

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: PROGRAMMING FOR CULTURAL EDUCATION AND REVITALIZATION PROGRAMMES FOR STATELESS ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN COX'SBAZAR, BANGLADESH; A SHORT ACCOUNT OF ROHINGYA CULTURE

"Despite the challenges they want to come back to school. They tell me they want to be better people in the future. They have ambitions to be a doctor or a teacher, or even the President! So they want to know how to read and write"

*- Arikuru, Ugandan Accelerated
Education Programme Teacher (Save the Children)*

"Refugees face two journeys, one leading to hope, the other to despair. It is up to us to help them along the right path."

Filippo Grandi, UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees

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Abstract

Tyranny has no words, it has sounds of pain and suffering, it has roaring of cruel hyenas, it has echoes of screaming of witches, and finally, it deserves no words to be described. It can be the absolute abstract of this paper as this paper will provide a vivid description a nation's culture and how this culture is denied and categorically disacknowledged by a brutal regime of Myanmar. Rohingyas have their centuries old culture and traditions mixed with Hindu, Muslim and Buddhists people; in terms of language, they have received linguistic elements from Arabic, Persian, Sangskrit, Pali, Bangla, Burmese, Rakhine, and English; in terms of culture, they received elements from Hindu, Muslims, Arabs, Afghans, Indians, Rhkhines, Burmese, Buddhists, Chittagonians, and so on; so they are emotionally and culturally a very rich nation. This paper will flash a beacon on the culture of this ill fated nation.

Keywords - Cultural education, Refugee education

Research Methodology

This research has been done based on secondary materials i.e. books, journal articles, web documents, e-books, online publications, social network write-ups, blogs, magazines, theses, newspapers, formal-informal interviews and published or unpublished documents. The analyses have been done on the basis of content analysis. The author also have used own ideas gained while reading the related documents, discussions with Rohingya refugees and local host communities in Cox'sbazar, social networking with Rohingyas activists in Bangladesh and Myanmar, online affiliations with academics and students from Myanmar, and informal discussions with development workers working for the Rohingya refugees from home and abroad.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide a concept on Rohingya culture they practice from the time immemorial. The paper will help the policy makers to have a concept why programming for cultural education and cultural revitalization is so important and how it helps gain the real time benefit to keep traumatized and torture-stricken Rohingya refugees alive with their distinct cultural identity and peaceful in the camp setting.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this paper are –

1. To explore Rohingya culture and traditions what they are parctising from time immemorial.
2. To emphasize cultural education for enhanced community safety from radicalization through cultural revitalization.
3. To invite people concerned to take part in programming for preservation and practice of Rohingya culture, customs and traditions.

Findings

The paper can provide only a short account of Rohingya culture and traditions for further reinvestigation of their enriched culture and traditions.

Research limitations/implications

The analysis can give a direction towards programming for creating funding scope for cultural education for Rohingya populations living in Bangladesh.

Paper type - Conceptual paper

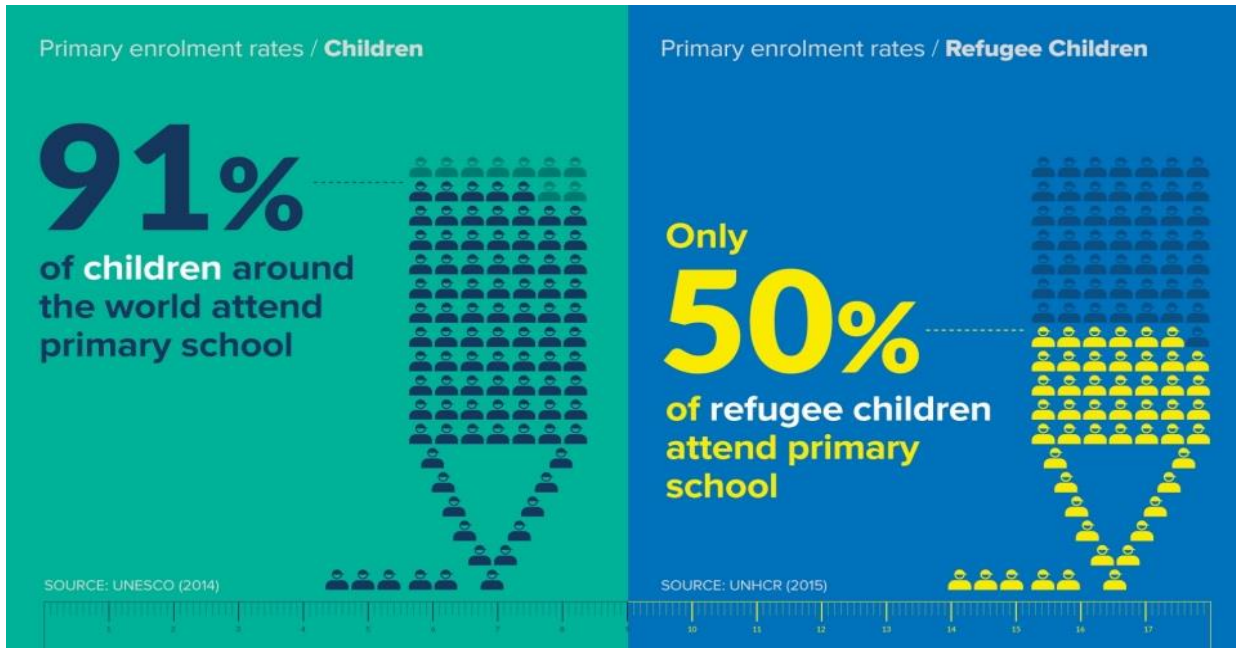
Introduction

The Rohingyas, a Muslim ethnic minority group in Rakhine, are considered among the most persecuted, vulnerable, and oppressed minorities in the world. Recently, the persecution on the Rohingya Muslims has increased due to Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar. The Rohingya continue to suffer from several forms of restrictions and human rights violations in Myanmar due to them being denied Myanmar citizenship. They are victims of various forms of oppression, such as arbitrary taxation, land confiscation, destruction of mosques, torture and ill-treatment, extrajudicial executions, restrictions on movements, forced eviction and house destruction, forced laborers on roads and at military camps, stopping from birth registration, enrollment in school and university, imposing fabricated history with retaliatory method of education, barrier in fencing the house, imposing Burmese names and financial restrictions on marriage. Since the 1970s, a number of crackdowns on the Rohingya in Rakhine have forced them to flee to neighboring countries. More than one million Rohingyas have migrated to refugee camps in the Bangladeshi district of Cox's Bazar (Mohajon, 2018). Now I will try to meet some questions – why education is so important for refugees, why cultural education, how displacement hampers national culture, some specific cultural aspects of stateless Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh and programming needs for preserving the lost and ruining culture of them.

Why education is so important for Rohingya refugees?

If we start with UNHCR High Commissioner's saying, "Making sure that refugees have access to education is at the heart of UNHCR's mandate to protect the world's rapidly increasing refugee population, and central to its mission of finding long-term solutions to refugee crises" (Grandi, 2016), then we could understand that the importance of education cannot be overstated, and most people would agree that education is a fundamental right and a key factor in human development (Umenyi, 2017). Also education is not only a basic human right; it is a tool for recovery (UNICEF, 2016) as we know well that the stateless Rohingya refugees suffered century long systematic deprivation from the government and they need education for their future survival as a nation. The global quest to ensure quality education for all by 2030 is included in the Sustainable Development Goals. However, meeting this ambitious target for the over 65 million people (or more) who have been forced to leave their homes by conflict, famine, fear of persecution or a multitude of other reasons remains an enormous challenge (Umenyi, 2017). Around the world, 4 million refugee children are out of school and missing out on their right to an education due to displacement, poverty and

exclusion (Save the Children, nd). Many of those children have never been to school in their home countries (Euronews, 2017), basically in Myanmar it was unthinkable for sound education as they were deprived in many ways by the Myanmar government to keep them illiterate and to leave them in the darkest side of civilization in a very planned method. In the chart below we see the real picture of our continuous failure in ensuring the basic rights of education for refugee children worldwide.



