The 2017 Rohingya Influx into Bangladesh and Its Implications for the Host Communities

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We addressed the research question, how does the host community perceive the effects of Rohingya influx to Bangladesh, from their perspectives using a questionnaire survey, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Bangladesh sheltered over a million Rohingyas, fleeing genocide and serious crimes against humanity, on humanitarian grounds. The local people welcomed them and offered direct support and assistance. Our findings suggest that their immediate sympathy for Rohingyas faded over time due to various factors. An overwhelming majority perceived the Rohingyas as pressure on their land and resources and being deprived on numerous grounds outweighed the disproportionate economic incentives of the influx. The findings offer fresh insights into the challenges of hosting refugees in the local communities because of the diverse impacts of forced displacement.

Keywords   Rohingya influx, forced displacement, genocide, host community, Bangladesh, Myanmar

Introduction

Having its own experience of the liberation war and genocide of 1971, Bangladesh sheltered over one million persecuted Rohingyas (UNHCR 2022). The majority of them fled their home in August 2017 in the face of violence and genocide committed by Myanmar's military and majoritarian Buddhists—a level of atrocity that the United Nations (UN) described as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" (BBC News 2020). The struggling Rohingya Muslim population of the Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar has often turned to Bangladesh for safety and security due to its geographical proximity and communal affinity (Uddin 2020; UNHCR 2019b; Lewis 2018; Ahmed 2010). In 1978 and 1991-1992, large groups of Rohingyas crossed the border into Bangladesh, although many eventually returned home

through repatriation agreements signed by the two countries (ibid.). However, the 2017 Rohingya displacement was on an unprecedented scale. Despite not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Bangladesh provided shelter to Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds. The newcomers were placed in camps primarily in Ukhia and Teknaf, two sub-districts of Cox's Bazar district (CBD) in Bangladesh, in addition to about 300,000 Rohingyas that had been staying as registered and unregistered refugees from previous cycles of violence (UNHCR 2019a).

The local Bangladeshi community offered front-line assistance and hosted this population until the national and international authorities responded with aid and assistance. Although the local host community has been bearing the socio-economic pressure of providing refuge to many Rohingyas, scant scholarly attention has been paid to this. The plight of the stateless Rohingyas has widely been studied by many (Ahmed 2010; Ullah 2011; Ibrahim 2016; Mahmood et al. 2016; Chaudhury and Samaddar 2018), yet the effects of the 2017 Rohingya influx to Bangladesh remains understudied.

Understanding the impact on communities of hosting refugees is difficult, as it is often complex and never straightforward. The nature and extent of such influence differ in all refugee-receiving societies and for different groups within the same receiving society. While it creates a wide range of opportunities for developed countries, developing countries with fewer resources often struggle with hosting refugees' various economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and safety and security challenges (UNHCR 2017). However, studies are identifying positive impacts on developing economies. For example, a survey of the Congolese camps in Rwanda demonstrated that cash aid and in-kind assistance provided by donors to the refugees increased their spending capacity, which brought positive impacts on local economies (Miller 2018). Syrian refugees, in the beginning, put economic strains on the host society in Lebanon, although they became consumers and contributing economic actors (IRC 2016). Refugees also often carry valuables, which are then invested in local markets, injecting remittances into the host economy (Jacobsen and Fratzke 2016; Jacobsen 2002).

Chambers (1986) drew attention to the fact that consequences of refugee presence may be mixed rather than unequivocally positive or negative, as the impacts of price increases, wage competition, and competition for a natural resource may vary for the host population. When aid materials are purchased from foreign markets, prices are likely to go down in the host market, which hurts local producers. When aid is purchased domestically, prices increase, which benefits local agricultural capitalists, but hurts consumers. This was observed in Tanzania, where prices for maize and legumes went down while non-aid crops remained the same (Alix-Garcia and Saah 2010). The same is true for wages. The inflow of refugees may depress wages for local day labourers and working classes, such as Syrian refugees in Lebanon (SCG 2014).

In contrast, skilled and educated ones could fetch higher salaries. Those

engaged in refugee relief operations in Tanzania earned more than similar jobs elsewhere in the country (Waters 1999). Again, the wage fall that creates a problem for the low-skilled working population benefits employers. In Tanzania, the remuneration paid to casual labourers dropped by about 50%, contributing to increased production in the agricultural sector and construction farms (Maystadt and Verwimp 2014).

Similarly, the impact on social cohesion depends on various factors. Host peoples' attitude towards refugees is often conditioned upon and determined by factors like their previous contacts and exposure to violence. The Lebanese who had earlier contact with Syrians were less prejudiced and more supportive of Syrian refugees (Ghosn, Braithwaite and Chu 2019). However, other factors contribute to the host population's negative perception of refugees and create social tension. Any cross-border migration, including refugee influx, creates resource competition as there is an increased use of environmental resources such as water, grazing areas, forests, and firewood (Swain 1996). It also accelerates deforestation, land erosion, destruction, and degradation of water sources (UNHCR 2011). In refugee influx, cultivable land and forests are often destroyed for camp settlements (Dzimbiri 1993; Miller 2018). Resource scarcity stimulates a sense of nativism amongst the locals, who may organise themselves to protect group interests and pressure migrants to return (Swain 1996).

The presence of aid may undermine social harmony and increases conflict potential as refugees have access to resources, aid and opportunities which are less accessible or unavailable to locals (Betts 2009). This situation is like what Gurr (1970) defined as *relative deprivation*—a discrepancy between people's legitimate expectations and what they get in reality. The dominant group has access to opportunities leaving the other groups in a disadvantageous situation that could cause the latter frustration (Majeed 1979; Saleh 2013). However, the relative scarcity of social and economic opportunities may increase the propensity of refugees to engage in unlawful activities (Depetris-Chauvin and Santos 2018; Codjoe et al. 2013). Nevertheless, the political and security implications of hosting refugees could be enormous when the out-group is associated with the destruction of land and property, reduced access to work and increased competition over scarce resources and are seen as a threat by the locals (Laurence, Schmid, and Hewstone 2019).

Refugees do not have voting power in the host country, and towards whom local attitudes are negative, they could be scapegoats for the pessimistic security environment. They may become targets of state security *agents* (Savun and Gineste 2019), or their arrival may create instability if the existing ethnic balance in the host community is fragile (Rüegger 2019). Refugees, moreover, could be used by opportunists, both political and criminal kind, as well as transnational criminal and terrorist groups (Miller 2018; Krcmaric 2016; Böhmelt, Bove, and Gleditsch. 2019).

