

Dance of Humanity: Victimization of Rohingya Muslims on the Name of Religion

Md Ehtesham Akhtar*

Department of Sociology, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, India

*Corresponding author: Md Ehtesham Akhtar, Department of Sociology, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, India, Tel: 9311718473; E-mail: ehteshamsociology@gmail.com

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Abstract

Rohingya Muslims belongs to the ethnic races of Burma, living there from centuries, denied citizenship on the name of religion. Now victim of Myanmar government and most persecuted minority in the world. More than six lakhs Rohingya left Myanmar within four months. Such huge migration never witnessed in the history in a so short duration. Rohingya lacking for basic human needs. Majority of Rohingya living in a refugee camps in a densely populated country Bangladesh where he is trailing for food, cloth, medicine and shelter etc. Entire world viewing the condition of Rohingya but silent. The paper had tried to draw the attention of all piece lover of the world to think and do something positive for Rohingya on the name of humanity and pressurize Myanmar government to take his bias decision back and provide Rohingya their rights in their home land.

Keywords: Rohingya; Multi-religious country; Muslims

Introduction

Rohingya's are known as the most persecuted minority in the world who are victim to Myanmar's government since 1982 when they were denied citizenship and rendered them stateless. The world knows that, Rohingya are ethnic races of Burma, majority of them are Muslims living in a Buddhist country from centuries. Rohingyas speak Rohingya and Ruaingga dialect that is distinct from other dialects throughout Myanmar. Still Rohingya are not considered as an ethnic race of Burma out of the 135 official ethnic groups in the country.

Majority of Rohingyas live in Rakhine state that is the poorest state of the country, full of lack of basic services and opportunities. Due to continuous violence a large number of Rohingyas fled to neighbouring countries like India and Bangladesh living as refugees and trailing from human basic needs.

The Union of Burma is a multi-cultural and multi-religious country born on 4 January 1948, which occupies an area of about 2,61,610 sq. Miles situated in Southeast Asia touching the border of India, Bangladesh, China, Laos and Thailand, strategically located near the Indian Ocean shipping lanes. About 60% of the country's population is non-Burmese; they are Shan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Pa-o, Palaung, Padaung, Naga, Lahu, Akha, Wa, Rohingya (Arakanese Muslim), Rakhine (Arakanese Buddhist) and many other indigenous races [1].

History shows Islam came to Burma in Arakan region before 788 A.D during Abbasid caliphate when the capital was Baghdad. That was also the fastest spreading period of Islam in the world. During Abbasid period Burmese accepted Islam not only in Arakan region but all over the Burma. A large number of local Burmese accepted Islam. Majority of Arakanies accepted Islam in comparison to other region of Burma. Thus Islam played an important role in the Arakanies civilization.

Arakan / Rakhine Geographical location

Arakan region Now Rakhine state covers an area of about 20,000 sq.miles. Arakan was an independent kingdom for most of its history. It was also ruled by Indian kingdoms and Burmese Empires. Today, the territory forms the Rakhine State in Myanmar. The region is bordered by the Bay of Bengal to its west, the Indian subcontinent to its north and Burma proper to its east. The Arakan Mountains isolated the region from rest of Burma and once made Arakan accessible only by sea (Wikipedia). There are seven rivers in Arakan. They are the Naf, the Mayu, the Kaladan, the Lemro, the Ann, the Taungup and the Sandoway. The four major navigable rivers are the Naf, Mayu, Kaladan and Lemro and all they are situated in the Northern Arakan. All these four rivers are tidal and easily navigable all the year round. Akyab is situated on the seacoast at the mouth of the Kaladan River and it is the Capital of Arakan since 1826 AD.

Arakan is inhabited by two major ethnic races, the Rohingyas and the Rakhines (Maghs). The Rohingyas are Muslims and the Maghs are Buddhists. At present, the Rohingyas and the Maghs stand at almost in equal proportion. The Rohingyas are mostly concentrated in the riparian plains of Naf, Mayu and Kaladan. Arakan is the only Muslim majority province among the 14 provinces of Burma. Out of the 7 million Muslim population of Burma half of them are in Arakan [1].

