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ROLE OF INDIA IN ROHINGYA CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

Almost 7,000,00 Rohingya Muslims have left Burma's Rakhine State since late August 2017 to escape the military's extensive campaign of collective action. Mass murders, sexual violence, and unrestrained consumption are only a few of the barbaric acts committed by Burmese security forces. These crimes are against humanity. Aung Sang Suu Kyi's government received criticism from both Western and Islamic countries, while Asian giant India supported Myanmar's initiatives. Given their long-term geo-legislative problems and geo-financial elements of South and Southeast Asian objectives, India too has significant stakes in Myanmar. Myanmar is a crucial essential ally in India's efforts to strengthen trade, speculation, and other forms of financial engagement with ASEAN since it is the only ASEAN nation with whom India has both land and sea borders. India's gateway to Southeast Asia is Myanmar, which explains why India has been so tactful in its stance toward the Rohingya problem. Alongside that, the Rakhine state is a crucial connection for India's hydrocarbon and exchange objectives; India has been taking a stab at linking upper East Indian states to Sittwe port. This study further reveals how India pursues its strategic goals by delivering developmental aid in Rakhine and some little help to the displaced people in Bangladesh while concluding arrangements to effectively repatriate the couple of thousand Rohingyas from the nation.

KEYWORDS

Rohingya, Refugee, Humanitarian, Political, Economic, Military, ASEAN, United Nations (UN), India, Bangladesh, Myanmar.



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1. Introduction

The situation of hundreds of thousands of members of the Rohingya-Muslim minority population in Myanmar's Rakhine State has been the subject of a tragedy that has come to be known as the "Rohingya crisis" for more than a few decades. The group is regarded as "illegal immigrants" from Bangladesh by Myanmar, which does not recognize them as citizens.

The military started a deadly operation in response to terrorist attacks on security stations in late August 2017, which led to the displacement of 700,000 Rohingyas from Myanmar and into neighboring Bangladesh. The crisis has taken on a security dimension with worries being raised over the infiltration of Islamic extremism among the Rohingyas, who have grown more and more desperate over their plight, and the United Nations (UN) has described the violence against the Rohingya community as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing." The enormous outcast surge has created a true humanitarian situation that offers recommendations for local safety and soundness.

Bangladesh's ties not just with Myanmar but also with other nations in the area, most notably India, are being severely impacted by the Rohingya issue. There have been several requests made both domestically and internationally for India, the dominating power in the area and a nation with a long tradition of helping its neighbors in need, to take the initiative in resolving the problem. India has significant sway in both Bangladesh and Myanmar and might have a significant impact there. India is giving precedence to its strategic aims in Myanmar such that Bangladesh's strategic concerns are being sacrificed for the accomplishment of those goals.

2. Research Questions:

This report will attempt to answer the following questions:

- i. What's the role of India in the issue of the Rohingya crisis on the humanitarian ground?
- ii. Whether there is any economic interest exist between India and Myanmar?
- iii. Whether there is any political interest exist between India-Bangladesh- and Myanmar?
- iv. Does the geopolitical interest make India in favor of Myanmar?
- v. How much credibility India does pose in influencing Myanmar to resolve the crisis?

3. Theoretical Framework:

The essential tenets of political realism and classical liberalism are analyzed in this part to situate the Rohingya refugee issue within this theoretical framework.

3.1 Political Realism

With its focus on the inevitableness and evilness of man's hunger for power, political realism, which is attributed to the towering figure in international relations Hans Morgenthau, helps spread its influence. One of the fundamental tenets of Morgenthau's political realism is that a state's principal responsibility is to serve and safeguard the national interest while prioritizing its survival over all other moral considerations. Realist theories prioritize national interests over any other kind of interest. States that are hosting Rohingya refugees have recently grown more worried about the dangers that these migrants represent to national security and have therefore justified expelling Rohingyas who attempt to enter their countries. The term "realist policy" is used in this paper to describe such animosity toward the Rohingyas because the state places too much emphasis on defending its interests, even to the point of disregarding numerous international laws based on customs and treaties that ensure the protection of the refugee population.