This varied and complicated implication of hosting refugees has not been

adequately studied in the context of Rohingya refugees and the local population of Cox's Bazar. An exception is Yasmin and Akther (2019), who attempted to examine the relationship between the local and Rohingya communities. Another is Crabtree (2010), who studied the livelihood strategies of the previous influxes of Rohingyas and found that they applied precarious livelihood strategies to cope, which exposed them to exploitation and tensions. Under this pretext, this paper aims to contribute by studying this under-researched subject and answering a research question: how has the host community perceived the effects of the 2017 Rohingya influx to Bangladesh?

Methodology

We applied a mixed-methods research design to explore the impacts of the 2017 Rohingya influx in Bangladesh. Between March and July 2018, we carried out desk research to develop three primary research instruments—a survey questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guide for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and a set of guiding themes for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). After that, we presented them in a questionnaire development workshop in August 2018 to multiple stakeholders, including academics, journalists, non-government organizations (NGOs) and development workers, and practitioners, including security forces with working experience in the Rohingya hosting area. The workshop feedback helped us to revise some sensitive questions, condense the questionnaire to avoid complexities, and make us aware of security concerns during the data collection phase. We conducted a pilot study in CBD between August 9-18, 2018 to examine the feasibility of these instruments.

We randomly selected 600 host community respondents through the multi-stage sampling technique. First, we chose Cox's Bazar district and set the Ukhia Upazila (sub-district), which hosted the most Rohingya population amongst the eight Upazilas of Cox's Bazar. Second, we chose two Unions (the smallest rural administrative unit in Bangladesh) of Ukhia: Palong Khali and Raja Palong. Third, the research team went to several villages in these Unions within the range of 0-2 kilometres from the Rohingya camps.

We trained eight male and eight female local enumerators to translate the survey questionnaire into the local language, respect cultural norms and regional context, and ensure respondents' voluntary consent before interviews. Notably, we required appropriate institutional ethics approval and permissions from the concerned offices before going to the field. We strictly followed the guidelines on risk assessment and research integrity. The survey team members visited households one after one since this data collection technique is commonly used in migration studies when the sampling frame is problematic to draw accurately (e.g., Reichel and Morales 2017). The survey team collected data during September

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on the Sample Characteristics

Variables	Statistics	Variables	Statistics
Gender		*Profession*	
Male	65.7%	Farmer	8.4%
Female	34.3%	Fisherman	1.7%
Marital Status		Housewife	26.5%
Married	79.1%	Day-labourer	7.2%
Unmarried	6.0%	Driver	2.2%
Divorced	0.2%	Business	32.8%
Widow	1.9%	Shop-keeper	3.0%
Religion		Carpenter	2.0%
Muslim	92.0%	Student	1.7%
Buddhist	1.7%	Tailor	1.2%
Hindu	6.3%	NGO worker	0.3%
Level of Education		Service holder	0.8%
No formal education	30.6%	Unemployed	1.5%
Grade 1-5	37.2%	Others	2.4%
Grade 6-10	21.6%	*Age*	
Grade 11-12	7.9%	18-28 years	20.5%
Graduate	1.6%	28-38 years	29.9%
Post-graduate	1.1%	38-48 years	27.7%
		48-58 years	14.1%
		58-68 years	6.2%
		68-78 years	1.5%

Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

7-16, 2018. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the survey sample. We have used descriptive statistics to explain the perceptions of the host community and the Chi-square test to examine the relationship between the variables of our interests.

We conducted thirty-three KIIs in Cox's Bazar and Dhaka during August and December 2018 to gain diverse perspectives from many stakeholders, including academics, researchers, security experts, journalists working at local and national newspapers, development professionals working inside and outside the camp areas, and local elected representatives. We conducted two FGDs attended by host community residents: one in an NGO office in Thaingkhali Bazar and the other

in the Lambasia area. The first FGD was held with eight participants (five males and three females), whereas twelve (three males and nine females) participants attended the second one. With participants' permission, we took detailed notes of the interviews and FGDs, transcribed them, read through texts for application, and later triangulated them with quantitative findings. We analyzed research findings thematically to explore how forced migration could affect the local people in the contexts where refugees stay.

Results: The Rohingya Influx and Its Implications for the Host Bangladeshi Communities

One cannot deny that the August 2017 Rohingya influx has implications for communities hosting them in CBD, and Bangladesh, which this paper attempts to understand and explain through the perceptions of the host population. In doing so, discussion and analysis of its effects are divided broadly into three themes: (i) socio-economic impact, (ii) environmental impact and (iii) implications to stability, law, and order.

Socio-Economic Impacts
People of Rohingya hosting communities perceived that the 2017 influx has impacted their society immensely. Nine indicators were used to understand perceptions about the socio-economic and environmental effects of the Rohingya influx on the host community in CBD. These are the destruction of hills, deterioration of the social condition of women, impacts on local business, land erosion and deforestation, decrease in cultivable land and crop production, an outbreak of infectious diseases, an impediment to elephants' movement, and employment crisis of low-income people. The vast majority of host community respondents hold undesirable perceptions about the socioeconomic effects of the influx (Table 2). Discussions of these indicators are carried on under the following interrelated sub-themes.

Mixed Economic Impacts: Price Hike and Competition in Jobs and Local Businesses: As shown in Table 2, nearly all the survey respondents reported an increase in the price of daily essentials after the new arrival of Rohingyas in CBD. Qualitative data collected through KIIs and FGDs reveal some nuances and help to elaborate on how it has impacted the life and livelihood of the locals. Two issues, such as the types of commodities and the distance from the camp, mostly matter in this regard. For instance, prices of daily useable items increased in adjacent camps, such as Kutupalong and Nayapara. A college teacher stated that the cost of potatoes in the Cox's Bazar Sadar (i.e., main city centre) was BDT twenty per kilogram (BDT is Bangladeshi Taka, during the survey period, US$1

Table 2. Opinion about the Socio-Economic Implications of the Rohingya Influx

| Response Items	No	Yes
(a) Has the destruction of hills increased in your area?	8.2% (48)	91.8% (540)
(b) Has the social condition of women deteriorated in your area?	4.4% (26)	95.6% (563)
(c) Has the price of daily commodities increased in your area?	0.7% (4)	99.3% (584)
(d) Has the competition in local business increased in your area?	4.5% (26)	95.5 (555)
(e) Have land erosion, and deforestation increased in your area?	4.1% (24)	95.9% (565)
(f) Have cultivable lands and crop production decreased in your area?	2.7% (16)	97.3% (573)
(g) Has the outbreak of infectious diseases increased in your area?	5.4% (32)	94.6% (557)
(h) Has the movement of elephants been blocked in your area?	11.4 (67)	88.6% (522)
(i) Has the employment crisis of low-income people increased in your area?	4.1% (24)	95.9% (565)

Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

was equivalent to eight-four BDT). This price was double in markets besides the Rohingya camps, often forcing local people to travel thirty-five kilometers to the town to buy commodities at a cheaper rate, although it cost extra money.