Poor Rohingya

Muslims and Buddhist are living together in Burma from centuries. They have common culture and language. Till the time before Britishers came to Burma both Buddhist and Muslims lived together without any major and minor violence. Their life was full of brotherhood love and affection, both community have cooperation for each other.

Situation of Burma turned when Britishers arrived and ruled with the policy of divide and rule. The divide and rule policy converted love and affection into hatred and peace into violence. Now both

communities Buddhist and Muslims have no love for each other. Both communities see each other as an enemy. During British rule Muslims were not given even single key position in British Government. Britishers started discriminating Muslims in all sphere of rules. This was the period Muslims started losing their domination and position In Burma intentionally Britishers kept Arakan underdeveloped. All kinds of development work were carried out outside Arakan state. No good schools and hospitals were given to Rohingya dominated region. Britishers put a poison in the mind of Buddhist that Rohingyas are foreigners they doesn't belongs to ethnic races of Burma. Still Rohingyas are suffering from that poison. Unfortunately, the same policy was adopted by previous military government and by the present ruling government.

After Independence from British in 1948, Burmese government passed the union citizenship act defining which ethnic group could avail citizenship of Burma. According to a 2015 report by the International Human Rights Clinic at Yale Law School, Rohingyas were not included in the list of citizenship. The act, however, did allow those whose families lived in Myanmar for at least two generations may apply for identity cards. Rohingyas were initially given such identification or even citizenship under the generational provision. During that time, several Rohingya also served in Parliament [2].

After Military coup in Myanmar situation turned dramatically. All Rohingyas were given foreign identity card in place of national registration cards that restricts their rights in their home land. The foreign identity card limits their rights of jobs, education, marriage, free travel, free practice of their religion and culture. In 1982 new citizenship act was passed, again Rohingya was not considered as one of the country's 135 ethnic groups. Rohingya have no voting rights. Since the 1970s, a number of crackdowns on the Rohingya in Rakhine State have forced hundreds of thousands to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh, as well as Malaysia, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. During such crackdowns, refugees have often reported rape, torture, arson and murder by Myanmar security forces [2].

Socio and economic condition

Economic condition of Rohingyas is extremely poor not due to Rohingyas are incapable of earning money. They have capacity to lead the nation. Before independence Britishers and after independence Burmese government both kept Arakan region far from all kinds of development intentionally. Government policies scheme and programmes all goes to non-rohinga region. Even international Non-Governmental and United Nation Organization is seen more active in non-Rohinga region. In international organization the ground level planner and workers are non-rohingyas. Due to hatred, they don't want to work in Rohingya region. Thus I can strongly say international schemes and programmes easily transferred to Non-Rohingyas region, outside Arakan/ Rakhine [3].

Social hatred are curse for any nation either that may be developed or undeveloped. Rohingas are economically and educationally backward not by chance but by force. Both National and International agencies are responsible for rohingya backwardness. International communities know better the condition of Rohingya despite that they are not seen active for the development of Arakan region. Rohingyas are totally dependent on agriculture and nature. Agriculture and cattleing are the main occupation of Rohingya, on the other hand it could be easily and strongly said that Rohingyas are dependent on nature, agricultural work totally depends on nature in almost all parts

of the globe. The main hinderance in agricultural harvesting in Arakan is flood that affects agricultural production.

As the study shows Arakan is not rich in minerals and not in industrial set up. Minerals and industries are the bone and stairs of development for any nation. Government could setup industry in the region but racial and religious hatred did not allow [4]. Despite long hatred Rohingyas are living a simple life, are strong believers and practitioners of the exchange of goods among Rohingyas are near and according to Islamic teachings and shariah.

Political involvement

Rohingare are politically weak due to lack of education and economy. No strong political parties and political leaders are seen among Rohingyas in Rakhine or outside Rakhine. The question arises why Rohingyas are lacking from strong Political parties and political leaders? The answer of the question is that Rohingyas are surviving for food from centuries that hinders Rohingyas to think to lead Rakhine [5]. In starvation circumstances, no individual or group could think about political affiliation or for political parties (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Showkat Shafi/Al Jazeera.

