

Rohingya Refugees and Security Threat to Local Residents: An Empirical Study at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Rukhsana Siddiqua^{1*} Anira Mohiuddin²

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology and Police Science, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Tangail, Bangladesh-1902 and Doctoral Research Fellow, Jindal Institute of Behavioral Sciences, O.P.Jindal Global University, Haryana, India

2. MS Student, Department of Criminology and Police Science, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, Tangail, Bangladesh-1902

Abstract

Refugees have become one of the most debatable issue in this decade. Worldwide 22.5 million are count as refugees, where 84% were from developing countries. In 2017 near 1 million rohingya refugees have crossed the Myanmar border to save from crime against humanity. Different dimensions of refugee crisis now being studied by scholar on their victimization and needs. In international basis refugees creating major threat issue as terrorism, violent crime to petty crimes. This study has focused on exploring possible security threats that been created by the rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) has been used from the criminological perspective to explain threat. Purely quantitative method used and primary data has been collected from local residents in Cox's Bazar where refugees present. The main objective was to find the prevalence of threat within those areas. This study has tried to explore the different forms of security threat like threat to life and property, police secrecy, hostile & violent environment, crime involvement and residents victimized by rohingyas. Different types of crime threat as violent, petty, public order, drugs & arms and border security have been studied and compared crime of rohingya refugees with general police data. Additionally, association found in some socio demographic characteristics e.g. gender, place of living, religion, education with threat. Police capabilities to prevent crime related refugees has also linked. Finally, some recommendations are drawn from public and academic perspective.

Keywords: Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Security Threat, Crime, Police Capabilities, Local Residents Acceptance.

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1. Introduction

Refugees became one of the most debatable talked topic in this decade. Millions of people have suffered as a victim of civil wars or internal security issues. The main origins of asylum seeking refugees are based during and after World War II now Worldwide 22.5 million are count as refugees, where 84% were from developing countries. One in every 113 people on the planet is now a refugee and one in every three (4.9 million people) being hosted by the world's least developed countries (UNHCR Global Trends Report, 2018).

The Rohingya are an ethnic group, the majority of whom are Muslim, who have lived for centuries in the majority Buddhist Myanmar. From the year 1960's to 'Operation Dragon King (1978), Operation Pyi Thaya (1991-1992), 2012 violence against Rohingyas and finally in 2017 counter insurgency clearance operation led to mass killing and seek to took shelter in neighborhood country Pakistan, India, Thailand, Australia, India, Malaysia and Bangladesh. Between those year gap near 1 million rohingya, 700,000 people have been refuge in Bangladesh.

Table 1: Existing refugees based on their age and gender

Age Group	% Male	% Female
< 1	1.8	1.8
1-4	7.7	7.4
5-18	11.5	10.9
18-59	18.5	23.4
>60	1.6	1.8

Source: Figures are taken from the UNHCR/RRRC family counting exercise. Though the exercise has not yet been completed, these are the best available estimates on gender and age disaggregation from a sample size of around 719,500 people (UNHCR, 2018).

Table 1 has shown some statistic of existing rohingya refugees in Bangladesh based on their age and gender:

With heightened vulnerability, heartbreaking plight women and children's (0.5 million) represents most of the refugees and continues to have disproportionate burden sufferings, deprive from their basic rights and violation of their human rights as well. From many developed and developing countries to international humanitarian organization are eager to know about their pains behind those victimization, problems faced by them to settle in other countries. Problems they face while homeless as the basic needs to need of as food, safe place to live,

sanitation, water, medical, legal supports. Those all refugees have created a serious threat to each host countries (Amnesty International, 2017). With crisis different countries already conduct study on threat perception of refugees most of Europe, Turkish, African public on Syrian, Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan refugees perceived a sense of threat on their safeties as to threat of terrorism, living place and deal unhappily how their govt. handing refugees. (Pew Research, 2016; Bell, 2014; Topar & Ozar, 2017)

Scholars have started to showing their concern not only base on those refugees need but also in area of their vulnerability lead became a criminal refugee and threat to security (Arends, 2016; Topal & Dokuzlu, 2017). Bangladesh where 1 million of refugees are staying and now researchers became concern about its long term effect (Khatun et. al., 2017) and their chance to involve in many criminal activities as prostitution, terrorism, drug cartel, fake identity, petty to violent crime to fulfil their needs. (Dey, Mitu, & Khatun, 2017).

