



Intended Illegal Infiltration or Compelled Migration: Debates on Settlements of Rohingya Muslims in India

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Abstract

Settlement of Rohingya migrants in some parts of India has triggered schism and polarization in the Indian politics. While most of the political parties opposed to the BJP and Muslim social and cultural organizations supported the settlement of the migrants and asked the government to consider their case from humanitarian perspectives, the BJP party and other rightwing social and cultural organizations called upon the people to stage protests against it. The government at the center also opposed their settlements and publicly declared to identify and send them back to their country. From places of settlements to religion of the migrants became the subjects of debate. This chapter critically examines why the settlements of Rohingya migrants evoked so much protests and noise at national level? Secondly, were the locations of settlements a well-considered choice of the migrants or they were taken to these destinations by people this side of the border? These questions became pertinent because instead of settling in the North East provinces of India they traveled deep far into the Indian territory, comprising extreme North in Kashmir to Southern city of Hyderabad. It analyzes why Hindus were so much agitated on the issue and what it meant for the Muslims who came forward to support the settlements of Rohingyas in India.

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Introduction

Migration and settlements of Rohingya Muslims in India dominated the national debates for weeks in India in the month of January 2018 and continued to capture headlines with intermittence. Though the issue had been compounding for few years, it captured the national attention only after two of the Rohingya migrants filed a case in the Supreme Court against the government proclamations to deport them. It further got momentum when the nation came to know that the state of Jammu and Kashmir government had allowed the settlement of 5700 Rohingyas in Jammu and Ladakh regions. The people in Jammu, particularly Hindus, opposed such settlements, whereas the valley-centric parties like the National Conference and People Democratic Party supported this. The valley-centric parties like the PDP and the National Conference used humanitarian arguments to support their decisions. Others in the valley also joined the chorus. On the other hand, Hindus in Jammu did not like it. They resented and organized protests against the settlement of Rohingyas in the state. The resentment was because the same sets of people who were instrumental in exodus of Pandits from Kashmir valley, and did not work for their rehabilitation, were talking about now settlements of people coming from across the border.

Following this, Rohingya settlements triggered a national debate which involved not only the political parties but also academia, media, human rights activists, and other social organizations in the country. A high degree of ethnic and ideological polarization across academia, intellectuals, and political class was seen across the country. The non-BJP political formations competed against each other in support of Rohingyas' settlements. From Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh to left parties, All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC) and the Indian National Congress (INC) came in defense of Rohingyas' settlements in India. All India Trinamool Congress, a major regional and ruling party in Bengal, openly contested the central government. A member of the legislative assembly of Bengal from TMC said that sheltering Rohingyas was not illegal. Mamata Banerjee also had tweeted in support of giving shelter to these migrants and opposed central government decision to deport them. She in her tweet said that she supported the appeal of the UN which said that they should be treated as persecuted humans. She further said that all comers are not terrorists (The Hindustan Times 2018). The CPI (M) not just asked the government not to deport the migrants but also take up their cause with the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) and other international forums besides taking up the matter in bilateral talks between the two governments at the highest level (Donot Deport Them 2017). In other words, CPM wanted that the Government of India should take the initiative and use its offices to influence Myanmar government in support of Rohingyas. The Congress party accepted that the matter is very serious,

but it did not come out with a clear stand on the issue. The party asked the government to take all the parties into confidence while formulating a policy and response to Rohingyas' settlements (The Hindu 2017). But soon what it did clearly exposed the party taking a stand in favor of migrants. The party allowed its Delhi unit to make demonstration on roads in support of Rohingyas (Times Now 2017). The party also invoked humanitarian issue and argued that the Rohingyas are victims of the state repression in Burma and the Indian government should not do something like forceful deportation as that will hurt the image of the government.