The Picture shows the level of poverty in Rakhine. Such malnutritionist people could never think about the future of Rakhine state. They are more concerned about food and shelter. If he takes food in the morning he is worried about the food in the evening. The world could never expect from Rohingya to lead Rakhine. Such people could never talk diplomatically on state crisis. World leaders have to come forward for Rohingyas rights.

Available literature shows that, earlier no human rights or social activist groups have talked strongly for Rohingas rights before the present crisis. No country has taken strong step in favour of Rohingas including Turkey. As mentioned above Rohingas are politically victimized from centuries. The question arises, what human right groups were doing for Rohingyas in the name of justice and discrimination? It will not be an exaggeration to say even UN was silent on Rohingyas issues.

The question arises why Burmese army dared mass killing in Burma despite UN's harsh laws relating to human rights. Another question arises, who supported them for mass killing. They, the Myanmar army are well aware that international community will not be silent on the genocide of Muslims. They also know that Muslim countries will raise their voices in UN and demand for lots of sanctions. Muslim countries will pressurise UN to take harsh action against Myanmar army.

Women and Children

According to Alzazeera reports 28 September 2017, UN rights experts urge Myanmar to 'vigorously prosecute cases of violence' against Rohingya women and children. UN rights experts have warned that the violence against women and children in Rakhine State "may amount to crimes against humanity". The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of a Child called on Myanmar authorities to promptly and effectively investigate and vigorously prosecute cases of violence against women and children in northern Rakhine. We are particularly worried about the fate of Rohingya women and children subjected to serious violations of their human rights, including killings, rape and forced displacement (the committees said in a statement on Wednesday 28 September 2017). The question arises, despite knowing the fact why all peace lovers of the world- individual, group and organizations are silent on human crisis. Human crisis should not be seen by linking with religion. By viewing Rohingya crisis it will not be an exaggeration to say all peace lovers of the world looking Rohingya crisis as a matter of religion that is unfair for the humanity.

Myanmar violence is crime against humanity

Definition of humanity changed- no one dare to talk, whats happening against innocent citizen of Rakhine. Today's world talking about pseudo justice, Pseudo humanity. The entire world is viewing mass killing of innocent men, women and children. World is watching the videos of barbarous killing of Rohingyas but yet silent. Both powerful and powerless countries are silent on the cause; all are watchers of the situation. It will not be an exaggeration to say that, Myanmar Government is a terrorist government on the humanitarian ground. Entire world should unite and take Military action against such terrorist Government. In the Past military action was taken against Saddam Hussain and Gaddafi, they had not gone through genocides, but military action was taken. In Afghanistan Military action was taken due to terrorist Government, but no mass killing of human was seen. Why is military action not taken against Myanmar Government which is also a terrorist government who has involved in genocide? The question arises where justice has gone from the world?

According to Rashtriya Sahara Urdu news dated 27/10/2017 more than six lakhs Rohingyas reached to Bangladesh living as refugees. Six lakhs people never left in the above mentioned countries in a short duration of one and a half month [6]. No one dared to stop the plight of Muslims from Myanmar. International agencies helping Rohingyas in Bangladesh but why not in Rakhine state, why they are afraid to help in Myanmar. Zehra Begum living in Bangladesh in Rohingya refugees' camp narrated that she and her family came to Bangladesh by foot crossing border, she tells that the condition of Muslims in Rakhine is worst; she is feeling peace in Bangladesh. Another woman Sameera Akhtar living in Rohingya camp in Bangladesh tells lots of refugees lost their life in sea when coming to Bangladesh by sinking boat. On eleven October 2017 twenty year old Haseena Akhtar gave birth to Mohammad Zuber in refugees' camp in Bangladesh, she left Rakhine when she was pregnant. Now she is worried about her infant [7].

On September 25, 2017 Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that security forces in Myanmar were waging "Buddhist terror" against Rohingya Muslims in the country, slamming what he called a lack of humanitarian efforts by the international community to protect the rights of the Muslim minority. There is obviously a genocide going on there. I am saying it clearly and they might be disturbed. Do those

who speak to the world about 'Islamic terrorism' also talk about Christian terrorism,' Jewish terrorism' or 'Buddhist terrorism'? No. They always show Buddhists as goodwill ambassadors like this. But actually there is 'Buddhist terrorism' going on in Myanmar right now," Erdoğan said at the International Ombudsman Conference in Istanbul.

