Mobile e-Service Carrier (eCar): Innovating Public Service Delivery in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study aims to identify effective and efficient methods for enhancing e-governance initiatives in Bangladesh, specifically focusing on improving e-services by simplifying delivery processes. It proposes a Mobile E-Service Carrier (eCar) model to facilitate seamless public service delivery. The main activities of this prototype include raising awareness, organizing exhibitions and fairs, facilitating birth registrations, publishing public examination results, setting up mobile photo labs, showcasing sports matches, providing access to land records, organizing drama exhibitions, and supporting human resource development. The study explores the potential for transforming governance by improving accessibility for the poorest segments of the population and seeks to raise awareness among government agencies about citizens' needs. It suggests a paradigm shift in public service delivery by bringing services directly to citizens' doorsteps and connecting people in rural areas. In this model, service providers or agencies are expected to reach out to citizens instead of requiring citizens to visit the agencies. This approach could empower individuals while making government agencies more attuned and responsive to the needs of the people. Finally, this could lead to more effective e-governance and inspire a new era of public service delivery.

Keywords: *public service, e-service, m-governance, good governance, e-Car*

Introduction: Rationale of the Study

The government of Bangladesh took many initiatives within its existing conventional and process-oriented management systems to build trust and seek

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support from its citizens in delivering efficient public services. One of the most momentous developments in public service is expanding the online application and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The quick advancements of ICTs and enormous prospects have boosted public anticipations for improved governance and quality service delivery (Salam & Islam, 2013). However, advanced technologies have also pressured the government to re-invent itself to realize citizens' rising anticipations by delivering improved services and innovative solutions to governance problems (see Siddiquee, 2008; Hossen et al., 2017). Quality service delivery is the core function of e-government that constantly intends to ensure efficiency, accountability, and transparency in the functioning of government (Hossen et al., 2017). Accordingly, governments worldwide have commenced programs to improve public service delivery by adopting an e-governance strategy, notably in public sectors.

Many countries have achieved significant progress in implementing e-governance and making e-services readily available and accessible to their citizens. With the aspiration to provide public services at the doorsteps of citizens and connect the people of the countryside, the Bangladesh government has set up e-service centers at Union, Upazila, and District levels as part of the e-governance scheme (AIP, 2009). This initiative has enhanced the efficiency of public agencies in service delivery and has other advantages for citizens, businesses, and the government (see Siddiquee, 2008). However, the government is not getting the full benefits of e-governance for many reasons, such as a lack of a strategic plan, inadequate skilled workforce, and social and educational background (see Hossen et al., 2017).

The overall e-government performance of Bangladesh could be more satisfactory, although many programs have been implemented in the last one and a half decades. As per the E-Government Survey 2022, the e-government development ranking has been elevated from 142 in 2008 to 111 in 2022 (United Nations, 2022). In contrast, the ranking of e-participation development has risen from 78 in 2008 to 75 in 2022 (United Nations, 2022). It signifies that there is space for the development of e-participation.

While the e-government measures concentrate on delivering public services through internet portals from information and service centers of administrative areas, they failed to intercede with the mobility of government agencies and the mobile society (Salam, 2013). At this juncture, demand-side citizens' expectations and supply-side government attitudes are crucial to the effectiveness of e-governance initiatives. The study aims to explore a new

platform where supply and demand can be effectively met and high-quality services can be provided through a simplified service process. The study has several objectives, including defining e-governance and m-governances, assessing the current state of e-governance and its shortcomings in Bangladesh, and examining the potential for improving government access for the poorest and most underprivileged segments of the population. The article proposes a significant shift in how public services are delivered through process reengineering. This shift is not just a change in process but a transformation in how citizens interact with government services. It seeks to provide public services through the front office that are currently not possible through the back office, make government e-services more accessible to a broader consumer base, and enhance convenience.

The initial section is to find the gaps in the existing e-governance system and explain the justification of this study. It continues with methodology, where data sources and data collection approaches are stated. The literature review section discusses the design and architecture of public services, the transformation of e-government to m-government, and the progress of m-service delivery in the existing literature. The arguments on e-services and m-services are placed in the section. The service delivery innovation has been discussed with a flowchart that is concluded in the next section.

Methodology: Data Sources and Approach
This study aims to build a conceptual framework depicting important concepts and analytical frameworks relating to service process simplification. This conceptual paper considers the "Model Approach" to research design, which includes four approaches: theory synthesis, adaptation, typology, and model (see Jaakkola, 2020). This approach seeks to build a theoretical framework that predicts relationships between concepts or models. It shows an entity and identifies the issues and processes reflected in this study. This study mainly uses secondary documents from published sources like books, journals, research reports, and concept notes. Barely data were encountered through discussions with service providers and service receivers.

This paper usually summarizes arguments as figures depicting the salient constructs and their relationships, which are logical statements derived from the conceptual framework (see Meredith, 1993). Like MacInnis (2011), deductive reasoning has been used to explain critical variables. Content analysis was followed throughout this research. The study has mainly focused on the e-service delivery system in Bangladesh. The features were reviewed to identify the gaps in the existing system through visual analysis and mobility dimensions.

The research ends with a model for effective public service delivery.

This conceptual paper aims to enhance the understanding of m-governance (interactive governance), which pertains to mobile governance and services (see MacInnis, 2011). It establishes the framework for m-governance (providing e-service through a portable carrier), enabling researchers to develop and propose a model based on limited empirical data (Yadav, 2010). Ultimately, this paper offers a roadmap to comprehend the subject, outlining the central concept, governance concept shifts, service process changes, and potential factors influencing improved service delivery.

Literature Review: Public Service Delivery

Design and Architecture of Public Services: Public service delivery is a core concern of government - those are obliged by the citizens. Public services have many delivery patterns, such as conventional (named c-service), electronic (named e-service), and mobile (named m-service) services. Before entering the e-government system in developing countries like Bangladesh, government services were conventionally delivered to the citizens, which made connecting citizens hardly a concern, and bringing services to the doorsteps of citizens was ignored. In the digital era, e-service is the electronic delivery of government notifications, program benefits, and essential services, usually over the Internet, through establishing e-service centers using information technologies. Conversely, m-services are a combination of mobility with e-services. It leads to connect citizens in the countryside through its in-line services and bringing services to the doorsteps through its portability.

Unlike conventional service systems, m-service delivery refers to the online delivery of public services with interactive information flow between customers and service providers. The e-service strategy ventured into information discharge via information technology, and information quality is essential in ensuring customer satisfaction. Broadly, e-service can be characterized as interactive, content-centered, and internet-based customer service driven by the customers and integrated with the support of services and systems delivered by service providers, desiring to strengthen the collaboration between service providers and receivers (see Ruyter et al., 2001). This approach helps to grow the trust of citizens in public agencies.

According to Ghosh et al. (2004), public service delivery has three slots: service providers, service recipients, and agencies. The *service provider* publishes and updates their services to be publicly available on the Internet. From a business standpoint, this is the service the proprietor wants to sell. From an architectural

viewpoint, this is the platform that holds the enactment of the service. The *service recipient* is the party with a need that can be fulfilled by a service unrestricted on the Internet platform. From a business stance, this business demands certain functions to be fulfilled. This application is looking for and gathering a service from an architectural outlook. The *agencies* would be an organization or institution, public or private, where the transaction occurs. The service provider comes here to prepare the services while the stakeholders come to receive their services.

Shift from e-government to m-government: E-governance is well-demarcated as the application of hardware, software, Internet, and other information and communication technologies (ICT) to the functioning of government to bring practical, efficient, transparent, and accountable governance, enabling the citizen to reap the maximum benefit from the government (see Budhiraja, 2002; Hassan, 2013). E-government is also labelled a quicker, more suitable, and often value-added delivery of public services. The primary goal of e-governance is to establish a relationship between government officials and citizens, providing greater access to government information and services by making government accessible for any part of the country and promoting citizen participation in government affairs (Asaduzzaman et al., 2012). Several challenges have been identified in e-service delivery in Bangladesh, i.e., lack of skilled workforce, shortage of power supply, lack of public awareness, and unwillingness of service providers (see Salam & Islam, 2015). The expected outcomes have yet to be attained from the e-services. Hence, it has begun regrouping and rethinking strategies in many governments. To approach the mobile government, it expects to briefly examine mobility and the prerequisites for being mobile. The query of how to express the actual potential of mobile government, the opportunities of how to feel available, and how to design new services for a mobile user cluster from a government perspective are studied.

Some researchers (i.e., Heeks, 2000) exclaim about using internet technology to deliver effective and efficient public services to the people and re-invent and re-make the government. Ho (2002) claims that e-government is a paradigm change in public service delivery in the Internet era. The e-government is the traditional government service assembled for the citizens via internet outlets and computers. In contrast, m-government depicts the design and execution of processes entangling the utilization of wireless and mobile technologies, devices, and applications to enhance better services for citizens, businesses, and government agencies (Kushchu & Kuscu, 2003). This conceptual paper considers the transformation of e-government to m-government.

Improvements in m-service delivery: The rapid development of e-government services have been significantly expedited by the fast growth of information and communication technology (Lee, 2010). The m-service delivery strategy can carry information and work away from the specified desk to endow the service and engage with the clients where they are. However, the benefits of m-services can be explained in the following ways:

It has been possible for m-services to transform from an "agency-centric model" to a "citizen-centric model" (Yong, 2004). Continuation comes from traditional governance to networked governance and agency-centric governance to citizen-centric governance, ultimately looking forward to the careful execution of e-governance for good governance. Connecting the citizens and bringing services to the citizen's doorsteps are the two most important purposes of Digital Bangladesh (AIP, 2009). Smooth delivery of services at doorsteps and connecting people require awareness and interaction from citizens (service receivers) while information and response from governments (service providers). Nevertheless, the demand and supply side arena is yet to be created in public service delivery. From the demand side, public awareness stipulates more interaction with agencies to get services. Therefore, the agency focuses on being more informative, quick, and responsive from the supply side.

The public services are conventional services (offline), electronic services (online), and mobile services (in-line). The most critical issue of the citizen-centric service delivery pattern is in-line service. M-services are third-generation services that do not have to go to government offices; the service providers come closer to the citizens' doorsteps with the desired services. It ensures the citizens can open access with awareness build-up where the government needs to be more informative and responsive. It is a citizen-centric approach where service is provided to the citizen's doorsteps; in the two-direction communication process, service is in touch at the locality where service providers can offer an instant response or quick feedback to citizens' requirements.

Kakihara & Sorensen (2001) conferred spatial, temporal, and contextual factors of mobility to describe the association between mobility and human transactions, pushing forward mobility's fluidity. This concept indicates the fluid characteristics of public service delivery. With its fluid characteristics, mobile service differs from the former organizational forms of public services, also quoted as conventional service. In m-service, the service providers have the potential to utilize electronic technology to be portable with information. The literature explains that a specific mobility model must be developed to deliver service. There is a demand for services at the doorsteps of the citizens as well as services provided by different agencies. In this context, a system

could be developed for providing instant service. The vehicles or carriers will act as service regulators and connectors between the service provider and receiver. However, the portable precursor may connect citizens, which was one of the principal goals of Digital Bangladesh. The current study intends to develop a solution for connecting service providers and receivers at a certain point, which should be added to previous policies and literature.

Analyses and Arguments: E-services vs. M-services
The definitive objective of e-governance is to create tremendous and transparent governance (see Kabir, 2007). The literature reveals that information and communication technologies guarantee effective, efficient, accountable, transparent, and reliable management. These are the familiar attributes of good governance and desirable for a nation. This study examines public services through visual analyses, features examination, and mobility dimensions.