There has been a mixed economic impact of the 2017 influx. The economic impact was felt differently by different groups within the host community. Those who participated in FGD-1 highlighted that Rohingya people sell relief products, such as rice, lentil, and oil, to local people at a lower price. A local government representative explained its varied impacts by saying that the low market price of rice is suitable for those who buy rice but not for those who cultivate and sell them at the local market. The cost of fresh products like fish, chilli and vegetables also increased. These are non-aid food items but parts of local staple diets whose demand increased with the arrival of the Rohingyas. One, therefore, had to buy a bundle of water cabbages for the price of three, which depicts the severity of the economic costs of the influx, particularly for the local low-income families, as mentioned by an academic.

Similarly, the survey's perceptions regarding the changes in livelihood opportunities were not convincing, although qualitative responses revealed some alternative views. More than 95% of respondents thought local businesses

Figure 1. Opinion on the Immediate Optimistic Side of the Rohingya Influx
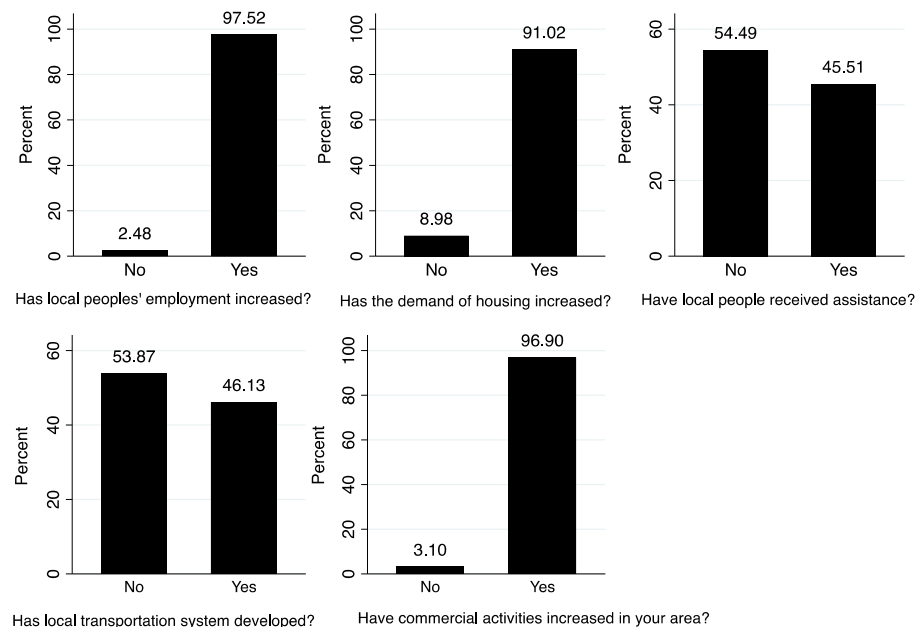
Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

had faced increased competition in the market due to the 2017 Rohingya influx (Table 2). However, a local political leader pointed out that local businesspeople benefited as a by-product of the crisis: the aid commodities sold cheaply by the camp dwellers yielded a profit for local businesses. The respondents also overwhelmingly projected the immediate positive effects on local business, job opportunities, and increased demands of hotels and housing facilities (Figure 1).

There has been an overwhelming perception that the availability of cultivable land and crop production declined as a vast landmass, including arable lands, hills, and forests, have been used to set up Rohingya makeshift camps. Most KIIs and FGDs participants claimed that local Bangladeshi people lost agricultural land as farmers could not plough and cultivate in those areas. In Ukhia, the government-owned *Khas* lands (fallow land) that local people used to lease to grow cash crops, like betel leaf and paddy, became unusable after the Rohingya influx. One participant of FGD-2 held in Lambasia area said:

> we have lost our agricultural land as houses for Rohingya people were built on them. Consequently, we do not have any land left to cultivate (FGD conducted on September 09, 2018).

Although some locals who lost their land were given compensation in the

form of cattle, a local journalist added there was limited land left for grazing cows and goats in the camp adjacent area (interviewed on September 10, 2018). Moreover, some people, who owned some land, refrained from cultivating paddy since the market price of grains sunken below the cost of cultivation.

Some key informants and FGD participants argued that local day labourers who used to earn BDT 500-700 per day made less, for example, BDT 150-300 per day, due to intense competition coming from Rohingyas who offered cheap labour, although officially they have not been allowed to go outside the camps for work. To a considerable extent, this caused economic hardship for local low-income people. The local people argued that they had severe concerns over the employment crisis. However, several local interviewees pointed out that the situation was different for educated people as many new employment and income generation opportunities were created due to the arrival of Rohingyas. Many people secured jobs in various NGOs and INGOs operating inside the camps. A young person who has worked inside the camp pointed out a discrepancy:

> I am an unemployed university graduate; the government could not provide me with a job, or I could not get one for myself. Since the NGOs came, I have been able to find employment. However, not all families have members with the ability to work (interviewed on September 10, 2018).

Participants of FGD-1 claimed that jobs were not always available for local people, as NGOs mainly recruited people from other parts of Bangladesh, which created a sense of deprivation amongst the local people in accessing the newly created job market.