Erdoğan claimed that there would be tens of thousands more casualties "if Turkey had not told the world" about events in Myanmar. He particularly singled out the United Nations for criticism, complaining that the U.N. session on Rohingya Muslims during the 72nd General Assembly last week only saw the participation of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the presidential level, the Pakistani and Bangladeshi prime ministers at the prime ministry level, and the deputy prime minister of Indonesia. The remaining participants were at the level of foreign ministers, Erdoğan said, slamming the "indifference" of the international community on the Rohingya tragedy and calling for "sanctions rather than condemnations." Repeating his criticism of the international system, the Turkish president blasted the fact that the operational power of the U.N. General Assembly was "in the hands of only five countries," which he said "locked the system." The presence of the U.N. cannot clearly be seen in crisis regions around the world that postponed due to the interests of the five countries of the U.N. Security Council, he claimed. Earlier this month, First Lady Emine Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu visited Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh alongside a Turkish delegation, during which they distributed aid to the Muslim minority. Above Turkish president statement clearly indicates all types of sanctions and actions are only for Muslims and Muslim countries, all powerful countries united on the Muslim issues. If we look Syria, Iraq and Libya they have different kind of political situation. The powerful countries have their own interest in that country but in the case of Rohingya totally innocent humans are facing starvation and oppression of Myanmar army. Again question arises where are the world human rights gone?

Vision of rights group

Myanmar government faced lot of criticism from abroad for not stopping the violence. The world believed that the Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is responsible for Rakhine ethnic clinching. Intellectual and peace loving of the world demands that Aung san suu kyi should returned Nobel award for peace. Being a head of the state she is totally a failure in establishing peace in the region. On the other hand it will not be an exaggeration to say she is an enemy of peace and terrorist supporter. She is not peace loving women. Thus this prestigious award should be taken back. That will also be a message for others. Protest of the world shows new sanction should be imposed on Myanmar government. Especially in the field of arms deal, all kind of agreement with Myanmar government should be cancelled, on the humanitarian ground and being a terrorist state.

According to Alzazeera news, residents and activists have described scenes of troops firing indiscriminately at unarmed Rohingya men, women and children. The government, however, has said nearly 100 people were killed after armed men from the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) launched a raid on police outposts in the region. Since the violence erupted, rights groups have documented fires burning in at least 10 areas of Myanmar's Rakhine State. More than 500,000 people have fled from the region according to the UN refugee agency [8,9].

United States has called for the protection of civilians and a deputy assistant secretary of state, Patrick Murphy, is due in Myanmar this

week. He will travel to Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, to meet government officials and representatives of different communities, including Rohingya, but he is not seeking to travel to the conflict zone in northern Rakhine State. Patrick should visit disturbed zone and meet real victims. Without travel in conflict Zone no one could know actual situations. Myanmar officials and victims representative will talk to them diplomatically because such meetings are always planned. In such circumstances no Representative of Rohingyas could dare to talk on real situations of the state. If he will talk on real situation he will be the next victim of the criminal military Government. All human being loves his life and their children. Thus it can be strongly said that Patrick will be kept in dark by Myanmar governments as he could never know and will never be aware with the real situation and could not hear the pain of victims as Turkey's first lady Emine Erdoğan and foreign minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu heard the pain of victims and wept (Figure 2).



Figure 2: President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Wife Emine Erdogan meeting Rohingya Muslims in Bangladesh.