Purposes Evaluation: The significant intention of Digital Bangladesh was to connect citizens and provide services at the doorsteps of people (AIP, 2009). The CEM (i.e., Conventional, Electronic, and Mobile) Keyboard model has been developed to compare different public services (see **Figure 1**) and to identify gaps in the existing line of service delivery. The two substantial elements (i.e., connecting the citizens and services at doorsteps) and three ways of service delivery (i.e., conventional, electronic, and mobile) have been analyzed. The provided public services are marked with six distinct keys: overlook and ignore, consider and practice, and frequent and habitual.
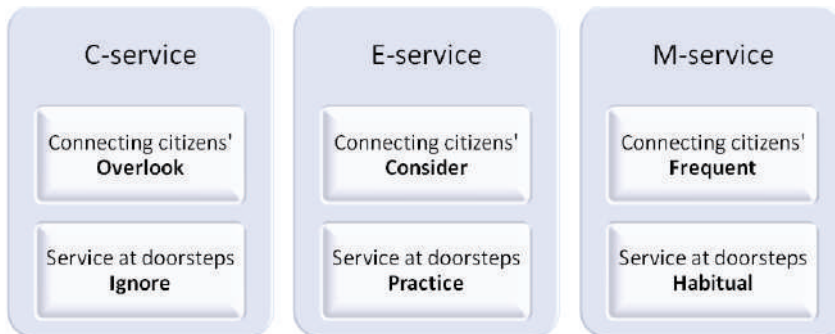
C-service	E-service	M-service
Connecting citizens' **Overlook**	Connecting citizens' **Consider**	Connecting citizens' **Frequent**
Service at doorsteps **Ignore**	Service at doorsteps **Practice**	Service at doorsteps **Habitual**

Figure 1 CEM Keyboard model of public service assessment (Author's construct)

In the digital era, Bangladesh is inherent in an electronic service platform after conventional service. It indicates that we overlook the first-generation service (c-service) and investigate the second-generation service (e-service). In public service delivery, connecting citizens must be frequent, while services at doorsteps should

be habitual. In the past (during the conventional way of providing services), we overlooked connecting citizens and ignored providing services at the doorsteps. At present (in the digital era), we hardly consider connecting citizens and merely try to provide services at the doorsteps, which is an infringement of the goal of Digital Bangladesh. It signifies that we must put our fingers on the right-handed buttons of the keyboard, which are frequently considered to connect citizens and customary people to serve them at their doorsteps.

Features Examination: Largely, e-services have online delivery options, an agency-centric approach, a region-specific agency, less informative space, a slower response rate, few awareness spans, a low connecting rate, and moderate flexibility altitude features. In contrast, m-services are superior through feature analysis, which necessitates process reengineering for service process simplification. There are gaps between what we have and what must go for service delivery (Salam & Islam, 2015). For better services and citizens' satisfaction, the government as a service provider (divisions departments or agencies) must ensure the features to acquire trust and seek consent from their nationals by delivering practical and accurate public services. Currently, service seekers come to the agency to meet the demand created by different segments of the territory. The service providers stay at the back office, where the service seeker has no chance of receiving an instant message from the office that points toward hindrance. Other areas for improvement are existing spare time for data processing, and the services are stored without timely feedback. Lastly, the service seeker must contact the agency to get service; it is challenging to collect services for disabled persons, young people, or people of poor segments. Hence, it requires looking forward to easy ways to serve the abovementioned segment of society.

Mobility Judgment: A relatively modest dissimilarity is found in existing e-services and proposed m-services regarding the clarity of each term. While e-service intervenes with the electronic handling of government procedures with less or moderate scope of interaction, m-service could address the service's mobility and provide in-line service. The various implications of m-service result from a different understanding of physical, social, or virtual mobility (see Roggenkamp, n.d.). M-service pattern includes the physical level of mobility since the car or vehicle is portable. It also incorporates the social status of mobility due to its response to the social needs of a particular area. In addition, virtual types of mobility include messaging or phoning for services provided and received through m-service.

Considering the above loopholes in existing e-service delivery in Digital Bangladesh, the service process reengineering is worthy. Conversely, the public

sector has just begun to connect citizens from all corners of society in the era of e-governance. Public services are also delivered to citizens' doorsteps, which needed to be more present in the age of conventional service delivery. A process map of public service delivery is drawn based on pointing out the limitations in the existing system (see **Figure 2**).
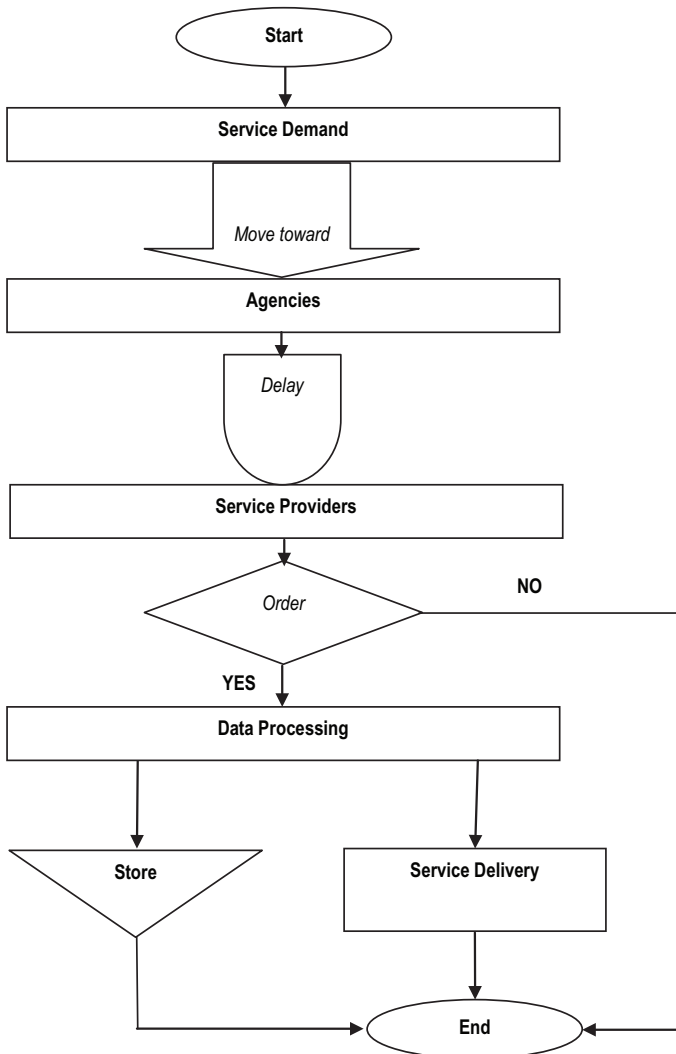

Figure 2 A process map of existing public service delivery (Author's drawn)

Discussions: A Service Delivery Innovation

Considering the drawbacks of conventional and electronic services and the benefits of mobile services, an innovative service delivery approach has been developed (see **Figure 3).** The existing e-service centers are less bothered about public services and more concerned about internet services. The proposed eCar could be smart enough to meet the requirements due to its mobility. It is a service paradigm of process simplification to public service delivery as the innovation of process reengineering. It may reach the doorway of the disabled, ethnic communities, or countryside people. The initiative could be terrific as it is low-cost and has time-constant excellence. In the proposed initiative (particularly eCar), the citizens would be aware of the services that made them interactive. The people's interaction is bound to carry more information for the officials to achieve quick response aptitude.
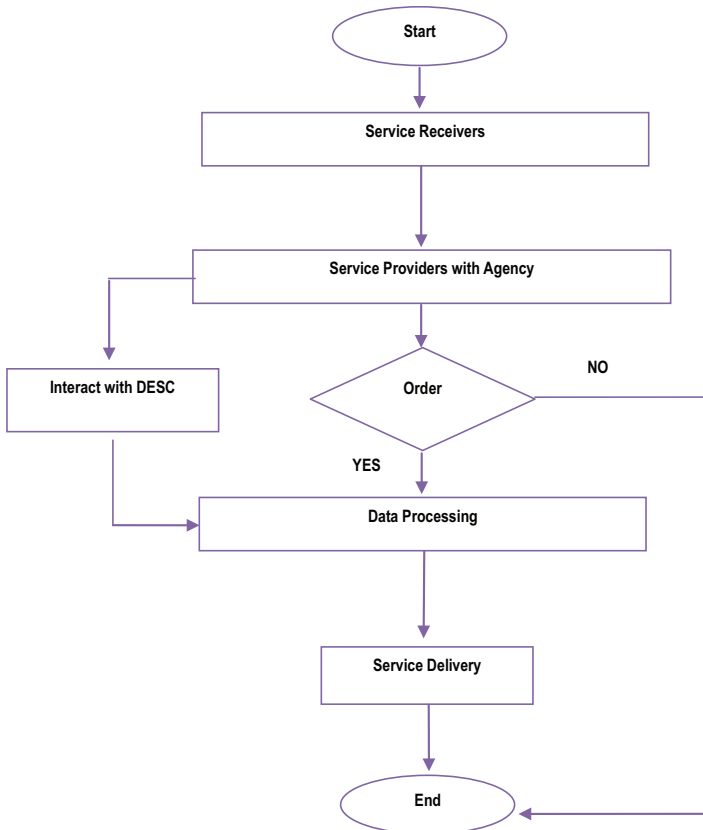

Figure 3 The proposed approach for public service delivery (Authors construct)

There will be no obstacles or interference from intermediaries, so people will be more engaged in receiving services. In addition, receiving the services without delay will be an opportunity, and receivers have yet to return. After that, many will be aware of the UDCs through m-service initiatives. The concern of this study is m-services at citizens' doorsteps through the e-Car and applies to various public services unusually found by existing e-service centers.

Without a technical infrastructure and human resource development, linking the interface between citizens and government would be more accessible. The readiness of the receiver and provider to adopt contemporary technology and the readiness to do so is essential. The realization of preparedness depends on the receivers' and providers' willingness and readiness. The top-down approach to promoting e-governance needs to be supported by the bottom-up approach, where citizens' perspective plays a vital role. The eCar is portrayed with requirement and possibility systems. The 'requirement system' is compiled with citizens as a user needs information for processing. After processing, it becomes a product; a product place is required. The 'possibility system' identifies advantages to the service receiver because of its unique characteristics or potentialities like mobility, responsiveness, and interaction.

Conclusions – Innovative Approach to Service Delivery

Public services are surrounded by fraud myths, high costs, and a lack of knowledge of handling the services. Public awareness is the foremost thing that needs to be made more accessible to the agencies and for demand creation. Similarly, the government needs to be more informative in providing quick responses to the citizens of the countryside. Recently, technology has increasingly mediated such interactions as the e-governance approach. M-governance is very worthy as the outcome of process reengineering to get the door to disabled persons, ethnic communities, or young individuals. The strategy requires infrastructure and policy to permit flexible connections among state agencies, service providers, and citizens. Therefore, the top policymakers must realize their citizens' necessity for better public services. The state should pay attention to the latest technologies and their influence on organizations and face up to the problems and possibilities. It should recognize the indispensable miracles of aligning organizational transformation and process reengineering with those above sincere m-service approaches. Being portable, interactive management should be considered a changeover of government itself - a paradigm shift of service delivery from e-government to m-government. It can be used as an outlet for e-government services through mobile e-service carriers (eCar) or portable centers.

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The Role of Emotions, Power, and Politics in Setting Policy Agenda: A Theoretical Analysis of Policy Inaction in the Shipbreaking Industries in Bangladesh

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Abstract:

Agenda-setting may not always be a rational process and depends mostly on the perception of the policy problem made by the policy entrepreneurs to the decision-makers where 'non-decision' or 'policy-inaction' is also a kind of decision to avoid certain issues. Taking the existing ship-breaking policy of Bangladesh as a case study, this study tries to theoretically analyze how the level of public emotions and exercise of political power impacts policy-making in a policy domain that resulted in no policy change. The study applies mainly two theories of public policy: the threshold model of the policy process by Christopher Pepin-Neff and the theory of three faces of power by Lukes which relates public emotions and political power with policy formulations. The study argues that, according to these theories, the case study is an example of a high emotion policy threshold (HEHP) issue where despite the initiatives by some policy actors to open a new policy window and the demands of the advocacy coalition consisting of International Labour Organization (ILO) and non-government organizations (NGO), the government used covert power to establish the preference for employment generation, national GDP and GNP and exclude the demand for policy redesign from policy-agenda. The objective of this study is not to establish a new proposition of policy discussion but rather to discuss policy inaction or agenda-setting in an existing problem from a new perspective, theoretically from two distinct points of view: Emotions and political power.

Keywords: Threshold Model, Policy Process, Political Power, Human Rights, ILO, Ship Breaking.

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Introduction:

Shipbreaking and recycling industries (SRI) have catalysed economic progress in Bangladesh through their support in supplying raw materials for the steel, furniture, electrical, and other manufacturing, and construction industries (Rabbi & Rahman, 2017). Despite its contribution to employment generation, poverty alleviation, and gross economic growth of the country, it is often criticized for workers' rights violations through posing significant threats to human and environmental security, which has often been ignored by the government (Vidal, 2017). Human rights organizations and environmentalists have been demanding workplace safety and the banning of importing ships carrying toxic chemicals for a long time. Consequently, the government formulated the 'Shipbreaking and Recycling Rules' in 2011, which is often contradictory to the health and safety issues of the workers and the local community (Chowdhury, et. al., 2024).