However, the benefits of education are bountiful. Most children fleeing from war are at a vulnerable and critical age of development. It is crucial to supply them with information that will allow them to explore the world and use the full capacity of their brains. While an educational setting can foster a future doctor, engineer, or astronaut, without this setting, these children can develop extremist ideas that will severely impact their personalities and lives in the future (Khalil, 2017). Mass Education and TVET is also so very much important for Rohingya women, youth and elderly to make them capable for their betterment and wellbeing. We can summarize the rationales of education for refugees below –

- ✓ Education is a refugee child's right and should be prioritized, it is also sensible to educate the Rohingya women, youth, and elderly people through mass education programmes as they were also deprived from education;
- ✓ Education helps refugee children and others cope and hope in their new environments;
- ✓ Education will improve their futures;
- ✓ Ensuring refugee children, women, youth and elderly people are educated will help bring peace and stability (Save the Children, nd);
- ✓ Education is the key to being truly independent;
- ✓ Opportunity to become leaders of their community;
- ✓ Don't become part of the statistic - We mentioned earlier how almost three million children have no access to schools. These innocent lives are at risk of being lost forever if they are not given proper care. An educated mind looks for a solution and makes one. An uneducated mind will only take what is offered and accept it. Children who don't get educated or trained with tradecraft, mainly stay refugee for the rest of their

life; therefore becoming nothing more than a statistic. An education will ensure that doesn't happen. In fact, it can have a positive impact and curb it down (Muslim Aid, nd).

Why Cultural Education?

Cultural education promotes historical awareness, contributes to the formation of an individual identity and encourages a creative, inquisitive attitude that benefits children and young people throughout their lives. Cultural education gives enjoyment and contributes to one's overall sense of well-being. Cultural education consists of the capacity for reflection. Children and also youngsters in cultural education learn to reflect upon their own culture, culture of others and culture in general (Heudsen, 2016). And cultural education is so important for stateless Rohingya refugees as they experienced uncountable types of harassments and tortures; and their deprivation started with a false belief of Myanmar government which results their life in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. Myanmar is surrounded by some Islamic countries, such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The Buddhists think that if any Islamic country attacks Myanmar, the Rohingya will fight against Myanmar. As a result, they are culturally discriminated, economically exploited, and politically sidelined by the Government of Myanmar (Mohajan, 2018). Save the Children finds "75% of Save the Children teachers identified refugee students' psychosocial wellbeing as a significant issue in their classrooms. Teachers noted that affected refugee children were often "very quiet," "frightened," "start crying for no reason at all," "distant," "always alone" and had difficulty concentrating in class and engaging with other students. Others had behavioral issues and were "loud and hyperactive" or "hostile and arrogant," making classrooms sometimes "chaotic". Refugee children may also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety. In a review of 22 studies of 3,003 resettled refugee children from 40 countries, prevalence rates of anxiety ranged from 33 to 50%, depression from 3 to 30%, and PTSD from 19 to 54%, whereas PTSD prevalence in the general child population ranges from 2 to 9%, (Save the Children, nd)." The same way, refugee women, youth and elderly experienced torture, beating, rape, beheading, burning homes and crops, chasing by the armies, amputation and other forms of humiliation; they are also at high risk of psycho-social problems and other post traumatic disorders. To help them come out from the post-trauma disorder, cultural education and practices can play a greater role. Cultural education contributes to knowledge transfer, personal development and participation in society. Cultural education enables young people (also people from all ages and genders) to develop their talents, introduces them to art and culture, makes them aware of aesthetics and ethics, and teaches them to express their feelings and to assign meaning. Cultural education helps children and young people discover their own ways of learning and communicating, and as such it complements other knowledge domains and disciplines. Cultural education promotes historical awareness, contributes to the formation of an individual identity and encourages a creative, inquisitive attitude that benefits children and young people throughout their lives. Cultural education gives enjoyment and contributes to one's overall sense of well-being. Culture is the world around us, the things we perceive and

how we experience them. Everything around us has been shaped and given meaning within the context of how a given society views and deals with the world. Culture shapes and gives expression to identity, makes personal and mass communication possible, drives the perception and experience of the world. Understanding culture and the ability to engage with culture in all its manifestations are therefore of great importance to everyone. Cultural education encourages children and young people to develop into balanced and mature adults who are able to live well and find their place in a changing world. In addition, cultural education unlocks and gives access to the wealth of cultural history and insights into modern-day cultural communication aimed at children and young people. In the 21st century, the role of education is to prepare children and young people for a life of learning in an international context. Giving each and every one of them equal access to cultural education and therefore to culture is of vital importance to their future (LKCA, 2017). McGregor & Ragab (2016) believes that painting, drama, dance, music, literature, photography, film and other art forms provide immigrants and refugees a creative space for exploration and expression of identities, for challenging discrimination and social exclusion and for fostering intercultural dialogue. Art and culture of immigrants and refugees can enable the cultivation of heritage, traditions, customs and culture of the origin country (Netto, 2008). Other migrants' and refugees' cultural and artistic productions develop ways of expressing the challenges of the immigrant community in the destination country and to raise the voice against discrimination, therefore having a transformative role by contributing to community cohesion, structural integration and social change (Delhaye, 2008). Artistic expression can be an important tool in therapeutic settings since it promotes self-esteem, facilitates the expression of emotions as well as the processing of traumatic experiences. Creative and artistic tools in therapies offer the means for refugees to explore, express and reconstruct their emotions and experiences related to conflict, violence and exile. Both quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that art therapy can improve physical, mental, and emotional well-being of immigrants and refugees and promote their social inclusion (Fitzpatrick, 2002; Rousseau et al., 2005; Rousseau & Heusch, 2000). While arts and culture by, for and with migrants and refugees can promote wellbeing, and dismantle structural barriers to integration, they can have exclusionary potential themselves (Le & Fujimoto, 2010). Rohingya people and their culture also naturally faces acculturation with the local Bangladeshi culture as McBrien states "people may experience acculturative stress, such as anxiety or depression, as they try to adapt to a new culture. At the group level, change affects social structure, economic factors, and political activity" (McBrien, 2005). Acculturation is not a good news for both, Rohingyas and Bangladeshi communities as they will go back to their country, repatriation is one of their crying demand. That's why this paper intends to advocate programming for cultural education and cultural revitalization programmes for the stateless Rohingya refugees.

How Does Displacement Hamper Culture and Accelerate Cultural Decay?

Displacement or resettlement refers to a movement of large numbers of people from the original settlement to a new settlement or when people leave their original place to resettle

in a new foreign place where they can begin a new life and adapt to the new biophysical, social and administrative systems of the new environment (Zahari et al, 2014). Forced displacement is at an all-time high. In 2017, 68.5 million people were displaced globally. While Bangladesh hosted the seventh-largest refugee population, it saw by far the most dramatic surge in 2017, when the number of refugees increased more than three-fold as a result of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar (Save the Children, nd). Undoubtedly, this forced displacement hampers their mind first and when mind becomes victims of horror of displacement it results in psychosocial problems. A grief psychosocial problem can cause unintentional destruction to their cultural practice. To Dubey (2008), displacement can cause major cultural disruption and losses. Displacement hampers Rohingyas' language, food, clothing etc. A report by Bangla Tribune and published in the local Ukhiya News (2017) says (translated from original Bangla report), "Most of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh cannot speak in pure Rohingya language. The educated Rohingyas are not only changing their language, also they are changing their clothing and food habits. The educated people among them complain that they flee from torture and tyranny but now they are also forgetting usage of their language and culture. According to language experts, this change is part of their survival technique. As Rohingya and Chittagonian language have a greater similarity, people from other parts of Bangladesh cannot recognize the difference where it is easy for native of Chitagong. To Muhammed Yunus, President of Rohingya Refugee Youth Organization, 'although people around the world have a keen interest for Rohingya language and culture, but Rohingya people pay little attention. The way they are learning Chittagonian language, they are forgetting their own language.' It is true that our language has no letters, and in addition we are leaving our style of clothing and food habits for security/safety reasons. To Jafor Alom Dipu, owner of a Rohingya medicine shop, 'our women traditionally wear Thami-Blouse and men wear Lungi, but now here our women are not using Thami-Blouse, they prefer Three-piece. Rohingya children cannot read and write in Rohingya language as they are learning Bangla in schools. As a result they are forgetting their own language.'