Literatures shows that, internationally there is complex finding where public acceptance differ from countries to countries as Greece 94%, Sweden 88%, Italy 77% Spain 77% Hungary 72% Poland 71% UK 70% France 70% Germany 67%, Netherlands 63% and 47% Bulgarian of population disapproved and unhappy to deal with refugees, in view of USA 46% are opposed to accept refugees (Kyuchukor, 2016; Bitton and Soen, 2016) Where they create mixed feelings and involve in different crimes that influences the fear of crime in the host resident. It has found that refugees are involve in generally crimes such as petty crimes, vandalism, burglary, violent crash with local populations and morality related crimes, some extend organized crimes, where 7% were violent crime, 2% weapon related and 25% petty crime (Slavova, 2015). In Lithuanian people fear of terrorism as base on France incident in 2015, African studies reveals that South Sudan refugees are involved in violence and firearms related offences. Hungary and Switzerland found that refugees are more involved in violent crime. (LCPS, 2013; Bell, 2014; Simonovits, 2016; Couttenier et al., 2017; Valiūnienė et. al., 2017). Daily newspapers have continually reported news related to rohingya refugee's involvement in crime as murder, robbery, theft, prostitutions, drug trafficking, mob and internal vs external clash and as well as spread over the countries and possible extend to involve in terrorist activities. (Molla, 2018; Daily Asian age; 2018; Aziz, 2017; Islam, 2017)

Stephen et al (1999) given the Integrated Threat Theory that can be related to refugees. The theory applies to any social group that may feel threatened in some way, whether or not that social group is a majority or minority group in their society. This theory deals with perceived threat rather than actual threat. This theory deals with four components as to: Realistic Threats Symbolic threat, Negative Stereotype dimension and Intergroup Anxiety dimension. In this study it basically focusses the criminological perspective of this integrated threat theory. The outsider group, how influence the host community in cox's bazar and Ukhiya Upazila to view refugees base on the ground of threat base on it realistic and symbolic perspective.

There is no work related to refugees in Bangladesh related to threat issue from criminological perspective where in worldwide refugee as security threat became one of the concern. The study value lies in exploring the area of security threat of local residents near the refugee residing areas.

The research is to answer the main research question: "Whether the local residents in cox's bazar are experiencing the refugee's problem as a threat?"

The general objective of the research aimed to determine the prevalence of security threat of public among areas refugee residing. There are some specific objectives that aimed to explore in this study as i) To find out the factors that create a security threat among local residents. ii) To identify the possible activity or crime patterned opinioned by both public and police data iii) To assess security threat association with socio demographic characteristics and iv) To provide possible ways to reduce if threat exist.

Having some limitations what is the actual reality behind threat perception and find out the real answer is the aim of this study.

2.Methodology of the study

This work purely based quantitative and deductive research approach as it follows many foreign studies. Rohingya crisis a big issue from 1978 to still now but no such study has done put the light from criminological perspective. A pilot study has conduct for selection of the site. The area and population of the study was residents near the refugee camps as ukhia, balukhali and kutupalong, coxbazar. This study collect data from the base on non-probability sampling method, with structure questionnaire and collected total sample from 105 respondents by conducting purposive sampling as the issue is quite sensitive and restricted. A crime data has been collected from cox's bazar model Police Office to compare the individual crime rate of general and rohingya refugee's crime rate. Data has been analyzed using SPSS software. This research also tried to cover all the valid tools and reliable source of information. It considered ethical issues as respondent interest, citation, reference and plagiarism.

3.Findings of the study

After the refugees arrived in large context after August 2017, the extend of security effect has been explore in this study. The finding based on the objectives of the study divided in two part as one is general demographic discussion other is objective based analysis.

3.1 Factors that create sense of threat

Rohingya refugees have been present in southern area from 1978 after a clash in Myanmar after 2017 internal security operation a wave of refugees have travel by land, oversea to save their life. About 67% of refugees came after 2017 inhuman banishment of rohingya in rakhien state.

