



**UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW**

**Migrants and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges to  
Institutions and Organizations  
in Managing *Rohingya* Refugees**

**Author:**

Chowdhury, Sultanul Muktasid 910910

**Supervisor:**

Kajsa Lindberg

**Department:**

Graduate School

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# **Migrants and the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

## **Challenges to Institutions and Organizations in Managing *Rohingya* Refugees**

Chowdhury, Sultanul Muktasid

*Master of Science in Management, Graduate School  
School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg*

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### **Abstract**

A few of organizational studies have been conducted in managing *Rohingya* refugees under COVID-19 pandemic situation. This study undertook a closer view of the organizational approaches in managing *rohingya* refugees in Bangladesh under COVID-19. After in-depth studies of secondary sources and having conducted field research at different refugee camps and humanitarian organizations who are located at refugee camp sites, it has been found that these organizations are advancing towards unifying operations of multi-sector stakeholders. Accordingly, unified management of physical, financial, and human resources in a centralized management are poised to come under the UNHCR. *Rohingya* refugees have been found aware of the forthcoming centralized management approach. Also, the refugees appeared to be uncertain and wary of their potential future. Some refugees expressed their apprehension that the centralized approach may not be as expected to meet their needs. The *Rohingya* refugee expectations appear to stipulate resources to equipping them with more conducive arrangements and vocational training that may render them a foreseeable future where the refugees would live a progressive civic life with commensurate lifestyles. Nevertheless, the upcoming centralized organizational approach to overcome an ephemeral arrangement on the part of the humanitarian organizations, the new arrangement can be a sustainable solution. An utmost achievement for *Rohingya* refugees would be that if the Myanmar authorities can be persuaded to form legal contracts with the *Rohingya* population, under the UN arrangements, to devise a mutual understanding for economic development of Myanmar, in general, and of *Rohingya* or *Rakhine* population, in particular. Accordingly, the *Rohingya* refugees would need to be taken back to their homestead where they belonged ensuring allocations and provisions for their physiological and other basic needs that are conducive to a progressive civic life. How this newly formed centralized organization advances to meet the required refugee supports is a point of consideration that warrants specific future research.

**Key Words:** *Rohingya* refugees, Institutions, Humanitarian Organizations, COVID-19, Sustainable, Organizational advances.

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## **Introduction:**

During the 1940s, military institutions managed and controlled the effects of the great war on people, refugees, communities, families, and social institutions. Waller (1940), in dealing with the war effect on people, analyzed army as a social institution. While the war-efforts from the military, then considered as a social institution, made their best output to win the war, the social institutions had their importance but not as the best output as had been for the war (Waller, 1940).

Soon after the war, the program on immigrants to the USA had been managed by refugees service agencies under directive of the US President (Maurice, 1947-1948). During 1947, Maurice (1949) noted, over 147 thousand refugees, misplaced persons, and formal immigrants arrived in the USA, which was larger than that in the previous years. In accordance, legislation was enacted to institutionalize these social issues – that included refugees and relevant aspects.

Even though OXFAM (*Oxford Committee for Famine Relief*), established in 1942, catered to the needs of poverty-stricken people, and continue to conduct activities focused to global poverty alleviation, the UNHCR was founded in 1950 (UNHCR, 2021-22a). Nonetheless, during the later years, several humanitarian institutions and organizations—IOM in 1951, UNICEF in 1946, WFP in 1961, BRAC in Bangladesh in 1971, and other organizations came forward with institutional advances, to support refugees issues and their social needs. In the process, in interacting with refugee issues, unique processes were adapted that followed to make the institutional efforts effective and efficient.

Notwithstanding the organizational *advances* and their practices that may have been sustainably institutionalized, however, to humanitarian institutions and organizations “such advances also give rise to new problems and vulnerabilities . . .” (Hutter & Power, 2005, p. 1).

For “an institution is understood to be an (observable) pattern of collective action, justified by a corresponding social norm” (Czarniawska, 2006, p.4), the *collective actions* of humanitarian institutions and organizations—as far as these collective actions relate to operational issues surrounding *Rohingya* refugee in Bangladesh—these organizations may be regarded as political institutions adhering to local norms that relate to public affairs of a nation. As such, these social norms and the practices can be observed in a crowded area interfacing challenges, such as, social distancing in the case of COVID-19 in refugee camps in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is among the top refugee hosting countries globally and a number of volunteering organizations are serving the refugees to make a sustainable society. The ACAPS article finds out the COVID-19 affected among the *Rohingya* refugees in a model of sustainable development throughout some secondary sources (ACAPS, 2022). It observes the random changes of the organizational policies by the crisis management team, where there is not adequate norms and policies for the refugees, which made institutional disruption among refugees. Thereby, a crisis of food, healthcare, housing, washing facilities, trainings and the use of inferior materials in the camps also kept a negative impact on the monetary funds (ACAPS, 2022).

Again, Bangladesh ranked with the highest COVID case in number among 17 countries, which is too risky for the people in practice. In addition, the country is accommodating of almost 1.11 million people forcibly displaced Rohingya people, who are sheltering in the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. Almost all the refugee people reside in extremely congested camps which includes the largest single-site of the Kutupalong-Balukhali sit. Children make up 52% of the total refugee population and women and girls makeup 51% (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021). The camp population density is about 8 m<sup>2</sup> per person, where they compared with the international standard of 45 m<sup>2</sup> per person (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021).

The COVID-19 test for the refugee camp started by mid-2020 and till now only 400 refugees tested the test and only 38 tested positive, interestingly only a couple of people expired in the COVID-19 (Khan, M. N., Islam, M. M., & Rahman, M. M., 2020). So, it can be said that in the crowd area, the affected and expiry rate in COVID-19 of people could be too high, interestingly which went on the opposite side as the institutions took strict laws i.e. to maintain proper hygiene. The reason behind is that 84% of refugees were concerned of sanitization and water along with the hygiene issues.