The extreme response, however, came from the Muslim organizations in particular. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi held that "if refugees from Tibet and Sri Lanka can stay in India, why not the Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar." (The Hindu 2017) It was on expected lines. The thrust of the argument was that if Hindus persecuted elsewhere can come and settle here why not Muslims? Owaisi wanted to convey that the government policy toward the migrants is selective and discriminatory and so is the response of the majority community as there is no national outrage against the non-Muslim migrants and their settlements. In fact, Muslims in general and their organizations expressed solidarity with the migrants. They held demonstrations and submitted their memorandum to the government to take care of the interests of Rohingyas at different levels and do not deport them forcibly. At Aurangabad, in Maharashtra, they held a rally and submitted memorandum to the district magistrate. It was represented by 21 organizations, mainly the Muslims except for the Samajwadi Party (The organizations included: Numainda Council, JamiaIslamiaKashifulUloom, Jama Masjid, Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Maharashtra Muslim Awami Committee, All India Imams Council, Khidmat-e-Hujjaj, MdQaisar Iqbal Siddiqui, Raza Academy, MIM, Samajwadi Party, Ameer MarkazUloom e Sharia, Muslim Personal Law Board, Al-Hira Educational & Welfare Society, JamiatUlemaMarathwada, Majlis-UI-Ulema, Happy To Help Foundation, Late Farhan Education & Welfare Society, Anjuman-e-KhademulMasoomin, Muslim Youth Forum Marathwada, K K Group and Azad Yuva Brigade were among the organisations that participated in the rally.). Though the settlements of Rohingyas extended to states like Delhi and Rajasthan as well, Jammu and Hyderabad settlements became the major contesting points.

Right-wing social and cultural organizations, and parties like BJP and its allies, openly opposed it. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) held that both Rohingyas and Bangladeshis are not the refugees. They are the foreigners who have illegally sneaked into India, and therefore they should be deported. The Prant Karyavah (executive head of a province) of the state Purushottam Dadhichi held that they are security threat to both the center and the state, and therefore they should not be allowed to settle (The Indian Express 2018b). Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a Hindu organization having pan-India impacts too, made demands from the government to immediately deport the migrants. It passed the resolution against the migrants and appealed to the people to boycott them socially and economically (The Indian Express 2018a). These pressures worked as the government filed

affidavit in the Supreme Court against the migrants' settlements. The party criticized the Congress and the other opposition for their stands on the issue which it depicted were driven by political considerations at best. Needless to say, the case of the two Rohingyas who had filed the case in the Supreme Court requesting the court to direct the government to stop their deportation created a national furor in which there was an explicit polarization of stands across political and ethnic lines.

As discussed, it is not only the political parties but media also carried the debates where a sharp ideological and perceptual positioning was visible. There were channels which went into to suggest that their investigation showed no links between the Rohingya migrants and the terror groups or terrorist activities. For instance, NDTV did a story which showed that only 0.25% of Rohingyas had FIR (First Information Report) against them in the state of J&K. Out of the 15 FIRs, most of them were related to minor crimes like thefts, violation of VISA rules, etc. The nature of crimes committed by them proved that they were not involved in terror activities (Rohingyas 2017). No proof of links between them and the Pakistani terrorists and Rakhine Rohingya Liberation Army was established. Quoting Inspector General of Police, Dr. S D Singh of Jammu region the report concluded that the migrants' settlers individually or in group were not involved in organized or any serious crimes (Ibid.). Obviously, the report dented the narrative of the government which claimed that Rohingyas had terror links and they are threat to the national security.

On the other hand, Zee group and News 18 group, The Republic and channels like Times Now anchored the debates against Rohingyas. The Republic debates titled like, Will pro-Rohingya Brigade Explain? Rohingya Terror Exposed, and so on. All these channels focused on three things: first how Rohingyas are involved in Hindu killings in Burma; second, how they are linked with the terrorists groups; and third, why PDP and NC do not show similar concerns toward the Hindu migrants from Kashmir and why there is secular silence against the human rights violation in Muslim countries. For the first time, Indian media got so polarized on such subjects where vertical division was clearly visible which explained their ideological positioning on such subjects.