However, human rights violation in this industry is often prevented from being exposed in public and ensured not to arise on the political agenda through influencing the political arena and the informal process (Alam and Faruque, 2014). Despite a huge demand for policy change or redesign, policy entrepreneurs like industrialists instigated the government for policy stasis that creates or reinforces socio-political values and institutional norms in such a way that limits the scope of the policy process to public consideration of the issues that are relatively innocuous to the policymakers (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962).

This article will theoretically analyze different socio-economic issues in the ship-breaking industries in Bangladesh using the Threshold model of the policy process and the theory of three faces of power, two significant theories of policy studies. This study argues that, according to the theory of three faces of power, in the present socio-economic, ethical, and cultural context of Bangladesh, the government processed this issue by preventing it from coming to the agenda by elucidating the informal processes through which an agenda is set (covert power) where they focus only on national economic growth through poverty alleviation and employment generation of the poor jobless people (Lukes, 1974). Using the threshold theory of policy process, it also argues that, human rights violations of the workers in this industry in Bangladesh is a High Emotion High Policy (HEHP) threshold issue (Pepin-Neff, 2019) as despite carrying a lot of emotions and having a strong and entrenched policy subsystem, it caused policy stasis that inclines attention avoidance.

Objectives of the Study:

- To understand the agenda-setting process from two different perspectives: public emotions and political power. Using two significant theories of policy studies, the threshold theory of the policy

process and the theory of three faces of power, and considering Bangladesh's existing shipbreaking and recycling policy as a case study, this study theoretically discusses how the level of public emotion and exercise of political power prevented the demand for policy change/redesign from policy agendas that resulted in policy inaction.

- To focus only on the industry's economic, health, and environmental aspects that played their part in policy inaction in the case study, not the detailed information on the overall shipbreaking industry in Bangladesh.

- To theoretically analyze the relevant features of the policy from emotion and power dimensions in the policy process considering secondary data on the case study; not to establish any hypothesis through discussion or collecting primary data.

Literature Review:

This essay will use the threshold policy process model to understand how governments cope with public emotions in agenda-setting. Here, the formal or informal agreements that promote the opening of a policy window are proposed as policy thresholds. Various legal rules, discursive signals, social limits, political norms, and social values that regulate the decision-making environment around individual policy issues and domains are indicators of this model (Pepin-Neff, 2019). Policy thresholds can occur in two ways in the policy process: high and low thresholds. The high thresholds are intended to impose costs, such as emotional taxation and exclusion of certain groups, to keep actors out of the process. Low thresholds enable policy windows to open, allowing actors to alleviate public anxiety, a concept known as "policy as therapy."
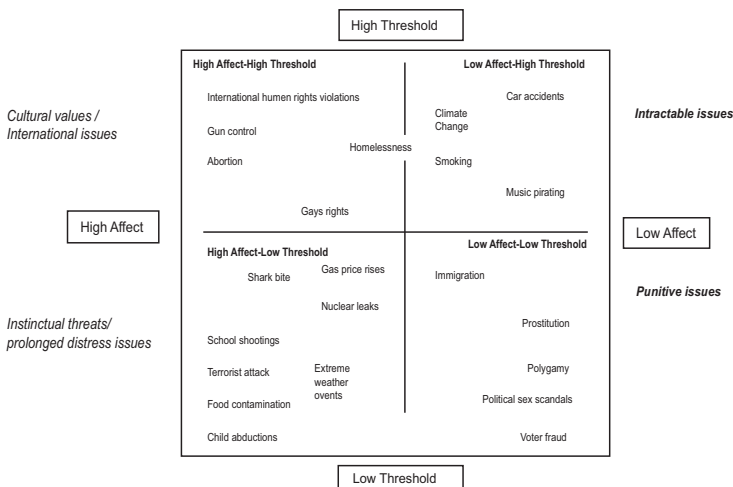

Figure 1: Model of Emotionality-to-Threshold Levels (Pepin-Neff, 2019)

For example, in the case of the abortion issue, despite high public affect/emotion due to religious and human rights perspectives, for their high thresholds, governments do not take it immediately to the policy agenda or focus on more important policy issues whereas terrorist attack is a highly emotional public issue with a low threshold that is promptly responded by the government and included in the policy agenda. Thus, this theory provides a frame for understanding the core question of public policy: "Who gets what, when, and how" (Lasswell 1950) through the emotional lens that signifies how public feelings facilitate the distribution of political penalties. This framework entitles some essential elements to perceive the consequence of the policy process.
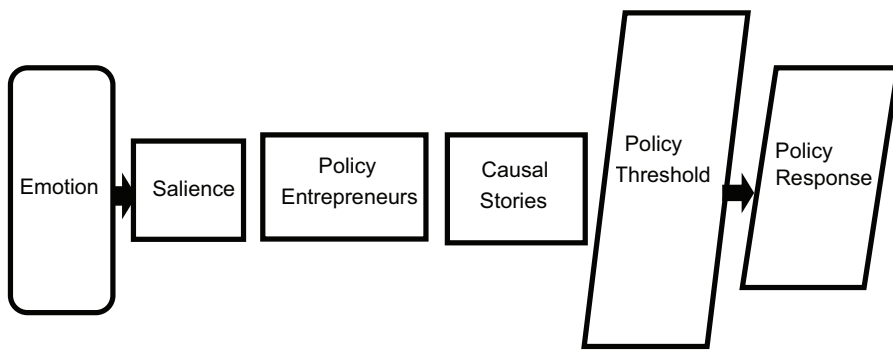

Figure 2: Policy Process (Pepin-Neff, 2019)

This essay will also apply the Theory of the Three Faces of Power proposed by Lukes (1974) as a tool to analyze how policymakers utilize power to pursue their interests. According to Lukes (1974), the government uses three types of power namely: overt, covert, and latent to utilize their preferences and prevent any policy amendment. This essay argues that in our case of discussion, the policymakers utilized covert power which means the power to control decision-making and agenda-setting to prevent the issue from arising in the policy agenda.

Methodology:
1. Research Design
A qualitative explanatory method of research was proper because the objective of this study was to examine the agenda-setting process through which non-action gives power back to the powerful. Using the threshold model of the policy process and the theory of three faces of power, this study theoretically identifies the role of emotions and political power behind excluding an issue from the policy agenda. To elaborate on this, the study takes the existing shipbreaking policy of Bangladesh as a case study where despite enormous

environmental and security threats, and the demands of amendment from different policy entrepreneurs, the government did not include the demand in the policy agenda that resulted in no policy redesign. Thus, this study largely follows the case study analysis approach for its qualitative research where a specific part was thematic analysis to identify patterns and connections and to categorize them for analysis.

The study uses secondary data to analyze trends and perceptions articulating the policy process following highly emotional events. It is an extensive review of new perspectives that facilitates an understanding of how public emotions and political priorities shaped the agenda-setting process of an existing problem in Bangladesh. The study purposefully avoided detailed explanations of the theories other than relevant topics to the case study and various quantitative information of the shipbreaking industry as the focus of the study does not demand any numerical analysis.

In this study, the process of not responding to relevant issues and preventing the government from implementing required policy change is analyzed through four thresholds: relevant affect/emotional expression, relative salience, policy entrepreneurship, and causal stories where the government applies covert power that impedes an issue from appearing in the policy-agenda by prioritizing other issues (Pepin-Neff, 2019, Lukes, 1974).

2. Data Collection and Analysis:

Data collection refers to the systematic gathering and measuring of information on variables of interest, that facilitates finding answers to research questions or discussing the research argument. Secondary data were collected from different relevant sources selected for their factual data and theoretical contributions to the subject matter of the study. The sources are:

Scholarly Articles, Journals, and Research Institutions: Different peer-reviewed journals and essays supported preparing the article's structure. These articles were searched through keywords like 'Threshold Model', policy process, human rights, ILO, and shipbreaking in academic databases like Google Scholar, JSTOR, and SSRN. Moreover, journals and publications from institutions like the *Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)*, the *International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)*, *Greenpeace International, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the* United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) added valuable insights into the analysis. Relevant statistical information about the industry especially published within the last decade was also taken from these publications.

Official Reports: Periodical reports by national and international organizations especially the International Labor Organization (ILO) and, the World Bank provided documentary evidence that helped to contextualize the theoretical analysis.

Government and NGO Publications: Action plans, policy papers, and assessments published by the Government of Bangladesh helped in narrating government stands on the specific issues. Though reports from different NGOs like the Environment and Social Development Organization (ESDO), Works for Green Bangladesh (WGB), and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) helped in developing insights in the essay, no data were directly used from their reports.

However, selected journals and reports were meticulously assessed based on their authenticity and pertinence. Key findings and arguments from the selected literature were then categorized and analyzed thematically to find patterns and connections. Thematic coding grouped similar ideas and arguments, allowing the identification of significant issues impacting the government's decision to prioritize economic aspects rather than health and environmental aspects of the industry. Finally, the study underwent a thorough case study analysis discussing all the categorized ideas and arguments applying the threshold model of the policy process and theory of three faces of power to develop a different understanding of setting policy agenda.

3. Limitations:
As the study mainly depends on the secondary data, some limitations were inevitable:

Reliance on Accessible Literature: Because of its dependency on the available literature, the study may not cover all dimensions of the industry or the processions for policy redesign by different groups of people. Again, biases in data of certain articles or reports may affect the overall discussion of the study.

Temporal Constraints: As the secondary data presents information on a specific timeline, the study cannot cover newer developments on the issue.
Illustrative Bias: As the illustration of secondary data is subjective, the study cannot deny the probability of researcher bias while prioritizing specific matters over others.

A Brief Discussion on the Ship-breaking Activities in Bangladesh:
The shipbreaking yards are largely in the country's southeast, just outside Chittagong (Frey, 2013). Although locals began dismantling ships that had sunk

on their shores in the 1960s and 1970s, the Government of Bangladesh did not formally recognize it as an industry and therefore did not have any regulatory measures until 2011 (Alam and Faruque, 2014). Many ship-breakers are from Bangladesh's northwest, a poverty-stricken region with little economic activity, while others are from Chittagong and the surrounding areas in the country's southeast (Pasha et al., 2012). Around 150 shipbreaking yards are reported to exist along the coast north of Chittagong, with 50 to 60 of them being operational all year (Rabbi and Rahman, 2017). According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) "Review of Maritime Transport 2019," Bangladesh ranked first in shipbreaking in 2018, dismantling 47.2 percent of all vessels in the world (Sirimanne, et. al, 2019).

Not only does the industry supply raw materials to industries such as inland shipbuilding, manufacturing, re-rolling mills, steel mills, oxygen plants, wire, ceramics, furniture factories, etc. but also ship scraps have been used as raw materials by over 350 re-rolling mills (Alam and Faruque, 2014). Currently, the industry provides more than 60% of the raw materials for the local steel industry (Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). Furthermore, the local shipbuilding industry is heavily reliant on it, as the majority of raw materials are derived from scrap steel. Without a local shipbreaking/recycling industry, inland and some coastal shipbuilding will be crippled (Ahammad & Sujauddin, 2017).

Sectors	Quantity	Unit
Steel Consumption	5	million tons
Steel Production	2.2 to 2.5	million tons
Scrap Steel from Ship Breaking	Up to 1.5	million tons
Ship Breaking Steel Contribution to Production	50	%
Ship Braking Steel Contribution to Consumption	20-25	%

Figure 3: Shipbreaking industry contributions to steel consumption and production in Bangladesh (Ahammad & Sujauddin, 2017)

Moreover, this industry significantly influences the country's socio-economic growth. Scrap ships guarantee the nation's long-term economic development without iron ore (Hossain, 2015). More than a million people are engaged in this sector, both directly and indirectly. If the local shipbreaking/recycling industry fails, three million people and the entire national economy will suffer greatly, lowering GDP and impeding the whole of national development process (Hossain, 2015).

According to the United Nations, Bangladesh shifted to middle-income nation status, where this industry played a big part (Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). The industry pays about Taka 5 billion (about US$68 million) in customs charges, income taxes, and value-added taxes each year, providing the government with a significant source of annual revenue (Ahammad and Sujauddin, 2017). In the

five years leading up to 2015, the industry contributed to the GDP of Bangladesh around Taka 53.3 billion (or US$770 million at 2009-10 constant prices) worth of output each year on average (Ahammad and Sujauddin, 2017).
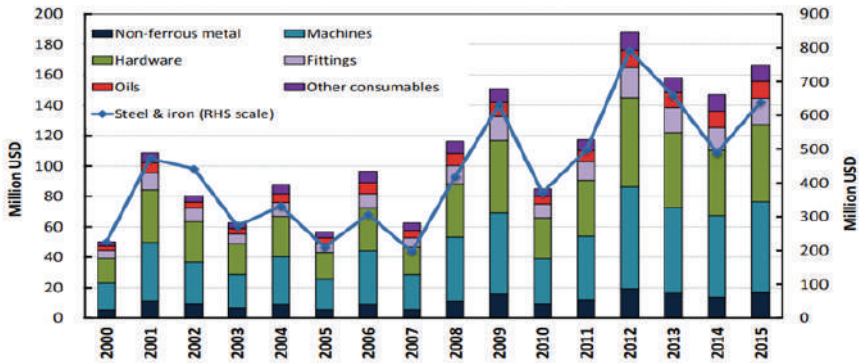

Figure 4: Gross value of production in the Shipbreaking industry in Bangladesh (at 2009-10 constant prices), 2000 to 2015 (Ahammad and Sujauddin, 2017).

