biiss journal

Mahabuba Islam Meem

THE ROHINGYA CRISIS AND THE HOST COMMUNITY OF BANGLADESH: A HUMAN SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

The paper is set to examine the impacts of the Rohingya crisis on the human security of the host community of Bangladesh. The study specifically focuses on the economic and community security of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila of Cox's Bazar. It also evaluates the conditions that can turn these insecurities protracted in the future. The conceptual framework of the study is built using the theories of Social Identity, Relative Deprivation, and Protracted Social Conflict to highlight different aspects of economic and community insecurities. The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data. A survey has been conducted among 200 local inhabitants of Ukhiya Upazila to consider their perceptions and interviews were taken from various sectors to gather more in-depth information about the socio-economic insecurities and the overall crisis. The data analysis of the study shows that economic insecurities among the host community rise from the fall in daily wages, local market failures, increase in the price of daily commodities, and unemployment rate. On the other hand, community insecurities have emerged through competing identities, deprivation of basic needs, a sense of being minorities among the local population, increasing crime rates, and security threats. The findings of the study suggest that economic underdevelopment and injustice resulting from these key aspects can turn the insecurities of the host community protracted in nature. The paper will lay the path for further research on the human security of the host community in Bangladesh and help policymakers take necessary initiatives in this regard.

Keywords: Rohingya Crisis, Host Community, Human Security, Ukhiya, Insecurity.

## 1.	Introduction

The Rohingya crisis is currently recognized as one of the most urgent humanitarian crises of the present world.[1] The massive influx of the Rohingya population in Bangladesh, as a result of the persecution faced by the Myanmar military in the northern Rakhine province of Myanmar, has turned out to be a pitfall

Mahabuba Islam Meem is an independent researcher and former Research Intern at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS). Her e-mail address is: meem.mahabuba@gmail.com

[1]	K. Reid, "Rohingya refugee crisis: Facts, FAQs, and how to help", available at https://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/rohingya-refugees-bangladesh-facts, accessed on 06 March 2021.

for the host community living in Cox's Bazar. The current crisis that emerged in August 2017 is posing serious threats to the human security of the host community. As much as the Rohingyas are in need of assistance for being the victim of a textbook example of ethnic cleansing, the focus must be on the host community too who have been the victims of the consequences of this crisis long enough. The host community is a country of asylum and the local, regional and national governmental, social and economic structures within which the refugees live. The host community, in general, may include the camps or the neighbourhood of the camps. The host community has regular interactions with the refugees and is impacted by the refugees living in the camps.[2]

At present, approximately 8,60,000 Rohingyas are living in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.[3] More than 7, 37,854 Rohingyas are living at the largest refugee camp in the world, situated at Kutupalong, Ukhiya Upazila of Cox's Bazar district.[4] The total population of Ukhiya Upazila is not more than 2,58,000 and the vast difference in number between the Rohingyas and the local population has created a sense of being the minority among the host community in their own homeland.[5] Ukhiya and Teknaf, the two southern Upazilas of Cox's Bazar have comparatively been affected more by the crisis.[6] The dimension of human security of the host community is at a vulnerable state, especially since the economy and community impact have been severe. Increase in the prices of daily commodities, unemployment, ethnic differences, and mistrusts between the communities are just a few to name. The economic stagnation has put the local population in great distress. On the other hand, the presence of a large number of Rohingyas has created community insecurity among the host population.

The economic and community insecurities are having impacts on the other dimensions of human security as well. The declining economic condition escalated the rate of unemployment and fall in the price of daily wages with a continuous rise in the price of daily commodities. This has brought profound community and social impacts on the host community. Although living in a society of financially unstable structure, the Rohingyas are enjoying far better facilities than that of local

[2] UNHCR Resettlement Service, "UNHCR-NGO Toolkit for Practical Cooperation on Resettlement: Community Outreach - Outreach to Host Communities: Definitions and FAQs", available at https://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/4cd7d1509/unhcr-ngo-toolkit-practical-cooperation-resettlement-community-outreach.html, accessed on 15 March 2021.
[3] Rohingya Refugee Response Report, "Three Years On: Rohingya Refugee Response Report 2020", *World Vision International*, 2020, p. 18.
[4] Gaia Vince, "Rohingya crisis: What life is like inside world's largest refugee camp", *The Independent*, 24 June 2019.
[5] Muhammad Zahidul Islam, "NGO aid rises on Rohingya crisis", *The Daily Star*, 19 August 2019.
[6] Tarek Mahmud, "Rohingya influx: Refugees outnumber Ukhiya, Teknaf locals", *Dhaka Tribune*, 23 October 2017.

communities and the continuous flow of aids from the international organizations has changed the outlook of the host community about the crisis as well as the Rohingyas. The presence of a large number of Rohingyas from different ethnic groups and the associated problems created by them have consequently put the host community in a vulnerable position with an identity crisis. The dimensions of insecurity seem to turn the whole scenario into a vicious cycle where the host community is suffering intensely.

The problems and conditions of the host community are in dire need of proper feasible actions, yet, very little attention has been paid to this issue. Among all the problems and insecurities, the impacts on the economy and community of the host community have been vital. Although there have been some initiatives taken on part of the government and international organizations by providing financial aid to the host community, the insecurities remain largely unaddressed.[7] The crisis has already become prolonged and if the problems of the host community are not taken care of, those will soon become protracted. The deteriorating condition of the host community should also receive enough attention to cope up with their existing problems as a result of the Rohingya crisis. For that, a proper analysis needs to be conducted on the dimensions of insecurities of the host community.

Having realised this, the objective of this paper is set to examine the impact of the Rohingya crisis on the economic and community security of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila of Cox's Bazar district. The paper will also analyze whether the dimensions of insecurities in Ukhiya Upazila will become protracted in line with the crisis. The paper specifically attempts to answer the key research questions: To what extent does the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh affect the economic and community dimension of human security of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila? How can the dimensions of insecurities become protracted in line with the crisis? The paper forms its conceptual framework using the theories of Social Identity, Relative Deprivation, and Protracted Social Conflict to analyze the insecurities faced by the host community. Based on the conceptual framework, the paper examines both the quantitative and qualitative data to provide a clear picture of the human security scenario of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila.