Social Impacts: Polygamy and the Weakening Education Sector: About 96% of the respondents' perceived that women's social conditions deteriorated in the locality since the arrival of Rohingyas. Local key informants explained this adverse social impact from three perspectives: security, polygamy, and sexually transmitted diseases. A person working freelance with a local NGO informed that some local parents, fearful of their daughters' safety, sent them away to live with relatives. The person also claimed that polygamy increased in these areas as some local men married Rohingya girls and women and lived in camps to collect relief. They use such marriages to access assistance from NGOs and other institutions. As such marriages are illegal, the Rohingya wives of those men remain vulnerable to abuse. An academic argued that the spread of polygamy, which created tensions between the local and Rohingya women, resulted in general anxiety about sexually transmitted diseases (interviewed on November 18, 2018).

Nevertheless, those local men who have married Rohingya women often have not paid attention to earlier wives and families. Their attitudes have undermined the state of peace of their local families that cannot maintain a

Table 3. Chi-square Test Summary

	The impact of Rohingya influx on education in the last 12 months
Chi-Square	213.960[a]
Degree of Freedom	2
P-value	0.000

Note: [a] 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 199.7.

primary livelihood and meet basic needs; as a result, family disputes increased, and women of those families became victims of increased domestic violence. Some interviewees raised concerns about increased drug trafficking and abuse, prostitution and human trafficking that are by-products of the influx, as speculated by an academic (interviewed on November 18, 2018).

The local people perceived that education was one of the sectors that were critically impacted, both in the short and long terms, by the August 2017 influx. Once asked whether there was any change in the condition of education in their Upazila in the last twelve months, respondents answered both negatively and positively, and the Chi-square test result (x^2 = 213.960, df = 2, and p = .000) implies that the Rohingya influx statistically has been related to the local-level education system (Table 3).

Five areas in the education section were adversely affected due to the influx (Figure 2). Most local respondents rated four indicators negatively, except the use of educational institutions as temporary shelters immediately after the influx. As soon as the influx started, several schools, colleges, and *Madrasah* (Muslim educational institutions) became temporary makeshift camps for the Rohingyas waiting to be relocated to the makeshift camps. Those institutions suffered from some infrastructural loss. A local college teacher shared his experience and stated that sometimes the school authority had to highlight the disrupted academic activities to the local administration to get them resettled and addressed (interviewed on September 10, 2018).

Besides that, many primary and high schools in Ukhia, some Alia Madrasahs (operated under Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board), and several local colleges were used as temporary relief centres. The only government-run college in Ukhia was being used by the World Food Programme (WFP) at the time of the interview. A local journalist said that the use of the physical infrastructure of educational institutions for relief-related purposes seriously impacted local students' and teachers' academic activities (interviewed on September 9, 2018).

Security-proving organizations stationed in such institutions protect and distribute stored relief materials. Besides the immediate effects, the post-influx one-year (or more) disruption of academic activities has negatively impacted

Figure 2. Opinion on the Effects of the Rohingya Influx on Education
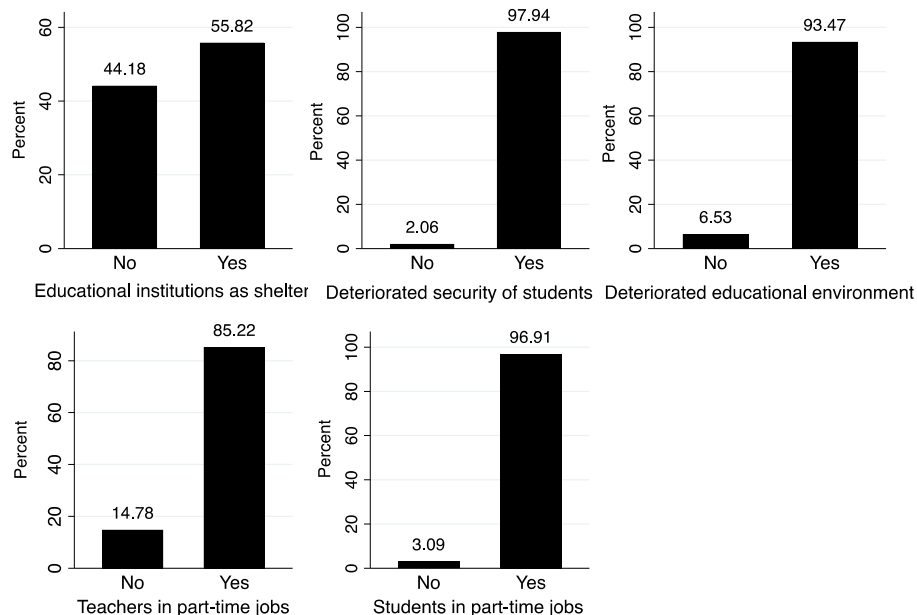
Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

the district's education system. Even after resuming educational activities, such trouble would lag students behind and undermine their performance in the long run, said a local politician. The high absenteeism of teachers and students from educational institutions was a severe concern: 85.22% and 96.91% of the survey respondents perceived that local teachers and students were involved in part-time jobs in the relief industry, meaning they had excuses for not going to academic activities (see Figure 2).

An NGO executive argued that increased job openings in the locality meant that school/college-going students without higher degrees could get relatively high-paid jobs. This is a positive outcome of the influx as these youths could help their families, although it could be perceived adversely as young people were not continuing their studies. A college teacher expounded on the gravity of this situation by saying that students in the first year of undergraduate study once received such salaries, paid less attention to come to classes and skipped essential exams (interviewed on September 10, 2018). Moreover, some unethically wanted to take final exams without attending classes. Not many of them were mindful of the long-term consequence of these short-term benefits. When these high-paid jobs are unavailable, they may suffer to get another job without the degrees they could not finish on time. Many local teachers were pulled into the lucrative and burgeoning NGO and humanitarian sector, which left educational institutions

in a lurch. This alarmed local people about their future generations who were deprived of quality education. A journalist stated:

> In the recent past, the education rate in Ukhia rose from 35% to 47% and is expected to keep growing. In the 35th public service examination, seven people from Ukhia got selected. However, it is still being determined whether we will have government service cadres in the next [coming] years (interviewed on September 9, 2018).

However, the most worrying factor was the insecurity of students. 97% of the survey respondents perceived that the security of students declined due to the influx of outsiders. Primary school students, for example, were sometimes fearful of high traffic to go to schools they had never experienced before. Their parents have been afraid of road accidents as local roads experienced 'heavier traffic than highways' as many vehicles of different, including relief proving bodies and international agencies, ply daily in Ukhia and Teknaf areas, often resulting in increased road accidents as reported by a local journalist.