However, SRI in Bangladesh has grown rapidly, at the expense of environmental degradation and extreme labour abuse (Hossain, 2017). The working conditions of shipbreakers are appalling due to a shortage of protective facilities, lack of awareness, lack of government intervention, and ineffective laws (Rabbi and Rahman, 2017). Hazardous chemicals such as persistent organic pollutants, asbestos, and heavy metals are released into the atmosphere as a result of shipbreaking which increases the turbidity of the seawater in the region and accelerates the rate and amount of shore erosion posing a danger to the inhabitants (Ahammad and Sujauddin, 2017).

Despite the employment of low-wage workers and environmental deregulation, SRI is a crucial source of revenue for the country and a source of livelihood for a large number of Bangladeshis (Rahman et al., 2018). Mainly for this reason, notwithstanding the international and local NGOs slammed the government of Bangladesh from time to time, they remained indifferent to filthy and unsafe shipbreaking activities (Hossain, 2017).

Discussion & Findings:
The process of preventing required policy change in the existing shipbreaking and recycling policy in Bangladesh will be discussed mainly through two theories of policy studies: the threshold model of the policy process and the theory of three faces of power. According to the theories, policy inaction will

be discussed through four thresholds: relevant affect/emotional expression, relative salience, policy entrepreneurship, and causal stories where, Emotional expression is discussed through four dimensions: emotional oppression, emotional labour, intersectionality, and social mobilization, and Relative salience is discussed through two dimensions: racialized affect and social construction of the target population (Pepin-Neff, 2019). Every part of the discussion will relate to the presence of power and politics, where despite the high emotion of the public, the government prioritized other issues and avoided the demanded policy change using their political power. This discussion will thus try to develop a significant perspective on the role of public emotion, power, and politics behind this non-decision-making or non-action of policy change.

Affect/Emotional Expression:
In the case of workers' rights violation in the SRI in Bangladesh, high Policy thresholds occurred in the policy process that is intended to impose costs, such as emotional taxation and exclusion of certain groups, to maintain policy actors out of the process (Pepin-Neff, 2019). Because of the structural complexity of ships and many environmental, safety, and health issues involved, shipbreaking and recycling are considered to be a complex process (OSHA, 2010). Moreover, SRI in Bangladesh is not only posing threats to the human rights of the workers especially women and child workers but also to local people by causing scarcity of natural resources, unsafe work environment, and pollution (Devault et al.,2017).

1. a Emotional Oppression:

More than 1000 shipbreaking workers have died and 10,000 were seriously injured in Bangladesh over the last 20 years mainly because of toxic gas explosions, the fall of heavy steel beams and metal plates from upper decks of ships, electric shocks, etc (Rabbi & Rahman, 2017). Moreover, these workers often suffer from respiratory diseases that reduce their life expectancy and physical capacity (YPSA, 2005). There is no provision in the current policy in Bangladesh for investigating the existence of flammable and dangerous chemicals, gas, etc., in the imported ships and assurance of workers' especially women and children's safety (Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). All these factors have aggravated the workers' health and human security risks.

Not only the hazardous impact on the environment and human health but also the problems of low wages especially for women and child workers, extended work hours, etc. in this industry in Bangladesh led to a negative high-affect

aggregation (Linville and Fischer, 1991) or public distress that spurred massive protest through the workers' union and relevant policy actors facilitating the dissemination of political penalties in both national and international settings (Pepin-Neff, 2019). The government of Bangladesh, to suppress the emotions of the workers and mobilize their outrage, allows them a limited range of emotions along with a restricted existence and limited experience of humanity through rewarding the system of acceptable emotions denying their full humanity (Rahman, et. al., 2018). This emotional invalidation leads to social oppression by preventing these poor workers from expressing themselves against unsafe and inhuman treatment at the workplace and bearing silent pain that ultimately prevents them from developing a sense of entitlement (Pepin-Neff, 2019).

1.b Emotional Labour:

Toxic discharge from the dyeing and the finishing plant, and emissions from the boiler and generators stack endanger the biodiversity and ecosystem of Bangladesh and result in alteration of the core characteristics of the regional environment that mostly affects the workers who live nearby and the local community (Chowdhury, et. al., 2014). Moreover, women and child workers in this industry here are often deprived of proper wages and expected to accept it as natural which causes emotional labour for them which represents structural discrimination and socially constructed emotional racism (Rahman, et. al., 2018). As child-bearers and homemakers, women are more vulnerable to the safety and environmental issues related to this industry (Bailey, 2000). The pollution in shipyards dangerously affects maternal health in Bangladesh with evidence of impaired childbirth and by-born lung disease (YPSA, 2005). Moreover, the on-the-job death rate of women is higher than men in this country due to risky manual jobs and a lack of safety measures (ILO, 2021). The social prejudices often deny acknowledging the emotional labour of these poor workers along with the local community, especially the women by denying their entire human and emotional range (Pepin-Neff, 2019).

1.c Intersectionality:

Because of high-risk involvement and ILO recognition as "by any standards, the demolition of ships is a dirty and dangerous occupation" (Bailey, 2000), the rich countries are gradually outsourcing shipbreaking and recycling activities to suitable developing countries like Bangladesh utilizing the facility of the free-market economy (Barnett, 2001). Mainly because of the availability of cheap labour, poverty, and the lack of environmental awareness, Bangladesh has become an attractive destination for this industry (Rahman, et. al., 2018).

Poisonous substances discharged from the scrapped ships are mixed with the soil, the Bay of Bengal, and nearby river water which harms the coastal environment and biodiversity and has a huge negative impact on the workers who live nearby and the local community (Greenpeace, 2001). Consequently, the scarcity of safe drinking water and arable lands affects local lives near the shipyards in Chittagong (FIDH, 2005).

All these factors create insecurity for the poor marginalized people, especially women in Bangladesh, in different forms like loss of economic or food security, forced migration, scarcity of water, etc. that result in intersectionality which influences the way political actors articulate this problem and attaches policy solutions and the way power dynamics are determined in this policy domain (Crenshaw, 1990, Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). Being fluid, heterogeneous identity, these poor workers in Bangladesh interact and cross in such a way that exacerbates social and emotional oppressions on workers making this disadvantaged and condemned environment deficient for some people and in a way that privileges the hierarchically advantaged identities like the industry owners (Pepin Neff and Caporale, 2018). Consequently, these poor and unprivileged workers are made hierarchical and stand-alone elements in society by the policymakers (Rabbi & Rahman, 2017) that shape how they would address the oppression and return power to themselves.

1.d Social Mobilization:
Different internal and external actors and influential factors in Bangladesh assumed direct and indirect roles in the development of this emotional process. The International Labor Organization (ILO), and donor agencies (USAID, UNDP) were the major external actors, and the human rights and environmental NGOs (BELA, ESDO) and the civil societies were among the internal policy actors who tried to get this highly emotional issue on the policy agenda of the government of Bangladesh (Hossain, 2017). They attempted to mobilize needful local, national, and global resources around ensuring the safety and establishing the human rights of the labourers of this industry through using social media and some of the news media (Buck and Powers, 2010; Olutokunbo et. al., 2015; Chowdhury, et. al., 2024).

Although the mobilization of this agitation resulted in political distress that insisted the policy entrepreneurs push for positively perceived policy response (Mintrom, 2000), the policy process limited the implementation of the issue and tried to avoid political penalties by preventing the problem from coming to political and media attention in Bangladesh (Hossain, 2017, Linville and Fischer, 1991). However, the government of Bangladesh controlled the agenda

setting by utilizing covert power by highlighting employment opportunities and financial solvency of the workers generated by this industry to prevent the spread of negative public emotions and alleviate political anxiety (Birkland, 1997; Hossain, 2015; Pepin-Neff, 2019). This contributed to minimizing the implementation of this highly emotional issue as a political instrument by the rival political parties creating political distress for the government (Birkland, 1997; Hossain, 2015).

However, as the policy response to such a high-affect issue is operationalized by evaluating the category and timing of policy action and the relevant policy actors (Pepin-Neff, 2019), the policy process has decided to keep this emotionally exhausting issue off the agenda over the extended period and limited the distribution of attention to this issue (Rabbi & Rahman, 2017). Being a consumptive event that triggered public emotions, finally, by attempting to pre-emptively stop negative high-emotion aggregation through agenda displacement they paved the way for continuing the integrity of the emotionality and the relative salience allocated to this issue (Birkland, 1997; Pepin-Neff, 2019).

Relative Salience
Although the death and injury of workers and gradual environmental degradation have drawn the attention of the whole country, especially the environmental organizations of Bangladesh, because of the indifference of the powerful to this issue, could not act as a variable in the political phenomenon (Birkland, 1997; Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). Moreover, the government of Bangladesh exercised authority and supervision to prevent the broadcasting of the news on deaths and injuries of workers media and only highlighted the importance of national economic development in the media and the contribution of shipbreaking industries behind it (Rahman, et. al., 2018). It helped in mobilizing public emotion in a way that people could prioritize financial solvency over environmental and health issues which was easily predictable and resulted in decreasing salience of the event which set the emotional habitus of the issue and consequently prevented the political government from redesigning the policy (Birkland, 1997; Baumgartner and Jones 1991).

2. a Racialized Affect:
Racialized affect helps in understand the salience of one issue over another (Pepin-Neff & Caporale, 2018). The ship-scrapping industrialists and relevant stakeholders in Bangladesh are against the policy change because of the additional cost of safe and environmentally sustainable disposal (Kutub, et. al.,

2017). Moreover, this cost will be passed on to suppliers and customers through higher shipping costs and, as a result, higher product costs, which might not be attractive in today's dynamic global market (ILO, 2021). For all these reasons, the industrialists lobbied and motivated the government in such a way that without this industry, the steel supply needed for other sectors in the country would collapse and the GDP of the country would drastically fall causing political distress for the government (Kutub, et. al., 2017). Besides, many of these industrialists are members of the parliament and major donors of the political parties who act on their interests.

However, for all these reasons, environmental and health issues in SRI in Bangladesh are weakened by other political agendas of the government (Hossain, 2015). This results in the marginalized labourers being sustained with conditions of vulnerability circulating liable effect. On the other hand, the business community and the politicians are privileged by circulating empowering effects hidden from the public eye but still dominate the policy process (Berg et al., 2015).

2.b Social construction of target populations:
The social construction of the target population helps to understand the reasons behind the high or low salience of an issue to the policymakers. A single aspect of an issue can be accepted as positive by the powerful ignoring all other elements (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). Social constructions around the policy problem of the case study allocate benefits for powerful politicians and business magnets in Bangladesh. Policy inaction was distributed in this issue across the stakeholders to reward the owners by ensuring continuing profit and cheap labour and punishing the oppressed and the voices raised against the oppression discouraging their engagement (Pepin-Neff, 2019; Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). These patterns of privilege and punishment in addressing this policy problem, attaching solutions prioritizing one issue over others created a 'feed-forward' effect that allowed allocating resources proportionally rather than equally (Schneider and Ingram, 1993). The demand for workplace safety and banning the import of dangerous ships for breaking were represented as detrimental to the economy by the government which influenced them to use covert power to policy stasis (Rahman, et. al., 2018). However, being influenced by the money they avail, and the time they can afford, positive social construction was made about the contribution of this industry to alleviate poverty and unemployment resulting in policies designed to give positive notions of government (Kutub, et. al., 2017). Thus, through social constructions, policymakers of Bangladesh informed people about future policies regarding the issue and path of dependency degenerative politics.

As the timing of the actions and non-actions are key rationale in governing policy domains that directly influence the operationalizing of political responses (Drucker, 2020; Pepin-Neff, 2019), the response to this human rights issue in this era of economic globalization, let the government of Bangladesh exercise their power as decision-maker and agenda-setter. Consequently, this demonstrates how policy actors and policy entrepreneurs advance their material interests through advancing social constructions in both formal and informal ways that produced political control responses using the policy thresholds that failed to link the policy entrepreneurs to advocate positive responses through preventing aggregation and emotional relief (Pepin-Neff, 2019).