---

[7] US Department of State, "Heads of International Missions Visit Cox's Bazar, Declare Continued Support for Host Communities and Rohingya Refugees", available at https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/heads-international-missions-visit-cox-s-bazar-declare-continued-support-host, accessed on 8 March 2021.

2.   Literature Review

2.1   *Rohingya Crisis: A Brief Overview*

The massive crisis of Rohingya influx in Bangladesh started back in August 2017.   During that time, more than 7,00,000 Rohingyas arrived in Bangladesh escaping from the mass violence and oppression in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. These people joined the already existing 1,94,000 Rohingyas who fled in the earlier waves of displacement.[8] The Rohingyas have been denied citizenship rights by the government of Myanmar that has made them stateless, denied basic rights, and protections. As a result, they have become the largest stateless population in the world. According to the reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), currently, more than one million Rohingyas reside in different parts of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.[9] They are primarily living in two makeshift camps known as the Kutupalong and Nayapara refugee camps and that has made the former as the world's largest refugee camp.

The dimensions of human security of the host community living in Cox's Bazar, especially the economic and community dimensions have been a matter of concern for a long period of time. According to the report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) titled 'Impact of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on Host communities', Bangladesh hosts 4.7 per cent of the world's total refugees.[10] But, it is not only the refugees but also the host communities that are facing severe impacts as a result of the crisis. Other than the social impact, the report suggests that rising prices of necessities and falling wages of low-skilled workers are also the major problems by which the influx is affecting the host community population, the mounting of tensions among refugees and host communities for various reasons. The refugee crisis tends to profoundly affect the livelihoods of host communities especially if that is going on in a developing country like Bangladesh. The Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh has been chiefly related to price changes, a fall in daily wages, and public services. The report mentions how the refugee crisis can, in fact, represent an opportunity to address the issues that have already hampered the host communities and made them a part of the insolvent group of people. Cash assistance to the refugees might create significant income spill-over to the host community's businesses and households. But, this effect is negligible compared to the difficulties a refugee crisis

---

[8] Hossain Ahmed Taufiq, "Rohingya Refugee Crisis and the State of Insecurity in Bangladesh", in Imtiaz Ahmed (eds), *Genocide and Mass Violence: Politics of Singularity*, Dhaka: Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka, 2019.

[9] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Refugee Response in Bangladesh", available at https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/myanmar_refugees, accessed on 06 March 2021.

[10] United Nations Development Programme, *Impacts of the Rohingya refugee influx on host communities*, Dhaka: United Nations, 2018.

brings for the host community.[11] The huge influx of the Rohingyas has not only created extra pressure on the economy, the presence of different ethnic groups has also led to an identity crisis among the host community.

One of the most crucial impacts on human security is experienced when any developing country faces the crisis of forced migration. The severe consequences of the large-scale forced migration crisis have caught the attention of the international community since last 1970s according to a report published by the UNHCR in 1997 named 'Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries'. The report explores how the impact mostly differs within the social, economic, and political life of the host developing countries and the presence of refugees adds to the already prevailing problems in those countries. More importantly, problems tend to accelerate when refugees are a substantial proportion of the local population. The demands placed by refugees on the already strained economy, services, and infrastructure contribute more to the hardship of the local population.[12] Miller discussed how, most of the time, the states that host refugees are often the least able to offer protection and assistance to refugees and may not be in political contexts where it is easy to implement policies that could foster mutually beneficial situations for the refugees and hosts.[13] There are several impacts of refugee influx but scholars continue to struggle with how to measure them in economic terms as the nature of economic burdens is nearly impossible to measure with quantitative data. The refugee crisis creates further difficulties for the host community because social integration between the two groups can rarely be attained.

2.2   *Human Security: Key Concepts and Approaches*

According to the 'Human Security Handbook' by United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, the human security approach is a crucial ingredient in order to achieve sustainable development.[14] This approach is also called a multidimensional analytical framework that can assist the UN system to assess, develop and implement integrated response to a broad range of issues and require the combined inputs of the UN system with the initiatives from the government, non-government entities, and communities. This is done to constitute more resilient societies where people are safe

---

[11] Ibid.

[12] UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and economic impact of large refugee populations on host developing countries", available at https://www.unhcr.org/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html, accessed on 08 March 2021.

[13] Sarah Deardorff Miller, "Assessing the impact of hosting refugees", *Centre for International Governance innovation*, No. 4, 2018.

[14] United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *Human Security Handbook*, New York: United Nations, 2016.

from chronic threats such as abject poverty, hunger, disease, violence, and repression where they are protected from sudden disruptions in their daily lives.

The 1994 Human Development Report published by the UNDP discusses the human security approach along with its features and dimensions. According to the report, human security relates to how people live in a society, how much access they have to market and social opportunities and whether they live in conflict or peace. There are two main aspects of human security. First, safety from chronic threats; and secondly, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, it can be in their houses, in jobs and the communities. There are seven main categories of human security which include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. This paper specifically focuses on the economic and community dimension of human security. Economic security requires an assured basic income usually from productive and remunerative work or in the last resort from some publicly financed safety net, people today feel insecure because jobs are extremely difficult to find and keep. The Report adds while discussing the community security category that, for most people security derives from their membership in a group.[15] This group can be a family, community, organization, an ethnic group that can provide a cultural identity and a reassuring set of values.

Amartya Sen viewed development as a process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy and this development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom such as poverty, poor economic opportunities, systematic social deprivation and neglect of public facilities. Economic poverty and social care lead to ineffectiveness in the maintenance of local peace and order.[16] Colletta primarily focuses on the connections between human security and violent conflict. According to him, although conflict is a normal part of economic and social transformation but these are also a form of reverse development. Even if ethnic diversity does not promote violent conflict directly, it remains a latent potential for conflict.[17] In the context of a refugee crisis, the presence of a large number of refugees from a different ethnic group increases the possibility of conflict especially when the host community suffers the adverse impact on their human security because of the crisis.