A Short Account of Rohingya Culture, Customs and Traditions

Rohingyas have their distinct cultural heritage dated back many centuries. Rohingyas are living in Bangladesh as refugees for half a century. Having they have similarity in terms of religion with local host communities, but they have significant differences in terms of language, customs-rituals and culture (Ahammad, 2016). To go to the main discussion one should go through the history of this oppressed nation and should have a clear idea who they are and what did they experienced in last couple of centuries.

Geographical and Demographic Aspects of Myanmar

Myanmar, in the past known as Burma, is a country located in South-East Asia and bordered by Bangladesh and India to the west, China to the northeast, Laos to the east and Thailand to the southeast. Naypyidaw, a newly-constructed city located to the north of Yangon, was officially declared to be Myanmar's new capital in 2006. The population of Myanmar comprises approximately 51 million. It is an ethnically and religiously diverse country, with 135 officially recognized and recorded ethnic groups as well as several other ethnic groups, such as the Rohingya, that are not officially recognized. The majority ethnic group is the Bamar, who constitute about two thirds of the population, and who dominate the military and

government. Myanmar has seven regions (or divisions) that are largely inhabited by the Bamar. Additionally, there are seven states, named after the ethnic minorities residing in that state: Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan. The regions and states are divided into 74 districts and sub-divided into 413 townships (Tay, 2018).

Introduction to Arakan or Rakhine State

Arakan or Rakhine – now a western province of Burma – had been an independent country till 1784 C.E. As with other countries, the geography of Arakan has had important influences on the course of its history. That Arakan managed to maintain itself as an independent kingdom until almost the end of the eighteenth century was mainly due to its geographical position (Yunus, 1994). Rakhine state has five districts and 17 townships. It is one of the poorest states in Myanmar with an estimated 78% of the population living in extreme poverty. The largest ethnic groups in Rakhine State are the Buddhist Rakhine and the Muslim Rohingya. A smaller Muslim group in Rakhine State are the Kaman, who are recognized as citizens by the government. Until recently, Rakhine State was home to around 1.2 million Rohingya, comprising around approximately 40% of the total state population. Accurately estimating the Rohingya population is difficult because they are excluded from census data by the government. Roughly two-thirds of the Rohingya resided in three northern townships of the state: Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Rathedaung (Yethedaung). Rohingya were the majority ethnic group in Maungdaw and Buthidaung, the only townships in Myanmar with a majority Muslim population (Tay, 2018). The total area of Arakan during the British period was approximately 20,000 sq. miles. It is a narrow mountainous strip of land along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal. It stretches north and south; wider in the north and tapering down to the south. It touches Bangladesh in the northwest, India in the north and Chin Hills in the northeast. It is cut off from Burma by a long range of near-impassable mountains, of Arakan Yoma, in the east making it a natural physiographic unit. It has 176 miles long maritime and land boundary with Bangladesh which traditionally serves as 'Gate Way to the Far East'. Its 360 miles long coastal belt in the west makes Arakan easy for sea communication. This rendered Arakan possible that Buddhism reached there earlier than Burma. Islam's arrival to Arakan and adjacent coastal regions of what is now Chittagong five centuries earlier than mainland Bengal also attributes to its geography. In all, there are seven rivers in Arakan: the Naf, Mayu, Kaladan, Lemro, Ann, Tangup and Sandoway; the Naf serving as the boundary line between Arakan and Bangladesh. The Kaladan is the longest one; it rises from beyond the Arakan Hill Tracts and flows into the turbulent Bay of Bengal at Akyab, the seaport and capital city of Arakan. Like Kaladan the rest of the rivers also flow into the Bay with some variations. All of these rivers are tidal and easily navigable all the year round. None of its rivers rises in Burma, and throughout its history its water communications with Bengal were much easier than its overland communications with Burma. Therefore the flourishing of certain religion in certain period in Bengal – Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam – has had strong influence on the religious predominance over Arakan during the same period. Arakan is in fact a continuation of Chittagong plain. Because of north Arakan's close overland ties with East-Bengal it is found that after Bengal became Muslim in 1203, the resulting cultural and political influence of the Muslims was of great significance in the history of Arakan. The spread of Islam by land further into Burma after the Muslim conquest of Arakan in 1430 was prevented by the difficult mountain barrier existing between the two countries. Arakan is a land of mountains, thick forests, rivers and creeks. Bulk of the total land surface area is covered with forests. Northern part of Arakan is wider with alluvial deltaic plains where as the southern portion is narrow and rocky. There are a number of off-shore

islands in the Arakan coast of which the Ramree and the Cheduba are the largest. There is a deep water natural harbour in the coast off the Ramree island a few miles northeast of Kyaukpyu township. This deep sea natural harbour can accommodate large ships like U.S. 7th fleet. The alluvial soil of the Mayu, Kaladan and Lemro valleys in north Arakan is so fertile that once the area was popularly called Dhanavati or granary of rice. The growing of rice in Arakan became so extensive and successful that the surplus product till the beginning of the Second World War, was used to be exported in huge quantities to Chittagong, Calcutta, Madaras, Colombo and Kochin. In 1950s Akyab alone had 50 rice mills most of which remained working round the clock the whole year. Apart from rice Arakan is famous for its naturally grown teak. The Arab traders of early times who established small trading colonies in Arakan were particularly attracted by the rich natural resources of the land and a courteous people. They used to build and repair ships with Arakanese iron wood known as Pyinkadow during their short stay before continuing their onward journey. Besides Pyinkadow Arakan's forests produce naturally grown teak and good quality timber. Bamboo is plentiful. Arakan is also ideal for rubber and tea plantation. It's long coastal belt is rich in fish and produces high quality shrimps in the dams built along the estuaries of tidal creeks and rivers. Arakan is also rich in mineral resources. There are confirmed reservoirs of petroleum and other mineral resources but until now totally untapped. There are, in total, 17 townships in Arakan. Akyab, situated at the mouth of Kaladan river in the northern Arakan, is the capital city which also serves as the main seaport of Arakan. Communication within Arakan is done mainly by water routes. The inland road communication is very poorly developed. There is no railway. Communication with proper Burma is done mainly by air and by sea. There are also Three overland connections with proper Burma through mountain passes across Arakan hill range. The Ann and Tongup passes are now in a much better position than before when it could be used only in dry season. The climate is moderate. There are three distinct seasons: winter, summer and rainy with annual rainfall of approximately 200 inches (Yunus, 1994).