Studying the organizations like BRAC, UNICEF, FAO, UNHCR, IOM and Oxfam, the institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic have become more challenging for the researchers as of limited mobility. Due to the organizational phenomenon, breaking down of the organizations causes some people to get refused as well as are forced to leave the nation for any ongoing war along with these refugees are even more challenging task for someone to adopt some new habits for himself or herself adopting with new challenges.

The contribution of UNHCR for the Rohingya refugee people was in a bigger scale as they are still serving hard to facilitate the organizations in managing the refugees. Again, the organization has provided an equipped emergency responding team with a relief of around 500 specialized staffs. Therefore, by 2018 the United Nations along with their partners launched a partnership project for the Rohingya as JPR: Joint Response Plan providing USD 951 million (Refugees, 2020).

The overpopulated camps with the challenging environmental, physical and psychological conditions where social distancing is a hard job for the organizations. Thereby, the social distancing has become the major challenges for the Rohingya refugees during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted in 1951, has remained as the instrument to provide international refugee protection. The 1967 Protocol provide the Convention “universal coverage” through the progressive development of international human rights law (UNHCR, 2010, p. 2). The Convention now “endorses a single definition of the term ‘refugee’” emphasizing the “protection of persons from political or other forms of persecution” (UNHCR, 2010, p. 3). A refugee, according to the Convention, is a person “unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin” for fear of being persecuted for reasons of “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR, 2010, p. 3).

McAdam emphasized (2018, p. 571) that for the protection of refugees and migrants, “adoption of two new instruments on people movement – the Global Compact on Refugees (Refugee Compact) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Migration Compact) – signals new moral and political undertakings by the world’s governments.” These instruments promise “to respect the human rights of people on the move, to provide the conditions for them to live in safety and with dignity, and to empower them to enrich the societies in which they live” (p. 571). These undertakings *reaffirm* the essence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was adopted in 1948.

Oxfam, as a partner of UNICEF ensured water treatment plants, where the treatment plants can even purify around 0.30 million liters of water each day. Oxfam also took the initiative to collect donations and played a vital role with UNICEF among the Rohingyas (The Rohingya refugee crisis, 2020).

The IOM confirmed that “over 800,000 Rohingya” migrated, over the previous years, into Bangladesh and the year 2021 is the fourth year since the *Rohingya* faced mass displacement from Myanmar that are alleged to have occurred owing to “systematic discrimination and targeted violence” (IOM, 2022).

Despite handing over an introduction letter from the University of Gothenburg—to permit to conduct field studies (mostly data collection) in the local and international humanitarian organizations involved in managing *Rohingya* refugees—all the six organizations that were approached tacitly refused to furnish any data and information while advised to find these publicly available information on their websites.

Despite several published studies on refugees, focusing *Rohingya* refugees in Bangladesh from Myanmar, studies on analyses of works the international and local humanitarian organizations have carried out—to support refugees during the pandemic situation—are inadequate. Thus, it deserves specific studies as to how the organizations manage their challenges away from their routine activities, in connection to the non-routine activities, unintended or unforeseen events.

The aim of this study is to describe and analyze the practices of both the international and local humanitarian organizations as regards supporting *Rohingya* refugees during the COVID- 19 pandemic situations.

Accordingly, this study is conducted among the refugee camps (in *Kutupalong* and *Ukhiya*), known as the “world's largest refugee camp” (OCHA, 2017) in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, with a particular focus on the migrated *Rohingya* refugees.

The research questions are:

1. What challenges can be identified by the humanitarian organizations and how do they manage?
2. What consequences does the challenges have on institutional level?

## Literature Review:

In reviewing associated literature in *these* aspects, it has been found that most skillful social scientists have discovered that interests in *required* development in organizational processes has practical basis. Also, these *requirements* appear to be away from structured adherence and inflexibility. However, the uses and misuses of institutional theory have taken different connotations. According to Czarniawska (2011), “The most interesting interpretations of institutional theory result from the misuse of the term ‘institution.’” Institution also means a human intentional act towards creating and enacting certain type of collective practice.

Scholars in institutions recognized organizations “as stable entities, divided from their environments by boundaries, toward *organizing* as a process” – simplifying the comprehension of how these organizational advances “emerge” as well as identifying the mechanism to engineer their accomplishments (Lindberg & Walter, 2013, p. 1).

In several scholarly text, an institution is considered to be a public administration organization. Another meaning, as Goffmanian (1961) defined, includes members of an institution regarded as legitimized social groupings (Douglas, 1986).

Hinings (2012) asserted the study in which Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin, and Suddaby (2008) outlined several stages towards developing institutional theory that are related to institutional fields and institutionalized organizations (see DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) and Zilber (2008) also emphasized the original concepts and processes within the institutional theory.

Zilber (2008) referred to Greenwood et al. (2008) in which the authors considered these concepts and processes to be the last stage as *expanding horizons*, and recognized the expansion of “cultural-cognitive elements in institutions, embedded agency, institutional change and entrepreneurship, and contestation.” Such expansions are identified as the concept of institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

Reay and Jones (2015) examined institutional logics and identified employment of three different but non-exclusive approaches: pattern deduction, pattern matching, and pattern induction and explained challenges and benefits in addition to other facets, such as, competing demands continue to increase in response to societal challenges (Smith & Tracey, 2016).

Owing to rapid technological advances, increasing globalization, interconnectedness, and diversified societal practices expedite newer ways of competing demands as well as escalate existing demands. Notably, these developments, in one hand, can facilitate creativity and innovation welcoming favorable social and societal changes, these developments, on the other hand, introduce significant hazards and risk that can negatively impact social and environmental forces (Smith & Tracey, 2016). Accordingly such changes have been noted to be accompanied by

increasing “polarization of rich and poor” within a country and between countries. Smith and Tracey (2016) labeled such polarization as ‘winners’ for those who can take advantages of increasing opportunities, and as ‘losers’ who found themselves ostracized from the “basic social and market structures” that could facilitate them out of destitution.