The literature mentioned and discussed above focuses on the human security approach and the negative impact of any refugee crisis on the human security of the

---

[15] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
[16] Amartya Sen, *Development as freedom*, United States: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.
[17] N. J. Colletta (ed.), *Human security, poverty and conflict: Reform of international financial institutions*, Massachusetts, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.

host community. The sole purpose of this paper is to present an interconnected relationship between the forced migration crisis and its adverse impact on the human security of the host community. The existing literature sheds some light on the impacts of forced migration and the refugee crisis on the host community. However, analysis of the dimensions of human security of the host community in the context of a refugee crisis is largely missing from the existing literature, especially in the case of Bangladesh. There are also much more variables to take into consideration while examining the impact on the host community. Also, it is important to take the perception of the host population into consideration. Moreover, the existing literature merely focuses on how the dimensions of insecurities of the host community can become protracted. Hence, a research gap still remains in this context.

Along with that, there is a need for a rigid framework to properly address the dimensions of insecurities. Since this paper focuses on the economic and community insecurities of the host community, a conceptual framework is important that will illustrate the way forced migration adversely affects the dimensions of human security of the host community and how the insecurities can turn protracted in the context of the Rohingya crisis.

3.   Conceptual Framework

Social Identity Theory (SIT) as proposed by Tajfel and Turner, focuses on the group's influence upon the individual and assumes that one part of self-concept is defined by our belonging to social groups.[18] This theory addresses the issues of social identity which are useful to explain the identity crisis of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila due to the presence of the Rohingyas. The theory posits that people tend to categorize themselves and others as belonging to different social groups and evaluate these categorizations. The membership and the value are defined as the social identity. To increase the self-esteem, people want to develop a positive social identity. According to SIT, people show all kinds of group behaviour such as the solidarity within in-groups and discrimination against out-groups as a part of the social identity process. During the period of any forced migration crisis, especially if the hosts and forced migrated people belong from two different groups with noticeable distinctions, then, it is not just a matter of competing resources but also competing identity.

According to Ted Gurr, the Relative deprivation (RD) theory is explained through three steps.[19] Firstly, there must be a comparison made by the group. Secondly, there should be cognitive appraisal that leads them to perceive that the

---

[18] H. Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behavior", *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 16, pp. 277-289.
[19] Ted R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971.

people of their intergroup are at a disadvantaged position. Lastly, the perceived disadvantage must be viewed as unfair. This originates from the belief that the perceiver group deserves comparatively better condition. This theory fits well with the situation of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila. The host community witnesses the Rohingyas enjoying better facilities and aids while facing various difficulties due to the crisis. Consequently, the host community suffers from relative deprivation. In case of forced migration, the aids and assistance provided to the refugees, especially in a community where the economic and social condition of the host population is not satisfactory. The host community very easily develops a feeling of being ignored by the forcedly migrated population. This reaches its peak when the hosts have to suffer severe problems in society arising from the forced migration crisis.

Edward Azar has put forward ten propositions of protracted social conflict (PSC) in 1985.[20] The first proposition is useful to examine whether the dimensions of insecurities of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila will become protracted in line with the Rohingya crisis. In the very first proposition, he described the characteristics that account for the prolonged nature. Economic underdevelopment and distributive injustice have been mentioned here. The source of protracted conflict is considered to be the denial of elements required for the development of all people and societies. Now it becomes evident that with the same characteristics and denial of elements the insecurities faced by them can also become protracted. The regular economic activities are disrupted because of the crisis and it leads to underdevelopment. The feeling of injustice among the host community comes from the comparison with the refugees in terms of them getting better facilities and aids. Underdevelopment and injustice together can cause the dimensions of insecurities to become protracted along with the crisis very easily.
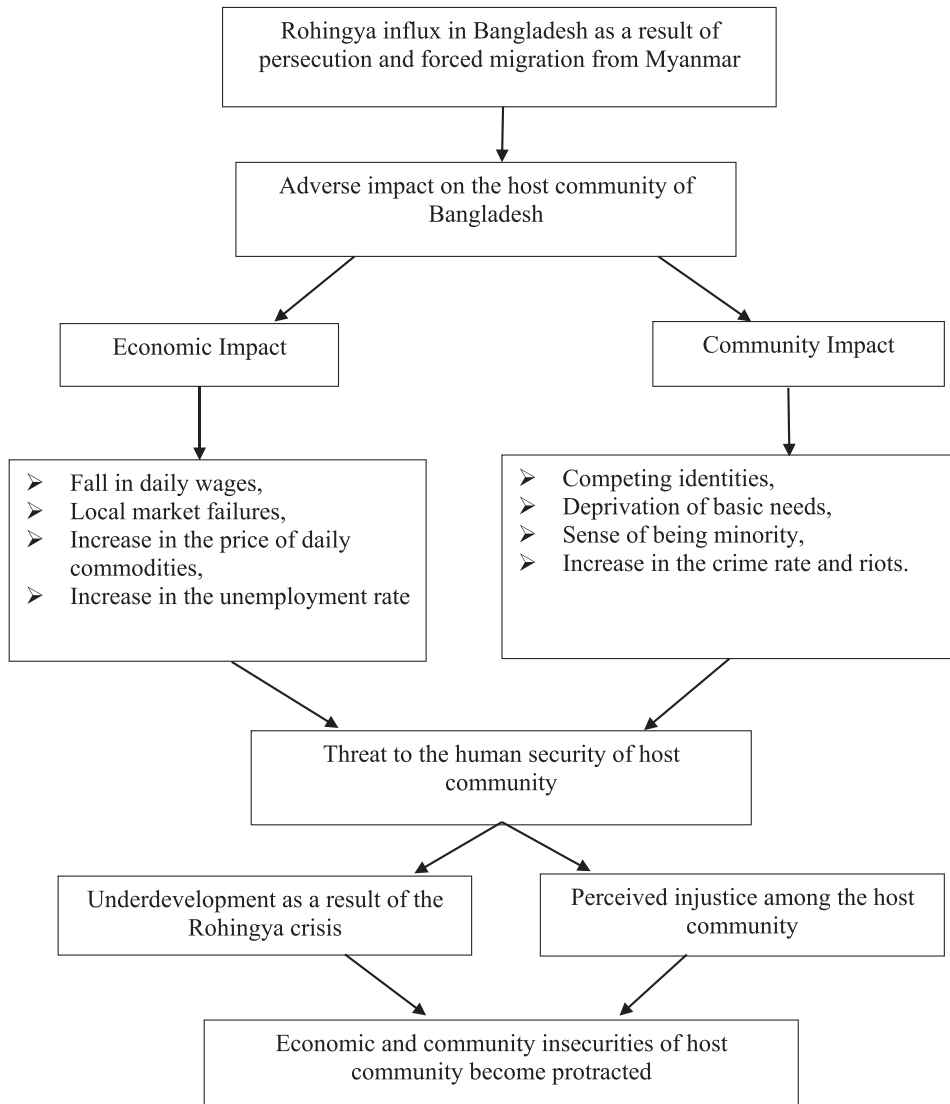
While the SIT addresses the identity crisis of the host community, RD theory helps to analyze the feeling of deprivation among the host community as a result of the Rohingya crisis. Lastly, the first proposition of PSC examines whether the dimensions of insecurities of the host community will become protracted in line with the Rohingya crisis. These three theories, collectively provide a clear scenario of the economic and community security of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila.