The governments' non-decision-making in this high-affect issue occurred due to minimum salience in the policy process and its international stakeholders. Bangladesh's dedication to achieving the sustainable development goals (SDG) and global agenda of poverty alleviation by the United Nations (UN) and getting the status of a 'middle-income country' within 2041 was prioritized over labour safety (Ahammad & Sujauddin, 2017). Moreover, policy redesign might not be well-accepted by multinational corporations, workers' unions, and other stakeholders because of its unlikeliness to provide jobs for the thousands of current labourers (Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). If the global agenda continues but no commitment is made in Bangladesh, the investment will most likely go elsewhere, resulting in job losses, and creating more challenges for the government (Devault et al.,2017). Consequently, it will pose a negative impact on the overall economy of the country which will decrease the relative salience of this issue nationally and globally. This lack of salience influenced the policy process for informal decision-making and resulted in agenda displacement (Pepin-Neff, 2019).

Policy Entrepreneurship
The issues and alternatives in policy design are often set on by the pre-political or pre-decisional processes (Cobb and Elder, 1972:12). The issue of shipbreaking and recycling policy amendment encouraged the policy actors like the politicians of the ruling party in Bangladesh to work as policy entrepreneurs to identify quickly adoptable measures that work as a therapy to mitigate highly emotional political situations (Rahman, et. al., 2018). Through their effective, diversified, and continuous engagement (Zahariadis, 2007), to address the criticism in the local and international settings and associated risks and vulnerability for the government (Rahman, et. al., 2018; Howlett et al, 2009), they advocated for not to respond to this issue and to motivate the public

especially the civil society towards the economic advantages earned from this industry by using covert power (Lukes, 1974).

Despite the dissatisfaction of ILO and some NGOs, joint advocacy of the policy entrepreneurs like The World Bank and the ruling party politicians advocated for non-decision prioritizing the contribution of this industry in financial stability and increasing the economic growth of Bangladesh (Ahmed & Sujauddin, 2017). These persuasive political actors along with the potential business community and the government's ideology as a whole were able to shape the agenda-setting process mainly through their operation as an ideological hegemony (Lukes, 1974: 18-20). Thus, relevant state and non-state policy actors after a strategic analysis of multiple streams of the problem, policy, and politics that build the policy environment (Kingdon and Stano, 1984; Sabaitier, 2007)), identified the policy problem (Mackenzie, 2004) and organized the emotional habitus of this highly emotional issue as 'economy friendly' that set the political trajectory (Pepin Neff and Caporale, 2018; Bossavie, et al, 2019). They attached a detailed solution (Mackenzie, 2004; Mintrom, 2000) to the problem and advocated for policy stasis until the emotional aspects of the issue subside (Vidal, 2017). Besides, they biased (Howlette et al, 2009; Botterill, 2013) the government of Bangladesh for non-agenda setting through the successful exercise of covert power that resulted in increasing the government's reputation and distribution of penalties (Schneider and Teske, 1992; Rabbi & Rahman, 2017). Relevant policy actors, ideas, and institutions played a collective role in this policy process and gave the power back to the powerful (ILO, 2021; Lasswell & Kaplan, 1950).

Causal Story

A purposeful-intended type causal story of this event was identified that had intentional causes (Stone, 1989). The stakeholders of this industry especially the industrialists of Bangladesh tend to hide the negative impacts of this industry on the workers' health and safety and the environment from the people's attention (Alam and Faruque, 2014). Thus, the government was motivated in such a way that they used their covert power so that it did not come to the agenda. As the structural position of interests and their political priorities in the policy process is important in determining how effectively issues are treated, this issue was excluded from the policy agenda by being weakened by accepting another priority closely linked with the structural power (Lukes, 1974). The government, being motivated by the industrialists has promoted economic development instead of labour safety and the environment and the influence of these political activists was beyond the visible actions toward other current and future issues (Rahman, et. al., 2018).

Moreover, the amendment to the existing policy would cause loss of employment; as a result, poverty would increase, decreasing the standard of people's lives. This will leave a negative impact on the overall GDP of Bangladesh which will impede achieving the UN's sustainable development goals within 2030 and graduating to middle-income status within 2041(Ahmed & Sujauddin, 2017). For this reason, the government remained visibly active in only a single field of public concern: economic development (Rahman, et. al., 2018). The policy process also does not shed light on the neglected labor conditions of millions of workers in this industry, most of who are women and children with very low wages, and frequent occupational accidents along with occupational diseases and deaths (Vidal, 2017). Besides, the owners and stakeholders of this industry motivated the government about the probable scarcity of steel supply due to the amendment of the existing policy that resisted the government from any response to the issue (Rahman, et. al., 2018).

Nevertheless, the type of workers engaged in this industry also helps to understand the reasons behind the policy stasis. The workers who live mostly in the nearby locality of the shipbreaking and recycling sites in Chittagong mostly migrated forcefully from disaster-prone coastal areas and drought-prone northern regions where they had to live below the poverty line (Vidal, 2017).

In short, the industrialists, other stakeholders, and the government of Bangladesh as a whole was blamed for using covert power to emotionally oppress the poor workers and ignoring their human rights (Stone, 1989; Pepin Neff and Caporale, 2018). Thus, the causal story was used as a political instrument (Stone, 2002) by the government to derive their intent to create a governable situation and to achieve survival value and speed in promoting a single agenda of economic development. The opposition of the parliament along with environmentalists despite building a coalition against the government, and blaming them for workers' loss, could not achieve a positively perceived policy response (Chowdhury, et. al., 2024). This resulted in legitimizing the relevant policy actors and protected the existing set of rules, political interests, and institutions (Stone, 2002).

Conclusion:
In conclusion, it can be said that the high level of public emotions does not always bring policy change. As this high-emotional issue tends to bounce back and forth, the government has alleviated the emotional distress through a long period of policy stasis through their power of non-decision-making and non-agenda setting. The policy process, by not responding to this issue, has distributed the political emotionality to decrease the frequency of events that let the health and safety threats of workers continue in exchange for financial

solvency. While the business community, depending on their structural importance, benefitted through extensive campaigns of formal lobbying; the government achieved short-term gains of their interest which could be disastrous in the long term. Thus, despite the high affect/emotion and the existence of strong policy path-dependencies and policy sub-systems, the exercise of the power of agenda control of the policymakers through policy stasis for an extended period, converted to policy inaction.

Though this policy domain has been demanding the policy design for a long time, the policy process did not respond to this incremental issue contrary to the cultural values and international human rights that consequently enacted a high-policy threshold by no amendment to the existing policy. Thus, the policy process prevented the issue from coming to the agenda by valuing financial solvency as divinely ordained and beneficial which is designed by 'deep rules' operating at the structural level (Benson, 1982; 162-5). Finally, in this way, the government of Bangladesh utilized high thresholds to reinforce social constructions and high effects that governed this policy issue by non-decision-making outside the formal political arena which ultimately gives the power back to the powerful (Lukes, 1974; Pepin-Neff, 2019).

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The Protracted Rohingya Refugee Crisis:
A Growing Incertitude for Bangladesh, the Rohingyas, and the Regional Countries

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Abstract

The protracted Rohingya refugee crisis is one of the most significant ongoing refugee crises in the world. The Rohingyas have been facing decades of discrimination, statelessness, and targeted violence in Myanmar which forced them to cross the Bangladeshi border to save lives. The Rohingyas entered Bangladesh after violent attacks in 1978, 1991-1992, and 2016. The recent influx of Rohingya refugees in 2016 surpassed previous records, raising the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh to 1.2 million. This significant number of refugees has not only created a humanitarian crisis but also security risks. Though, the host country is getting humanitarian assistance from international communities to support the refugees the security risks are getting less attention. This study emphasizes the security aspects of this refugee crisis. It explains that the protracted Rohingya refugee crisis has created a multi-dimensional traditional and non-traditional security risks. The host country is at the risk of several national security issues and the Rohingyas are also facing a human security crisis. This crisis has also posed non-traditional security risks to the regional countries simultaneously. It also explains the necessity of immediate attention to resolve the crisis permanently by short-term and long-term measures.

Keywords: *refugee, security, traditional, non-traditional, Rohingya, citizenship, rehabilitation.*

Introduction

The Rohingya refugee crisis is one of the most significant ongoing refugee problems in the world. "The Rohingyas" have been declared the "most persecuted ethnic minority" by the United Nations (Kingston, 2015) because

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of the deprivation of rights and miserable living conditions they are experiencing in Myanmar. The Rohingyas in Rakhine states fled to neighbouring Bangladesh to save their lives from 1978 to 2017 in several stages. This paper argues that the Rohingya refugee crisis is not only a humanitarian issue but also has created multi-dimensional traditional and non-traditional security risks for the host country. It explains how the protracted Rohingya refugee crisis has affected the local population, environment, law-and-order situation and posed multi-dimensional traditional and non-traditional security threats for the host country. It also emphasizes the human security issues related to the refugee camps and how failure to resolve this issue may destabilize the regional countries. In the end, this paper proposes a few recommendations for resolving the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Refugees and security
The refugee flow has been identified as a phenomenon that occurs when the bond between the people and their government is broken (Stein, 1986). Johnson (2011) argues that the host countries are not always willing to accept refugees especially when the number is significantly high. Because of the inability of the host country to provide proper resources and security for the refugees, the camps become susceptible to attack by both internal and external threats and hence make the refugee crisis more severe. Since the refugee camps are located in rural areas, far from the city, and the camps are supported by aid organizations with food and other reliefs, the camp areas are vulnerable to attack from external armed groups of the host countries (Johnson, 2011). The demographic pattern of the camps along with the geographical position defines the security threat of the camp that is calculated with an opportunity and willingness framework. Johnson (2011) has proposed five hypothesizes with his framework:

Hypothesis 1: The higher the proportion of males residing in a camp, the lower the likelihood of an attack on the camp.

Hypothesis 2: The higher the level of young refugees, the higher the likelihood of an attack on the camp.

Hypothesis 3: The larger the camp, the greater the likelihood of an attack.

Alternative Hypothesis 1: Ongoing conflict in the host or home state will increase the likelihood of an attack on a refugee camp.

Alternative Hypothesis 2a: The presence of lootable resources in the HOST state will increase the likelihood of an attack on a refugee camp.

Alternative Hypothesis 2b: The presence of lootable resources in the HOME state will decrease the likelihood of an attack on a refugee camp.

Johnson (2011) emphasized demographic engineering within the refugee camps to ensure the safety and security of the camps. In an alternative approach, he proposed deployment of security forces by the host country to reduce the attack on the camps which is less likely to be done by the host country because of the burden of extra spending. This framework focuses on the internal safety and security of the refugees in the camp and emphasizes a multi-level approach to ensure security for the refugees.

Mandel (1997) has identified mass refugee flows as a burden rather than an asset for the host country in this century which is experiencing the refugee crisis more than ever in history. He has identified three major security risks: 1. A perceived increase in economic and environmental burden, including an inability to provide food, shelter, clothing, employment, and social services 2. A perceived increase in political risk, including internal stability (worsened by a flow of arms) and violation of native practices, and 3. Perceived increase of external pressure on local culture, ethnic practices, religious, linguistic matters, livelihood, etc. Mandel (1997) argues that the third world has a long historical record of hospitality towards the refugees, and the developed and developing countries have different approaches to the refugee dilemma. The developed countries are more concerned about the economic risk of accepting refugees but the developing countries are more concerned about the political disruptions.

Haque (2016) has discussed the protracted Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh focuses on the involvement of Rohingyas with terrorist organizations and the risk of cross-border conflict between terrorist groups which may create a border crisis between Bangladesh and Myanmar. He also discussed the non-traditional security threats like environmental degradation and the drinking water crisis in that region because of the protracted refugee establishment. As the recent influx of Rohingya arrived in 2017, so there is no mention of that in the discussion of Haque's (2016) article.

O'Driscoll (2017) has focused on the internal security matters of the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar region. He has emphasized the severe resource scarcity in the camps because of the arrival of the recent influx of Rohingyas in 2017. Conflict among different groups for the drinking water crisis, drug business, internal power politics, competition in the job market, and limited accommodation facility is focused on in his discussion.