3.2 Classical Liberalism

The "Second Treatise of Government" by John Locke serves as the cornerstone of classical liberalism. Classical liberals point out that, regardless of a person's national identity, the primary duty of legitimate state authority is to safeguard their rights, liberties, and property. The liberal approach with relation to the Rohingya refugees emphasizes welcoming such refugees, meeting their basic needs, and maintaining their rights. Liberals contend that when a sizable community of Rohingyas flees state-sponsored persecution in Myanmar, the bordering nations have a humanitarian duty to offer shelter and protection to such a refugee group. The legal and

normative foundation for such a liberal refugee policy is provided by a plethora of international refugee legislation and humanitarian laws. The 1951 Refugee Convention, its 1961 Protocol, and almost a half-dozen more international agreements emphasizing the protection of civil and political rights as well as the abolition of discrimination and torture are all included on the list.

In summary, a realistic approach to refugee policy emphasizes the interests of the host state and justifies the deportation of refugees for reasons of national security. A liberal refugee policy, on the other hand, stresses the vulnerability of the displaced people and asks for providing them with shelter and care.

4. Literature Review:

This report contrasts the political and humanitarian aspects of India's response to the Rohingya crisis, analyzes the various steps the government has taken to publicize the issue, and also looks at the response, explaining the fundamental concerns of compassion on the part of the government.

4.1 Humanitarian Ground:

- i. A massive humanitarian crisis is affecting India's eastern neighbors. More than 500,000 Rohingya refugees fleeing unrest in Myanmar's Rakhine State have crossed into neighboring Bangladesh since late August 2017. Unrelenting state-sponsored brutality directed towards the Rohingya minority, as well as sectarian rioting involving Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists, have drawn broad international criticism and calls for immediate humanitarian measures (Sahoo, 2017).
- ii. In September 2017, India dispatched 53 metric tons of "family bags" filled with necessities including rice, lentils, sugar, salt, cooking oil, tea, ready-to-eat noodles, cookies, and mosquito nets to Bangladesh to help the Rohingya refugees there. Even though the refugees who were already in India were not receiving any support or the necessary help, this was referred to as "Operation Insaniyat," or humanitarianism (Amin, 2018).
- iii. Bangladesh cannot be helped by just sending "a few sacks of rice" in terms of material aid, according to one observer. Importantly, such a posture seriously casts doubt on India's commitment to democratic and humanitarian ideals among its neighbors and undercuts its capacity to distinguish itself from China (Sahoo, 2017).

4.2 Economic and Political Ground:

- i. Delhi must strike a compromise between its worries about security and its moralism toward humanitarian issues. Even though the security discourse on India's approach to the Rohingya issue is dominated by the terrorist issue, India's Act East Policy is connected to land linkages with Myanmar. The two key planks of this approach are to strengthen upper east India's finances and to lessen the influence of China (Ghoshal, 2017).
- ii. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi voiced alarm about "extreme violence" in Rakhine during an official visit to Myanmar in September 2017. He also expressed sympathy with the Myanmar government in its fight against psychological oppression (Lintner, 2017; Mitra, 2017).
- iii. The Rohingya issue has been perceived as a direct contradiction to India's long-standing stance on refugees. There is still much that India can do to support the creation of long-term solutions as the Rohingya catastrophe develops. These activities are crucial in shaping India's position in the region and internationally (Gayoom, 2019).

5. Research Method and Data Collection Strategy:

5.1 Design of the Study:

- ✓ This study is an exploratory in nature.
- ✓ Both the qualitative and quantitative methods shall have been applied to analyze the research questions.

5.2 Sources of Data:

The study makes use of “mixed methods”, based on secondary sources and primary information. Secondary sources include reports, documents, newspaper reports, Online bulletins, research report books, articles, journals, published papers, government policies, agreements, regulations, protocols, and subject-related websites. Essential sources incorporate chronicled and authoritative archives, onlooker accounts, after-effects of analyses, factual information, bits of exploratory writing, sound and video accounts, talks, and craftsmanship objects.