Interestingly, organizations, including humanitarian institutions, can attempt to revert such win-lose situation through integration of synergistic growth, innovation, and efficiency in respect to stakeholder needs and wants in line with the corporate values, core purpose, and beneficial impacts correlated with organizational mission and broader societal interests (Smith & Tracey, 2016). Nonetheless, accommodating competing interests offer organizational challenges to revert win-lose situations to win-win outcomes.

Stronger boundaries around societal norms, specific to individual countries, push organizations to become “isolated from or unresponsive to changes in their external environments” that can forge contradictory positions between “the norms and practices accepted in external environment and the legitimacy in the societal context (Seo & Creed, 2002).

Zietsma and Lawrence (2016) found four separate cycles of institutional stability or change, underscored by specific trends of boundary work and practice work that were recurrent. These are:

“(1) institutional stability, involving boundary and practice maintenance; (2) institutional conflict, involving breaching and bolstering the boundary and disrupting and defending practices; (3) institutional innovation, involving establishing experimental boundaries that were protected from institutional discipline and inventing new practices; and (4) institutional restabilization, involving crossboundary connecting and practice diffusion.”

These cycles were contiguous, with some overlap, and had distinctive, cumulative consequences for the status of the boundary and practices. Table 2 provides supporting qualitative evidence for each cycle. Quotations are cross-referenced by number (in parentheses) in the text and table.

This literature review examined the progress of organizations—away from structured formalism towards processes and pertinent advances—and their attendant experiences during COVID- 19 pandemic period, as far as these relate to the challenges and advances of organizations interface with the total environment in order to innovate and manage the new processes that may emerge. Moreover, the way of discerning the organizations to new process that they have been innovating and administering in managing *Rohingya* refugees in Bangladesh.

A host of news media reported on risks of natural disasters in refugee camps – in addition to other crises of political and social in nature. Attempts towards adopting to changing risks by natural hazards has been an integral part (Zaman, 2020) particularly for *Rohingya* refugees as they needed to move from Rakhine plain land in Myanmar to mountainous regions in Cox’s Bazar district in

Bangladesh. However, according to Zaman (2020), through a community-based approach disaster risk reduction strategies and emergency preparedness remain a growing necessity.

To overcome an “ephemeral” (Lanzara, 1983) arrangement on the part of the humanitarian organizations, it would be a sustainable solution and an utmost achievement for Rohingya refugees if the Myanmar authorities can be pursued to form legal contracts with the Rohingya population—under the UN arrangements—to devise a mutual understanding for economic development of Myanmar, in general and of *Rohingya* (or Rakhine) population, in particular.

In 2017 in Myanmar, the attack on police posts by retaliatory Rohingya people (hereinafter, Rohingyas) subjected almost hundreds of Rohingya villages in arsoning, in which about 200,000 fleeing migrants Rohingyas lost their dwellings (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021). These refugee people moved out and started living in the rural areas of districts of Bandarban and Cox’s Bazaar. However, based on the prior research as well as some broader discourses, the migrants are being hampered by the labor market law in some cases, which is not socially sustainable (Fitzgerald, D., & Atat, R., 2018).

The Myanmar military forced about 0.75 million Rohingya people with mostly children and women to flee from Myanmar in 2017 (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021). It has become an international issue of norms, decency, values, rules and regulations which is being civilized. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and the humanitarian workers now toiling restlessly in the Rohingya camps (The Conversation, 2018) through the micro organizations. Bangladesh has attained an expertise in disaster management and it can easily be exported to make useful in foreign policy. The challenge of feeding and housing the refugees was formidable and to support from the international community has been relatively modest and adequate. The Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, launched by UNHCR and IOM made an appeal for US\$951 million to support for the refugees in Bangladesh for the period from March to December 2018 (The Conversation, 2018). The Department of Immigration and Passports has completed the biometric registration of around a million people, while the organization RRRC-UNHCR has listed 825,265 Rohingyas (The Conversation, 2018).

As well as organizational “advances” (Hutter & Power, 2005, p. 1) to support refugees—in particular, the *Rohingya* refugees who “fled violence in Myanmar” (UNHCR, 2022) and entered into Bangladesh in recent years—and to identifying the scope and extent of managing the challenges, issues, limitations, problems, and concerns that these organizations and similar institutions have been dealing in.

Again, the force had launched nationwide initiative which is known as “Naga Min” (Dragon King) almost 60 years back, and registered in the population prior to national census (The Conversation, 2018). It turned to provoke all the flights (Zaman, 2020), for around 200,000 ‘Rohingya’ people to enter Bangladesh, and in later period they got denied and sent forcibly back to Myanmar (their home country). However, these Rohingya people could enter Bangladesh avoiding the

organizational legislation, which are in vogue in Bangladesh. In 1992, around 250,000 Rohingya people could settle themselves in Bangladesh, where only 28,000 people were registered as the refugees by the several involved organizations, and the society became more crowded, which is really more challenging and unsustainable during the pandemic.

The refugee camps are more congested and a real crowd again time and budget are great factors among the risks and limitations. It is a bit of risky tasks to visit the camps physically and to conduct interviews (refugees and members of various organizations). Alongside, I plan to make some field observation by taking pictures and make some videos of the present phenomenon and whether the camps are socially sustainable or not.

The organizations as UNICEF, BRAC, Oxfam, UNHCR, FAO and IOM served the Rohingya refugees during the pandemic as well as throughout the disasters. The natural calamities like- flood and how the organizations (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2009), are managing the actors (Lanzara, 1983), to organize the refugee camps during the earthquakes was really challenging for the organizations. The paper also suggests, how to cope up with the natural disasters as well to grow in local communities, dealing with the micro factors as the actors in the organizations, which is termed as the ephemeral organizations (Lanzara, 1983). These small organizations explores the behaviors of the migrated refugees (Cresswell, 2013) to form a sustainable society. Therefore, the kitchen as well as the accommodation was more likely to get affected by Covid- 19 and there were not sufficient ventilation as well to inhale the poor air always to keep the environment more sustainable (The Conversation, 2018).