Human Rights Watch called for governments to impose travel bans and freeze assets on security officials implicated in serious abuses, expand existing arms embargoes to include all military sales, assistance, and cooperation, and place a ban on financial transactions with key military-owned enterprises. Bangladesh is struggling to cope with the influx of refugees; many of them women and children, and aid workers fear people could die due to a lack of food, shelter and water, given the huge numbers fleeing the violence. Bangladesh has said all refugees must go home. Myanmar has said it will take back those who can verify their citizenship [10]. The question arises still Myanmar government belief Rohingyas are not citizens of Myanmar. What kind of proof does Myanmar government require for citizenship? It is understood that Myanmar government is not going to accept any kind of proof of citizenship from Rohingya, terrorist Government have lots of excuses. International community, human right watch and peace loverd have to sit and pave the way for solution and pressurize Myanmar Government to accept Rohingya as a citizen of Myanmar without any kind of hatred and discrimination. This is not an easy task for an individual and a single nation. Any one of the above mentioned group have to come on front and gather the world peace lover individual, group and nation and pass resolution and take hard decision and action in the name of humanity.

Violation of human rights

According to Al Jazeera and news agencies dated 29 September 2017 The United Nations boss has called for action to end "violence" against the Rohingya, pleading with the Myanmar government to immediately end military operations against the majority Muslim ethnic group [11].

In a speech to the UN Security Council on 28 September 2017 Antonio Guterres said the current crisis is "steadily deteriorating" adding that since the conflict began last month about 500,000 Rohingyas have already crossed the border to Bangladesh to flee the violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State. The situation has spiralled into the world's fastest developing refugee emergency a humanitarian and human rights nightmare. Guterres also said we have received bone-chilling accounts from those who fled, mainly women, children and the elderly. "These testimonies point to excessive violence and serious violations of human rights." Guterres also cautioned that the current conflict risks the possibility of "radicalisation" among the refugees, as well as trafficking of women and children. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) also said it has been receiving increasing reports that Rohingya have been sexually assaulted in Rakhine state [12].

In response to Guterres' comments, Thaug Tun, Myanmar's national security adviser told the UN Security Council that there is no ethnic cleansing against Rohingya. "The vast majority of those who fled did so out of fear - fear was instilled in the hearts by the terrorists," he said referring to ARSA [13,14].

The above circumstances may lead trafficking of women and children and also forced women to prostitution. Human traffickers search such opportunities for trafficking. Poverty are curse for any nation, poverty leads lots of social problems in society. Rohingya refugees have no place to live and limit to eat. He could not walk freely and could not search jobs of his own choice in other country like Bangladesh and India etc. He has lots of restrictions on travel, which he has to follow. Rohingya people arrived India and Bangladesh by traveling through Jungles, mountains and rivers. They reached Bangladesh exhausted, sick, and hungry with little they could bring with him from their home. Most of them are women and children their conditions are miserable which a common man couldn't dare to see. They reached Bangladesh not in one day or two days but they traveled in days. Majority of the Rohingya arrived by foot or boat across Bangladesh's 278km border with Myanmar [10].

Conclusion

As mentioned above, history shows Rohingas are citizens of Burma. They are not outsiders. The responsibility of international community is to solve the citizenship problems of Rohingyas. They have to be given their rights on the humanitarian grounds, all Political leaders, social activists and human rights watcher should sit together to solve Rohingyas citizenship problems and their rights should be returned. It could not be an exaggeration to say that the first responsibility to solve the Rohingya crisis is of UN and second responsibility of all Muslim countries. No doubt most of the Muslim countries helping and raising voice for Rohingyas at his own level but that's not enough and a solution. The Muslim countries have to move one step more than united nation efforts. On the other hand international community should create pressure on Myanmar government and proof Rohingya as a citizen of Burma. Pressurize Mayanmar government to accept Rohingya as a citizen of Burma without any kind of discrimination. World looks Burmese Muslim a century old citizen of Burma living from generations, they are not outsiders at any level. The ruling government should take their bias and illogical decisions back. Rohingya must be given equal rights to Magh in Burma that is the dream of all peace loving of the world.

Misfortune is that army is involved in genocide, the entire world are silent watcher of mass killings of innocent human. Military action

must be taken by the UN for immediate effect, but no harsh action taken by the UN against such heinous crime. Atleast UN should send NATO Army in Myanmar for peace and action to saving the life of innocent women and children on the name of humanity. Following is the Urdu poetic word for Rohingya.

Ham toh chale perdesh ham refuji hogaye

Choota apna ghar bar ham refujee hogaye

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