5.3 Data Processing and Analysis:

- ✓ Employ both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques.
- ✓ For quantitative data analysis, MS Excel will be used.

6. Data Analysis:

6.1 Humanitarian Role:

A humanitarian disaster and global shock have resulted from the massive exodus of Muslims from Myanmar into Bangladesh that is still going on. India and everyone else have cherished this helpful signal. Prime Minister Modi appreciated Bangladesh's generosity in defending and providing assistance to those forcibly evicted from Myanmar's Rakhine State. India has begun providing aid to Bangladesh as part of Operation Insaniyat; 7,000 metric tonnes of massive amounts of relief aid would be transported through the action. However, beginning on December 24, 2008, aid from India will also be given to locals whose lives have been significantly touched by the refugee surge, in addition to refugees. India will thus provide the fifth tranche of humanitarian aid to aid the Bangladeshi government's humanitarian efforts to house the Rohingyas in makeshift camps in Cox's Bazar. Tents, emergency supplies, and sewing machines will all be included in this charity package for Myanmar women who have been forcibly relocated. Additionally, India has completed a first project to build 250 homes in Myanmar's Rakhine province and is presently going to carry out the second arrangement of financial improvement extends in the area.

Table 1: Indian Humanitarian Aid Consignment for the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh:

September 2017	First tranche	4.5 lakh food packs of rice, lentils, sugar, salt, cooking oil, biscuits, milk, etc.
May 2018	Second tranche	373 metric tons of dry fish, milk powder, baby food, rain coats and gum boots to cater.
September 17, 2018	Third tranche	over 1 million litres of Super Kerosene Oil and 20,000 kerosene stoves.
December 24, 2018	Fourth tranche	2,25,000 blankets, 2,00,000 woolen sweaters and 500 solar street lights.

(Source: The Daily Star, 2018)

6.2 Geopolitical Interest:

This section examines the connection between India and Myanmar in terms of connectivity, security, and ethnicity. To examine the prospects and difficulties of the strategic alliance between India and Myanmar, this section generally discusses a wide range of topics, including historical dimensions of cooperation, contested territories, ethnic linkages, the political economy of India-Myanmar cooperation, and Act East Policy.

6.2.1 Economic Interests:

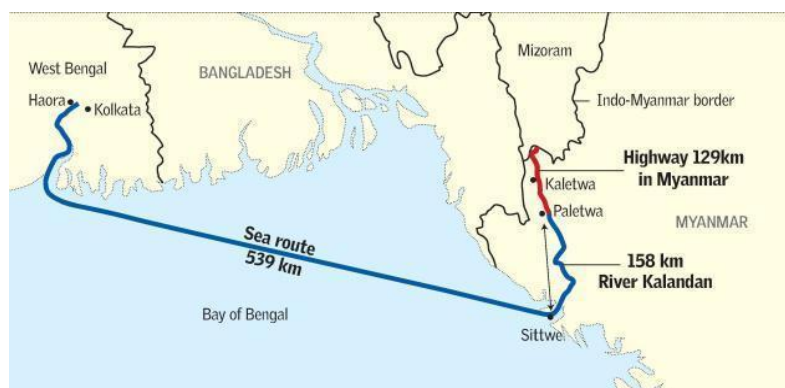
India is making a big effort to strengthen its relationship with Myanmar to achieve its stated objective. The current Indian administration has added new vigor to maintain strong ties with Myanmar. As a result, the Indo-

Myanmar relationship has been remarkably improving lately. India has approved three important agreements with Myanmar: the exploration of gaseous fuel, satellite-based remote sensing, and the expansion of Buddhist studies there.