Why has there been so much polarization on Rohingya Muslims in the country? After all there has been influx of Buddhist Chakmas and Hindus from Bangladesh. Similarly, there has been migration of population from Sri Lanka, and they have been allowed to settle in India. There have been also Afghani settlements which are primarily Muslims, and yet the government or the civil society has not made too much noise of it then why only against Rohingyas? Is it because Rohingyas are primarily Muslims by religion? In what sense of terms settlements of Rohingyas are threat to the national security? Why did Rohingya migrants who came from Burma cover such a long distance from the Far East to travel to the extreme North in Kashmir and in Hyderabad in the South? Why did they not sneak into the North-East states of India which are racially and geographically close to them? Is there any pattern of settlements? Further, is this only coincident or their selection of destinations for settlements are part of well-thought-of plan and agencies behind it? Were their migrations to Hyderabad and Jammu done because they found it safer

compared to the other states because they happened to be the Muslim-dominated places? Is there an agency which is working for their settlements in such areas in order to increase the numerical dominance of followers of Islam to alter the religious demography of the places? Further that how has the rise of violent form of global Islam increasingly shaped the mind of the common people toward the Muslims in general? These are the questions which become important to understand the Rohingya issues in India.

Rohingya Muslims are the people settled in the Rakhine state of Burma. They stay in Burma, but as per the new constitution, they are not the citizens of the state. Burmese government has snatched away the citizenship rights that they used to enjoy. Muslim constitutes nearly 8% of the total population. They are widely dispersed across the country because they are of different origins. There are Muslims from China, Malaya, India, Sri Lanka, and so on. While the Chinese and Malayan Muslims are white in complexion, the Muslims migrated from India and Sri Lanka are black in color. Further, while the Chinese Muslims are located in different parts of Northern Burma, the Muslims of Malaya origin and Indian Muslims are mostly settled in far south-east of the country, Rangoon, and its near vicinity, respectively. However, the majority of Muslims nearly 1.1 million are settled in the north-west state of Rakhine. This part of Burma once was called Arakan areas, and it borders with Bangladesh.

Burma is a Buddhist-dominated country. Buddhist population is roughly around 45 million. Muslims concentration is very high only in the Arakan or Rakhine region. There are contested accounts of History. The Muslim intellectuals and historians argue that the Muslims in Rakhine state were the original inhabitants since the eighth century in Burma. They came into contact with the Arab traders and converted themselves to Islam. (Al-Mehmood 2016) They also hold that Arakan was an independent Kingdom which became part of Burma only in the eighteenth century when the Burman king Bodapaya conquered it in 1784 and annexed the territory. Burmese nationalists, however, hold that the Arakan was part of Burma since the time immemorial. Further, Burma remained under the British occupation from 1824 when it was made to be the part of British India till it was given independence in 1948.

As the Arakan or Rakhine province was Muslim dominated, it wanted to be part of Pakistan. Buddhist nationalists confronted this, and this became a bone of contention between the two communities in subsequent years. They harbored apprehensions against them which continued even after independence. When the new government after independence came into power, it used ruthless power to suppress the possible Muslim revolts. The tension started brewing up, and in 1950 an armed insurgency was started by a section of the Muslim community named Mujahideen. However, it failed to make much impact. But this made the majority community to understand that the Muslim's loyalty is not toward Burma. It made a permanent mark of mistrust between the two communities.

In 1962, when *General Ne Win* came to power, the government took strong measures toward the extremists. The government came out with national registration cards to its citizens, and Rohingyas were given identity cards which treated them