---

[20] Edward E. Azar, "Protracted international conflicts: Ten propositions", *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1985, pp. 59-70.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Rohingya influx in Bangladesh as a result of│
│  persecution and forced migration from Myanmar│
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Adverse impact on the host community of   │
│                  Bangladesh                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        │                              │
┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
│ Economic Impact  │          │ Community Impact │
└──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
        │                              │
┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ ➢ Fall in daily wages,   │  │ ➢ Competing identities,  │
│ ➢ Local market failures, │  │ ➢ Deprivation of basic   │
│ ➢ Increase in the price  │  │   needs,                 │
│   of daily commodities,  │  │ ➢ Sense of being minority,│
│ ➢ Increase in the        │  │ ➢ Increase in the crime  │
│   unemployment rate      │  │   rate and riots.        │
└──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘
            │                        │
        ┌───────────────────────────────────┐
        │ Threat to the human security of   │
        │          host community           │
        └───────────────────────────────────┘
            │                        │
┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Underdevelopment as a    │  │ Perceived injustice among│
│ result of the Rohingya   │  │ the host community       │
│ crisis                   │  │                          │
└──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘
            │                        │
        ┌───────────────────────────────────┐
        │ Economic and community insecurities│
        │ of host community become protracted│
        └───────────────────────────────────┘
```

Source: Author

These key concepts from the theories, when combined, create a rigid framework to analyze the impact of forced migration or refugee crisis on the human security of the host community. In the context of the Rohingya crisis and human security of the host community in Bangladesh, the framework points towards the significant role of insecurities, deprivation, and identity crisis in the context of the Rohingya crisis. The conceptual framework helps to highlight different aspects of economic and community insecurities of the host community living in Ukhiya Upazila as a result of the Rohingya crisis. This framework is useful for this study to analyze both the quantitative and qualitative data, which have been discussed in the next section of this paper.

4.   Methodology

This study employs the mixed method design (which is the amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative approaches) while collecting and analyzing data. The study deals with the impact of the Rohingya crisis on the human security of the host community, with a focus on economic and community dimensions of security. The mixed method best suits this study because, the integration of qualitative and quantitative data offers a better understanding of the insecurities of the host community.[21] It will also follow a descriptive research design.[22] The study is conducted in the Ukhiya Upazila of Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh. In order to accurately assess the impact of the Rohingya crisis on the human security dimensions of the host community, it was imperative to conduct the study in an area that is considered to be directly affected by the crisis. Kutupalong refugee camp is in Ukhiya Upazila, which is known as the world's largest refugee camp containing more than 7,00,000 Rohingyas.[23] So, Ukhiya Upazila is considered appropriate for this study.

Ukhiya is an Upazila of Cox's Bazar district with a total area of 261.8 sq. km. It contains 5 unions and these are ‒ Palong Khali, Raja Palong, Haldia Palong, Jalia Palong, and Ratna Palong. Apart from that, Ukhiya contains 13 Mouza and 54 villages. The average literacy rate is 39.58 per cent and almost 54.40 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.[24] Ukhiya Upazila first came

[21] Jose F Molina-Azorin, "Mixed methods research: An opportunity to improve our studies and our research skills", *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2016, pp. 37-38.

[22] Shona McCombes, "Descriptive research", available at https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/descriptiveresearch/#:~:text=Descriptive %20research %20aims %20to %20accurately,investigate %20one %20or %20more %20variables, accessed on 06 March 2021.

[23] Victoria Milko and Clare Hammond, "The World's Largest Refugee Camp Is Becoming a Real City", *Bloomberg CityLab*, 28 September, 2019.

[24] Towhid Hossain Chowdhury, "Ukhiya Upazila", available at http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Ukhia_Upazila, accessed on 21 December 2019.

into focus when a huge number of Rohingyas took shelter in that place crossing the Naf River in 2017.

**Figure 2: Map of Ukhiya Upazila** [25]

In this study, the effect on the human security dimensions of the host community caused by the Rohingya crisis is examined. Therefore, the Rohingya crisis is the independent variable of this study, which is assumed to have caused the change in the human security dimension of the host community. If the Rohingya crisis brings changes in the economic and community security aspects of the host community, these dimensions of human security of the host community are considered as the dependent variable of this study. Because the changes in the human security dimensions of the host community depend directly on the Rohingya crisis. Here, the impact of the independent variable causes changes in the dependent variable. The

---

[25] Ibid.

study will evaluate the extent of this impact. The Rohingya crisis is having a negative impact on the economic and community dimensions of human security of the host community. The causal relationship shows that the Rohingya crisis, through its negative impacts, is affecting the economic and community security of the host community in Bangladesh.

Figure 3: Research Variables
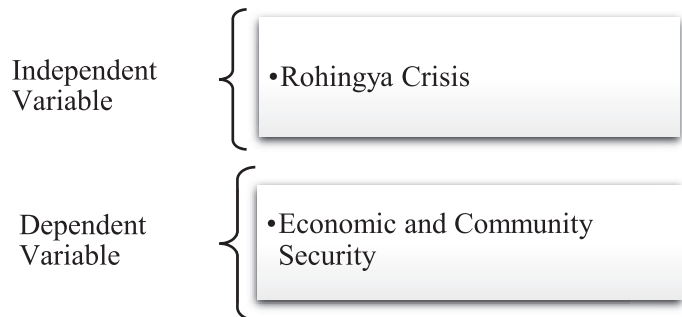
The sample for this study is the local people of Ukhiya Upazila. A total of 200 local people was selected and the sampling criteria required them to be a minimum of 18 years or older. Convenience sampling has been used as the key sampling technique to conduct the survey. Data collection procedures for this study are done in two sequential phases. The first one is field research for primary data collection and the second one is library research for secondary data collection.