6.2.1.1 Look East Policy:

Myanmar serves as a gateway to India's "Look East" strategy. Since Myanmar is the only ASEAN nation with a border with India and may serve as a bridge between India and ASEAN, it is strategically significant to India. An increase in commerce and connectivity with China and the rest of Asia would also benefit India's remote eastern and north-eastern regions. India is making a big effort to strengthen its relationship with Myanmar to achieve its stated objective.

Figure 1: Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

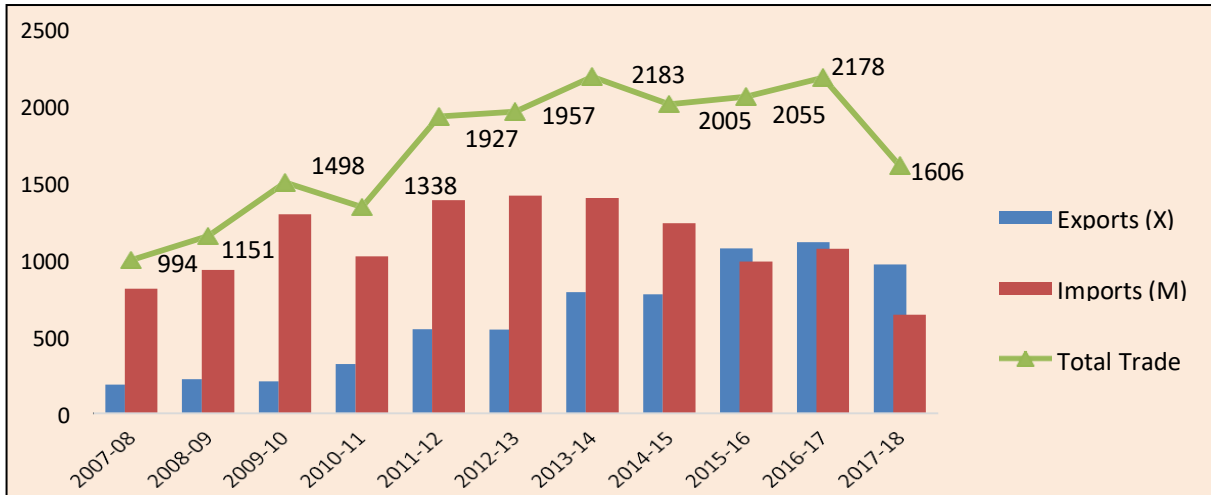


Source: The Daily Star, 2013

India is working in Myanmar on a few land- and water-based projects. India has benefitted from the deterioration of ties between China and Myanmar as well as the openness of Myanmar by taking part in several projects aimed at enhancing the framework. A large number of these initiatives cross Rakhine, including the Kaladan Multi-Modal Project in Sittwe, the nation's capital. The Kaladan multi-modal project, sponsored by India, aims to connect the isolated northeast of that country by sea, river, and land via Sittwe port. To mention a few, the Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo road project, the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport project, and the rehabilitation of the Sittwe port in Myanmar. The India-Myanmar gas pipeline project is another area where India and Myanmar have a close relationship.

6.2.1.2 India- Myanmar Trade Relations:

In 1970, India and Myanmar inked a bilateral trade agreement. India is Myanmar's fifth-largest commercial partner, serving as both its sixth-largest source of imports and fifth-largest destination for exports. In addition, New Delhi is looking to work with Myanmar on joint ventures in a variety of industries, such as IT, vehicles, materials, and agriculture.