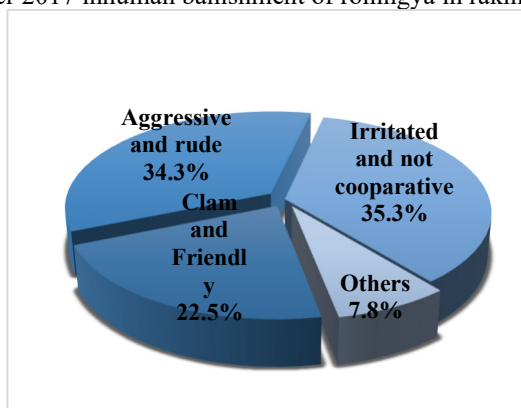


Figure 1: Behavior of refugees towards local reside

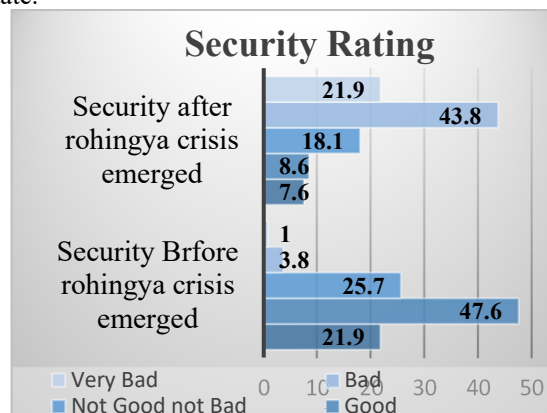


Figure 2: Rating of security before and after the refugees came

According to figure 1, the behaviors of the refugees were irritated and not cooperative (35.3%) towards the local residents where 34.3% were aggressive and rude, also found that around 22.5% were clam and friendly towards respondent. The respondent has been asked for rating the before and current security from rohingya arrival. From figure 2, it seems that from good (47.6%) to bad (43.8%) rated after the refugees arrived.

A cross tabulation between this two found that in good security majority have found clam and friendly behavior from refugees. In moderate security rating people found not cooperative behavior from rohingyas. Lastly who rated bad and very bad security they experienced mostly aggressive and violent behavior from the refugees. Another table that indicate victimization rate among refugees last one year among respondent vs their heard of victimization.

Table 2: Victimization scenario of last year

Indicator		Percent	Number
Victim of a crime	Yes	19.0	19
	No	81.0	
Perpetrator of offence	Rohingya	52.6	10
	General	47.4	9
Types of offense committed by Rohinga	Petty offense	81.8	10
	Others	18.2	
Report to police station	Yes	18.2	2
	No	81.8	
Response from police Station	Unfavorable	100	2
Heard of others' victimization	Yes	65.7	105
	No	34.3	

The table no 2, clearly found that actual victimization is only 19% where refugees were 52.6% offender, most of crimes were pretty crime. A little amount of people has visited Police Station and they have shown unfavorable response to them. Other hand 65.7% have heard of local people victimization that increases the security threat among local residents. Additionally, 95.2 % believes that they can involve in crime where 93.3% feeling threaten for the presence of refugees on their locality.

Table 3: Forms of threat

Forms of Threat	Number	Percent
Population growth and economy	14	14.1
Crime & Identity faking	19	19.2
Social and Cultural threats	12	12.1
Hostile and violent environment (Behavior)	26	26.3
Environmental degradation	13	13.1
Police secrecy	3	3.0
Traffic & accidents	4	4.0
Threat to life & property	8	8.1
Total	99	100

Respondents mostly said they got feelings as fear, anxiety, damage, danger, hostile, harm etc. because of some sort of causes. Forms that have no relation with crime are population growth 14.1%, environmental degradation 13.1%, traffic and accident 4%. Indicators that related with fear of crime as hostile behavior & violent 26.3%, crime and identity faking 19.2%, social and cultural threats 12.1%, threat to life and property 8.1% and police secrecy 3% (Table 3).

Table 4: Security Threat

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	56.2
No	46	43.8
Total	105	100.0

From this table it shows that out of 105 respondents 59 as 56.2% has related with security threat where 43.8% emphasis about other threats (table 4). Rohingya refugees created many threats to our country as studied like food, health, economy, environment (CPD, 2017) but it's relations with security rarely studied, where this table respondent said about emphasis on this threat too. This table is the summarization from the table 4.7 by adding four indicators of security threat together as crime and identity faking, hostile environment, police secrecy and threat to property and life (Yesmin, 2016).