It seems to be more interesting to study migrated refugees (Cresswell, T., 2013) during the COVID- 19, who all are taking challenges to survive in order to maintain the legislation by the institutions in a more sustainable way as well to follow the social responsibilities. Therefore, I plan to collect data both from primary and secondary sources from the organizations like News articles, UNICEF, Oxfam, IOM, FAO, UNHCR along with UHR and BRAC can be used to see under the institutional theory on the Rohingya refuses that how are surviving and adopting with the challenges during COVID- 19 with maintaining health hygiene factors.

Around 2600 hand washing locations during the pandemic was installed for the Rohingya camp communities and were provided with proper soaps, which was stocked up to six weeks (Banik, R., Rahman, M., Hossain, M. M., Sikder, M. T., & Gozal, D., 2020). Thereby, around two thousand promoters work for this hygiene messages for Covid- 19 in a week for thirty five thousand household activities. The WASH trainings and kits for the refugee children and adults (Banik, R., Rahman, M., Hossain, M. M., Sikder, M. T., & Gozal, D., 2020).

## **Theoretical Framework:**

The research study is based upon the information available from online sources of organizations, such as, UNICEF, Oxfam, BRAC, IOM, FAO and some news articles how the migrated refugees are adopting with the interfacing societal challenges. Nonetheless, it looks more interesting to interviewing the migrated refugees and the multi-sectoral officials of the NGOs, micro firms, and the UN organizations in socio sustainability prospect (managing both positive-negative business impacts) during the COVID- 19 around the refugee camps.

In reviewing associated literature in *these* aspects, it has been found that most skillful social scientists have discovered that interests in *required* development in organizational processes has practical basis. Also, these *requirements* appear to be away from structured adherence and inflexibility. However, the uses and misuses of institutional theory have taken different connotations. According to Czarniawska (2011), “The most interesting interpretations of institutional theory result from the misuse of the term ‘institution.’” Institution also means a human intentional act towards creating and enacting certain type of collective practice.

Scholars in institutions recognized organizations “as stable entities, divided from their environments by boundaries, toward *organizing* as a process” – simplifying the comprehension of how these organizational advances “emerge” as well as identifying the mechanism to engineer their accomplishments (Lindberg & Walter, 2013, p. 1). Notably, institutions are considered to be public administration organizations including their members of institutions recognized as legitimized social groupings (Douglas, 1986).

In developing institutional theory, there involved are several stages that relate to institutional fields and institutionalized organizations (see DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) that emphasize the original concepts and processes within the institutional theory (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Zilber, 2008). These concepts and processes—identified as the concept of institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008)—recognizably are the expansion of “cultural-cognitive elements in institutions, embedded agency, institutional change and entrepreneurship, and contestation” (Greenwood et al., 2008).

Humanitarian institutions: UNHCR, Oxfam, UNICEF, FAO, IOM, WFP, BRAC, and such other institutions, can undertake integration of synergistic growth, innovation, and efficiency to implement beneficial action plans to make equitable treatment of all stakeholders – in an effort to make win-win situation in respect to stakeholder needs and wants (Smith & Tracey, 2016).

Certain boundaries of societal norms, specific to Bangladesh, for example, may make institutions and organizations “isolated from or unresponsive to changes in their external environments,” forging contradictory positions between societal norms and practices accepted in external environment and their legitimate standing (Seo & Creed, 2002).

The theoretical framework of this study also embraces the views of Meyer and Rowan (1977), stressing the organizational and multi-sector environmental interrelations—that are conceptualized and “suggested in . . . institutional theories in their extreme forms”—all that encompass organizations as “dramatic enactments of the rationalized myths” (p. 346).

In order to study the institutional theory, there are Field-level macro studies, which have been noted from the interviews and field observation of the *Rohingya* camps. Again, the practice-based studies (the macro level) can be termed as the- Habitus (the social norms and habits) along with connecting both the field and practice studies.

Selzinck (1948) argued that strictly formal structures of organizations “never succeed” (p. 25) in governing the “non-rational dimensions” of organizational interrelations with their environment. General analysis of organizational structured interrelations by their “ubiquity and importance” was found inherently difficult (Sutton, 1958. p. 98). According to Selzinck (1957, p. 2), new approaches to scientific management and “development of a ‘theory of organization’” received dynamic interests in recent years, enabling a superior utilization of human resources and sufficient understanding of decision making.

Nonetheless, the day-to-day experiences of “large numbers of able and reflective” people are tantamount to challenging the authority of the social scientists. In general, social scientists appear to be inclined to studies in which a dominance of the facts, or a competence in technique, show “advantages and confidence” (Sutton, 1958. P. 98).

The institutional work emphasizes the actors of the organizations, where the refugees are considered as the actors. Here, the concepts of cultural dopes (Lawrence, Suddaby & Leca, 2009) for the migrated refugees to make a sustainable society during the COVID- 19. The cultural prospect ensures the work accomplished by the refugees maintaining proper hygiene.

In the theoretical part, data and information from organizations: UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, IOM, Oxfam, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), and so forth would be scrutinized, in the light of institutional theory, to empirically identify and discover advances, and to investigate emerged processes of organizations in managing *Rohingya* refugees in Bangladesh as well as the challenges, risks, issues, problems, and concerns these organizations encounter towards resolving to mitigate adversities of refugees.