The History of Persecution of Rohingya of Myanmar

The history of Rohingya of Myanmar is a history of persecution and human rights violations. Hostile attitudes towards the Rohingya fuelled a long history of systematic violence and discrimination, denying them many basic rights including citizenship, freedom of movement, access to healthcare and education, marital registration rights and voting rights. This effectively rendered them the largest stateless group in the world. Anti-Muslim sentiments have been provoked by Buddhist extremist groups who have created public support for systematic campaigns of violence and discrimination against Rohingya. While previously the ethnic groups in Rakhine State had a history of positive community relationships and close mutual dependency, relations between the Rohingya and other ethnic groups have become increasingly complex and sensitive since 2012. All people in Rakhine face difficulties in meeting basic needs, but the Rohingya and other Muslim communities, face particular challenges, related to discrimination and the lack of citizenship. Restrictions against Rohingya are manifold. They are not allowed to form organizations or vote. They face major challenges in accessing education in general, and particularly university education. They often experience extortion (when going through check points, when marrying, having children, when building a new home, when repairing a home) and may have their names arbitrarily changed by officials creating the official family lists. Rohingyas are not allowed to build homes with permanent materials like concrete, and at times were not allowed to install fencing around their homes. Mosques have been closed or destroyed. Based on interviews

with refugees who fled to Bangladesh after the eruption of violence in 2016, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Amnesty International documented a wide range of human rights violations against the Rohingya population in Rakhine State including killings, disappearances, torture and other inhumane treatment, rape and other forms of sexual violence and arbitrary detention. According to reports by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, the International Crisis Group, Amnesty International and investigative reporters, these incidents were followed by a massive clearance operation by the Myanmar army, during which Rohingya homes and villages were systematically burnt down and thousands were killed by violence. These events prompted an unprecedented exodus of Rohingya to neighbouring Bangladesh (Tay, 2018).

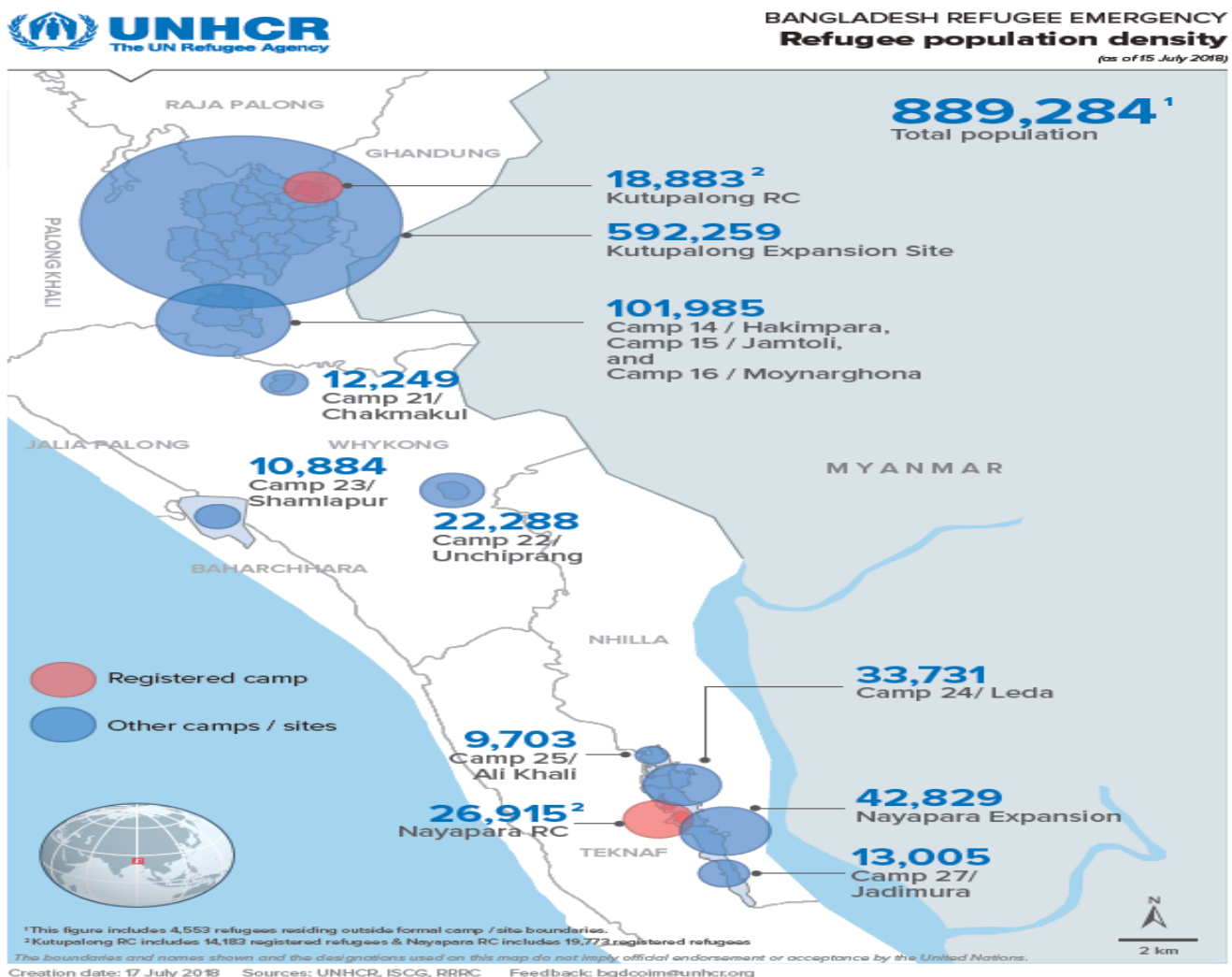
Etymology of the Word 'Rohingya'

Muslim leaders in Rakhine State have promoted the use of the term "Rohingya" to describe themselves as part of their assertion of rights along ethnic lines. The first formal acknowledgement of the ethnonym "Rohingya" dates to 10 March 1950 in an official address by a group of elders from North Arakan to Prime Minister U Nu on his visit to Maungdaw (Jilani, 1999). Michael W. Charney states that the derivation of Rohingya from Roainga is very clear. Roainga can be traced to the 17th century to Rosanga (Charney, 2005). The term "Rohingya" is derived from the Arabic word *Rahm* which means mercy. It has its origins with the arrival of Arab traders on shores of Ramree Island in the 18th century (Ullah, 2011). The myth tells of a ship of Arab traders that arrived on shores of Ramree Island in the 18th century and wrecked off the Burmese coast, and the survivors asked for *Rahm* of the local king. The king allotted a piece of land for them, and they were allowed to settle there. Over time *Rahm* changed to Rhohang and eventually to Rohingya (Chowdhury, 1996; Bahar, 2010b). There is an alternate concept that the term "Rohingya" is actually used to describe the Ruha people who migrated from Afghanistan (Ahmed, 2012). Another version of the "Rohingya" is that the 'Roh' in Rohingya means 'mountain' in Sanskrit and that the region of mountains in northwest India was known as Roh (Ahmed, 2012).

Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a long history of hosting Rohingya from Rakhine State in Myanmar. The Cox's Bazar district in the Chittagong Division borders the northern part of Rakhine. This district received large numbers of Rohingya refugees in 1978 (around 250,000 people) most of whom returned to Myanmar after international pressure on the Myanmar government to allow them to return. Another large wave of Rohingya refugees arrived in Bangladesh in 1991–1992 when again around 250,000 people crossed the border. They were recognised by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) as refugees and hosted in camps in the Cox's Bazar district. After several years, the Bangladeshi authorities enforced a policy of repatriation of the refugees. Living conditions in the camps deteriorated which forced most of the refugees to return to Myanmar. Some of the Rohingya who arrived in 1991 and 1992 remained in two camps (Kutupalong 'registered camp' and Nayapara 'registered camp'). Until 2017, these camps were home to around 32,000 registered refugees. The camps still exist but they have now become part of much larger refugee sites accommodating more recently arrived refugees. Many more Rohingya, who arrived after 1992, were not recognized as refugees by the Bangladesh authorities and lived in poor conditions in 'refugee like situations' in makeshift camps surrounding the official camps and Shamlapur at the coast. These