Environment Impacts: Destruction of Hills, Forests, and Wildlife
The local environment of the greater Ukhia and Teknaf area was one of the worst affected aspects of the 2017 influx. Local people perceived that the August 2017 influx expedited the pace of hills' destruction and amplified land erosion and deforestation processes. Both the natural and artificial forests, including reserve forests, were razed and damaged by a large number of the tormented displaced population who inhibit themselves in this area. A local leader who lost the vast majority of his wealth and natural sanctuary as a by-product of this crisis stated:

> First of all, I have lost my forests and hills forever. Secondly, I have lost the natural settings in my area. Finally, I have lost my agricultural land (interviewed on September 7, 2018).

A professional development worker inside the camps mentioned that many wild animals, including monkeys, snakes, jackals, and elephants, had to change their lives and leave the area. A journalist reported that when elephants lost their habitats, they often attacked the camp area or entered localities, searching for food and passages to find alternative routes. This led to human casualties in the camps and local communities.

Most areas, which used to be covered by reserved forests, hills, and greenery, became almost deserted as Rohingya camps were set up. Many Rohingyas and locals have been collecting firewood to sustain their livelihood. The impact on life and livelihood was acute for specific groups. People who used to collect and sell firewood found the forests either destroyed or deforested, as used by the Rohingyas for collecting wood. Besides this degradation of the environment

and biodiversity loss, a development professional expressed concerns about deforestation, cutting of large trees, and digging out their roots. These posed serious threats of landslides as the authorities could undertake too little or very late reforestation attempts. Over the period, the summer heat of the camp areas increased due to lack of rainfall, heavily influenced by deforestation activities. There was a crisis of fresh drinking water. A development worker who worked inside the camps stated that development workers initially set up deep tube wells to meet the water needs of the camps that affected the host community (interviewed on August 13, 2018). The local community who used shallow tube wells complained of less access to water as water layers went down due to overuse of groundwater.

Effects on Stability and Law and Order Situation
The host community members opined that the 2017 influx profoundly impacted the overall stability and law and order situation in CBD. The vast majority of respondents perceived increased criminal activities like minor crimes, murder, drug and human trafficking, availability of arms, and the illegal business of issuing fake national identity cards (Figure 3).

Although they opined a lesser threat of terrorism, ninety percent of respondents perceived increased availability of illicit arms and alleged a sense of conflict increased among the Rohingyas living in the camps. The effects of the Rohingya influx on stability and law and order are analysed at three levels: individual, community, and national.

Sense of Individual Insecurity: From Abduction to Murder: After a year of sheltering Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds, more than four-fifth of the local population perceived their security as declining (Table 4). The Chi-square test result ($x^2(3) = 762.622$, p < 0.0001) is statistically significant, meaning that the influx was associated with the decline of the personal security of locals (Table 5).

They felt this insecurity due to incidents that occurred post-influx twelve months (Table 6). People's insecurity emanated from different sources, although abduction carried out by some disreputable Rohingyas was one of the main reasons. There was an allegation of the kidnapping of locals for money. A local government councillor mentioned that an abduction case occurred only a few days before conducting this interview (interviewed on September 7, 2018). In another case, two host community people were released after paying BTD 200,000 to associated criminals, possibly from armed Rohingya groups. Such an incident also happened inside the camps through which abductors collected ransom from a local person, as mentioned by an NGO official who worked inside the camps (interviewed on September 8, 2018). Rather than involving the Rohingya community, a notorious part has been involved in such crimes. Cases of killing and murder happened inside and outside the camps, which critically

Figure 3. Opinion on the Rohingya Influx and Its Effect on Stability, Law, and Order Situation
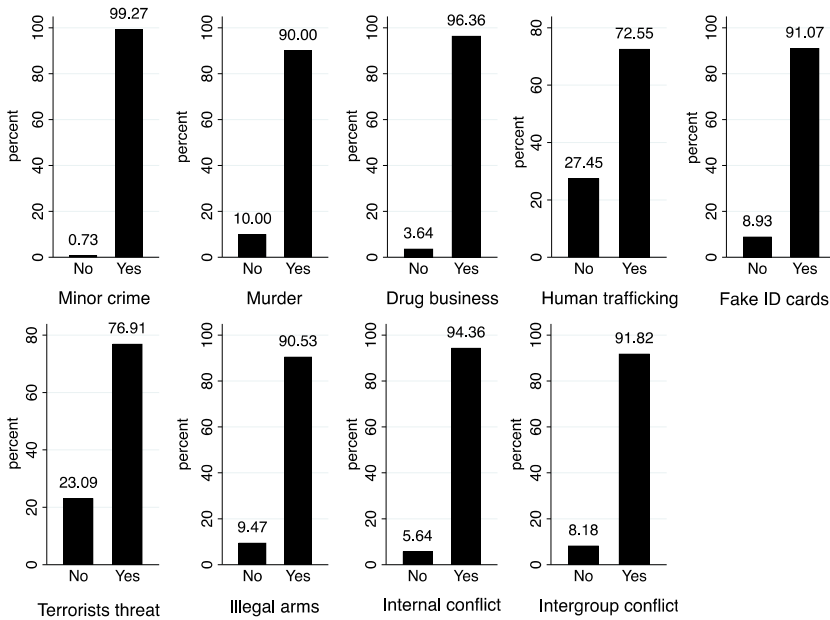
Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

Table 4. Opinion about Personal Security of Locals after the Influx

Response Items	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Security improved	28	4.7	4.7	4.7
Security decreased	516	86.0	86.1	90.8
Neither increased, nor decreased	51	8.5	8.5	99.3
Don't know	2	0.3	0.3	99.7
No comment	2	0.3	0.3	100.0
Total	599	99.8	100.0	

Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

Table 5. Chi-square Test Summary

	Perceptions about personal security after the Rohingya influx
Chi-Square	762.622[a]
Degree of Freedom	3
P-value	0.000

Note: [a] 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 146.8.

Table 6. Opinions on Time of Respondents Increased Personal (in)security

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very recently (less than 6 months)	14	2.3	2.6	2.6
Recently (in the last 6-12 months)	515	85.8	95.9	98.5
In the meantime (in the last 3 years)	1	0.2	0.2	98.7
For a long time (more than 6 years)	7	1.2	1.3	100.0
Total	537	89.5	100.0	

Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

shaped locals' perception of (in)security.