as foreigners. It needs to be placed here for clear understanding that even in the Citizenship Act of 1948, Rohingyas were not included in the ethnic groups which were to be given citizenship. However, they did not feel so much hardship initially. The Burmese government also held that the Muslims settled in Arakan areas are the ones who were brought by the British from Bangladesh, and therefore they are illegal migrants. Advancing this argument in 1982, a new citizenship law was introduced which declared them noncitizens and thereby snatched away all the citizenry rights from them. A three level citizenship law was enacted in which Rohingyas were not recognized as one of the indigenous ethnic groups of the country. They were now supposed to provide proofs that their families lived before 1948, and they are able to speak one of the national languages. It was difficult for them as they lacked the documents of stay before 1948. As a result they overnight became foreigners. They not only were now denied the right to vote in the system but their other activities were also restricted, including some movements. They could not enter now certain professions like law and medicine and were not allowed to run their own business. They were not natural but naturalized people of Burma. It needs to be understood that the rights of citizens are not withdrawn from all the Muslims but only those who the government found after screening as foreigners settled from Bangladesh. As the crackdown on outsiders had started already in 1978, over 250,000 Rohingyas left their homes and migrated to Bangladesh who returned after UN arranged a settlement formula between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Decades of isolation and alienation has allowed the radicalization of Muslims in the Arakan region, especially after the appearance of Wahhabi Islam on the global map (Wahabi Islam divides the world into Darul Harab and Darul Islam. Darul harb is the land which is governed by Non-Muslims whereas Darul Islam is the land which is governed by the followers of Islam. It propagates that the territory of Darul Harab must be converted into the land of Islam and all means are acceptable to it.). In 2016, Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) came to fore with attacks on three police posts which resulted into killing of nine police officers (BBC Asia News 2017). The army retaliated with disproportionate force resulting into killing of over 400 Rohingya Muslims. The army claimed that it killed only the ultras, whereas the Rohingyas and human rights organizations indicated that the majority of the people who were killed were the innocent civilians (Ibid BBC Asia News.). While the army and the government establishment claim that the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) is primarily a terrorist group, the group justifies its organization and such actions on the ground that the government is involved in genocide of Muslims, and therefore they are left with no option but to take arms in the hands. While the Rohingya ultras justify their action on the ground that the state has been coercing them and they are being denied even the basic human rights, the state justifies its actions on the ground that they are the ultras and therefore cannot be treated with soft hands.

While there is one narrative that the ARSA has a no link with international Jihadi groups and its activities are limited to resistance to state atrocities against the Rohingyas, recent revelations have debunked this premise. The October 9, 2016, attacks by Rohingyas have revealed that the assailants had link with people in

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia where they were trained and exposed to handling weapons (<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-rohingya/myanmars-rohingya-insurgency-has-links-to-saudi-pakistan-report-idINKBN1450Y7>). It was found that the Rohingyas who were involved in attacks were trained by Afghans in the Rakhine state for almost 2 years. The Brussels-based International Crisis Group revealed that Rohingyas have also fought for Jihads in other parts of the world (<http://www.dw.com/en/is-saudi-wahhabism-fueling-rohingya-muslim-insurgency/a-36791809>). There are also reports that they receive funds from some of the gulf countries for Jihads. The matter of fact is that the whole scenario in the Rakhine province worsened with taring of the Muslims in Guerilla warfare and formation of Harakah al-Yaqin by Atah Ullah Khan (ISI 2017). This organization further has links with other terrorist organizations in the name of Islam. Atah Ullah Khan was instrumental in issuance of Fatwa to the Rohingya Muslims to support extremist activities of Harakah al-Yaqin. This extremist organization used sophisticated weapons to attack the armed forces of Myanmar. This resulted into retaliatory violence by the armed forces in which even the common Muslims suffered heavily.

Further, in the Muslim-dominated Rakhine state, if military and Buddhists have come out openly against the Muslims, the latter also has targeted the Hindu and Buddhist populations (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/we-are-going-to-kill-you-villagers-in-burma-recount-violence-by-rohingya-muslim-militants/2017/11/14/409ff59b-849d-4459-bdc7-d1ea2b5ff9a6_story.html?utm_term=.d7527703e6d9). The report of Annie Goven filed in the Washington Post on 15 November 2017 reveals that Hindus and Buddhists also have their own terror stories to share with. There are several internally displaced people settled currently in the Western Burma who hold that they would never like to go back to their homes. They fear that Rohingyas will slit their throat and kill the entire family. Hindus also became targets of the Rohingya Muslims. On 27 September 2017, the Government of Myanmar found out mass graves of 45 dead bodies of Hindus near Fakira Bazar (Hasnat 2017). It claimed that ARSA had come to the Hindu village, gathered up around 100 of them, chased them to their fields, and finally killed them with knives (Tun 2017). One can understand the violence between the local Buddhists and the state on the one hand and Rohingya Muslims on the other, but why the Hindus were killed is still an idiom to be resolved. Is it not because the Rohingyas are also intolerant to other faiths? Even the Christians living in Burma acknowledge that it is the terror activities of the Rohingya Muslims that the state has resorted to repressive attitude (<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/rohingya-immigrants/4065689.html>). The stories of Hindus being killed by the Rohingya Muslims also infuriated Hindus in India.