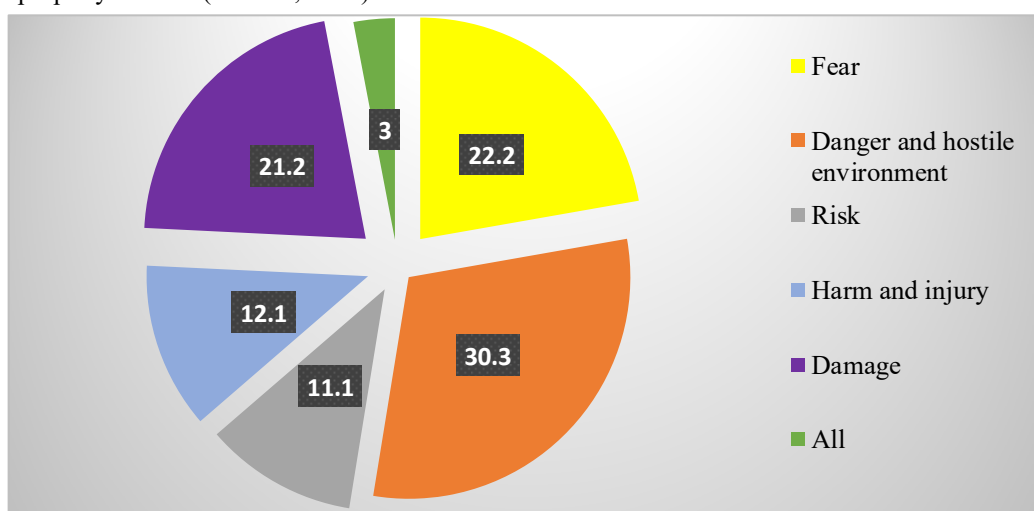


Figure 3: Local people's attitude towards refugees

Security threats create some kind of feelings among local residents (Siddiqua, 2015) that said by locals as majority 30.3% said about sense of danger and hostile situation, fear among them agreed by 22.2% where others as 21.2% damage, 12.1% harm and injury, 11.1% said that risk and 3% agreed that they got all those above equally. From figure 3, it can link each sense mainly danger and hostile situation, harm and injury and fear have create further feeling related to crime. A crosstab that test gamma found 0.55 as moderate relationship between heard of victimization and locals felt of threat. Another indicator is police capabilities to prevent crime where 12lakh refugees for only some, 76.2% believed that police cannot prevent crime on the locality that also create sense of insecurity.

Table 5: Police capabilities to prevent crimes committed by refugees

Police capability to prevent crime	Percent
Yes	23.8
No	76.2
Total	100.0

Next table 5, shows that peoples have less confidence on the capabilities of police to prevent crimes that will be committed by the refugees in future. In Austria police riddle with refugee related crime, where Germany crime reduce but fear increase (Culbertson, 2017; DW, 2018)

3.2 Possible activity or crime pattern opinioned by respondents

Violent crime

Murder and Robbery rarely found on daily's that committed by refugees, as it is a sensitive issue. From many studies it found that ARSA exist among the refugees that is terrorist group. Local people generally heard more about those than the others, so this table tried to explore the extend of crime refugees commit and their opinion on possibility of terrorism.

Table 6: Violent crimes and refugees

Violent crime indicator		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Murder	N	42	45	10	7	1	105
	Percent	40	42.9	9.5	6.7	1	100
Robbery	N	51	43	8	2	1	105
	Percent	48.6	41	7.6	1.9	1	100
Terrorism	N	24	33	31	16	1	105
	Percent	22.9	31.4	29.5	15.2	1	100

From table 6, Percentage shows that 42.9% respondent agree that murder committed by refugees, where 48.6% strongly agreed about robbery. Other hand terrorism related threat have mixed response from disagree to strongly agree. But majority relate it with agree as 31.4%. From threat to terrorism to violent crimes public agreed on international studies (Slavova, 2015; Pew Research, 2016; Kyuchukov, 2016).

Petty crime

Petty crime often most committed crime among refugees as found in Europe, Africans, Israel and so on (Slavova, 2015; Culbertson, 2017; Shechory-Bitton & Soen, 2016).

Table 7: Petty crimes and refugees

Petty crime indicator		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Internal Conflict in camp	N	87	14	4	0	0	105
	%	82.9	13.3	3.9	0	0	100
Clash with local public	N	57	17	10	12	3	105
	%	53.8	16.3	15.4	11.5	2.9	100
Theft	N	64	27	7	4	3	105
	%	61	25.7	6.7	3.8	2.9	100

In case of Bangladesh respondents strongly agreed on three categories of petty crime that happens among them and with locality. Internal clash in their camp is one of the big issue that create public a sense of threat as, when they mixed up with us they will create a conflict situation. 82.9% strongly agreed about this. Not within them but refugees started to create clash and conflict, beating with local peoples and sometimes threaten them. It also strongly agreed by 53.8% respondent. Lastly theft 61% agreed that refugees committing crime related to theft and often who were arrested with fake identity of Bangladeshi's nationals (table 7).