This paper discusses the background of the Rohingya refugee crisis initiated when the bondage between the Myanmar government and the Rohingya

community was broken (Stein, 1986). As Johnson (2011) argues about the host country's unwillingness to welcome the refugees, Bangladesh was unwilling to welcome the Rohingyas because of its high population density. The Rohingyas have been a burden for Bangladesh as Mandel (1997) argues because of the high density of refugee flow in a small geographic area. This paper discusses how the high density of refugees has created multi-dimensional security threats for the host country. It discusses that considering the Rohingya refugee crisis from the humanitarian crisis perspective doesn't provide the whole picture of the problem, rather the security implication of the host country needs to be considered. However, the security implications of the refugee crisis for the host country and the local community have not been addressed in the existing literature. So, there is enough scope for research to focus on how the protracted Rohingya refugee crisis has posed a multi-dimensional security threat to the host country, the Rohingyas, and the cross-border regional communities.

Methodology
Research Design
The research adopts both quantitative and qualitative approaches, focusing on the synthesis of existing scholarly works and reports. By utilizing secondary data, the study seeks to identify trends, themes, and insights that articulate the complex relationship between refugee influx and national security. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of existing knowledge, facilitating an understanding of how the Rohingya crisis poses security challenges in Bangladesh.

Data Sources
The study relies primarily on secondary data sourced from:

Academic Journals: Peer-reviewed articles provide a robust framework for analyzing the intersection of international security policy and refugee movements. Journals such as the *Journal of International Affairs*, *International Security* and *Refugee Survey Quarterly* contain valuable insights into the dynamics of security risks and policy responses related to Rohingya refugees.

Official Reports: Reports published by recognized entities, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank, and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), provide vital statistical data and analyses regarding the Rohingya crisis. These reports serve as foundational documents that provide context to the crisis and its security dimensions.

Government Publications: Materials released by the Government of Bangladesh, including policy papers, action plans, and security assessments,

are critical for understanding national responses to the refugee influx and the implications for domestic security.

Think Tanks and Research Institutions: Analysis of think tanks, such as the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) and the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), offer nuanced perspectives on security policy debates surrounding the Rohingya crisis, helping to contextualize the findings within broader international relations theories and frameworks.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process involves a systematic review of the literature. The following steps outline this process:

Literature Search: A comprehensive search was conducted using academic databases such as JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, Emerald, Google Scholar, and SSRN. Keywords including "Rohingya refugees," "Bangladesh security," "international security policy," and "refugee crisis impact" guided the search. This search targeted articles published within the last decade to ensure currency and relevance.

Selection Criteria: Selected articles and reports were evaluated based on their relevance, credibility, and methodological rigour. Emphasis was placed on peer-reviewed articles and official reports from recognized organizations. Sources were chosen for their analytical depth, empirical data, and theoretical contributions to the subject matter.

Data Extraction: Key themes, findings, and arguments from the selected literature were extracted and organized categorically. Themes included security risks posed by the refugee crisis, national policy responses to the influx, humanitarian challenges, and the broader implications for regional stability.

Thematic Analysis: The extracted data underwent a thematic analysis to identify patterns and relationships. Thematic coding was employed to group similar ideas and arguments, allowing for the identification of overarching issues impacting Bangladesh's security landscape. This qualitative analysis illuminated how the Rohingya crisis intersects with national and international security policies.

Limitations

While the methodology relies heavily on secondary data, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

Dependence on Available Literature: The study is constrained by the existing body of literature, which may not encompass all dimensions of the Rohingya

crisis or its security implications. Gaps in data or biased representations in certain articles could influence the overall findings.

Temporal Constraints: Secondary data reflects the state of knowledge at a particular time. As the situation regarding the Rohingya refugees evolves, newer developments may not be captured in the existing literature, necessitating further studies to keep pace with emerging trends.

Interpretative Bias: The interpretation of secondary data is inherently subjective; thus, there is potential for researcher bias in emphasizing specific themes over others.

Ethical Considerations

Although the research predominantly utilizes secondary data, ethical considerations remain paramount. The argumentation must respect the dignity and rights of the Rohingya refugees, avoiding sensationalism or misrepresentation of their plight. All selected sources are critically analyzed to ensure that the research contributes meaningfully to the discourse without undermining the suffering or resilience of displaced populations.

Background of the problem

'Rohingya' is a small ethnic group of Myanmar who has been described as the 'most persecuted ethnic minority' by the United Nations (Kingston, 2015) and their origin in Rakhine state dates back to the 7th century when Arab Muslim traders settled in that region (Parnini, 2011). After the independence of Myanmar from British colonial rule in 1959, the government of Myanmar started showing discrimination towards these people and denied them their citizenship rights according to the citizenship law,1982. In 1978, 200,000 Rohingyas and in 1992 another 250,000 Rohingyas crossed the border seeking refuge in Bangladesh because of military intervention in the Rakhine state of Myanmar(Al Imran and Mian, 2014). The protracted Rohingya refugee crisis turned into a severe crisis when 650,000 Rohingyas crossed the border of Bangladesh after violence erupted in the Rakhine state of Myanmar on 25 August 2017. After a coordinated attack by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) on 30 police posts and army bases in the north of Myanmar's Rakhine state, in the townships of Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung, the Myanmar Army conducted a military attack towards Rohingya people who assist the ARSA in conducting its terrorist activities (Al Imran and Mian,2014).
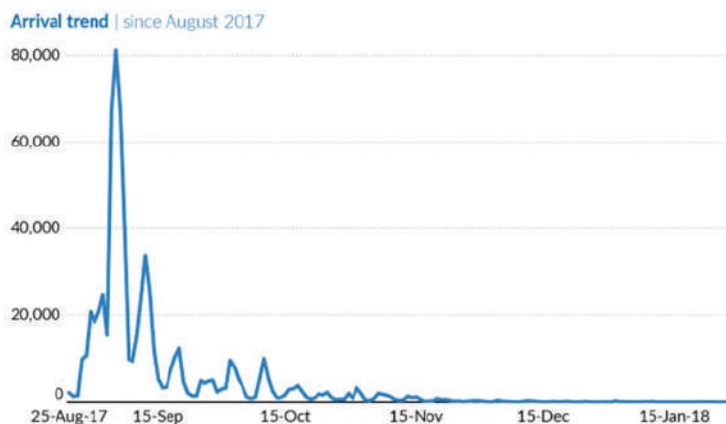
Figure: Arrival trend of Rohingya in Bangladesh after the military
intervention in 2017
Source: UNHCR

Figure 1 shows that on 25th August 2017, the refugees started crossing the border of Bangladesh. The influx of Rohingyas gradually reached the peak of 80,000 refugees per day in early September 2017 and gradually decreased until mid-January 2018 when Bangladesh closed the border. UNHCR has established refugee camps in Cox's Bazar to provide accommodation to the Rohingyas.

Figure 2 shows the location of the camps and the number of refugees staying in those camps. Several 860,243 Rohingyas are living in these camps. Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhiaupazilla is the largest camp where 581,390 refugees are living. The total number of Rohingya refugees (including those living outside the refugee camps) is 1,092,136 and has been considered the fastest growing refugee crisis of modern times (Ware and Laoutides, 2019). The camps have limited capacity to provide accommodation facilities to the Rohingyas but nearly 96 children give birth every day (Das,2013). This kind of high birth rate of Rohingyas has made the situation more difficult. So, the government of Bangladesh has arranged a new accommodation for the Rohingyas on an isolated island called "Bhashanchor" and shifted 32,560 refugees already (RRRC,2024).
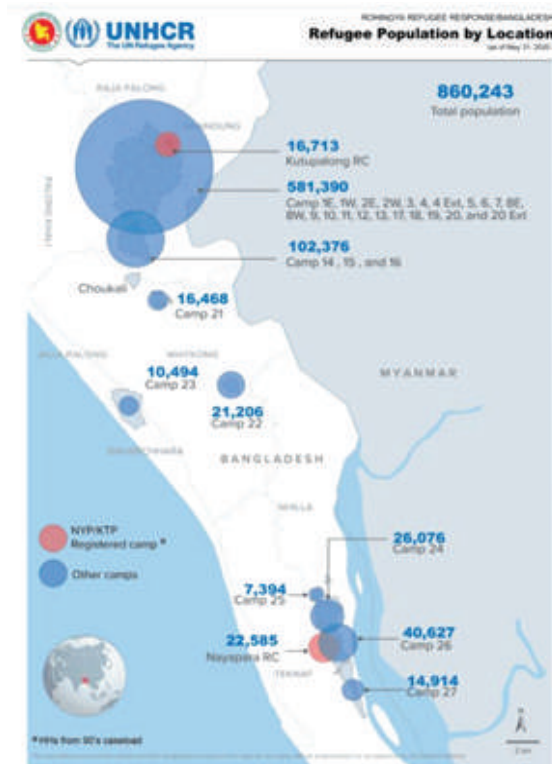
Figure 2: Location of the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar
Source: UNHCR

The protracted Rohingya refugee crisis has raised multi-dimensional security risks for the host country and the Rohingyas. Four guerilla groups who are fighting for independence against the government of Myanmar have affiliations with the Rohingya ethnic community and they use the Rohingya areas in Rakhine state as their military base (Parvez, 2021). As the Rohingyas have been deprived of their citizenship rights by the government (Cheesman, N.,2017; Haque, M.M., 2017) and often oppressed by the Myanmar army, they have formed ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army), a guerilla group controlled from Saudi Arab, to fight for their rights(Tarabay,2017; Fair, 2018). The Myanmar government's discriminatory attitude towards the Rohingya community has created the crisis into a refugee crisis and Bangladesh, as the host country of the refugees is facing security risks of the crisis.

Multi-dimensional Security threat to Bangladesh:
- **Traditional Security threats**
- ⇨ **Terrorist threat to national security**

The recent influx of Rohingya refugees has deteriorated the anti-terrorism achievements of the host country (Halim, 2023) since the rapidly evolving jihadists' activities in the Rohingya community are on the increase and these jihadists also crossed the border to seek refuge in Bangladesh after the outbreak of violence in Rakhine state (Bhattacharjee,2024; Bashar,2017). The defense ministry of the host country reported that at least 11 armed militant groups are actively competing with one another to establish dominance within the camps and these armed militant groups are getting arms and money from abroad (HRW, 2023). Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), also known as Harakah al-Yaqin, a Saudi-based armed group has been conducting operations against the discrimination towards the Rohingyas(Hossain et al, 2021). The Myanmar army's counter-insurgency attack over the ARSA provoked the Rohingyas to get involved with radical Islamic jihadist groups. Both IS (Islamic States) and Al-Qaeda Central's released statement calling for a revenge attack against Myanmar using Bangladesh as a base camp has created security concerns for the highest authority (Bashar, 2017). Asian security service reports showed the affiliation of Jemaah Islamia with Al-Qaeda and the presence of militants in Rohingya refugee camps which severely poses a terrorist threat to the host country (Halim, 2023). The risk of Bangladeshi land being used as an ARSA base in the fight against the Myanmar army has raised the risk of cross-boundary border conflict. Besides, some prohibited small jihadist groups in Bangladesh have reacted to the issue in the name of saving Islam which may deteriorate the inner stability of the country. So, the country is facing terrorist threats domestically and internationally regarding this issue which has been a major national security concern.

⇨ **Bilateral relationship deteriorating threat**

The Rohingya refugee crisis has created bilateral disputes between these two countries as Myanmar claims Rohingyas are illegal migrants from Bangladesh and denies them citizenship rights. On the other hand, Bangladesh's effort to use diplomatic channels to impose international pressure on Myanmar to resolve the issue has posed tension between their bilateral relation (Panini,2013). Bangladesh has three-sided borders with India and with Myanmar, the land border length is 270 kilometres which has the potential to be used as a commercial transit route between these countries that may contribute to economic development. Previously these two countries demarcated their maritime boundary through ITLOS's judgment on 14th March 2012 which raised diplomatic tension between them and the ongoing refugee

crisis has added further challenges for maintaining a peaceful bilateral relationship which is crucial for both of the countries (Parnini, 2013). From the beginning of the incident, Bangladesh along with international humanitarian agencies tried to find possible solutions for the Rohingyas through diplomatic channels and started negotiations with the Myanmar government. Both countries formed a joint working group with 30 members for the repatriation process but no significant progress happened so far (Halim, 2023). Moreover, the concurrent war between the government military force and the militant groups has posed uncertainty regarding any possible repatriation process. So, from the state security perspective, the tension raised by the refugee crisis needs further attention and a proper immediate solution for mitigating the bilateral security threat between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

- **Non-traditional security threats**
⇨ **Excessive pressure on the local population and job market**

Bangladesh has been described as the most densely populated country by the World Bank with a population size of 173 million and 1315 people living in every square kilometre (World Bank, 2023). Table 1 shows that official records of UNHCR declare that 749,820 refugees entered the camp area after 25 August 2017 (Ware and Laoutides, 2019). Currently, the total number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is 1,003,394 (UNHCR, 2024a).