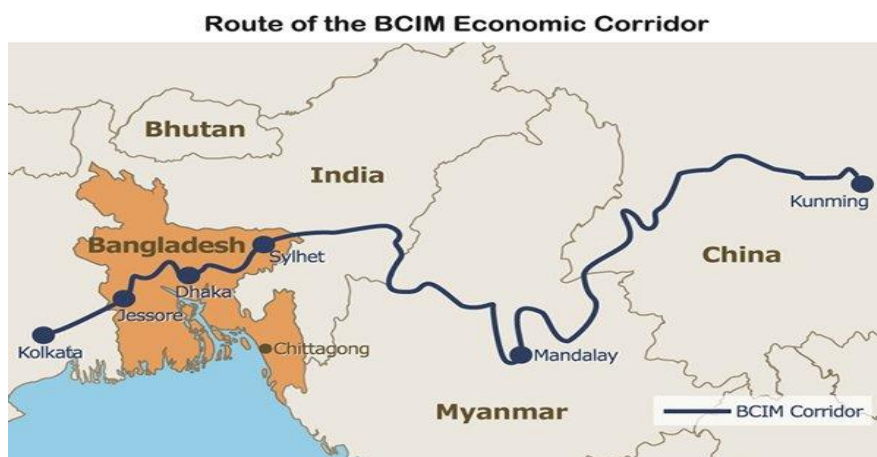
Figure 2: India's Trade with Myanmar (US\$ million)

Source: Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India

An examination of the most recent trade developments between India and Myanmar opens this section. Trade between the two countries has been continuously increasing; it reached the US \$2.18 billion in 2016–17 but fell to \$1.6 billion in 2017–18, primarily as a result of India imposing quantitative import limits on beans and pulses. Bilateral commerce between India and Myanmar increased by almost 61% from US\$ 994.45 million in 2007–08 to US\$ 1.6 billion in 2017–18.

6.2.1.3 BCIM Economic Corridor:

Kolkata and Kunming, the capital cities of the Yunnan provinces, are intended to be connected by the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor (EC). It is a sub-regional alliance of Asian countries designed to boost investment and commerce between the four states. The BCIM-EC suggests connecting eastern China with South Asia as part of the BRI, which would eventually connect Southeast Asia through various means for improved economic and cultural connection.

Figure 3: Map of BCIM-EC in South and Southeast Asia

Source: The Daily Star, 2017

The 2,800 km trade route that runs via Bangladesh and Myanmar from Kolkata, India, to Kunming, China, is at the heart of the BCIM effort. The path starts in Kunming and moves through nodal concentrations, such as Spread: Mandalay and Lashio in Myanmar. After passing through Manipur and Silchar, it turns towards Kolkata before intersecting with Bangladesh through Sylhet and Dhaka. Branches extend forth to the ports of Cox Bazar

and Chittagong. India's investment in the project is crucial since it will significantly advance India's upper east. India shouldn't pass up the opportunities presented by BCIM, especially given the district's extensive

6.2.2 Political Interests:

In July 2019, India and Myanmar agreed to cooperate on defense issues on a bilateral basis. As a result, in 1951, a treaty of friendship was formed with Myanmar. The government stated in its plea to the Supreme Court about India's decision to repatriate 40,000 Rohingya refugees that some of the Rohingyas with aggressor foundation were observed as active in Jammu, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mewat. During his visit to Myanmar in September, Prime Minister Narendra Modi painted India and Myanmar as "accomplices" in their concern about "radical barbarism" in Rakhine State. The Rohingya refugees and India's refugee policy toward the Rohingyas:

- ✓ Competition with China;
- ✓ The fragile geopolitics of India's northeast; and
- ✓ The rising Hindu nationalism in the nation.

6.2.3 Military Interests:

To its Burmese partner, the Indian Safeguard Foundation urgently imparts a special relationship. Over the course of the previous year, the Indian armed forces have established an honorary avenue for the top Tatmadaw administration in a variety of bilateral and global conversations. The Indian military is committed to maintaining a good working relationship with the dishonest Tatmadaw as a major security partner in the region and a weapons supplier. Myanmar receives barrier equipment from India. India delivered a foundational group of torpedoes made in India for the Myanmar naval force; the total contract value is estimated at \$37.9 million.