Based on the research problem and the thesis title, the theory defining institutions “understood to be an (observable) pattern of collective action” (Czarniawska, 1997) that assert “relations between roles and situations,” (2006) and the theory Meyer and Rowan (1977, p. 346) elucidated is purposed to form the overall theoretical framework of this study.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) showed that organizations that “incorporate structural elements isomorphic with [their] environment” have been able to “manage such interdependencies” between the multi-sector stakeholders.

Until any combined efforts under a single entity are implemented, these involved organizations would potentially have sporadic efforts to refugee management. However, arrangement under a single entity would potentially streamline organizations advances, extend their coordinated operations to where it is most needed, devise and direct coordinated efforts, avoid duplications of operations, monitor delivery of necessities that are needed for efficient management of refugees (Karim, 2018), and ensure economy of efforts.

The Bangladesh Government and the local as well as international humanitarian organizations continue to toil restlessly in these *Rohingya* camps in Bangladesh (Karim, 2018).

“Political institutions are collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions in terms of relations between roles and situations” (Czarniawska, 2006, p.6; Mark & Olsen, 1989, p.160) that may have new situations to manage, such as, COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, McAdam (2018, p. 571) confirmed, “Over 700,000 *Rohingya* refugees who [before 2018] fled violence in Myanmar remained in precarious conditions in Bangladesh, in dire need of humanitarian assistance and durable protection.” These “ephemeral” (Lanzara, 1983) circumstances also offered unique situations and vulnerabilities to the organizations that provide humanitarian relief.

“Institution is understood to be an (observable) pattern of collective action” (Czarniawska, B., 2009), institutions are impeded by several acts. However, institutions are some noticeable norms and values maintained in the society. Thereby, in terms of the *Rohingya* refugee camps, it can be said that, how the consequences does the challenges have on institutional level?

Additionally, the correlated theories and ancillary concepts that are pertinent *to this study*, nominated from among the social scientists, to name a few, are Islam & Yunus, 2020, and NYD, 2016. These theories and concepts are summarized in the Literature Review section of this study.

The risk for the COVID-19 is too high in Bangladesh, even when these refugee as the actors raised the country’s population, it made a great threat for a small country like Bangladesh. Cox’s Bazar became a horrible and lack of assistance for saving lives. But UHR responded as a supportive team as they think the children are at top priority to make a sustainable society (Fitzgerald, D., & Atat, R., 2018), through volunteering activities. They fought the novel coronavirus by taking special care of the orphans, seniors, widowed and disabled by supplying clean water and sanitized facilities by Oxfam.

Analyses of collected data and information are analyzed to employ the abovementioned theories. The variables of interests of this study included multi-sector stakeholder interrelations, collective actions, and interdependencies among players (actors), potentials/barriers to emerge into new methods and processes, and *Rohingya* refugees. Thereby, the organizational challenges during the Covid- 19, such as to maintain the social distancing and the way the challenges are being managed (the balance between what happens in practice and what regulations prescribe).

## **Methodology:**

The paper relates to the earlier literature as the guide to collect data from both primary and the secondary source with some interesting and practical experiences (Silverman, D., 2017). It seems to be more interesting to know that how migrated refugees survived in the vulnerable situations and natural calamities. The steps and procedures of writing research papers are well furnished by the author, which is a mixed methodology to fit in this platform.

In order to identify the challenges facing by the humanitarian organizations and the way of managing the *Rohingyas*, the author prefers the institutional theory both from primary and secondary sources fits more inclined with the research paper. As a result, both budget and time limitations were found by the author and his team.

### **1. The Setting-**

Researchers are yet to analyze the qualitative data base on some recent articles as well as some useful web links which is an ongoing process to find how things work. Here, the research study aims to make some qualitative analyses based on how the migrants are surviving in the social aspect and what are their needs, which is being served by organizations and volunteers. I came to know more about Ethnography and Netnography in our Seminar, where I find my research paper is more or less related to Netnography i.e. data from past including some recorded data i.e. interviewing and observing.

The humanitarian organizations, local and international, operating in Bangladesh prioritized and responded to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on the *Rohingya* refugees, who have been living in a fast transmissibility zone in “34 congested refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar district” (IOM, 2022).

As of September 26, 2021, while “a total of 3084 COVID-19 cases [had] been reported among the Rohingya population” in Bangladesh (WHO Highlights, 2021), an achievement of vaccinating “77% of targeted people completing both doses of COVID-19 vaccination” showed how Bangladesh Government and its paraphernalia have been managing to get across the pandemic crisis (Health Sector Bulletin#16, 2021).

Also, among the sporadic fire accidents in *Rohingya* refugee camps, mostly owing to not only the construction materials that have high flashpoints, such as dried out elephant grass, wooden planks, dried out flammable bamboos, and so forth but also irresponsible handling and management of ovens for cooking and fire-related activities, the “massive fire [that] broke out [on Sep. 09, 2021] in Cox’s Bazar’s Ukhiya, destroying over 1,000 shanties,” “including houses, learning and medical centres in the camp” availed the local arrangements under Bangladesh government that “brought the fire under control” with no casualty reported (Dhaka Tribune, 2022).

## **2. Design of the Study-**

In the case of managing *Rohingya* crises in Bangladesh by certain institutions and organizations—in particular, under COVID-19 pandemic conditions—it is possible that these organizations may have encountered new challenges and unfamiliar or less familiar vulnerabilities. These challenges may have required these organizations to identify unspecified work patterns, extended or unconventional work hours, circumstantial assistance, disciplining, and so forth that these organizations can regard as emerging felicitous trend(s). The field visits, surveys, and interviews during this study may discover these advances and expanded operations that may be labeled *sustainable* and therefore *replicable* to similar future crises in Bangladesh and elsewhere.

Towards addressing these advances, expanded operations, obstacles, and vulnerabilities of organizations and institutions, the research tools that this study employed are face to face semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, survey questionnaires, and virtual or face-to-face in-depth audio- and wherever possible, video-interviews.