New Arrivals reported by location, Pre-existing and total Rohingyas

Location	Population prior to Aug influx	Total influx (Individual)	Total Population (combined)
Makeshift Settlement / Refugee Camps			
Kutupalong Expansion[1]	99,495	211,725	311,220
Kutupalong RC	13,901	20,000	33,901
Leda MS	14,240	11,859	26,099
Nayapara RC	19,230	15,000	34,230
Shamlapur	8,433	27,742	36,175
Grand Total	**155,299**	**288,326**	**441,625**
New Spontaneous Settlements			
Hakimpara	140	52,412	52,552
Burmapara/ Tasnimakhola	100	27,841	27,941
Roikhong/Unchiprang	-	28,556	28,556
Jamtoli / Thangkhali	72	32,273	32,345
Baggoha/Potibonia	50	20,642	20,692
Grand Total	**362**	**161,724**	**162,086**
Host Community			
Cox's Bazar Sadar	12,485	2,805	15,290
Ramu	1,600	1,395	2,995
Teknaf	34,437	37,920	71,607
Ukhia	8,160	31,107	39,559
Naikhangchhari (Bandarban)	-	16,200	16,200
Total Rohingyaa	**212,343**	**537,477**	**749,820**

Table 1: Number of Rohingya refugees registered in the camps
Source: ICSG

These refugees have imposed excessive pressure on the local food supply-chain management system. Figure 3 shows that the World Food Program has enlisted Bangladesh in the "Global Report on Food Crises – 2023" because of the increasing food crisis in the Cox's Bazar district mentioning that 967,765 Rohingya refugees (UNHCR, 2024a) and 3,76,500 local Bangladeshi people are experiencing food shortage (WFP, 2024). Though under the UNHCR program relief programs have been conducted in the camp areas, increasing demand for commodities for camps has created resource scarcity in that locality. Besides, for accommodation purposes of the Rohingyas, a 15 square kilometer land area has been used for the Kutupalong refugee camp which is the largest refugee camp in the world (UNHCR,2024b). On 07th January 2024, a devastating fire ravaged Camp 05 and destroyed almost 800 shelters making 7,000 refugees homeless (UN, 2024). High population density within the camp and low rescue facility have made the camps susceptible to vulnerability which poses threats to the local population at the same time.

The recent influx of refugees has posed security threats to the local community differently. Several NGOs initially started training programs for refugees to create job opportunities (Taufiq,2019) which has been stopped by direct intervention of the government. However, young Rohingya refugees have been taking training opportunities and getting involved in the job market illegally at a significantly cheap wage rate. It has created an unemployment problem for the local community (Idrish et al 2024; Taufiq,2019). So, this massive influx of refugees has created an unprecedented threat in the accommodation, food supply, and employment sectors of that region (Halim, 2023).

Food-crisis countries hosting at least 1 million refugees, migrants or asylum-seekers, 2023

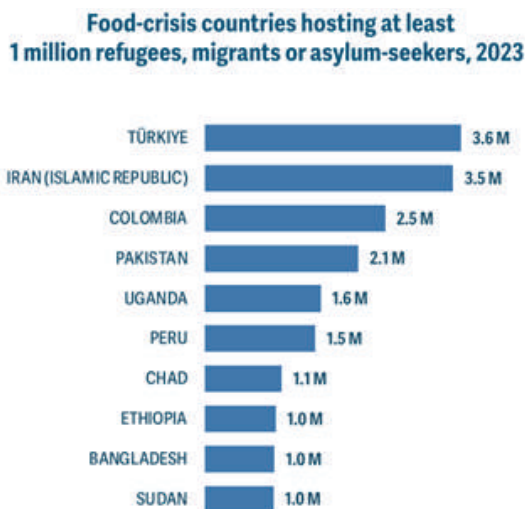| Country	Value
TÜRKIYE	3.6 M
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC)	3.5 M
COLOMBIA	2.5 M
PAKISTAN	2.1 M
UGANDA	1.6 M
PERU	1.5 M
CHAD	1.1 M
ETHIOPIA	1.0 M
BANGLADESH	1.0 M
SUDAN	1.0 M

Figure 03: Bangladesh in the refugee hosting food insecurity list-2023
Source: FSIN, 2023

Rohingyas have created challenges in the overseas job market of Bangladesh, which is the second-highest foreign remittance earning sector of the country. The overseas labor market of Bangladesh is primarily focused in the middle-east region. 250000 Rohingya refugees who were staying in the camps for a long time managed Bangladeshi passports by collecting identity cards from local councilors in illegal channels and went abroad to seek a future by joining the labor market. However, these Rohingyas have been involved in different criminal activities and created an 'image crisis' among Bangladeshi workers(Mahmud, 2018). Dannecker(2005) discusses the criminal activities committed by the Rohingyas, bearing Bangladeshi passports, in Malaysia, are gang rape, armed gang robbery, and murder. Previously, Malaysia banned Bangladeshi workers in the labor markets for Bangladeshi (Reuters, 2007) and this important remittance incoming sector is facing a threat that may affect the national economy (Mahmud, 2018). Considering this great concern and the severity of the problem this Rohingya refugee crisis needs to be solved to eliminate the further chance of affecting the overseas labour market of Rohingyas.

⇨ **Security Threat to the Environment**

The recent influx of refugee flow has imposed unbearable pressure on the environment of the Kutupalang, and Balukhali regions of Cox's Bazar district. Deforestation in massive areas for creating accommodation arrangements for refugees who arrived in 2017 has created a security threat to the eco-system and cutting hills in indiscriminate ways has created landslide risk in respective areas (Banerjee,2024**;** Taufiq, 2019). Halim(2023) gives a reference that the Cox's Bazar Hill forest harbours 56 reptile species, 13 amphibian species, and 286 bird species collectively represent nearly 50 percent of the country's biodiversity. The entrance of the mass Rohingya influx in that region has posed a massive threat to that part of the country's biodiversity (Halim,2023). Figure 5 shows the intensity of the deforestation that has taken place by the Rohingyas in different camp areas. The largest Rohingya refugee camp "Kutupalong" is situated in Ukhiya upazila where 2336 acres of forest have been deforested by the refugees and it has posed a severe environmental security threat to that region(Parveen,2024; Akhter et al, 2020; Hammer and Ahmed,2020).
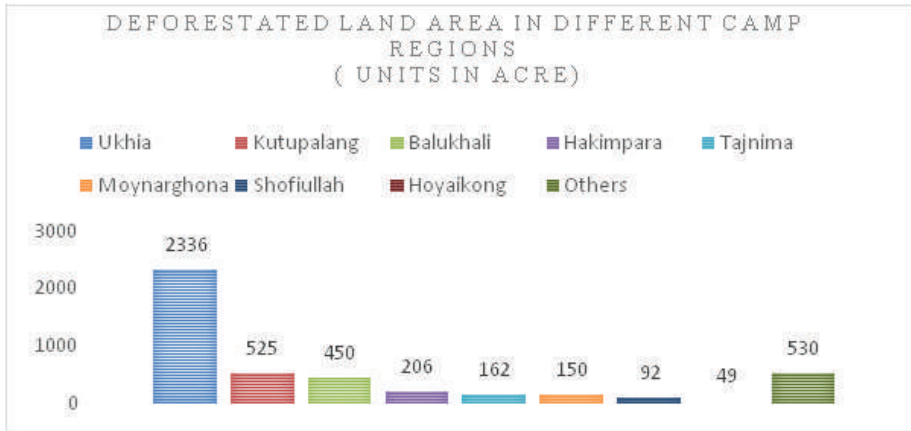
Figure 5: Deforested land area comparison among different camp regions
Source: Akhter et al (2020)

The refugee camps built by UNHCR have limited capacity to accommodate more than 1 million refugees in those regions and newly arrived refugees have managed their arrangements by cutting hills in an unplanned way and risking their lives during rainy seasons when those areas become vulnerable to the landslide (Banerjee,2024; Akhter et al, 2020; Hammer and Ahmed,2020).

Excessive pressure on freshwater sources has created water scarcity in Tekhnaf and outside regions of Kutupalang camp. UNHCR has arranged 5731 tube wells and automatic pumps to ensure freshwater supply(Akhter et al, 2020). Table 2 shows that excessive extraction of fresh water, nearly 15 million gallons daily, has lowered the groundwater level and water quality both physiologically and microbiologically. Banerjee (2024) emphasized that extraction of groundwater in an unplanned way has already deteriorated the water quality and lowered the groundwater level which turned many tube wells into non-functioning. Streams and wells, previously known as sources of clean water, were contaminated with waste runoffs which deteriorated the water availability condition (Banerjee, 2024; Hammer and Ahmed, 2024). Still, 56% of refugees suffer from water scarcity for drinking and household purposes because of the unavailability and distance of water sources.12,650 water samples and found faucal contamination in 28% of water sources and 73.96% of storage sources and usage of contaminated water in household matters has made malaria, dysentery, and diarrhoea a common phenomenon in camps(Banerjee, 2024; Hammer and Ahmed, 2024; Akhter et al, 2020).

Sl. no	Parameter	Unit	Method/Instrument Used	Storage 2	Tubewell 2	Storage 4Ext	Tubewell 4Ext	WHO Limit
				Result				
1	pH	–	Hanna HI 8424 pH Meter	5.38	5.43	7.12	7.06	6.5-8.5
2	Turbidity	NTU	HF Scientific DRT-100B Turbidity Meter	0.2	0.7	1.0	4.0	Max. 5
3	Residual Chlorine	mg/L	DPDC Colorimetric Method using HACH DR-2000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Min 0.2
4	Dissolved Oxygen	mg/L	BOYN 820 Do Meter	5.84	5.71	6.07	6.12	-
5	Total Coliform	cfu/100 mL	Membrane Filter Technique	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
6	Fecal Coliform	cfu/100 mL	Membrane Filter Technique	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Table 2: Physiological and microbiological parameters of tube well waters in Rohingya refugee camps, Source: MDPI

Pit latrines, arranged for the refugees have severely contaminated the water sources because of the limitation of the sewerage system, and human waste that has been directly thrown in the Naf river is polluting the water. So, the environment in the camp area is experiencing a security threat severely and the imbalance caused already may need a long time to recover.

⇨ **Crime, drug trafficking, arms, and violence threat**

The establishment of the Rohingya refugee camps has brought a severe security threat to the law-and-order situation in the Kutupalang and Balukhali camp areas (Das, 2017). In 2019, the highest number of violent deaths happened, 110 murders, and 178 gunfight deaths occurred in the refugee camps in that year (Taufiq, 2019). HRW (2023) shows that at least 86 violent deaths happened in 2023, 40 violent deaths happened in 2022 within the camp areas. In 2024, 64 violent incidents were recorded which caused 72 violent deaths till October 2024 that were related to drug trafficking, sexual assault, and mob violence, and both Rohingyas and the local community members were victims (Prothomalo,2024). In 33 Rohingya refugee camps, at least 11 armed militant groups activity has been reported by the Ministry of Defense of the host country (HRW, 2023). Densely populated camp areas and resource scarcity incite competition among these groups for resources and dominance. As the Rohingyas have been living under exploitation in Myanmar without formal education and cultural practices, they lacked social norms which resulted in violence breaking out in the camp areas regularly (Taufiq,2019).

Rohingyas involvement with armed jihadists and the ARSA group has deteriorated the law-and-order condition of the region, especially at night when the severity of drug trafficking and prostitution activities occur. Myanmar is a part of the international drug trafficking "Golden Triangle" route. Image 2 shows how drugs are being trafficked from Myanmar to regional countries. A major

percentage of drugs has been trafficked from Myanmar but after the Rohingya settlement in 2017, drug trafficking occurrences have increased significantly (Taufiq, 2019). The most popular drug that has been carried by the Rohingyas is Yaba (a synthetic tablet made of Methamphetamine and Caffeine) and Myanmar is the only country where this drug is produced currently. A significant percentage of teenagers in Bangladesh is gradually becoming dependent on this drug and the government is at risk of losing its potential human resource because of the Yaba drug. Figure 7 shows the trend of Yaba drug seizure by the Department of Narcotics of Bangladesh from 2015 to 2024.