Needless to say, in the last three decades, over 1.1 million Rohingyas have left the country. The major destinations have been Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India. Since the border of Bangladesh meets the Arakan region, the major exodus has been to Bangladesh. According to one estimate, nearly 890,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh followed by 350,000 in Pakistan, 200,000 in Saudi Arabia, 150,000 in Malaysia, and 40,000 in India. The matter of fact is that now Bangladesh, and even Malaysia, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia have refused to welcome Rohingya

migrants. Bangladesh thinks that it cannot bear further the burden of population coming from Myanmar (Ashrq Al-Awsat 2017). This applies to other Muslim countries as well. This gives ammunition to the right-wing organizations in India to argue that when the Muslim countries are not ready to accommodate their coreligionists, why should India give them the shelter? There is a substance in this argument. Is pan-Islamism mere rhetoric for political consolidation? These questions become valid in context of idea of Muslim brotherhood dominating the Islamic ideology at moment.

The Malaysian government made several statements against the government of Myanmar, but it was not ready to accommodate the refugees. So is with other Muslim countries. For example, Turkey government issued strong statements in support of Rohingyas, but they are not ready to give space for settlement of these stateless people. Gulf countries are the richest countries in the Muslim world. They are ready to extend financial help, but they are not ready to accommodate them on their soil. It is not only in case of Burma. What happened in case of Syrian refugees are for all to see. It is finally Germany and the European countries which gave them refugee status. No Muslim country came forward to give land for their settlement and grant citizenship. The 2014 Report of Amnesty International is really shocking. The report noted that none of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council which included rich gulf countries accommodated even a single Syrian refugee (Dehlvi 2017a).

The religion for which they aspire to die did not come for their rescue. The argument can be made that why the people from far distant land like Myanmar should be accommodated in their countries, but the fact is that after the start of Syrian crisis, there has been mass migration of population from Syria, but there has been no helping hand from the Arab world. The Gulf Cooperation Council which comprises of several Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, etc. did not extend the hands of support (Dehlvi 2017b). United Nations has termed it as the biggest humanitarian crisis, but no affirmative action has come up from the world communities. While the Muslim nations such as Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan tried to convey their anguish over the on-going ethnic violence against the Rohingya Muslims, the Western countries remained rather reluctant. When the secretary of the USA visited Myanmar, he termed the violence against the Rohingyas as “ethnic cleansing” and indicated of applying sanctions against Burma, but they did not take any substantial stand (Reuters 2017). This was again used by the right-wing organizations and the government to argue against Rohingyas.

Further, the conditions of the non-Muslims in the Muslim countries also allowed the non-Muslims in the country to display a sense of apathy to the Rohingya cause. This was raised not only by the Hindus but also the Muslims in the country. Sultan Shahin, the founder and editor of the New Age Muslim, while participating in a news channel debate argued that why do Indian Muslim leaders and Ulemas remain silent spectators when the human rights of non-Hindus are violated in Muslim-dominated countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc.? Why do Muslims of the world do not speak against the human rights violations in Islamic countries?

Do the human rights belong only to the Muslims and not to the other religious communities? This question became pertinent in light of exodus of Hindus from Pakistan and Bangladesh (The New Age 2017).