Public order crimes and threats

Public order crimes as prostitutions, spreading drug to community. Sigel (2004) define public order crime as act involves interfere with operations of society and the ability of people to function effectively.

Table 8: Public order offences, threat and refugees

Public order offences and threat	Number	Percent
Highly agreed	47	65.7
Moderate	57	34.3
Low	1	12.4
Total	105	100.0

Refugees are committing public order offense and also threat to social cohesion, women security are agreed by 65.7% respondent highly, where 34.3% moderately agreed and 12.4% agreed in low (table 8).

Drug and arms related crime

Drug and arms related cases mostly found on daily newspaper as no related study about rohingya refugee and crime.

Table 9: Drug and arms related crime and refugees

Drug and Arms crime related		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Drug crime related	N	77	18	7	3	0	105
	Percent	73.3	17.1	6.7	2.9	0	100
Arms crime related	N	19	44	31	9	2	105
	Percent	18.1	42	29.5	8.6	1.9	100

It seems that respondent 73.3% strongly agreed that drug related crime present where in case of arms near 44 respondent agreed about 42% in this security issue (Table 9).

Threat to border security

One of the important threat that created by rohingya refugees the border near to Myanmar, based on likert scale people mostly agreed the refugee crisis let the border security hamper.

Table 10: Border Security

Border Security is strong	Individual Percent		Overall Percentage	
	Strongly Agree	29.5%	Highly Agreed	73.3%
	Agree	44.8%	Moderately Agreed	21.9%
	Neutral	20%	Disagreed	4.8%
	Disagree	4.8%		
	Strongly Disagree	1%		

On other hand table 10 lead to the overall percentage shows that 73.3% have highly agreed that refugees are threat to border security. Border crimes related specifically to migration, ‘ordinary’ crime, capital offences etc. (Beutin et. al., 2006).

Figure 4, gives a glimpse of comparison between local residents fear of crimes where violent crime 54.3% agreed that rohingya were committing and chance to committing crime of violent. 44.8% agreed highly about this and only 1% agreed low chances. Next the petty crime is highly agreed by the respondent as 68.6%, where moderately agreed by 30.5% and last 1% agreed about low chances. As found in case of public order crime has mixed feelings shown about 50.5% agreed about moderate chances, where 37.1% about high and 12.4 about low chances. In case of drug and arms related crime respondent opinioned 48.6% as high and 47.6% moderate. Where 3.8% hold low chances. Lastly the overall crime committed by rohingya as opinioned by public as 61% moderately agreed, then 37.1% highly agreed and lastly 1.9% opinioned about low crime commitment.

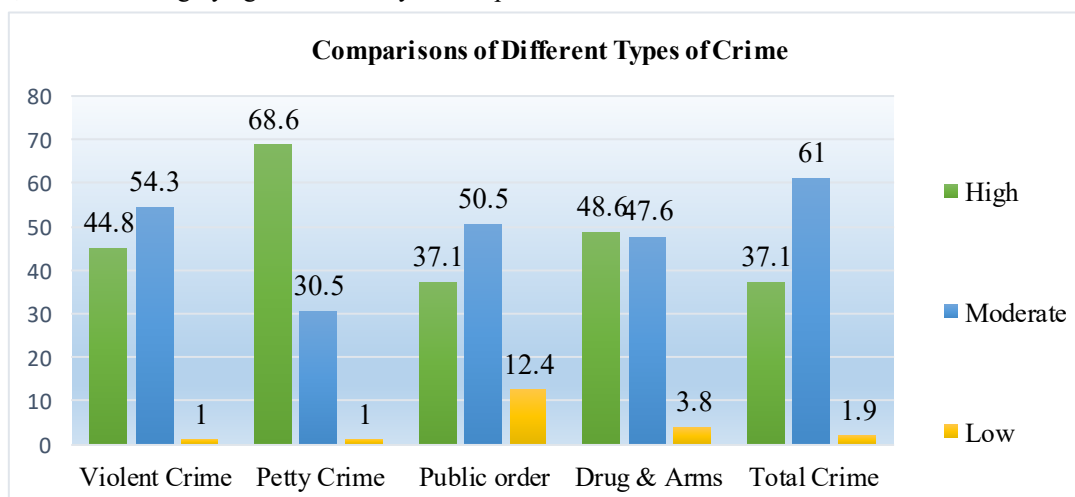


Figure 4: Comparison between views of crimes

3.3 Actual involvement of crime

Crime Committed by Rohingya Refugees (24 August 2017- 9 July 2018 – Cox’s bazar Police Statistics) and data from June 2017 to June 2018 of general statistics found that from the following table 11,