unrecognized refugees were not allowed to receive the services that UNHCR and its partners provided to registered refugees. After the crisis of October 2016 in Rakhine State, an additional 70,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh allowed them to cross the borders unimpededly and the Bangladesh community responded with an outpouring of private assistance. Without waiting for GOB authorization, the refugees further expanded the makeshift settlements around the registered camps and also established an entirely new area of makeshift settlements in Balukhali (in what is now called Camp 10 in Kutupalong). The mass influx of 712,179 refugees from 25 August to 31 December 2017 and an additional 13,223 who arrived since January 2018, caused a major humanitarian emergency that gravely compounded the existing challenges around the provision of assistance to the estimated 200,000 to 300,000 Rohingya refugees who were already in Bangladesh. On 31 August 2018, UNHCR estimated that 889,753 Rohingya refugees were in need of assistance in Cox's Bazar District. Two thirds of the refugees in Bangladesh originate from Maungdaw township in the northern part of Rakhine State. Thirty one percent of the refugee families have been identified as having at least one protection vulnerability. The arrival of so many refugees to the South-eastern districts of Bangladesh has caused a significant increase in population in Cox's Bazar district: in the sub-districts of Teknaf, the Rohingya refugees form 29% of the total population and in Ukhia (which hosts the very large Kutupalong refugee settlement) they form an estimated 76% of the total population. Most Rohingya live in camps, but an estimated 79,000 live among the Bangladeshi host communities (Tay, 2018).



Rohingya Culture under Attack by Myanmar Government

The Buddhists of Myanmar claim that the Rohingya are economically developed, and their culture is under siege than the Rohingya (Mohajon, 2018). This blind phobia made them destroy villages after villages and they tried in all possible way to eradicate every single elements of Rohingya language and culture. Although the language of Rohingya was widespread during the era of Arakan Kings, today its existence as a written language has diminished, as it was mainly destroyed by the Burman invaders in 1784, and was not preserved well by subsequent colonialists (Yunus, 1994). Now none can talk for these oppressed people and nobody is even allowed to visit the Rohingya villages in Myanmar.

Rohingya and Religion

Rohingya are the predominant adherents of Islam in Myanmar, practicing a conservative form of Sunni Islam, based on the Hanafi *mazhab* (school of thought) and that according to some observers has become more orthodox under influence of movements such as the *Tablighi Jamaat*. Religious identity remains important to Rohingya refugees. Older men grow beards and the women usually wear the *hijab* (veil covering the head and chest). Women are restricted from participating in some parts of public and civic life. The traditional houses are surrounded by fences of bamboo, which enables the practice of *purdah* preventing women to be seen by outsiders. There used to be mosques and *madrassahs* (religious schools) in every Rohingya settlement. Men visited the mosque to pray together, while women prayed at home. A governmental ban in 2012 on gatherings of more than four people in Muslim-majority areas made it difficult for Rohingya to pray together. Traditionally, Rohingya have mechanisms to maintain a strong sense of solidarity and collectivism in the villages, a tradition called *samaj*. Practices include communal meat distribution during the religious festival of Eid ul Adha, and support arrangements for orphans and widows. Rohingya also generally make the obligatory Muslim donation (*zakat*) to the needy in the community. Like other Muslims, Rohingya celebrate the Islamic holidays including *Eid al-Fitr* ('feast of breaking the fast'), *Lailat al-Barat* ('night of salvation'), *Lailat al-Qadr* ('night of decree') and *Eid al-Adha* ('feast of the sacrifice'). Historically, *mullahs* (Islamic theologians), *moulvis* (qualified Islamic teachers), and elders (*murobbi*) played important roles in Rohingya villages in Rakhine State. Government restrictions on Rohingya community life in Myanmar have greatly diminished these roles over the past 20 years. Highly respected in the community are the *háfes*, persons who have memorized the Quran. They are often descendants of prominent religious figures, *Háfes* are usually men, but women can also become *háfes*, even though this is rare. Female *háfes* are often consulted by other women for guidance on personal matters, such as how to deal with the husband and may give informal religious classes to small groups of girls or women. While the vast majority of refugees from Rakhine State are Muslim, a small percentage are Hindu. In Rakhine State there were around 21,000 Hindu who are not recognized as an official ethnic group in Myanmar. They speak the same dialect as the Rohingya but usually do not self-identify as Rohingya. Reportedly, there are tensions arose between the two communities in Rakhine in 2017 following Rohingya attacks. On their request, a few hundred Hindu refugees were accommodated in separate refugee settlements in Bangladesh (Tay, 2018).

Power Structure of Socio-political Life of Rohingyas

Hukumot - The highest power is made up of the police, army, Nasaka and Myanmar intelligence, who community members have to obey or risk imprisonment or a large fine.

They oversee taxation and property registration and have authority to give final permission for marriage and building houses. Bribery is necessary to get support from the *Hukumot*.

Local government - The next step is local government, who works under the *Hukamot*. The *Ukatta* (chairman) is the head and could be a Mog or Rohingya. They are elected through a show of hands in the community. Sometimes chairmen are appointed by bribing the *Hukamot*. The chairman solves problems & disputes (for a high fee), gave permission for marriage & building houses.

Murobbi - If problems can not be solved within or between families, they go to *Murobbi*, who could be the local Imam, a teacher or any educated person.

Family - Most of the Rohingya people used to live in a joint family. Disputes are resolved within the family, with the *Uji* (head of household, usually an older man) taking the final decision. In case of theft or similar incidents, they try to resolve it by going to the house of the accused person and discussing it (BBC Media Action, Internews & Translators without Borders. Nd).

Gender Roles and Family Dynamics

Polygamy, in a Sharia designed way, although prohibited by the Myanmar government, remains a traditional practice in the Rohingya culture. The Rohingya typically live in extended families with men heading the household, although women and girls may assume the head-of-household role in the absence of a male. Many Rohingya women and children in Bangladesh live in extremely vulnerable conditions of insecurity as they lost or became separated from their husbands and fathers while fleeing for their lives. Marriage continues to be the primary means of attaining social and economic security for Rohingya women and girls, who are traditionally discouraged from working. The responsibilities of women and girls include all aspects of childcare, food preparation, cleaning, laundry, and caring for the elderly. The practice of *purdah* is widespread in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. While girls up to the age of 12 years are commonly seen outdoors in the villages, frequently caring for younger siblings, at the point of puberty, girls often are required to remain within the family home (*gor golon*) until marriage, and often even following that milestone. The *burqa* and *niqab* (sometimes in combination with an umbrella, for additional modesty) offer increased mobility for women who otherwise would face even greater scrutiny and harassment for conducting their normal business out of doors. Some women, particularly those who have had greater access to education, and as well those who are heads of households, seek work outside the home. Employed women frequently face admonition from their communities and accusations against their character. The perceived 'failure' to adhere to cultural restrictions curtailing women's liberty of movement is seen to reflect poorly on the social status of their families. The power of women within the home is not uniform as it varies with age and status. When Rohingya women marry, they leave their family and are considered part of their husband's family from that point onward. They join the husband's household and are under the supervision and control of the mother-in-law. According to a traditional hierarchy, the wife of the eldest son of a family has relatively greater influence within the household than the wife of the next son, and so on. Decisions related to children's health are traditionally made by the most powerful woman within the household. Marriage is

accompanied by a 'dowry': a gift by the family of the bride to the family of the groom (Tay, 2018).

Rohingya Language

The Rohingya language (Ruáingga or Rohingya) is an Indo-Aryan language that is closely related to the Chittagonian (Chittagong) dialect of Bengali (Bangla) which is spoken by the Bangladeshi host population around Cox's Bazar. The Rohingya language is primarily an oral language and does not have a standardized and internationally recognized written script. Various scripts are used to capture the Rohingya language in written form: Arabic, Urdu, Rohingyalish (a simplified Rohingya script using Latin letters), and Hanifi that is named after its developer Maulana Mohammed Hanif (Tay, 2018).