Image 2: International drug trafficking route
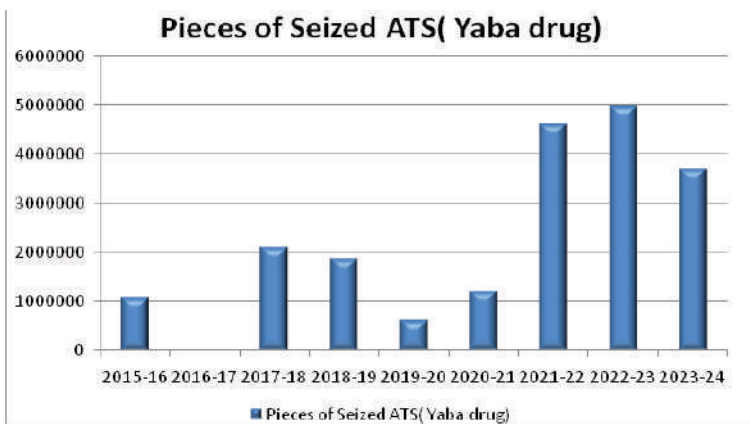Source: The Economist

Figure 7: Seizure of ATS (Yaba drug) in Bangladesh
Source: Annual Report 2023-24, Department of Narcotics, Bangladesh

As Rohingyas are suffering from human security threats and don't have any income source in Myanmar, they have been compelled by drug dealers to carry drugs within the route in exchange for safe arrival at refugee camps with a small amount of money in Bangladesh from Myanmar. The increasing violence in the camp areas has resulted from the profit sharing of illegal drug business among different Rohingya groups that pose national security towards Bangladesh (Nath, 2024; Islam, 2023; Parvin, 2019).

Security threat to Rohingyas: Human security
⇨ **Living standards of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh**

The Rohingyas are living in a few refugee camps in Bangladesh (Burma Para Camp, Kutupalong Camp, Kutupalang extension Camp, Jamtoli Camp, Hakimpara Camp, etc.) and the highest number of refugees 311,220 are living in Kutupalong extension camp (O'Driscoll, D., 2017) which is reasonably high in comparison with the standard camp size of 20,000 refugees. The significantly high number of refugees has created a shortage of resources in the camp and this resource scarcity has created internal conflict between different groups of Rohingyas in the camps. After the recent COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, 1.2 million people experienced food insecurity and required urgent food and livelihood assistance in Cox's Bazar and over 70 % of them were Rohingya refugees (FSIN, 2021). Currently, 889,400 Rohingya refugees are experiencing the vulnerability of food assistance (FSIN, 2021). The proportion of refugee households with insufficient food consumption increased from 42 % in 2019 to 50 % (REVA 3, April 2020). Besides, the shortage of accommodation facilities and sewerage systems has created different challenges for the Rohingyas to live in the camps.

Considering the high density of refugees in the camps and resource scarcity in Cox's Bazar, the government of Bangladesh has established a separate accommodation plan for the Rohingyas on a remote island called "Bhasan Char". Initially, the government has arranged accommodation for 100,000 Rohingyas spending $300 million (Hossain, 2020). In two phases, the government has already shifted 20,000 refugees to that island. Though, the refugees have willingly gone to the island because of the poor living conditions in the refugee camps gradually the island seems to them as an isolated prison. Besides that, the height of the island is very low compared to the sea level. So, currently, these 20,000 Rohingyas on the island are at risk of cyclone flow tide in the island.

⇨ **Law and order situation in the camps**

The Cox's Bazar Rohingya camp areas are highly crime-intensive zones (ACAPS, 2020) where the local law enforcement agencies can't control the crime occurring in effective ways. Kidnapping, drug trafficking, and rape are a few common crimes that had been happening regularly. In a report by IRC published in 2019, it has been mentioned that Rohingya families with relatively high money are susceptible to kidnapping and there is no example of recovering missing persons from criminals by the police those kidnapped people are sold to human trafficking groups, who send these people in different countries over boat crossing the ocean (IRC, 2020). Moreover, Rohingyas are used by local drug mafias as a carrier of drugs within the host country as Cox's Bazar is the hot spot for drug selling in the country. Rohingyas are crossing the Bangladesh-Myanmar border through the Naff river and carrying the drug in a different risky way avoiding the Border security forces of both countries and carrying the drug in Bangladesh. It creates severe life-threatening risks for the Rohingya people.

⇨ **Risks of natural disasters**

The Rohingyas after entering Bangladesh in 2017, indiscriminately cut the hills of the Cox's Bazar to arrange their accommodation and it severely affected the geographical environment of that region. The refugee camps prepared for the refugees are now at risk of a landslide because of the indiscriminate and unplanned land cut from the hills by the Rohingyas (O'Driscoll, D., 2017). Especially, in the rainy season, the water flow from the hilly areas may cause landslides over the refugee camps which may cause loss of life. Moreover, Cox's Bazar is a highly cyclone-prone area in Bangladesh, the country regularly experiences cyclones each year (Alam et al, 2020). The government of Bangladesh has identified the district of Cox's Bazar as a cyclone-prone zone and constructed two-storied cyclone centres centers for the people to provide accommodation during the cyclone. Still the houses in the refugees' camps are built with tin and bamboo which are severely vulnerable to a Hurricane (Alam et al, 2020).

The 20,000 Rohingyas in the Bhasan Char Island of Noakhali district are also at risk of flow tides of cyclone. The Bangladesh Army has constructed a 9-foot-high dam around the island to protect the refugees from tidal waves (Hossain, 2020) but the risk of cyclones can not be ignored. So, the refugees on the island are staying on that isolated prison-like island in the face of risks of life-threatening cyclone flow tides.

⇨ **Fire outbreaks in Rohingya camps**

The refugee camp areas are densely populated with Rohingyas and the houses constructed for them are very close which has created a risk of the quick spread of fire. There are a few incidents of fire outbreaks which were controlled successfully with minimum loss but the last fire outbreak on 22nd March 2020 severely affected the Balukhali refugee camp of Cox's Bazar. According to the UNHCR report, the fire killed at least, 15 Rohingyas, and more than 48,000 people in the camp lost their accommodation (Mahecic, 2021). At the same time, the 9500 shelters that were burnt in the accident also included more than 1,600 important infrastructure facilities vital for daily operations, including hospitals, learning centres, aid distribution points, and a registration centre which stopped the daily operation of the UNHCR operation in that camp area (Mahecic, 2021). The latest fire outbreak on 07th January 2024 destroyed 800 shelters causing 7000 refugees to be homeless (Ganguly and Paul, 2024). This sudden accident of fire outbreak has endangered the lives and livelihood of the refugees in the camp. So, this refugee life doesn't ensure the life security of the Rohingya people in the camp who deserve a happy and prosperous life with all the facilities provided by their government in their motherland.

⇨ **Risk of losing citizenship rights in own country**

The Rohingyas are an ethnic minority group currently living refugee life in Bangladesh who have been deprived of citizenship rights in Myanmar. The Myanmar government doesn't officially acknowledge the existence of Rohingyas but rather addresses these people as outside settlers from Bangladesh. The Rohingyas had to give human labour in different jobs without any salary in Myanmar, even though they could not give birth to a child without permission from the government. Currently, a major portion of that community is living in Bangladesh as a refugee who deserves to get citizenship from their government. However, this protracted refugee crisis in Bangladesh has also posed a risk to them of losing the chance of getting their citizenship rights in Myanmar. Myanmar's junta leader Min Aung Hlaing, after taking power in the country on 1st February 2021 expressed his doubt on the repatriation issue of Rohingyas from Bangladesh mentioning the absence of this community in official documents (Reuters, 2021). This position of the current military regime has deteriorated the scope of advancement in the repatriation process. So, the problem must be addressed immediately to ensure citizenship rights for these people in their country so that they can have happy and prosperous lives.

Security threat to the regional countries

⇨ **Illegal border crossing by Rohingyas**

The Advisory Commission on Rakhine state, chaired by Kofi Anan presents a report "TOWARDS A PEACEFUL, FAIR AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR THE PEOPLE OF RAKHINE" which addresses that the regional countries have been hosting a large number of Rohingya refugees as a result of irregular migration. Any kind of destabilizing issue regarding the Rohingyas may affect the regional stability. Besides the 1.2 million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, the number of Rohingyas living in Malaysia (almost 100,000), India (17,730), Indonesia (582) and Thailand (119) (Taylor, 2020). The Rohingyas often attempt to cross the land border of India and the Indian Ocean by fishing boats to enter different countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand (Fuller and Cochrane, 2015). They are arrested by security guards of respective countries. Rohingyas are often affected by different diseases because of their long stay in the ocean and die in the boat, for example, 400 Rohingyas who attempted to enter Malaysia by crossing the sea by fishing boat were rescued by the Bangladesh Navy and 30 of them died in the boat (Peterson and Rahman, 2020). The Advisory Commission has expressed concern that such type of irregular migration may destabilize the region as after 25th August 2017, the number of irregular migration incidents has increased significantly.

⇨ **Potential escalation of terrorism and regional instability**

The Rohingya refugee crisis has posed several security challenges for the East Asian countries. Procrastination in resolving the problem by the international community may encourage the refugees to seek support from extremist groups who are active in that region. After the recent crisis in 2017, different terrorist groups like IS, and Al Qaeda expressed their solidarity with the refugees to fight against the Myanmar Army for revenge (Barker, 2017). So, failure in immediate settlement of the crisis may intensify the problem. Besides this, four guerilla groups are currently fighting against the government of Myanmar currently for independence: the United WA State Army, the Kachin Independence Army, the Karen National Liberation Army, and the Arakan Army (Parvez, 2021). The significant influence of Major General TwanMrat Naing, Chief of the Arakan Army in the Rakhine state may attract the Rohingyas to get support from this guerilla group and get involved in armed conflict with the government of Myanmar which may deteriorate the repatriation issue and prolong the crisis for undefined time (Parvez, 2021).

From the preceding analysis, it becomes evident how multi-dimensional security threats posed by the Rohingya refugee crisis are impacting the national

security, social cohesion, and economic stability of the host country. Social Tensions and Local Conflicts, Criminal Activities and Human Trafficking, Environmental Degradation, Health and Sanitation Risks, Economic Strain, Regional Instability and Geopolitical Pressures, and Security and Extremism Concerns – these multi-faceted challenges have turned this issue into a growing incertitude for Bangladesh. At the same time, the ongoing crisis has forced the Rohingya community people to move towards uncertainty. These people are victims of the situation and are currently in the trap of losing citizenship rights in Myanmar. So, this refugee crisis needs immediate attention from the global community to settle the issue.

Recommendation
⇨ **Repatriation of the refugees**
The Rohingya who crossed the border under the terror of armed intervention of the Myanmar army should be allowed to return to their country following the terms of the "Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities" of UNHCR. On 23 November 2017, the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an MoU on the repatriation of the Rohingyas and established a joint working group to negotiate the details. Myanmar agreed to repatriate the verified refugees. Bangladesh handed over the information of 106,000 refugees in 2018-2019 and 492,000 in 2020 but the Myanmar government achieved little progress in the completion of the verification process (Taylor, 2020). The verification process needs to be completed to speed up the voluntary repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar.

⇨ **Citizenship Verification**
As the Advisory Commission on the Rakhine state says, the citizenship verification process conducted by the government stumbled several times and the Rohingyas remain deprived of citizenship in Rakhine. The Myanmar government should ensure all benefits for the 4000 verified Rohingyas in Rakhine state and establish a specific timeline for the citizenship verification process. It'll encourage the Rohingya refugees to participate in the voluntary repatriation process.

⇨ **Resettling Rohingya in other countries**
Resettlement of Rohingyas in other countries can be considered as an alternative option. In 2017, Canada offered to accept a limited number of Rohingya women from Bangladesh who were victims of sexual violence in Myanmar and the UN tried to resettle 1000 Rohingyas in the USA, Canada, and a few European countries (Das, 2017). This small number of Rohingya

resettlement in other countries will not reduce the intensity of the problem. Repatriating verified Rohingyas in Myanmar and resettling the rest of the Rohingyas in the USA, Canada, and European countries may help to make a permanent solution to the problem.

Conclusion

The Rohingya refugee crisis, as no significant progress is visible yet, has created a severe security threat for Bangladesh. Though UNHCR is supporting the refugees with humanitarian assistance, such temporary measures are not sufficient enough, rather the international community should come forward with a concrete framework for the repatriation of these refugees, ensuring inclusive and systematic representation of Rohingyas in the decision-making process, of their homeland. The existing refugee crisis can be resolved with sound leadership, strategic planning, creative diplomacy advocacy, and political will (Brian, 2020). A strategically designed plan for the safe repatriation of refugees to their home country, coupled with gurantees for a prosperous future, would assist Bangladesh in alleviating current security threats, thereby contributing to the establishment of enduring peace and stability in the region.

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