The most suitable approach to answer the research question is a methodological approach to collect qualitative data and information as well as where applicable quantitative data. Ethical consideration and unconditional consent of respondents would be adhered to. Reliability and validity of data and information collected would be ensured through authenticity of sources and ethnographic observations. The ethnographic qualitative data and information would be aimed to produce contextual real world knowledge about processes, methods, social structures, behaviors, and shared beliefs of specific organizations and individual respondents.

The criteria that were employed to select individual participants in which the research was conducted are informed consent of individual participants, ethnographical active and passive observation, and voluntary participation of responding to survey instruments.

For organizational sources, collection of data and information would be sought with an introduction letter from the University of Gothenburg that would be handed out to specific and responsible representatives of different organizations in which informed consent and active participation would be ensured. In essential cases, semi-structured in-depth interviews would be employed.

## **3. Data Collection Strategy-**

Collection of data was proposed to be as below but the field conditions were more challenging, which is being well elaborated below under Empirical Observations.

- a. At least 30 representatives of humanitarian organizations (includes virtual or face-to-face in-depth audio- and video-interviews) were expected. However, during the field observation more than 12 representatives couldn't be interviewed.
- b. Minimum 30 *Rohingya* refugees (includes virtual or face-to-face in-depth audio- and video-interviews) was assumed. Thereby, 20 number of questionnaires could filled up.

Position of the Interviewee	Venue of the Interview
<b>Representatives of Organizations</b>	
Head of UNHCR/UNICEF representatives – 02 persons	Questionnaire / Video recording/ e-mail
Refugee representatives (Male) – 03 persons	Interview (Video recording) at <i>Ukhiya / Kutupalong</i> camp
Refugee representatives (Female) – 03 persons	Interview at (Virtual conversation) <i>Kutupalong</i> camp
Concerned employee from Oxfam – 04 persons	Questionnaire at site ( <i>Kutupalong / Ukhiya</i> camp)
Representatives from UNHCR – 04 persons	Questionnaire at site ( <i>Ukhiya / Kutupalong</i> camp)
Member of Military Organization – 03 persons	Questionnaire through e-mail
Representative from IOM – 04 persons	Questionnaire through e-mail
Representative from FAO – 03persons	Questionnaire through e-mail / on field ( <i>Kutupalong / Ukhiya</i> camp)
Employee from BRAC– 04 persons	Interview (Video recording) at <i>Kutupalong</i> camp
<b>Refugees</b>	
Senior members of <i>Rohingya</i> refugee (Male) – 07 persons	<i>Kutupalong</i> camp
<i>Rohingya</i> refugee (Female) – 07 persons	<i>Kutupalong</i> camp
Newly Migrated refugee – 07 persons	<i>Ukhiya</i> camp (on field)
Local camp leader – 04 persons	<i>Ukhiya</i> camp (on field)
Random refugee child – 05 persons	<i>Kutupalong</i> camp

According to the research plan, this author traveled to *Ukhiya* refugee camp and *Kutupalong* refugee camp, both in Cox’s Bazar district area, during February 2022. Printed copies of questionnaires, audio record device, and video record device accompanied the author to employ these tools in conducting this empirical study and carry out *natural* observation of the campsites and the local ambience.

A brief description of six organizations—visited for data collection through questionnaire and interviews—that are involved in humanitarian activities to support *Rohingya* refugees are appended below.

*Specimen copy of Data Collecting Instrument for Organizations*

Following are the two questionnaires that were employed for data collection. One questionnaire was designed for data collection from the representatives (below) and the other in the following page was for data collection from refugees.

A total of 12 representatives from humanitarian organizations, including face-to-face in-depth interviews and photos taken with representatives as a memento, were conducted through questionnaires. Organizations refused to allow video recording and taking any picture of their data boards.

Q#	Questions	Responses: Not added
1.	Please specify the number of employees (your estimation on the number is good enough)	
2.	What challenges have you encountered during the pandemic in providing services to the Refugees?	
3.	Please list the ways and means with which you and/or your organization could perform even better in encountering challenges, issues, problems, and concerns while discharging your duties & responsibilities in managing (add more pages, if necessary): (a) The <i>Rohingya</i> (b) Their day to day life in the Camps (c) Their food & accommodation, clothing, health, hygiene, medication, education, and recreation.	
4.	Are you working in a team?	
5.	While working with a team in a team environment, please enumerate the number of people in that team that you have been working with?	
6.	By what term/designation your Team is known by? (For example, medical team, counseling team, etc.)	
7.	In your view, how resilient are the organizational arrangements in managing the refugees in Bangladesh? a. Extremely resilient b. Very resilient c. Neither d. Not very resilient	

	e. Not at all resilient	
8.	Please specify (tick or encircle) your assessment, on the extent of humanitarian services/supports provided to <i>Rohingya</i> from the organizations, during the COVID- 19 in this district/area, where you've been working. To express your assessment, can you please use the following scale where 1 (one) defines 'NONE' and 05 (five) defines the Highest Level of services/supports by the organizations?	
9.	Please define your level of satisfaction while working with your organization or any of these organizations, NGOs, or as volunteers during the COVID- 19 in this district/area, working in respect to serving the <i>Rohingya</i> refugees: a. Extremely satisfactory b. Very satisfactory c. Indifferent/ Neither d. Very unsatisfactory e. Extremely unsatisfactory	
10.	Please provide any Feedback / Suggestions on any aspect(s) that you think might help both the organizations working for <i>Rohingya</i> as well as the <i>Rohingya</i> themselves?	

During this field research, this author identified that organizations are suspicious in allowing external people into their data and information – regardless of the documentary identity and the authority (introduction) letters. Certain employees of humanitarian organizations in the area, in particular from the IOM, literally challenged the research team that if the researcher and the team were under the pretext of survey-research or similar pleas.