Historical of Rohingya Poetry

The kingdom of Arakan had come in close cultural contact with the Muslim Sultanat of Bengal since the fifteenth century. When there was political turmoil as a result of the break-up of the Afghan state in Bengal, and gradual advance of Moghuls, Afghan nobles and other Muslims of rank and position fled towards the eastern most districts of Bengal. Quite a few of these people found shelter at the Arakan court where they filled up important positions in the government. Under the patronage of these men a number of such immigrant Muslim intellectuals continued the cultivation of Bengali literature. The Muslim poet who found patronage at Arakan court in the seventeenth century the most notable are Daulat Qazi (Qadi), Alaol (Al Awwal), Magan Siddiqi (Thakur) and Mardan. Daulat Qazi wrote his *Sati Mayna O Lor Chandrani* at the request and under the patronage of Ashraf Khan, described as a Hanafi Muslim who was the adviser and defence minister of Salim Shah II (Thiri Thudamma) 1622-1638. Alawal was another great scholar, poet and musician, having perfect command of a number of languages: Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi. Soon his qualities attracted the notice of Magan Siddiqi (Thakur), who was chief minister of two successive Arakan kings from 1645 to 1660. Magan was himself a man of learning and a poet. He had released Alawal from the cavalry, took him under his patronage at court, and commissioned him to render into Bengali the *Padmavati*, a famous Hindi romantic epic by Malik Mohammed Jaisi. Alawal accomplished the work with consummate ability and unlike Jaisi, who had embossed his story with mystic ideas and supernatural ornamentation, gave prominence to human life and activities. Alawal's *Padmavati* was completed most probably in 1651. His next work was *Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal*, based on the same romantic story in the famous Arabian Nights. It was completed most probably in 1655-1659. This was followed by the composition of *Half-Paika* (seven portraits) based on the Persian poet Nizam Ganjabi's work of the same name. It was completed after the Moghul prince Shah Shuja's flight to Arakan in 1660, which is mentioned in the work. Alawal was thrown into prison for his suspected but unfounded complicity with Shah Shuja. After a short time, however, the poet was released and was restored to favour at the instance of an influential Qadi named Masud Shah and a minister at the Arakan court named Sulaiman Siddiqi. At the latter's request Alawal composed the *Tuhfa* on the basis of Yusuf Gada's Persian work of the same name. It deals with the injunctions and observances of Islam. The work was completed the remaining portion of Daulat Qazi's *Sati Mayna O Lor Chandrani*. In his old age Alawal received the patronage of Majlis Navaraj, an important noble or minister at the Arakan court. At his instance Alawal rendered into Bengali Nizam Ganjabis famous work *Sikandarnama*, which is a collection of enchanting stories that had

developed in Persia round Alexander's expeditions. Besides these works Alawal also composed a number of mystical and lyric poems, mostly in his old age. Though his principal works were mainly in the nature of translation or adaptation from Persian works, Alawal recreated much in the process. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest poets of Bengali literature. Leider (2018) states, "With his works in Bengali embedding Persian narratives in Sanskrit poetic forms, the poet Alaol stands out as an eminent representative of the Muslim elite at the Arakanese court." Alawal's patron Magan Thakur also was a poet of no small merit. He was a Muslim born of a Siddiqi family; but the title of Thakur was conferred on him by the Arakan ruler who used to confer that title on persons of the highest rank and distinction. Magan was well versed in Arabic, Persian, Hindi and Bengali. Only one of his poetical compositions, the *Chandravati*, has hitherto been discovered. It is the story of love between prince Birbhan with princess Chandravati and possesses considerable literary merit. Magan died most probably in 1660. One of his contemporaries and for sometime a contemporary of poet Daulat Qazi, was poet Mardan. He states his birth-place to be Kanchipuri in Arakan where there lived, according to his description, a number of Ulama and Shaikhs together with Brahmans and Kayasthas who were engaged in literary activities. He wrote an epic entitled *Nasib Nama* which is somewhat original in nature in that it is not based on any Arabic or Persian work but on contemporary social life. The literary tradition established at Arakan by those poets continued for long till at least the end of the eighteenth century when we come across another important Muslim poet named Abdul Karim Khandakar. He says that his great grandfather, Rasul Mia, was a custom officer under the Arakan King, while his grandfather, Masan Ali, was well-versed in different languages so that he acted as an interpreter at the port in connection with foreign ships and merchants that used to come there. Abdul Karim's father Ali Akbar also was a man of learning. Abdul Karim received the patronage of one wealthy merchant named Sadiq Nana Atiabar. At his request Abdul Karim translated into Bengali a Persian work entitled *Dulla Majlis* in 1789. Previously he had composed two other works, *Hajar Masail* and *Tamam Anjari*, also on the basis of Persian work. Speaking about a village named Bandar in Roshang (Arakan) Abdul Karim says "There lived in that village *qadis*, *muftis*, *ulama*, religious fakirs and darvishes. Those high-ranking Muslims living there used converse with the king on equal and friendly terms. Whenever a poor man happened to visit the village, he was never returned empty handed. For saying prayers a mosque was built there by Sadiq Nana Atiabar. For this act he became well-known in the society. There gathered a good number of *Ulama* in the village who supervised the regular saying of prayers. One of them was appointed Khatib, while another was appointed Imam (respectively for Jum'a and daily prayers) (Yunus, 1994).

Putti

Bengali became a favourite language and the Arakan kings encouraged the writing of a number of Puttis, which was then the only form of literature. Some *Putti* literatures to be mentioned of Arakan are: Shuja Qazi's *Roshanger Panchali* (History of Roshang), Kazi Daulat's *Sati Mayna-O-Lora Candrani*, Shamer Ali's *Razawan Shah*, Mardan's *Nasir Nama* or *Nasir Maloum*, Shah Alaol's *Padmabati*, Tufa, *Sati Mayna Lor Chandrani*, Saiful Mulk Badiujjamal, *Sikander Nama*, *Hatf-Paikar*, Abdul Karim's *Dulla Mailis*, *Hajar Masail*, *Tamam Anjari*, Qazi Abdul Karim's *Rahatul Qulub*, Abdullar Hazar Sawal, *Nurnama*, *Madhumalati*,

Darige Majlis, Abul Hussain's Adamer Larai, Ismail Saquib's Bilqisnama, Qazi Muhammad Hussain's Amir Hamza, Dewalmati, Haidar Jung, and etc. Thus Arakan opened up a new field for expansion and exploitation for the Muslims of Chittagong. Except for the political barriers Chittagong and Arakan became one in all other respects and this continued for well over a century and to some extent lingered even up to the first half of the last century (Alam, 1999).

Rohingya Music

Music plays an important role in the life of a displaced community like the Rohingyas (Farzana, 2011). Little has been written in English about the music of Rohingya, and few high-quality recordings of their traditional music exist. When a state tries to eradicate an entire people, music can help preserve their culture and identity, to a Rohingya singer, "in the lyrics, the history comes." The Rohingyas have strong musical traditions, particularly with [an 8-string mandolin](#). Other popular instruments include [the harmonium](#) (a pump organ common on the Indian subcontinent), and [various drums and percussion instruments](#). Their song lyrics come from folklore and the artists themselves, offering a glimpse into their history and modern ways of coping with pain and conflict (Ingber, 2019).