In the recent past, there have been several stories of torture and abduction of Hindu women in Pakistan which created national outrage. Unfortunately, the Muslims organizations and leaders never hit the streets for the Hindus. That is why when Muslim organizations invoked cultural, civilizational, and humanitarian arguments to defend settlements of Rohingyas in the country, there were few takers. The cultural and civilization logic emanated from the great saying that this country celebrates the ethos of *Atithi Devo Bhavah* (Guests are God). And therefore, if India denies the shelter to the persecuted communities, it would be going against its own ethos which the right-wing organizations and nationalists always boast off. The President of All India Ulema and Mashaikh Board, Syed Mohammad Ashraf Kichhouchhwi, and Syed Salman Chisti of Ajmer Dargah Sharif used this argument and demanded that the government of India must give shelter to the Rohingya Muslims (The Indian Express 2017a). But such appeals to the government did not go well with the masses. The reaction went worse when the Chief Minister of the state of J&K Mahbooba Mufti Sayed made a statement that Rohingyas are not found in terror activities, and the central government should be generous to their settlement. She said so on the floor of the legislative assembly (The Indian Express 2017b). She accepted that some madrasas are associated with Rohingyas in the valley. Hindus took serious objection to her statements as this amounted to her duplicity on the settlement as she has been opposed to any outsider to settle in the state. But the government of India rejected all such appeals and filed its reply with the Supreme Court in which it categorically stated that Rohingyas are threat to the national security (The affidavit said "...this obligation is binding only in respect which are party to the convention. Since India is not party to the said convention, or the said protocol the obligations contained therein are not applicable to India."). When Rajnath Singh, the central home minister, visited the state, he told in a press conference clearly that Rohingyas are threat to the national security (The Kashmir Horizons 2017). And further that they will be deported soon to the land from where they came in (Masih 2017). The government reiterated its stand that Rohingyas are involved in terror activities, and they have overseas links with the terrorists groups, and therefore they cannot be allowed to settle in India. Surprisingly, while the religious organizations belonging to the Muslim community supported Rohingyas on humanitarian ground, the Grand Mufti of Syria, Sheikh Ahmad Badreddin Hassoun, supported India's stand. In an interview to Indian News Channel WION, he endorsed India's stand and said that there was propaganda against the Myanmar government (<http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syrias-grand-mufti-concurs-india-rohingya-muslims-are-security-threat-1087331340>).

Interestingly, the political parties in valley who do not welcome back Kashmiri Pandits in the valley came out enthusiastically to advance the humanitarian logic to support the stay of Rohingyas in Jammu region. This, however, infuriated the Hindus of the region who saw in it a deliberate design to alter the numerical strength of Hindus. And, therefore, Hindus of the Jammu region vehemently criticized the

state government decision to give shelter to these refugees. The question was not inappropriate as the political parties like PDP and National Conference otherwise are very sensitive on Article 35 A (Article 35 A is an article which was inserted into the Indian constitution not through constitutional amendments under Article 368 but through presidential order. It pertains to the right given to the legislature of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to decide the permanent citizen of the state.) and don't want it to be disturbed in order to perpetuate the numerical preponderance of Muslims in the valley, but they had no problems if Rohingya Muslims come from Burma and settle there in Jammu region. The coverage of the distance by the migrants from Burma to remote Jammu also raised questions. Why the migrants did not settle in the other states close to Burmese border. It is interesting that the Rohingyas settled in the state are not in the valley but in Jammu and Ladakh regions.

Hindu organizations have protested against such settlements because they fear that settlements of the Muslims would alter the demographic equations in the future, and that would have far-reaching political and cultural consequences for the Hindus. Their understanding of Islam emanates from the experience they had in the Kashmir valley where Hindus who had been there for thousands of years were forced to leave their homes and properties. For them, humanitarian call had no meaning, and therefore they wanted nothing less than eviction and deportation of Rohingyas. They fear that the refugee of today will turn out to be the mercenary of Islam tomorrow bringing turmoil for the other religionists. The massive level of radicalization of the Muslim youths across the world and rise of the cult of violent form of Islam has gone into forming this psyche among other religionists in general and Hindus in particular.