As the study involves the use of mixed methodology, field research was also done in two phases, survey and interview. In order to take the perception of the local population about the Rohingya crisis and its impacts on the economic and community security of the host community, a household survey was conducted among 200 local population of Ukhiya Upazila in Cox's Bazar district. Data used in the survey was collected over a period of three months in the year 2019. The study employs a mixed methodology to overcome the limitations of only relying on the survey. This is because surveys do not provide in-depth information; [26] and, in this case, a sample of 200 people is unable to properly describe the insecurity of the host community.

---

[26]Research Methods for the Social Sciences, "Survey Research", available at https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-research-methods/chapter/chapter-9-survey-research/, accessed on 06 March 2021.

Interviews have been conducted to validate the result of the survey. Since the survey concentrates primarily on the grass-root level of the population, the Key Informant Interviews (KII) are conducted among people who can provide reliable and in-depth information regarding the study. A total of 18 people were interviewed for this study. These people include government officials, law enforcement officials, academicians, camp in-charges, and officials from national and international organizations. In-depth information found from the interviews is used to evaluate the insecurities of the host community. Secondary data both from libraries, seminars and online have been a vital element while conducting this study. Most of the secondary data are used in the literature review and some in the data analysis part.

5.   Findings

As this study intends to explore the impacts on the host community and their human security, the participation of the local population has been imperative. The findings section of the paper focuses on the survey data which aims to evaluate the perception of local people living in Ukhiya Upazila regarding the impact of the Rohingya crisis on their daily lives. Findings from the survey data highlighted the aspects of economic and community insecurities of the host community.

200 people living in different unions of Ukhiya Upazila have been a part of the survey in order to get a better understanding of their insights. Among the survey respondents, 60.5 per cent were males and 39.5 per cent were females. The average age of the survey respondents was 37 where it varied from a minimum age of 18 to 75. Since this study is based in Ukhiya Upazila, people who took part in the survey come from different parts of Ukhiya.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Population [27]

Union	Local Population
Jalia Palong	55,369
Palong Khali	38,199
Ratna Palong	26,197
Raja Palong	66,174
Haldia Palong	55,200

---

[27] Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), "Support to Bangladesh host communities in the Rohingya refugee response. Cox's Bazar: ISCG", available at https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/iscg-update-support-bangladesh-host-communities-rohingya-refugee-response, accessed on 28 December 2019.

According to the data presented in Table 1, among the five Unions of Ukhiya Upazila, Raja Palong has the highest number of local residents and Ratna Palong has the lowest number of local residents. Ukhiya Upazila has a total population of 2,58,000. On the other hand, 7, 37,854 Rohingyas are living in the refugee camps and 3000 of them are living with the host communities in Ukhiya Upazila.[28]

Figure 4: Present Accommodation of the Survey Respondents
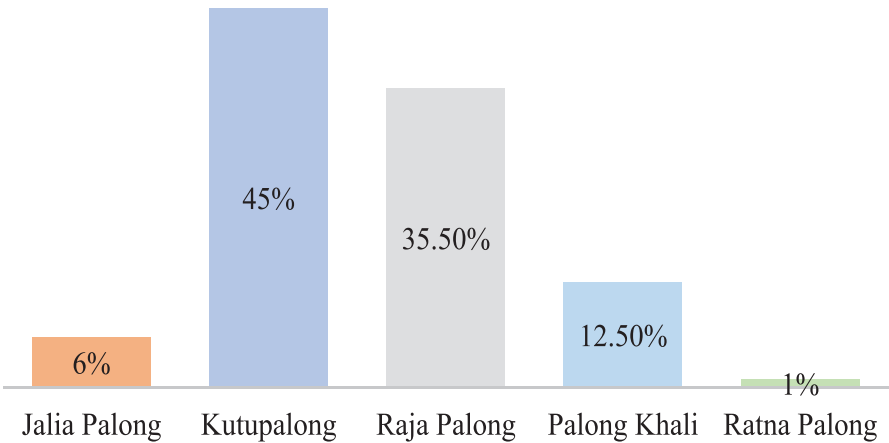
From Figure 4 it is observed that the highest number of participants in the survey comprising 45 per cent of total belong to Kutupalong which is the location of world's largest refugee camp. The lowest number of participants came from Ratna Palong, with only 1 per cent of the total respondents.

---

[28] Ibid.

**Table 2: Educational Qualification of the Survey Respondents**

Level of Education	Percentage of the Respondents
No educational qualification	33%
Primary	32.50%
Secondary	26.50%
Honours	7.50%
Masters	0.50%

According to the data presented in Table 2, majority of the respondents have no educational qualification. Only 32.50 per cent of the respondents have achieved a primary level of education and 26.5 per cent of the population have completed their secondary level of education.

On the other hand, 77 per cent of the respondents are employed in a variety of sectors and 23 per cent are unemployed. These local people of Ukhiya Upazila were employed in different areas, such as farming, shopkeeping, NGOs, office assistance, etc. However, the majority of the respondents work as farmers and day laborers in Ukhiya Upazila.

Figure 5 shows that at least 22.5 per cent of the respondents feel that since the Rohingya influx, the price of daily commodities is on rise and 9 per cent of them feel that competition in the job market has increased. 45 per cent of the total sample population think that all of the negative impacts such as theft, social degradation, job competition, expansion of diseases, and price hike have been evident since the influx of the Rohingyas. The survey finds that almost 87 per cent of the respondents cannot bear their family expenses with the present family income because of the sudden influx of the Rohingyas.

Figure 5: Significant Changes in the Economy and Community after the Rohingya Influx
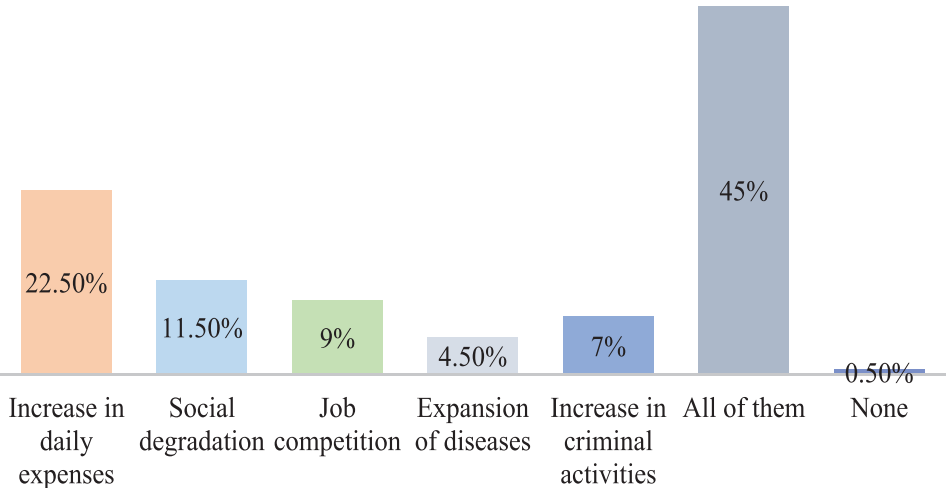

According to the survey, about 77.5 per cent of the respondents believe that the economic condition of Ukhiya Upazila was better before the presence of the Rohingyas and 89 per cent of the respondents observed a decrease in the family income. Along with that, 70.5 per cent of people think their resources have decreased after the Rohingya influx since 2017. According to 97.5 per cent of the respondents in Ukhiya Upazila, the price of their everyday essentials has increased after the influx of the Rohingyas and 86 per cent of the respondents believe that service charges have also increased since the beginning of the influx of Rohingyas including the transportation fees. Almost 75.5 per cent of the respondents believe that their current profession has been negatively affected by the present Rohingya crisis.

With regard to community security, the survey data shows that 46 per cent of the population in Ukhiya Upazila communicate with Rohingyas on a daily basis and about 24 per cent of them communicate with the Rohingyas at least three or four times a week. On the other hand, 90 per cent of the respondents reveal that they do not trust the Rohingya population.

Figure 6: Dimension of Trust between the Host Community and the Rohingyas