About nine out of ten survey respondents perceived that the rate of murder increased (Figure 3). As several murders happened inside the Rohingya camps, people living adjacent to them became scared of such killings, forcing them to return home before dusk. What happened inside the camps was often linked with the availability of illegal arms and drug traffickers, leading to other unlawful activities. An NGO professional working in the camp said that these ripple effects create a sense of insecurity among the host community. Every individual felt this sense of insecurity since strangers entered local areas with various intentions.

A journalist, referring to many criminal cases against non-law-abiding Rohingyas, argued that their unlawful activities undermined local peoples' movements. An interviewee stated their mother, having a sense of fear and anxiety, insisted that them not go far at night by saying:

> If someone enters the camps after robbing me, the culprit would be impossible to trace from Rohingya people (interviewed on September 9, 2018).

The gravity of safety threats may not be understood from far away, but this was apparent to locals who live near the camps and hear gun fights every night. Host community people were worried about the unrestricted movements of Rohingyas, which the locals did not experience during the previous smaller waves of Rohingya influx. They did not go outside the camps without any emergencies. After the 2017 influx, the locals have become careful of going outside their areas due to fear of various kinds.

Community Insecurity: From Intra-Group Conflicts to Inter-Community Tensions
The attitudes of local people towards Rohingyas over a year of the influx have changed from fellow feeling and benevolence to irritation and annoyance due to different associated reasons, including community insecurity, emanating from outsiders hanging around everywhere in the locality. This perception endured due to losses and sufferings culminated in various other relationships with

Rohingyas living in the camps. An NGO officer stated that although the host people gave them shelter in their houses and yards, they were scared of robbery and theft. Apprehension and fear gradually engulfed them due to criminal activities, but they could not protest. Two migration-induced local-level problems have undermined community security: conflict among Rohingyas and tension between the locals and Rohingyas.

About 94% of survey respondents opined those internal conflicts among the Rohingyas increased, whereas 92% perceived an evolving conflicting relationship between the host and Rohingyas (Figure 3). There was an argument that the old conflicts among Rohingyas in the Rakhine state resurfaced in the camps. They do not have anything to do in the camps but live on relief and assistance; therefore, they often spend sluggishly discussing their Myanmar lives. Hence, a sense of misgiving progressed as stories of violent problems were experienced by Rohingyas inside the camps. Nobody knows about these, mainly between five pm and the following day when no outsider is allowed to stay inside the camps. Their nightlife has been marred with tension, anxiety, and occasional violence, often considered a less-discussed issue. There were incidents of violence and the killing of some Rohingyas by different groups to establish control inside the camp. Camp dwellers were unwilling to speak about such issues due to unknown fear and risks.

Due to various issues and factors, a sense of tension and conflicting relation between the Rohingyas and host communities have been grown. A local Chairman narrated one incident of small-scale violence:

> There was a clash between the locals and the Rohingya people during Ramadan in Tanjimarkhola. After the night prayer, a man and his two sons returned home. The light from their torch fell on some Rohingyas sitting inside the paddy field by the road. They became angry, so they beat up and kidnapped the man, and he was rescued the next day with the help of the local administration and police and sent to the hospital (interviewed on September 7, 2018).

A general trend of evolving conflicting relations was over accessing local resources; sometimes, quarrels broke out when locals prohibited Rohingyas from collecting water from local sources, as reported by an M&E officer of an NGO (interviewed on September 10, 2018). Moreover, a sense of deprivation and being a minority (ninety-five percent and ninety-six percent of the respondents) in their land have developed among the host population (Figure 4).

Various issues and types of inconvenience combined with perceived and actual discrimination of the humanitarian industry and state contributed to growing these senses. The authority paid no or inadequate attention to the local community when the Rohingyas arrived in 2017.

The feeling of being a minority has been a sensitive issue as over one million

Figure 4. Opinion of Being a Minority and Developing a Sense of Deprivation
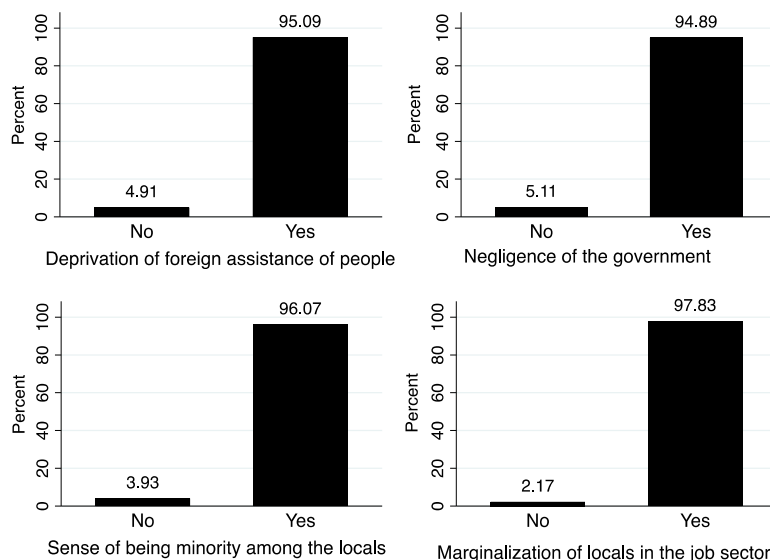
Source: Survey conducted in September 2018.

Rohingyas superseded the locals in Ukhia and Teknaf. An NGO worker complained that some Rohingyas started claiming the area for them and reportedly engaged in conflict with the locals by claiming the land. By referring to the attitude of Rohingyas, a local government Chairman said they would shove one on their way even though the roads are spacious enough. The person added:

> If we had not tolerated the Rohingyas, there would have been violent conflicts here every day (interviewed on September 7, 2018).

Participants of FGD-2 argued that in any case of discord with the local people, Rohingyas threaten by invoking Al-Yaqin, a Rohingya armed group (FGD conducted on September 09, 2018). These incidents may give rise to many negative attitudes among the locals. However, according to a local Chairman, not all Rohingyas the locals sheltered are the same; there are good people and some criminals too. As stated by a local journalist and an NGO Officer, Rohingyas have become "a threat" and perceived as "a burden" to the host community, which naturally could sour inter-community relations in future.