From the above data it’s found that rohingya’s total crime until 9th July was 231 and total number of refugees apprehend 451 where general was 1018 that is quite high than the refugees. But in comparison with crimes total percentage between this twosome crime rate is higher than the general public and it is a threat for the local community and police. Studies base on international it found that some refugees involved with violent crime where some found that petty crime committed more by them (Shechory-Bitton & Soen, 2016; Miller, 2016; Slavova, 2015; Culbertson, 2017; Topal and Ozr, 2017; DW, 2018).

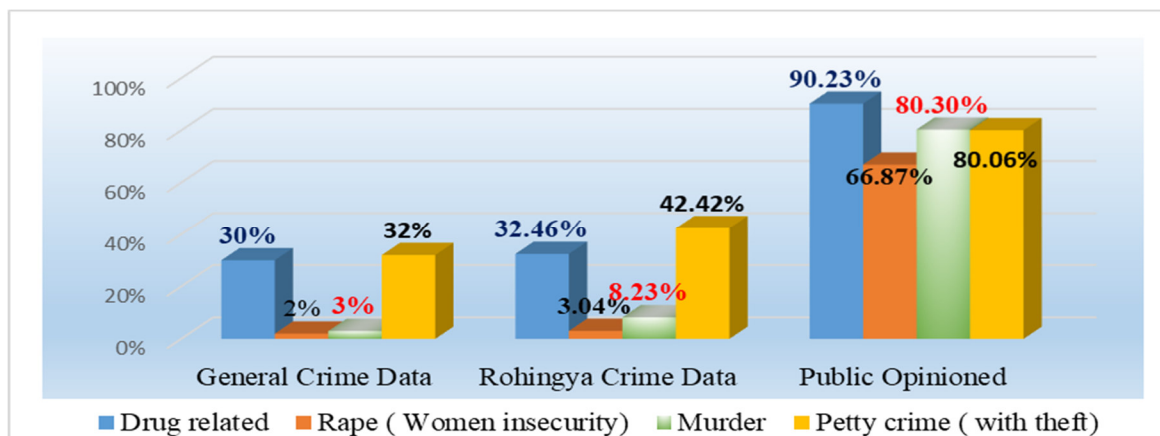


Figure 5: Compare between official data and respondent opinions about crime commission by refugees

Threat to terrorism is also a vast area to explore but without the public opinion there have no official data. Crimes as drug 32.46% that's higher than the general as 30%, Rape in total coxobazar as 2% where in refugees it's higher as 3.04%, murder among them is 8.23% as in general the rate is very low 3% and last criteria is petty crime rohingya as 41.42% where general data shows about 30%. Crime committed by refugees have shown on Table 2 and the likert scale question from Table 6- Table 9 are measure of perception of respondent Table 11 overall agree to this crime indicate with official data that crime is committed by them and it create a sense of threat in host community and further in other areas (Figure 5)

Table 11: Police data of rohingya and general crime

Crime Names	Rohingya crime Percent	General crime Percent
Arms trafficking	5.19%	10%
Drug trafficking	32.46%	30%
Women and child trafficking	6%	12%
Rape	3.04%	2.01%
Foreigners Act	3.91%	N/A
Kidnapping	2.1%	2%
Theft	1%	2%
Robbery (Preparation)	3%	4%
Murder	8.23%	3%
Petty crime	41.42%	30.2%
Special Tribunal	N/A	5%
Total crimes	231	1018
Total apprehend	451	N/A

Crimes that are levels same as refugees as, kidnapping 2% general and 2.1% refugees, robbery 4% general and 3% in refugees, Theft 2% general and 1% in refugees.

Some crimes are lower than generals as, arms related cases, 10% generals and 5.19% refugees, women and child repression 12% general and 6% in refugees lastly in special tribunal 5% generals prosecuted and 3.91% prosecuted on foreigner's act.

In summary from this chapter public threaten feeling match with actual data and refugees became concern of security threat would be presumed.

3.4 Threat relationship with socio demographic characteristics

From some demographic variable it found that security threat is related to it. As like this study found that male was more prone to security threat where female opinion varies among other forms of threat. Association of lambda as 0.67 that indicate moderate association between this two variable.