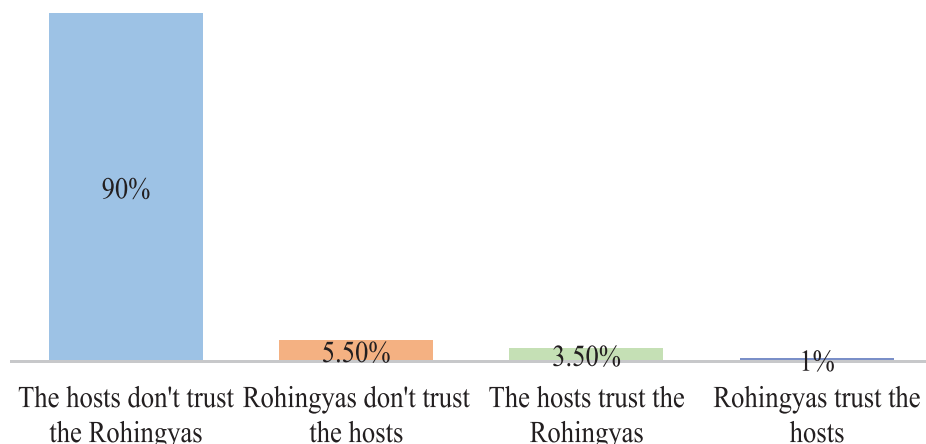
The survey finds that 93 per cent of the respondents in Ukhiya think that the relationship between them and the Rohingyas is not good considering the present reality. Data also shows that 95 per cent population of Ukhiya Upazila feel they do not get the proper facilities needed to live a decent life and 94.5 per cent of the respondents in Ukhiya feel that the Rohingyas are getting better facilities than they are currently receiving/enjoying. The survey further shows that 97.5 per cent of the respondents feel that their social and community conditions were better before the Rohingya influx in 2017.

Among the respondents, 91 per cent do not feel safe anymore considering the environmental degradation after the presence of Rohingyas. Also, 95 per cent of people have mentioned that the reason why they do not feel safe anymore is the presence of the Rohingyas around them. Furthermore, 95 per cent of the host population believe that the crime rate of Ukhiya has increased after the Rohingya influx. In case of the increase in criminal activities, 21.5 per cent of the respondents believe only the use of drugs and its trafficking is on the increase and 49 per cent of the population think every criminal activity has increased including theft, robbery, murder, drug trafficking and others since the beginning of the Rohingya influx.

Both the economic and community factors of insecurities are mutually reinforcing in the context of the local population living in Ukhiya Upazila. The survey data analysis helps to identify different aspects of them. The qualitative data aims to validate the survey data and evaluate the aspects of economic and community

insecurities of the host community because of the Rohingya crisis. The next section of the paper provides an in-depth examination of those insecurities.

6.   Insecurities of the Host Community

The Rohingya crisis has significant impacts on the economic and community security of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila, Cox's Bazar. The framework and findings of the study show some key aspects for rising insecurities of the economy and community. For the economic impact, fall in daily wages, local market failures, increase in the price of daily commodities and unemployment are the triggering factors. On the other hand, in case of community impact, competing identities, deprivation of basic needs, sense of being minorities and increasing crime rate are some key aspects. Underdevelopment resulting from economic insecurities and perceived injustice resulting from the community insecurities account for the fact that with the presence of these two elements, the existing economic and community dimensions of insecurities can become protracted.

6.1   *Economic Insecurities*

The Rohingya crisis is considered to have affected the economy of the host community the most. Since economic security refers to the assurance of basic income from productive or remunerative work, the primary source of insecurity in this dimension arises when jobs become difficult to keep for people and when there is an increasing rate of unemployment.[29] This is the most common cause in developing countries, especially in Bangladesh. The immediate economic impact of the Rohingya crisis has been severe on people living close to the camps but also on the whole Cox's Bazar district as well. One of the most immediate consequences of hosting more than one million Rohingyas has been the fall in daily wages.[30] Since industries and other service activities are not well developed in Cox's Bazar district yet, Ukhiya's dependence on agriculture is still 63 per cent.[31] Refugees, living on the soil of the host country go outside of the camps in search of employment and confront with the local people.[32] The same scenario can be seen in the Rohingya crisis. A sharp fall in the daily wages can be observed in the host community, especially for the day labourers. The Rohingyas in general, charge poor wages for the labour than that of the local population. The male agricultural wage labourers earn Tk. 435-500 per day and the

---

[29] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report*, op. cit.
[30] S. M. Hashim, "Socio-economic impacts of the Rohingya influx", *The Daily Star*, 06 August 2019.
[31] United Nations Development Programme, *Impacts of the Rohingya refugee influx on host communities*, op. cit.
[32] L. Myat, "The Rohingya refugee crisis: Social, economic and environmental implications for the local community in Bangladesh", Dissertation submitted to Flinders University, 2018.

female workers earn at least   BDT 350.[33] The qualitative data suggest that the Rohingyas perform the same share of work with the half the price of almost BDT 250 and this leads to a drastic fall in the wages of local people. This is creating instability on the income scenario of the host community.

The Rohingya influx has led to local market failures in Cox's Bazar, especially in the areas close to the camps. On top of that, hosting a huge number of Rohingyas adds more pressure on the already scarce resources. The shortage of food grains and resources, thus, has become a common scenario in the areas especially near the camps. Earlier, there was not any scarcity of basic needs and the markets supplied the required goods at a reasonable price. But after the crisis started, as mentioned earlier the total population of Ukhiya increased dramatically and local markets failed to supply enough food and other resources, as revealed in the interviews. Most of the markets in Ukhiya Upazila are now centred around the camps. The supply of food grains goes straight to the camps, not the local markets. There is a shortage of clean water in that area after the arrival of the Rohingyas. Local people used to collect wood and fuel for livelihood purposes from the forest which are also being destructed due to the crisis.

One of the most immediate impacts of the refugee crisis is seen in the local markets where there is a sharp rise in the price of daily commodities. Since the huge influx of Rohingyas, the local markets of Ukhiya Upazila have also felt the pressure from price hike. With a literacy rate below 40 per cent, the majority of the local population either work as day labourers or as shopkeepers. On top of that, the price hike has a severe impact on the local population. For example, a household survey conducted by UNDP presented the differences in prices pre and post-influx of the Rohingyas.

---

[33] UNDP, *Impacts of the Rohingya refugee influx on host communities*, op. cit.

Table 3: Pre and post influx prices of daily commodities[34]

Food Item	Pre-Influx	Post-Influx
Rice	32	38
Flour	28	35
Fish	130	150
Vegetables	25	30
Potato	22	30
Sugar	60	62
Salt	22	25