Risks to National Security: Transnational Criminal Syndicates and Potential of Extremism Expansion

The national security of Bangladesh has potential risks associated with the Rohingya crisis, criminal syndicates, and extremist outfits. The availability and

spread of illegal arms and the dangers of drug and human trafficking (Figure 3) could exploit and endanger the local communities. There have been cross-border, transnational criminal syndicates which influenced the situation. They, for example, used Rohingyas and other locals vulnerable to trafficking and trading drugs like *Yaba* (a stimulant drug in tablet form) to enter Bangladesh and spread illegally across the country, as stated by several interviewees, including the head of a local newspaper and an NGO Officer. The temporary Rohingya camps arguably have been considered as the transit route of Yaba. Referring to the news of drug consignments recovery by law enforcement agencies, a journalist argued that maybe some of them were caught, but they "could not search all" living in the camps. A local person working with an NGO reported that besides the Rohingyas, local criminal gangs used vulnerable people to transport drugs from one place to another (interviewed on September 11, 2018). A business syndicate developed between notorious Rohingyas and local criminals, connected to different illicit trades wherein Rohingyas have been used as mules in exchange for money by some local goons. According to an indigenous leader (interviewed on September 10, 2018) and a security analyst (interviewed on December 12, 2018) mentioned that such businesses have become means of survival for many locals and Rohingyas. However, the latter are not allowed to work legally outside the camp.

An academic opined that, besides the ring of drug trafficking, other transnational criminal groups have become active in human trafficking and engaging Rohingya women and children in prostitution in Cox's Bazar and beyond. These syndicates have worked silently and exploited the vulnerable Rohingya population. A local councillor added that Rohingyas living illegally in Bangladesh for years often acted as brokers to facilitate the trafficking process of newly arrived Rohingya women and girls. Nonetheless, more than three-fourths of survey respondents perceived increased threats of terrorism and extremism in the wake of the fresh influx (Figure 3). The presence of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), known as Al-Yaqin, allowed some interviewees to speculate that they were active and responsible for violence inside the camps.

A local journalist pointed out that the ARSA, whose alleged attack on Myanmar police outposts triggered the 2017 exodus, did not vanish but could have been very likely to be found active inside the camps (interviewed on September 24, 2018). According to another journalist, when ordinary Rohingyas came to Bangladesh, so did members of the ARSA (interviewed on September 09, 2018). There were violent incidents in and around the camps; therefore, the locals' perception of fear and insecurity has been prevalent. When Rohingya people commemorated one year of their exodus to Cox's Bazar, some wore Lungis and shirts (a typical marker of the Rohingya population) and held Myanmar's flag. They expressed willingness to go back home at any cost, while others, wearing red ribbons on their head and chanting slogans in favour of the ARSA, opposed such

a return, a potential concern of the national security of Bangladesh, as conveyed by an indigenous leader (interviewed on September 10, 2018).

There was a concern over what would happen if Rohingyas were not repatriated; it could be a potential source of extremism inside the camps when many persecuted, marginalized people do not have any hope for the future. However, they live inside such a crowded area; they could be susceptible to the breeding ground of radicalization. According to a security expert, the risk of transnational connections has been high as several international terrorist outfits expressed sympathy for the Rohingyas, persecuted in their home, Myanmar (interviewed on November 8, 2018). The person added that with their defeat in broader Middle Eastern contexts, such groups would likely search for new theatres like the Rohingyas to carry out their struggle. Given such a complex scenario, the expansion of extremism could pose severe threats to Bangladesh and beyond. The security forces of Bangladesh arrested some people in such connections, the person stated. In contrast, the government on the national security ground banned dozens of NGOs allegedly working inside the camps to support such groups, as reported by a journalist (interviewed on September 10, 2028).

Discussion

Refugee movement to any country has both positive and negative effects. The 2017 Rohingya influx to Bangladesh has not been an exception. As the data presented in the earlier sections indicate, the displacement of Rohingya people from Myanmar to Bangladesh has made both types of impact in the host area. From the socio-economic aspect, the influx has brought mixed results to the people of the host community, as suggested by Chambers (1986). Although the price of daily commodities increased with the demand for essentials due to the presence of a large group of people and affected local low-income people adversely, it also benefited small businesses. Moreover, Rohingyas, who are not allowed to go outside the camps to work legally, have been informally selling their labour at a much lower wage, making the life and livelihood of local low-income people difficult.

Again, Rohingyas, who generally live on relief and assistance, have sold some of their relief products in the local market, benefiting the low-income people who buy those from local vendors. The local petty businesspeople also benefited from this system of buying and selling products. Rohingyas also bought non-aid products from the local market that helped the local business community and positively impacted the local economy—as Miller (2018) argued. Nevertheless, this market puzzle undermined local farmers who produce such products locally and those who could not cultivate their lands due to the pressure of Rohingyas'

presence in their lands. Many refrained from cultivating their lands as paddy prices went down as Rohingyas sold some of their aid-food items in the local market.

Moreover, aid agencies purchased all aid products from the national or international market but not from the local market. This has been a complex puzzle in local production and business systems—that benefited some but harmed others. Therefore, we see that the influx has both negative and positive economic implications for the host community, which is in line with the findings of Maystadt and Vervimp (2014) in the Tanzanian context.

The 2017 influx has created ample job opportunities for locals with basic educational qualifications and skills to join those jobs in NGO and humanitarian sectors. Many schools and college students joined in humanitarian jobs and earned money that could have been impossible for them had there not been any influx. Many teachers also joined jobs and made hard currency besides their regular salaries. The Cox's Bazar area has experienced an upsurge in the housing sector that benefited many house owners. These opportunities in jobs and income generations are primarily beneficial for educated people, as Waters (1999) argued, and leave concerns of job discrepancy among the locals as many are unskilled. Less/uneducated people could not join in NGO and humanitarian sector to make money. Therefore, they have developed a sense of deprivation to which the humanitarian industry immensely contributed. Moreover, many NGOs and humanitarian organizations recruited their staff from other districts instead of from Ukhia and Teknaf, which is another source of developing a sense of deprivation for the locals.