Threat varies from ground to ground in this study. Religion and threat are related as one where Buddhist communities threaten related to crime and identity faking. Turkish study find as religion difference increase threat increase (Topal and Ozer, 2017) where most of European felt threaten for muslims in terrorism (op't Hoog, 2017; Beutin, et al. 2006; Wang & Revelle, 2016; Chantham House, 2017; Purpose, 2017).

On lastly threat has relation with place of residence (Simonvits, 2016). In here overall balukhali host communities are mostly threatening if all the security threat indicator all added

Gamma associate this two variable in value of 0.41 that indicated that positive moderate association between educational qualification and threaten feelings of the respondent after rohingya came. Low education increases more threat feeling.

The association of lambda between this two variable near 0.55 that indicate moderate association. So in summary whether married or unmarried or divorced security threat most emphasis by the majority expect the widows. Married threaten of the hostile environment where unmarried felt of victimization of crime threat more. Not significant association found on occupation, income and age (low).

3.5 Recommendations from Respondents

In previous table no 5, its shown that more than 70% thought that police is not capable for prevention of crimes. To prevent crime some ways been suggested by the public as, 51.2% said about to increase man power of police as police and public ratio is very low. 950 police to control more than 15lakh rohingyas. (Cox’s bazar Police Station 2018). About 13.1% said to use new strategies, 10.7% said to emphasis more on training whereas increasing arms have stated by 1.2% respondent. Another 23.8% second majority respondent opinioned that other areas as to collaboration with other LEA agencies as to Army and BGB etc. more, strict supervision, increase number of check post, come out from the abstract framework of international law will help to control and prevent crimes committed by refugees (Figure 6).

Respondents suggested the way they will be less fearful to crime. Most of the respondent here said that repatriation is best way 21.9%, after that two indicators strict identification and focus on general people’s needs with same percentage 21.9%, where other 17.1% respondent said about to give refugees training and made them socialized according to normal rules will help to reduction of threat.

From police to increase manpower, collaboration with other agency emphasis by local populations as to

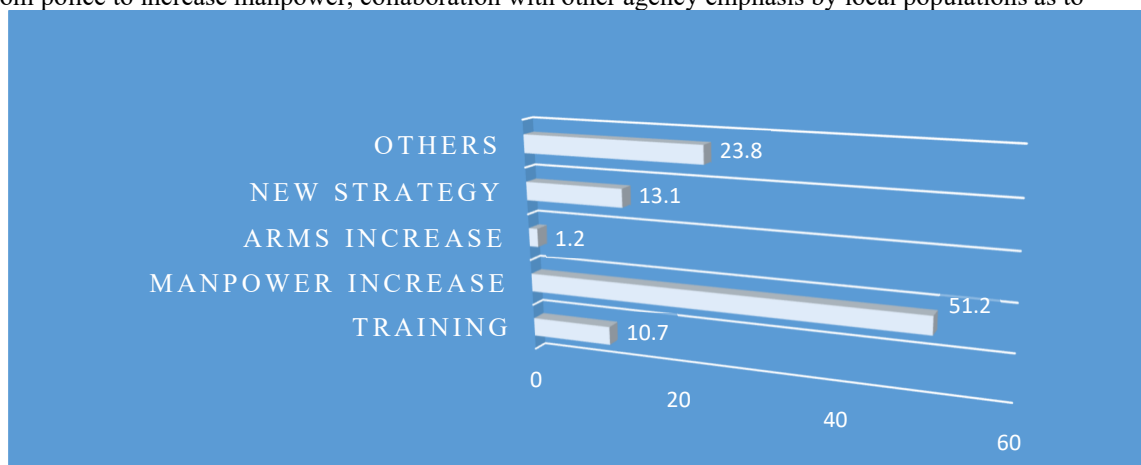


Figure 6: Possible strategies to reduce crime

reduce security threat they asked for focus on their need, identify each rohingya with database will help more as only 33,000 only registered rohingya where more than 15 lakhs are staying on a place where average people was near 2 lakh (UNHCR, 2018; Census Bangladesh 2011).

4. Test of Hypotheses

Table 13: Results of Statistical test

Pearson chi Square	Calculated Value	Tabulated value	df	Asym. Sig (2tailed)
Hypothesis 1	20.121	19.675	11	0.044
Hypothesis 2	7.384	5.991	2	0.025
Hypothesis 3	7.146	3.841	1	0.008

Hypothesis one

There is relationship between security threat experience by respondent and crime committed by refugees.

Comment

Calculated value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected and alternative is accepted. So, crime committed by refugees are increasing the security threat among respondents.