Taranas, poetic verses that recount trauma, history, and feelings about an ambivalent future (Ingber, 2019) is the mostly sung genre of songs of Rohingyas. *Tarana* poems/songs express emotions (often related to despair, melancholy and fear). They can be recited or sung, sometimes with aid of musical instruments such as the *tobla* (small drums) or *juri* (traditional guitar-like instrument). Songs constitute a medium to keep alive the history and preserve the collective identity (Tay, 2018). Music and song reflect lives of people the way they think, feel, express and the way they are. Likewise, the lives of Rohingyas are influenced with one of the most important factors of culture; music and song. Rohingyas use many traditional instruments such as Tobla and Juri in combination of modern musical instruments. Song plays an oral medium for transmitting emotion, feeling and sentiment of Rohingyas in order to keep their history alive to the majority of non-literate community through religious, philosophical country songs. In summer time, many Rohingya youngsters go for singing under the moonlit nights with or without their musical instruments to feel fresh. There are also many groups of singers and musicians who release songs of all genres, and even it is easy for anyone who wants to dedicate a song for special one mentioning the name in the song from his or her favorite singer. Farzana (2011) illustrates the influence and importance of tarana rightly in her research paper, "When the refugees look to the east from Bangladesh towards Arakan and the mountain range of Arakan Yoma, they 'remember many things of the past'. Many families were split up. Parents had sent their young children outside of Arakan to save their lives while they themselves chose to stay and die in their homeland. These are the painful memories the refugees hide as they go about their daily lives; they continue to cherish these memories in their minds and sustain them by composing songs. They still feel nostalgic for their homeland. Perhaps this tarana served as a constant reminder of their past."

Howla or Ola or Foula is a kind of popular song sung in almost every wedding ceremony by women accompanied with dancing.

Bitayali Geet (song), Jari Geet and Gazir Geet are some of the melodious songs popular

among Rohingya community. It is well noted that Rohingya Music and Song was broadcasted on May 15, 1962, the year before Ne Win military regime seized power.

Qawwali, two groups of people answering each other in forms of songs.

Ailshiari, groups of farmers mocking each other through songs while working.

Popular folk musicians - Abu Taiyob, Taher, Yusuf, Hajara.

Instruments - Sitar, Mandolin, Shaker, Violin, Harmonica, Juri. (BBC Media Action, Internews & Translators without Borders, nd)

Farzana (2011) states how life in camps is looking forward through music, "music has been used as an effective means in the Rohingyas' displaced life to keep alive their memories of the past. Being a non-literate community, the songs have become a medium for them to save their history and pass it on to the younger generations. It is a medium that allows them to avoid direct confrontation with their persecutors and oppressors while at the same time enables them to express their resentments and frustrations. They are primarily doing this for themselves, but at the same time it can give outsiders an in-depth understanding into their life in exile, their identity, and their culture."

Clothing

Rohingyas traditionally follow the Indo-Burmese dresses which date back to the origin of Rohingya hundreds of years ago (The Stateless Rohingya.com). Rohingya women typically dress in traditional clothing, such as a *sarong* (also called *ta-mi*, *ta-ine*, or a female *longyi*) which is a large cut of fabric, often wrapped around the waist, blouse and *urna* or veil, a piece of cloths on the head. Men often dress in *longyi* (a sheet of cloth wrapped around the waist extending to the feet that is widely worn in Myanmar) and shirt (Tay, 2018).. In addition to these, the religious scholars prefer wearing Kurutha, Jubba or Panjabi (long clothes) together with hats with or without turbans. In official or national occasions, Rohingya men sometimes wear Taikpon (collarless jackets) on top of the shirts (The Stateless Rohingya.com). When they go outside, Rohingya women wear a *hijab* (head covering veil) or a *niqab* (face covering veil) with a *Burkah*, a long robe from shoulder to toe, including an umbrella. Due to remoteness and restrictions on movement, Rohingya in rural areas in the northern townships of Rakhine State tend to be more conservative than those in the central townships (i.e. Sittwe, Pauk Taw, Min Bya, Mrauk Oo and Kyauk Taw) which are more urbanized and where people have easier access to higher levels of education. In the central townships, women do not necessarily wear the full *hijab* while women in the northern townships of Rakhine may, in addition to the *hijab*, also wear a *burqa* and *niqab*. Several humanitarian workers observed that this custom has changed rapidly since the encampment of internally displaced persons in 2012 in that there is an increase of conservative values within the groups now confined within the camps for internally displaced persons in Myanmar. Within refugee settings in Bangladesh, some humanitarian workers report an increase in the use of face-covering clothing (Tay, 2018). The commonest of all is wearing slippers (Sandal) both men and women alike; lighter, slimmer and smaller for women (The Stateless Rohingya.com).

Mehendi or Henna

As part of their traditional cultural practice, Rohingya women decorate their skin with henna paste, or 'mehendi' for marriage or religious ceremonies. Older men use henna to colour

their beards as a religious practice. *Henna* may also be used as traditional medicine to heal broken bones, headache, backache, stomach pain or burns (Tay, 2018).

Food

The common Rohingya diet consists of rice, fresh and dried fish, potatoes, vegetables, rice noodles, chicken, milk and chillies. Occasionally, for example at religious holidays, people eat meat (beef, mutton and chicken) slaughtered according to the Islamic law (halal). Islamic law prohibits consumption of tortoise, crab and pork. If they can afford it Rohingya use three meals per day. The family usually has the meal in the house, men and children taking their meal first with the women and older girls taking their meal after the men have finished (Tay, 2018).

Cakes

Bola Fida (Rohingya Snack)- It is one of the favorite cakes among the Rohingyas. It is made from rice powder and it is like hand-made noodles. Then it is cooked with sugar and served to the guests and family members. It is extensively sold in the BOLI khela, a kind of wrestling, and other festivals.

Ludifida - Ludifida is traditional food of the Rohingya people. They enjoy whenever they have Ludifida at home or during festivals.

Modu Bat – Modu Bat is a kind of soaked rice (made from half germinated rice powder) served in the early morning in the season of sowing (The Stateless Rohingya.com).

Faan

For recreational purposes, people widely use betel leaf (*faan*) with areca nut and tobacco. After chewing it is either spat out or swallowed. When people meet each other or make a home visit, they habitually offer *faan* (betel leaf) and areca nut (Tay, 2018).

Biri

Many men smoke, either cigarettes or *biri* (handmade cigarette). Some women also smoke. Use of alcohol is prohibited by Islamic law (Tay, 2018).

Names

Rohingya do not have surnames and names do not change when individuals get married. The use of names is dictated by custom, for example, it is cultural practice that younger persons do not address older persons by their name, but according to their age, gender, and position in the family and society. In Myanmar, particularly in central Rakhine, Rohingya may have two names, one Muslim and one Burmese. Rohingya often abbreviate names: for example, Mohamed will be pronounced as 'Mammad', Hussein as 'Hussaun' or 'Hussinya', Ahmed as 'Ammad', Mohamed Ullah as 'Madullah' and Hafiz as 'Habes' (Tay, 2018).

Games and Sports

Traditionally Rohingyas have their own style of games and sports. Boys and men play several games, sports and did other activities for entertainment.

Some boys' games are-

- *Dang khela* or tip-cat
- *Guli khela* or marbles

- *Gundi* or kite flying

Tip-cat is a game played with two sticks, the aim being to hit the shorter one the furthest distance possible.

'*Morich Khela*' was played by both male and female children in water by continuously hitting on water with a stick made from coconut leaves.

Married and unmarried girls used to play '*Gila Toktta*' (similar to tip-cat) together at night. Girls used to play indoor and outdoor games before reaching puberty. After puberty they used to play indoor games and do indoor activities.

Some games for girls are -

- *Lohaluhi* or hide and seek
- *Faldoni* or skipping
- *Chohodda/Malabuchi* (pretend cooking game)
- *Refet* (played with marbles)
- *Panch gola/Chaku beta* (played with five small stones)

Competitive Games

They have some competitive games as well, chiefly played by grown up males. Rohingya Bolis (Wrestlers) are once famous in Bangladesh. Some mostly played games are-

- *Boli khela* or wrestling
- *Dudu khela*: played in moonlight by making a court in the open space
- *Kralu/Kralum/Kralung*: beach volleyball like sport
- *Nouka Bais* or rowing
- Football. (BBC Media Action, Internews & Translators without Borders. Nd)

Festivals, Holidays and Occasions

Fairs are arranged during *boli khela* or wrestling, *gundi* or kite flying and rowing. Men from adjacent villages came to the fairs. Rohingya women were not allowed to go to these public programmes.