The price of daily commodities has increased because of many reasons. First of all, most people in the Ukhiya Upazila perceive that since large amount of food grains are used for the Rohingyas, there is a shortage in the local markets. This contributes to the rise in the prices. The condition of the roads got worse, for this reason, there is a difficulty in the supply of food and thus, the increase in the price is observed. Furthermore, qualitative data from the interview suggest that there are always some interest groups that contribute to the arising problems. The Balukhali market, the biggest market of Ukhiya was first on lease for Tk. 2500 and just within two years, it increased to Tk.10,00,000. This money will be collected from the common people by increasing tolls. This contributes to the rise in service charges. There are also several reports of some illegal markets inside the camps which are bigger than the outside ones. It, therefore, can also be linked to the price hike.

Data showed that most of the local people are not skilled in Ukhiya Upazila. They primarily depend on agriculture, day labour, and others for their livelihoods. But when the Rohingyas started competing with them for those jobs at a much cheaper rate, this led to unemployment among the local population. In the case of business sector as well, local people living in Cox's Bazar district has felt the negative impact of the Rohingya crisis. Many hotels located in that district have faced almost 40 per cent loss despite the peak season of business.[35] The rate of unemployment has drastically increased in Ukhiya Upazila after the crisis started. In case of the areas closest to the camps, such as Kutupalong of Ukhiya Upazila, most people have become unemployed as a result of losing the lands allocated to them for agriculture. These lands, as revealed from the interviews, are known as *Khas* lands, allocated to the local people of Ukhiya Upazila by the government. Currently, most of these lands

---

[34]*UNDP Household Survey*, Dhaka: UNDP, 2018.
[35] A. Islam, "Economic and social impact of the Rohingya crisis", Dhaka: Centre for Enterprise and Society, ULAB, 2018, pp. 1-4.

are being taken away from them for the purpose of building camps for the Rohingyas and other infrastructure for different NGOs. The outcome of this effect is in fact, multidimensional. Because of increasing rate of unemployment and fall in the daily wages, the local population are struggling with the increasing price of daily commodities and scarcity of resources. All of these, nevertheless, pose a major threat to the economic security of the host community.

6.2   *Community Insecurities*

The Rohingya crisis is also having an adverse impact on the community security of the host community. Lack of trust and limited access to opportunities among individuals of different groups can pose threat to community security, especially if the host and the refugees belong to two distinct ethnic groups.[36] Identity is an important factor behind the rising insecurities in the host community. For most people, the security derives from the group they belong to and this group provides a cultural identity and a reassuring set of values.[37] The same goes for the host community in Ukhiya Upazila and the Rohingyas who have taken refuge in that place. Because of the differences in the identities, the basic element of trust is absent between these two groups. Also, the sudden and massive influx of the Rohingyas is perceived as a threat to the inter-communal harmony. This has further created challenges to retain the existing social values and culture of the local people living in Ukhiya Upazila. As locals of this area have to come in contact with the Rohingyas on a daily basis, the differences between the two groups are intensified and the local people feel more insecure. On top of that, data from the interview suggests that these two groups communicate more when there is an urgent crisis that solely depends on creating trust between them.

Hosting almost one million refugees for such a long period is hampering the basic allocation of resources to the local population in Bangladesh. When the host community does not get sufficient support for their livelihoods and at the same time notice the relief aids centred around the Rohingyas, the people suffer from a feeling of relative deprivation. The local people often feel they do not get proper facilities from the government and their complaints are overshadowed by the recent chaos rising from the Rohingya crisis. According to the interviewees, the core issue here stands that local people of Ukhiya Upazila, especially those living near the camps do not get proper necessary facilities and their livelihood opportunities are firmly squeezing as a result of the Rohingyas' presence in the locality. The host community

---

[36] UNHCR Standing Committee, "Social and economic impact of large refugee populations on host developing countries", op. cit.
[37] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report*, op. cit.

also views the Rohingyas are getting more aids and facilities than they do. This is where the feeling of deprivation gets stronger.

As said earlier, with a population of 2,58,000, Ukhiya Upazila now provides shelter to more than 7,50,000 Rohingyas.[38] The drastic differences between the population of the host community of Ukhiya and Rohingyas have created a feeling of the minority among the locals. So, here, the term minority is used to describe the insecurities of the local people of Ukhiya resulting from the presence of a considerable number of Rohingyas near and among them.

The presence of the Rohingyas has also created unwanted social and community changes. The daily activities have been hugely influenced by the crisis. The qualitative data from the interview suggest that the sense of being minorities in their own place is the result of many reinforcing factors such as the drastic differences between their population size, feeling of insecurities, poor livelihood conditions, and deprivation of basic needs.