Also, it was questioned that instead of research work, these research teams could be media agents attempting to collect data and information from these organizations that would be fabricated for media consumption, so as to facilitating their plans for individual gains/interests before publishing fabricated stories for national exposure. Such national exposures through mainstream media, undesired by humanitarian organizations, have been causing redundant approaches from various pressure groups and therefore, these organizations were unwilling to cooperate with data and information, so as to neutralize potentially negative effects of their image.

The refugees did not take a positive view of strangers (this author and the team), who tended to asking them questions that refugees observed being recorded in writing. As a measure to motivate and build rapport, this author adopted to entertaining them in onsite tea-stalls at both the camp locations and was successful in building the rapport that led to extract responses to the questionnaire.

However, informed consent from both the organizational representatives and the sample refugees to respond to survey were achieved. Ethical considerations ensured for refugees and organizations were through non-threatening and non-intimidating that involved building a rapport with the sample.

Only 12 questionnaires were completed in the *Kutupalong* camp while eight questionnaires were recorded in the *Ukhiya* camp – making a total of 20 questionnaires that could be processed through interviewing.

*Specimen copy of Data Collection Instrument for Rohingya Refugees:*

Q #	Questions	Responses: Not added
1.	Please indicate which age group you belong to	
2.	Have you ever been affected by COVID- 19?	
3.	If yes, how satisfied, in your view, were you with the hygienic supports received from humanitarian organizations, such as, UN, Oxfam, UNHCR, IOM, etc.?	
4.	How long it has been that you have entered Bangladesh and staying in a Camp?	
5.	Did you come in Bangladesh <i>alone</i> – separated from your family?	
6.	If you and other members of your family came in to Bangladesh, how many of you came?	
7.	How are you trying to increase your income?	
8.	What are the reasons for you to come to Bangladesh? Please, rank your motives with the most important first.	
9.	After coming to Bangladesh what are the types of helps you could receive?	
10.	What are the types of helps you <i>wished to have</i> but <i>couldn't get</i> , after coming to Bangladesh?	
11.	Please specify how satisfied you are about the role of the organizations, NGOs, volunteers working with you and other <i>Rohingya</i> people	
12.	What are possible suggestions for improvement you would like to give to the organizations, NGOs, volunteers working with you and other <i>Rohingya</i> people?	
13.	Please provide any Feedback / Suggestions on any aspect(s) that you think might help both the organizations working for <i>Rohingya</i> as well as the <i>Rohingya</i> themselves?	

More importantly, three interview-videos were recorded where the discussions were in Bangla language, needing an explainer to interpret specific Bangla words into terms understandable to the

video-respondents that they could not perceive in the first place. *Rohingya* refugees had been observed to have very little to no literacy and numeracy. Two more videos were recorded documenting the ambience surrounding the refugee camp locations.

#### **4. Data Analysis-**

As this methodology would be more of interpretive than controlled, the field research team would be careful of and take into consideration so as to ensure that how collection processes and interpretation are not influenced or biased to reach the results.

These descriptive and observational data and information would be collected through primary sources. However, data and information about organizations and their management activities would also be taken from relevant secondary sources.

Interestingly, as on September 2021, a total number of 3084 COVID-19 cases has reported among the *Rohingya* refugees, which was ended on the same month with an achievement of vaccinating 90% refugees people Teknaf, Ukhiya camps and (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021). Lastly, as an empirical study, the Kutupalong and Ukhiya camps had the outbreak of thirty two people to expiry due to COVID- 19 among the *Rohingya* refugee camps with a death ratio of only 1%.

The interviews would be transcribed and thematically analyzed through coding and examining for authenticity so as to identify broad themes and patterns. Where identifiable research team would endeavor to gain understanding of participants' motivation and perceptions.

The methodology of this study was to collect, collate, combine, and compare the primary and secondary data and information and the study of the organizational representatives. This can be achieved through primary secondary data obtained by conducting semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews as well as virtual interviews.

In addition, face-to-face audio- or video-interviews, accessible data, audio-video and published theories as well as ethnographic empirical methods would be employed. In that, structured and semi-structured surveys and ethnographic field observations would be conducted to determine whether the humanitarian needs of the *Rohingya* refugees are met or otherwise.

These data and information was gathered and grouped in a spreadsheet (both interviewing, questionnaires) and color coding would follow to facilitate analysis. Moreover, the information are used to find out the issues through color coding method along with the questionnaires are preserved in separate Pdf files for future references. Sample of the color coding were made to find out the challenges and the result of the study.

Also, in complying with health and sanitation, an employee was observed engaged in cleaning a water tank that was to facilitate water availability for *Rohingya* refugees. Nevertheless, it was evident that some nations are still funding towards maintenance of health and sanitation in keeping with basic humanitarian needs and thus keep these on a sustainable disposition.

## 5. Risks and limitations -

The risks and limitations include:

- a. Limited support from humanitarian organizations: Bureaucratic hindrances on approvals to interview representatives and lengthy office procedures for such approvals limited the collection of required information from the site office(s) of organizations, who did suggest to search their web portals for relevant articles and information.
- b. Time Limit: Owing to the short duration of this study, more time allocation could enable conducting in-depth research.
- c. Budgets: Higher budget availability would facilitate employment of more research assistants and repeated travel for ethnographic data collection, in-depth interviews, and camp observation.
- d. Data Accessibility: Data collection from organizations, in terms of budget on different heads, circumstances limiting planned activities, and meagre assistance owing to busy schedules of organizational representatives limited the exploration of organizational data and information. However, the relevant websites have been scrutinized.
- e. COVID-19 pandemic: Pandemic conditions in the field area restricted and regulated movements around the congested refugee camps that hindered ethnographic field observations, interviews, and restricted the distribution of questionnaires.