Hypothesis two

There is relationship between heard about victimization and overview to crime committed by rohingya refugees.

Comment

Calculated value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected and alternative is accepted. So, crime committed by refugees are increasing the security threat among respondents.

Hypothesis three

Sense of threat have significant impact on Bangladesh Police to prevent refugee related crime.

Comment

Calculated value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected and alternative is accepted. So, it means Sense of threat have significant impact on Bangladesh Police to prevent refugee related crime.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In criminological perspective local residents highlighted Drug related crime and stability of near area main threats of refugee crisis. Security safeties emphasis more after the basic needs in those areas. Threats that generally perceived by variables as behavior, prior victimizations, heard about victimization, police capabilities, with some crime indictors that perceived by locals. Security threat also associate with gender, place of living, religion, marital status and education.

Moreover, respondents are afraid that crimes and violence could increase because of refugees and it correspond with police statistics. People are victimize ranging from violent to petty crime. It's a great threat to them to loss their place of agriculture, business to being victim of clashes or beating. Serious crime victimization only heard from people where all agencies deal this issue with sensitivity and secrecy. With having check pointing near about 60,000 have tried to cross the camp area when they apprehend (Coxbazar Model Thana, 2018). With the sincere collaboration with local in decision making this spreading can be overcome.

From all the resident and based on other studies the appropriate recommendations are suggest for successful reduction of threat issues caused by rohingya refugees:

- i. A good identification system for refugee that will separate them of Bangladeshi by using of the digital technologies.
- ii. Stephan and Stephan (2000) suggest the proper flow of right and accurate information among groups.
- iii. Some ways as diversity training, multicultural education, cooperative learning programs, intergroup dialog, intercultural relations training, peace education, proble m solving etc. can be useful.
- iv. Not focus on relief based but ensure more basic needs as socializing and education that lack before in Myanmar.
- v. Ensure and protect public needs by government and local agencies.
- vi. Police need to increase & proper manage their manpower.
- vii. Police partnership with Army, BGB and International organizations.

This research was an attempt to discover security threat among local residents after emergence of rohingya crisis. Opinion based primary data has been collected for the study. Further researchers can be conducted base on this threat area and to see its impact on all over Bangladesh.

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First Author, Rukhsana Siddiqua(L'12-AP'14) was born in Bangladesh in the year 1987. She completed her secondary and higher secondary studies in science from Rajuk College, Dhaka, Bangladesh and completed her graduation (B.Sc. Honors) in criminology and police science in 2008 from a public university in Tangail city of Bangladesh named Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University. She completed her post-graduation (MS) from the same department in the year 2009. She was involved in several national level surveys from student life. She joined as Research Assistant in Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association in 2010. Then she joined as Lecturer(L) in the department of Criminology and Police Science in 2012 and promoted as Assistant Professor(AP) in the year 2014. During eight years of teaching she supervised 54 monograph students and 3 thesis students; attended 6 national and international seminars and presented papers and acted as session chair. She was a key panelist in UNICEF panel in fourth international conference of SASCV. She has 11 international and national publications. She accomplished Post graduation in Victimology and Victim Assistance, offered by World Society of Victimology, at City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong in 2018. She enrolled as doctoral research fellow from August 2019, in the Jindal Institute of Behavioral Sciences of O.P. Jindal Global University, Haryana, India. She is pursuing her PhD in cyber violence victimization. She developed her expertise in different fields of criminology and victimology. She is a life member of World Society of Victimology; Country Director of South

Asian Society of Criminology and Victimology and member of Bangladesh Society of Criminology and Victimology. The author's major fields of study are cybercrime, trafficking, border security and criminal investigation.

Second Author, Anira Mohiuddin was born in Bangladesh in 1994. She Completed her Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C) from Tangail Girls High School and Higher Secondary Certificate (H.S.C) from Major General Mahmudul Hasan Ideal College with respectively GPA 5.00 and 4.90. She also graduated from the Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminology and Police Science. After obtaining her degree, she continued into MBSTU to obtain her Master's degree in Criminology and Police Science. She is with an aim to learn in-depth and use her knowledge for the betterment of human and the flourish in the field of criminology and police. Her interest in the field of led her to love the journeys of the research and the discoveries that develop her every time. Working in the hostile area of Rohingya camp with the local resident was one of the amazing experiences. Besides, presently She has been involved with different organization for social work such as Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, British Council, Democracy Watch, Nagorik Uddyog and BNCC.