One of the biggest sources of insecurities among the host community is the deteriorating condition of law and order in that area. Most of the local people hold negative views about the Rohingyas although they have been cooperative and sympathetic at first because of the persecution the Rohingyas faced in Myanmar. The shift in the attitude towards the Rohingyas has taken place because of the emergence of insecurities among the host community. One of the reasons behind this insecurity is that locals perceive few Rohingyas as potential criminals.[39] There is also a common perception among people that kidnapping, theft, and other criminal activities have increased since the influx of Rohingyas in that locality. The internal conflicts and crimes among the Rohingyas are even on increase drastically. The interviews of legal officials revealed that, in the year 2017, total of 76 crimes have been reported in Ukhiya Upazila. In 2018, the number increased to 208.[40] Until August 2021, 178 crimes have been reported. However, there has not been any report of major conflict between the hosts and the Rohingyas. The fact that local people believe some Rohingyas are potential criminals and there is a widespread perception among them about their involvement in murder, kidnapping, and robbery. Whether the perceptions are true or not, these are creating community problems and making people more insecure. Illegal drug trade, human trafficking, keeping illegal weapons, attacking the legal officers are the most common crimes committed by the Rohingyas. The

---

[38] Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), "Situation update: Rohingya refugee crisis. Cox's Bazar: ISCG", available at https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/iscg-situation-report-rohingya-crisis-coxs-bazar-september-2018, accessed on 25 December 2019.

[39] UNDP and UN Women, *"Social impact assessment of the Rohingya refugee crisis into Bangladesh: Key findings and recommendations"*, Dhaka: UNDP and UN Women, 2017.

[40] Tarek Mahmud, "Crime on rise in Cox's Bazar camps", *Dhaka Tribune*, 01 September 2018.

increasing crime rate is posing a serious threat to the community security of the host community.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data of the study finds that, various aspects of economic insecurities have triggered underdevelopment in Ukhiya Upazila. On the other hand, community insecurities have led to perceived injustice among the host population. These two elements are likely to create an environment where the dimensions of insecurities of the host community will become protracted. With the quality of life getting worse because of reduced wages, unemployment and local market failures, Ukhiya Upazila has become underdeveloped within two years. On the other hand, the study finds that all the aspects working behind the rising community insecurities have also pushed the local population of Ukhiya to believe that serious injustice has been done with the host community. This perceived injustice is the result of many threats and insecurities the locals face in the community. The presence of different identity groups and scarcity of resources, deprivation of basic needs, disruption in daily activities, and the ongoing criminal activities conducted by the Rohingyas have altogether hampered the community security of the host community in Ukhiya Upazila. In the very first proposition of "protracted social conflict", economic underdevelopment and distributive injustice have been mentioned among the characteristics that account for the prolonged nature of any social conflict.[41] Although the crisis has not turned into any conflict yet, the increasing social contention arising from the insecurities might be seen as potential for conflict.[42] The survey data found from the study also indicates that the majority of the population (about 85.5 per cent) believe that rising insecurities will become protracted in nature if the crisis is not resolved. If the scenario of insecurities continues the same, the economic and community insecurities will become protracted along with the crisis.

7.   Conclusion

This study intends to evaluate the impacts of the Rohingya crisis on the human security of the host community. The study analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data, and finds out several key aspects regarding the impacts on economic and community security in Ukhiya Upazila. Findings show that, in case of the impact on economic insecurity, the fall in daily wages, local market failures, increase in the price of daily commodities, and unemployment have been most prominent issues in Cox's Bazar locality. In the case of community insecurity, the study deals with four key aspects like competing identities, deprivation of basic needs, sense of being minorities among the host community, and increasing crime rates. Lastly, the study

---

[41] Edward E. Azar, op. cit.
[42] United Nations Development Programme, *Impacts of the Rohingya refugee influx on host communities*, op. cit.

reveals that economic underdevelopment and injustice emerged as a result of economic and community insecurities might turn the dimensions of insecurities in the host community into protracted. This potential scenario is inevitable if appropriate measures are not taken to accurately address the rising insecurities.

The findings of the study show that the Rohingya crisis has created an unprecedented challenge for the human security of host community living in Ukhiya Upazila. The areas of Cox's Bazar district were already affected by poverty, natural disasters, and other social problems. On top of that, the crisis adds more burden on the already fragile socio-economic structure of these areas. But, the dimensions of economic and community security are considered as the most affected areas by the crisis. It was found that the economy of those areas has become more fragile with depressed wages among the local population and the price hikes of everyday essentials. The community system is facing several threats because of the presence of an overwhelming number of Rohingyas in the community and the increasing crime rate. All of these are posing a serious threat to the human security of the host community. The government of Bangladesh, however, has been taking appropriate measures along with the help of many humanitarian agencies as well as local, national, and international NGOs to combat the crisis. Despite that, the measures are yet inadequate considering the large scale impacts on the human security of the host community.

The present socio-economic scenario of Ukhiya Upazila requires sustainable actions for the host community before the structure breaks down completely. The host population must meet with a stable financial safety net. The rate of unemployment should be reduced with ensured basic income. One way to reduce the feeling of deprivation among the host community is to fulfil their basic needs for ensuring a decent life. All this can be done with a well-monitored flow of the local market so that there is no scarcity of resources among the locals. Roads and transport system requires development so that there is no disruption in the supply of food. The price of daily commodities should be monitored as well. The law enforcement officials can focus on ensuring proper safety to the locals from criminal activities so that they do not feel insecure. Finally, a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis must be attained before it makes the condition of human security of the host community worse.