The way the global Islam has accelerated radicalization, the idea has gained ground that there is something inherent within Islam which makes it fanatic and radical and unfit therefore for a society which believes in coexistence. A numerically dominant Muslim community does not give the same cultural and civil rights to other religious and cultural communities, and therefore rising numerical strength of Islam is a threat to the pluralistic and democratic predominantly Hindu India. Already there have been chains of protests and movements by these organizations against the Bangladeshi Muslims who have got settled in different parts of India and have changed the religious and cultural geography of many states like Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, and even Delhi (Both the BJP and RSS have passed resolutions several times in the past against the migrants from Bangladesh into India. And supported the demand of identifying and deportation of the migrants. But unfortunately, nothing substantial have been done to this effect despite government at the centre.).

Human rights organizations, both national and international, have come out to openly support the cause of Rohingyas. Their main arguments are that India has a long-standing tradition of giving shelters to the persecuted communities in order to save their lives. If the Rohingyas are sent back, they too will be persecuted by the hostile state apparatus in Burma. The National Human Rights Commission chaired by the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India justified their stay on the ground of long tradition of giving such refuse as well as on the grounds of extended

and enlarged explanations of fundamental rights by the Supreme Court that even the noncitizens have the right to life. It observed that even though the country has not signed the Convention on Refugee of 1951 and the Protocol of 1967 on the same as yet, it has been signatory to many such conventions which seek to protect the human rights. It held that the country had so far stricken a balance between the human and humanitarian cause on the one hand and security and national interests on the other (The Times of India 2017). The Supreme Court of India led by the Chief Justice of India while hearing the petition of the two migrants, namely, Mohammad Salimullah and Mohammad Shaqir, observed that it was a huge humanitarian crisis, and the court would not ignore the humanitarian aspects in dealing with the matter, though in its same breath it held that it will balance the interests of the national security, economic interest, labor interests, and demographic considerations (NDTV 2017). Government, on the other hand, does not seem to be in mood to paying heed to the Supreme Court. The ISI angle of training the Rohingya Muslims has given food for thought to the government to investigate into larger design of Pakistan to alter the demographic characters of Jammu and other parts of the state where they have settled in. Many jurists have also objected to the intervention of the Supreme Court on the issue. They argue that Supreme Court does not have jurisdiction in this matter. The security of the state is basically the responsibility of the executive. It is the executive which examines and evaluates the magnitude of the security threat to the country immediate as well as prospective. And therefore the court has no business to enter into the domain of the executive.

Conclusions

Migration of population with strong ethnic orientation has larger impacts in the society in which they come and settle in. In the initial years, they don't assert their cultural and political identity and just wish to be part of the society. This is the time when they need the cooperation of the sheltering state. But with the growth of population, they not only demand more share in the cultural and political space but that becomes the issue of contestations with the indigenous communities. Down the generations they start asserting themselves for the same. India is witness to over 300 Million Bangladeshi Muslims who have altered the political and cultural geography of states like Assam, Tripura, West Bengal, Bihar, and many other states of India. Bangladeshi settlers in Assam and Bengal today have started influencing the politics and culture of the areas they have settled in. In the state of West Bengal, they pushed out the Hindus from the border areas to settle in the cities selling their lands and properties. Now no party, except for the right-wing political and social organizations, has courage to demand their repatriation to Bangladesh. In Bengal, they have gone so offensive that with their support the Muslim communities have started coercing the Hindus in many villages where they are in dominating positions. In last few years, Bengal witnessed several one-sided communal riots in which the Muslim masses aggressively attacked the Hindu processions and forced the government to issue directives to restrict their religious processions and rituals in public

space. Migrants thus are not the individuals but the part of political and cultural communities which they come from. They begin with individual rights and then go for equal rights in cultural and political space. Thus, with advance of time, they throw larger challenges to the hosting countries, and therefore there has been opposition to their settlements. This becomes all the more relevant and complex in case of India which witnessed partition in the name of religion in 1947 and continues to face Islamic extremism in many parts of the country. Opposition to the Rohingyas by the right-wing political and cultural organizations is driven by such thinking which has gathered popular strength in recent years.

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