7. Research Findings and Recommendations:

7.1 Findings:

This section summarizes the findings and contributions made. From the above discussion, the following are some important findings:

- i. India carried out Operation "Insaniyat" in Bangladesh to offer aid to refugees there. India has been sending aid to Bangladesh as part of Operation Insaniyat; overall, 7,000 metric tonnes of massive amounts of relief aid will be transported through the activity;
- ii. Since Myanmar is still India's gateway to Southeast Asia, its cooperation is essential for New Delhi's broader regional goals;
- iii. Recently, bilateral trade trends between India and Myanmar have been steadily increasing. Myanmar and India's bilateral trade increased by around 61% between 2007 and 2018, from US\$ 994.45 million to US\$ 1.6 billion.
- iv. The BCIM economic corridor is crucial to reviving BRI, and India should seize the chances it creates.
- v. Myanmar's oil and gas reserves, which are crucial to India's energy-scarce and rapidly growing economy;
- vi. India's concerted efforts to improve relations with Myanmar have resulted in the Indo-Myanmar relationship experiencing an unprecedented upswing in recent years; and
- vii. India is prioritizing its strategic goals in Myanmar since Bangladesh's strategic issues are sacrificed to achieve those goals.
- viii. India is giving priority to its strategic goals in Myanmar, in a sense, Bangladesh's strategic problems are being sacrificed for the meeting of those goals.

7.2 Recommendations:

This section figures out some important recommendations about the Rohingya crisis. Based on the above findings, this paper recommends the following:

- i. India is committed to continuing to play a role in resolving the Rohingya crisis;
- ii. India should maintain equal diplomatic relations with Bangladesh and Myanmar, which are proving hostile to none;

- iii. Regional governments of India should assure the Myanmar government that they will offer full support and cooperation in tracking down and apprehending Rohingya militants if any such evidence is found;
- iv. The international community can also play a role by providing financial assistance.
- v. All international leaders, especially those from Asia, should urge the Myanmar army to halt its clearing operations in Rakhine State;
- vi. India must make every effort to improve relations with Myanmar and Bangladesh as well;
- vii. The issue won't be resolved unless both sides work together to address it cooperatively.

8. Conclusions:

Nearly a million Rohingyas fleeing Myanmar's Rakhine State have been helped by Bangladesh during the past year or someplace nearby. While Bangladesh struggles to control the crisis, India, the dominant nation in South Asia, is not allowing in all of the people who want asylum, has plans to forcibly deport those who are already there and isn't providing enough assistance to them. India, like other countries on the earth, does not always respond to humanitarian crises and concerns involving displaced people, but at no point in its independent history has it barred the door to those fleeing conflict zones, especially those in its immediate neighborhood. Indian policy toward the Rohingya crisis has so far been perceived as rejecting its standard treatment of displaced persons. There is still much that India can do to support the creation of long-term solutions as the Rohingya catastrophe develops. These actions will have a major impact on how India is seen locally and globally.

As a developing force with global objectives and a long-better position to set provincial and global conventions in handling evacuees, India is speaking out on emerging issues that have an impact on the whole globe because it feels bound to do so with a sense of honor. India in particular has to become more actively involved in the emergency's long-term objectives. To put it simply, New Delhi's response appears to have been driven by a virus-like calculation of cost-benefit advantages for trade with Myanmar, maintaining its influence in opposition to China, and defending involvement in counterinsurgency operations in the upper east. The Indian government should be concentrating on improving its network with the Rakhine state and establishing commercial ties with the entire region at this time to balance out the area. India has refrained from bringing up the topic of human rights with Myanmar in open discussions and gatherings, despite the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission's unequivocal accusations of decimation against the Tatmadaw and the International Criminal Court's ongoing investigation.

The Indian response to the Rohingya crisis has so far been perceived as rejecting its traditional treatment of outcasts. India still has a lot it can do to help with finding long-term solutions as the Rohingya situation develops. India's position in the region and throughout the world will be heavily influenced by these activities. Minister Swaraj's trip to Myanmar suggests that Delhi is determined to remain a working partner in ending the emergency, but this is just the beginning of what India can and should do. India may now be in a better position to influence territorial and international discussions on emerging concerns affecting global administration, especially on displaced persons.

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