Tamasha/Tousha is arranged during fairs, which comprised dance and drama where men performed as women (BBC Media Action, Internews & Translators without Borders. Nd).

Tumbru Khela is a kind of open magic games with some black magic performed by the trained and learned black magicians in an open place by the bank of a river or a big pond with trees.

Eid- ul-Fitr is the festival ending month long fasting of Muslims holy month of Ramadan. On the day they wear new dresses and women color their hands with Henna or mehendi. In every household they offer sweetmeats to their visitors. The door is open to the known and unknown till evening.

Eid-ul-Adha is the festival of sacrificing an animal (halal) in the name of Allah commemorating the memory Abraham's sacrifice.

Lailat-ul-Barat is the night of salvation from hell by Allah's blessing, given that one fasts in the day and offer prayer for whole night or in the late night. The night comes before Ramadan month. It is also called as Shab-e-Barat. People make Ludifida and beef curries on this night.

Lailat-ul-Qadar is the night of power. It is a night one can be bestowed on the odd nights of last ten days of Ramadan, namely- 21/23/25/27th of Ramadan. People normally pray whole

night from dusk to dawn chiefly on 27th of Ramadan. People make Ludifida with Halua and beef curries on this night.

Ramadan Karim is the holiest of all festivals. It has a great influence in Rohingyas life and culture. In this month, they go for extra prayer, and in the last ten days of this month they stay in the mosque which called as Itikaf, women also can stay at home in a highly confined room for their spiritual purity and sanctity.

Hajj is a yearly ritual and pilgrimage to the holy lands of Mecca and Medina. The rich Rohingyas pay the visit. People who performs this pilgrimage services called as Hajji and highly trusted and respected in the society.

Foteya/Foitfa/Mejban/Mejjan/Mela is a kind of food offering on some anniversaries; on the day of kid's naming 'Akika', on the 4th and 40th day (also on yearly death anniversary) of loved one's death, on Ashura or Miladunnobi etc.

Han Chedani/Han Furani is a kind of gathering of relatives and neighbors to celebrate Ear Stitching of a young Rohingya girl. **And Gor Galani** is a small gathering where a girl who enters into puberty is ceremonially announced to stay inside the home.

Khatna/Mussolmani is a gathering of relatives to celebrate genital mutilation of a young Rohingya boy. A rural Hajam performs the mutilation with herbal medicines. People are offered foods and sweetmeats on the day.

Waj mahfil is a kind of common congregation organized by some local organizations or religious institutions to commemorate some days or to preach Islamic teachings among the people. Religious leaders sermon for the people and at the last part of the sermon they perform common prayer.

Jumma or Friday prayer is a prayer offered in the mid day on Friday. It starts with Khuthba and ends with a common prayer.

Holidays

- Independence Day – January 4th marking the independence of Burma from British power.
- Union Day – February 12th marks the anniversary of Panglong Agreement in 1947.
- Rohingya Indigenous Ethnic Day – September 25th commemorates the declaration by the then Prime Minister of Burma U Nu Rohingyas as the aboriginal in his speech to the nation at 8:00 pm in 1954.

Mobile, radio and TV

People used mobiles to listen to the radio, which played folk music and other types of music like Rohingya, Bangla and Hindi songs. Men loaded songs on mobile memory cards for women to listen to at home. Men used to watch movies on TV in the local market. Women played games on their mobile phones (BBC Media Action, Internews & Translators without Borders. Nd)

Other Entertainment Popular with Women

Listening to stories told by their mother during childhood, for example, Prophet Mohammed (s.a.a.w)'s and his daughter Fatema's story, chatting while doing household chores, sewing (BBC Media Action, Internews & Translators without Borders. Nd)

Thanaka

Rohingya Muslim women and girls use swirls of yellow paste made from ground tree bark to decorate their cheeks. Thanaka, a type of sun protection that dates back centuries, is a

common sight on the faces of the women. They believe the use of the paste keeps their skin smooth and cool, safe from exposure to the sun, and fends off acne. Thanaka is produced from the bark of a tree found in the dry central parts of Myanmar. A flat stone called a kyauk pyin is used to grind the bark into a milky yellow paste. The paste is applied to the face in various patterns and dries into a protective layer. While it is used medicinally elsewhere in Asia, women in Myanmar also use it as a cosmetic. Rohingya girls and women use traditional methods to make the paste from thanaka tree bark which is sold in the camps. But now a days they don't feel free using *thanaka* as it is not used by local host communities.

Arts

Arts, drawings, paintings and so on are strong means of history, social movements, and resistance. The use of the visual arts is not so widespread among the Rohingyas (Farzana, 2011).

Some Rohingya Songs

Collected from Ingber (2016).

Artiste: Mohammed Alom, a Rohingya singer

We are the Rohingya nation,
bad luck.
We've been orphans for a lifetime.
If our Rohingya community had parents,
we wouldn't have to leave the country.
We are here, Rohingya nation: mother, father, brothers, sisters.
We don't have a place in Burma.

If we had peace in the country,
we wouldn't have come to this foreign country.
Wouldn't have brought mother, father, brothers, sisters, relatives
to this country.
We, Rohingya nation, didn't have any choice.
We are the Rohingya nation.

Collected from Farzana (2011)

Artiste: Aleya Banu, a Rohingya Singer

We spent our life crying

We spent our days crying
Surrounded by the Mogs in Burma
So we've left behind homeland
Fearing torture of the government
We spent our life crying
In a home called Arakan
So we've left behind homeland
Fearing torture of the government.

Tender babies and charming lovely kids
Why should they starve to death?
So we've left behind homeland
Fearing torture of the government
We spent our life crying.

Surrounded by the Mogs in Burma
So we've left behind homeland
Fearing torture of the government.

Mogs attend elementary
Yet they pick the stick to rule,
But we get to sell betel leaves
Even if we earn a BA*
Tender babies and charming lovely kids
Why should they starve to death?
So we've left behind Arakan
So we've left due to fear of everyone.

Tender babies and charming lovely kids
Why should they starve to death?
So we've left due to fear of everyone
So we've left due to fear of military men
We spent our life crying
Surrounded by the Mogs in Burma
So we've left behind homeland
Fearing torture of the government

Artiste: Tonima

We have become refugees

Oh God, forgiving and merciful
We are in exile
We have become refugees (II)

For how long will you keep us in this mountain caves
For how long will you make us eaten by insects (II)

We remained adrift suffering from tortures
Oh God make our country peaceful if you wish (II)

Artiste: Chorus song

We migrated to Bangladesh leaving behind our beautiful homes

On our rooftop there was dried food
In our field we had fresh chillies

we migrated to Bangladesh leaving everything behind thinking
that we are of the same (Muslim) brotherhood
Now when we look back to the East,
We remember many things of the past
O, where are my beloved parents?
You sent us to Bangladesh
We migrated leaving behind the country Burma (II)

Note: All the songs are in translated version.

Recommendations for Programming

In depth research – I like to recommend for in depth research on the matter of Rohingya culture, customs and traditions to find out the real life practices.

Collaborations among the agencies around the world – A joint collaboration should be made to sort out what and how to programming for cultural education and revitalization for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Preservation of Rohingya culture – Actors responding to Rohingya refugee crisis should take necessary steps to preserve their history, culture, language, traditions, customs and beliefs before it ruins or diminishes in their life without root.

Conclusion

A nation builds on its distinct nature of traditions, beliefs, history, myths, language, culture, customs, traditions and everyday practices. When a government opposes everything they, Rohingyas, believe, do, work, passionate for, create, practice or cherish; it is our collective duty to work for this nation to heal them the oppressions and severe oppositions they faced and to help them believe that they are not alone. A hand on a shoulder who lost everything is a hand of God.

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