A more critical aspect of the 2017 influx was that it induced young people to join the job sector and earn money by leaving their education, a quick decision from their side that has long-term effects on students and society. Immediately after the influx, they jumped into NGOs and the humanitarian industry and forgot about their futures. They never pay attention to what will happen when the number of jobs is reduced, and they will become unemployed. They may only get better jobs with proper education and degrees that they left aside due to joining lucrative temporary jobs. Some also looked for fuzzy means to take the exam without attending the classes in schools and colleges. At the same time, many local teachers were engaged in dual jobs—regular jobs and jobs in NGO and humanitarian industries. This has an ethical aspect, both for the teachers and students. Therefore, one can argue that earning quick money at the cost of their education and future may not benefit them in the long run.

Many young children were afraid of attending school due to massive traffic and highway accidents, a by-product of the 2017 influx they had never experienced before. Such a restricted attitude in attending schools impacts their early childhood learning process. Another sociocultural impact of the Rohingya migration can be found in the incident of increased child marriage and polygamy.

Local low-income people often marry Rohingya women, influencing the state of family peace. Those who take Rohingya women as second wives sometimes do not pay adequate attention to the basic needs of existing families, which often leads to domestic violence.

Despite the mixed economic impact and positive outcome, the host population harbours an unmixed negative approach towards the incomers. Several factors are driving this attitude. Since the Rohingyas arrived in CBD, the state's focus shifted towards them, away from the local inhabitants. The state paid utmost attention to managing the crisis created by the sudden Rohingya displacement, which created a sense of misgiving among the host population. Moreover, when Rohingyas temporarily settled in makeshift camps and started accessing various environmental resources, including forests, firewood, water etc. and eventually made some claim over land through formal and informal settlement, together it became a severe issue for the host population who had already become a minority in their areas in Ukhia and Teknaf. Being deprived of incoming resources on different grounds and becoming a minority in their area, locals now see displaced Rohingyas as a burden to the locality and as a threat to Bangladesh that could lead to an unwanted situation at any time. This supports the findings in the literature on the security and political implications of hosting refugees who are actual or perceived sources of threat to land, property, work, and resource base (Laurence, Schmid and Hewstone 2019). It also reminds us of Gurr's (1970) relative deprivation—both real and perceived, which could lead to a difficult time for the host population.

Migration-induced competition over scarce resources contributes to developing an "us" versus "them" relationship between the migrant and host communities (Swain 1996). The feeling of nativism that developed among the host population cannot be overlooked, as there was deprivation and frustration in accessing forest resources, collecting firewood, and availing aid and assistance. The locals who welcomed Rohingyas on humanitarian and religious grounds at the beginning of the 2017 influx within a year perceived Rohingyas as responsible for the destruction of hills, deforestation, inadequate access to groundwater, and negatively impacting biodiversity. Moreover, locals usually do not have access to emergency humanitarian aid in the refugee context (Betts 2009). Although these have not led to any direct violent conflict between the two communities, they contributed to developing an attitude and mindset towards Rohingyas that was far different from the immediate period of the 2017 influx.

The engagement of a section of Rohingyas who live on aid and humanitarian assistance in unlawful activities such as drug trafficking, kidnapping, ransom collection, gun running and other criminal activities while living in camps has left the host population questioning their peaceful attitude and the long-running consequence for Bangladesh. Such unlawful activities are not uncommon in refugees as they live sluggish lives in refugee camps (Codjoe et al. 2013). Such

involvement is not because of any scarcity, as Depetris-Chauvin and Santos (2018) suggested, but due to the greed and ambition of a population that oppresses other Rohingyas and competes with locals to establish control there. On a personal level, local people have developed a sense of fear and insecurity emanating from news and rumour of a group's involvement in the abduction, gun violence and killing inside the camps. The number of robberies and theft has also increased since their arrival. This made the locals cautious about Rohingya movements in their locality. This is a drastic change in the approach of the host population, who sheltered them with empathy when they were persecuted in Myanmar and were forced to leave their country in August 2017. Rohingyas are considered pessimistically by the locals as they challenge and pose threats to the state of peace and security of the Teknaf and Ukhia region.

In addition, a significant portion of the population highlighted the involvement of transnational criminal syndicates that exploit the vulnerable Rohingyas to engage in unlawful activities that create a negative image of the greater CBD. When opportunists use refugees, it generates risk both for refugees and locals and creates further insecurity in the area where they are sheltered (Miller 2018; Krcmaric 2016). A prediction of potential indoctrination of persecuted Rohingyas by any global outfit is another source of tension for Bangladesh, South Asia and beyond. Hence, the locals see a possible way out of this displacement crisis by repatriating them to their homes in Myanmar.

Conclusion

Bangladesh, on humanitarian grounds, provided shelter to more than one million displaced Rohingyas. They fled their homes in Myanmar to escape persecution, genocide, violence, and atrocities (Martuscelli, Ahmed, and Sammonds 2022). The 2017 Rohingya influx has resulted in different socio-economic, environmental, and security implications in Bangladesh. Consequently, the immediate welcoming sympathy that the local people showed on their arrival has faded due to the multitude of adverse impacts of the influx. The Rohingya influx has produced mixed economic effects, including creating employment opportunities, enlarging economic activities, and increasing commercial activities.

In contrast, it has increased the price of daily essentials, created job scarcity for local laborers and low-income families, and reduced agricultural cultivation and production. Similarly, the influx negatively affects the education sector in the short and long terms. Besides, Rohingyas have degraded the environment through deforestation, hill cutting, losing biodiversity, and generating competition over access to fresh drinking water.

The influx has profoundly affected the overall law and order situation and stability of the areas that host Rohingyas. Different unlawful criminal activities,

atrocities inside the camps, mostly at night, and drug (*Yaba*) dealing have increased. A sense of personal insecurity was felt by locals as there were incidents of abduction of local people, and consequential ransom collection and atrocities happened inside the camps. There has been tension in the host community; a sense of apprehension engulfed them due to the presence of Rohingyas, who have outnumbered the locals in their land. Although some local goons have capitalized on Rohingyas' vulnerability to use them as mules in criminal activities, some old, illegal Rohingya intermediaries use such vulnerabilities of women, girls, and children to target human trafficking and prostitution. Moreover, the hostile attitudes and behavior of Rohingyas towards the locals could be sources of their bitter relations. Last but not least, being persecuted and Rohingyas living in congested camps could be susceptible to radicalization and indoctrination by some global outfits that could threaten stability beyond Bangladesh.

Acknowledgements

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