### **Empirical Observations:**

*Rohingya* refugees are the ethnic minority people who were found as stateless. In 2017, the violation even broke the Rakhine state of Myanmar, where the maximum number of people moved to Bangladesh. The majority people were children, women and old people were suffering from various diseases like- diarrhea, diphtheria and the life of the children and women became uncertain with almost a 40% of people were counted age below of 12 (Refugees, 2020). Again, as an empirical example, the Southern part i.e. Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh became the largest refugee camp globally with a population density of around 0.92 million (OCHA (2017).

These refugees live at the Mayu Frontier in Myanmar, which is formerly named as Arakan State (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021). The Rhakine state lies between Arakan Mountains beside the borders of Bangladesh. The history of the *Rohingyas* claim indigenous status which is traceable. In 1950s the Bengali intellectuals started to call themselves i.e. the Myanmar people “*Rohingya*”. Later, in 1982 according to the Citizenship Act passed by the military government in order to legitimize as an institution, which was recognized by a few ethnic group of people who lived in

Burma for around two hundred years (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021). They were subsequently denied their citizenship, education, employment, freedom of movement and vulnerable property and officially became stateless (Dhaka Tribune – Epaper, 2021).

However, it could also be known by this author and the team, with verification onsite from multiple reliable sources like- UNHCR, WFP, Oxfam are the overall funding for advancing humanitarian supports by these organizations have been deteriorating through the last year to present day conditions. The same information on deteriorating funding could also be found known to the *Rohingya* refugees – more information of this aspect have been placed in the following pages.

The field visit to both *Kutupalong* and *Ukhiya* camp gave a different experience to the author. It was found that WFP are involved with food supply to the *Rohingya* people, UNHCR is funding them are taking care of the whole camp area, IOM works for the database, BRAC is funding the refugees, Oxfam is ensuring the water tanks through their staffs with proper sanitization facilities to ensure a healthy and sustainable environment.

In 2018, the patient number of diphtheria cases exceeded eight thousand which includes of 44 death and the mass displacement made an ideal setting for large-scale outbreaks of communicable diseases (Islam, M. M., & Yunus, M. Y., 2020). The complex emergencies i.e. environmental threats, gender violation, non-communicable disease and psycho patients raised among the refugee people including some other infective diseases along with diphtheria.

On the contrary, the organization like WFP ensured against the migrated refugees, as they are selling the free food stuffs to the employees at a higher price to earn some money. So, they have limited the supply of food stuffs, where UNHCR is running in shortage of employees. Most of the organizations explained that, managing these huge number of *Rohingya* people have become a great challenge to them.

In order to collect the empirical data, the observation on the societal aspects will be my platform. To conduct the research on COVID- 19 affected refugees, is tough to collect data during this pandemic as people has shorten up their movements. Thereby, some can be virtual interviews depending on the present pandemic scenario. So, I plan to conduct the qualitative research in some actions which is focused to find out how and what way the refugee Rohingyas and the role of the organizations and volunteers during the pandemic in sustainable prospect (Fitzgerald, D., & Atat, R., 2018).

### **1. The Challenges-**

The *Rohingya* families who entered Bangladesh, now living in the ramshackle camps, averaged “4.6 members” per family, who have had “a lack of knowledge about COVID-19” as well as “a lack of access to water, sanitation, and hygiene” that warrant urgent action to avoid large numbers of *Rohingya* people getting infected (Islam & Yunus, 2020), have intensified the spread of the virus.

The Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh was coordinated by a National Task Force set up by Bangladesh (Islam, M. M., & Yunus, M. Y., 2020). The humanitarian sector included of 130 organizations of UN Agencies like- Red Cross, Red Crescent and government based organizations were active. Shelters made of bamboo and plastic were erected and the camps required about eight hundred tons of firewood each day and filled the air with wood smoke heightened respiratory infections (Islam, M. M., & Yunus, M. Y., 2020).

Almost hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar crossed their own land and took shelter in Bangladesh cause of massive violence and mass killings, where around sixty percent among them were children witness the scary scenarios in Myanmar. UNICEF as a host along with the Bangladesh Government took the initiatives against these *Rohingyas*.

In conflict situations, WFP brings relief to exhausted populations and use food assistance to build pathways to peace and stability – work for which WFP was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 (The Nobel Peace Prize, 2020).

It is possible that reduced funding to these organizations will hinder their approaches towards handling challenges, issues, problems, and concerns towards maintaining organizational advances and expanded operations with respect to managing *Rohingya* refugees and their camps. To elaborate, managing the large number of refugee migrants from other nation, even during the COVID-19 pandemic is really a great challenge for the institutions. Thereby, meeting the employees of IOM, BRAC and Oxfam, I came to know that, there are shortage of funding, which really does not satisfy the employees' salary level. So, they are leaving jobs, organizations are breaking down, where UNHCR is planning to take all the small firms under one umbrella.

Notably, I had a talk to the Doctors in a treatment center at the campsite, a Swedish flag was hoisted that can be understood to be sponsored from Swedish funding. As per them, this is showed how Swedish and other countries have been extending the supports towards management of *Rohingya* refugee issues. However, the general comments from the interviews, the shortage of budget at the institutional level.

In another field observation, one of the representatives from BRAC asserted that the UNHCR has been working on bringing together under one entity the local and international elements of humanitarian organizations – so as to facilitate coordination in managing refugee support activities. For example- providing food, shelter and clothing among the refugees by UNHCR only. It has been learned from field observation that most of the organizations involved in *Rohingya* refugee management have, therefore, been shrinking their funding and operational as well as humanitarian activities.

While there was no *systematically arranged* provision for electricity supplies in the refugee camps, installed solar panels were in place to provide limited support for energy sources, for three to four hours a day, with which the refugees are able to recharge their mobile phone batteries for half-an-

hour in exchange of Bangladesh Taka 10 (one US dollar = about Taka 85) to enable communication among the refugees.

Few quotes from the interviews comes as:

- a. “I feel more insured as a leader as the criminals are killing the leaders randomly at the late night -Majhi”. In order to explain from Majhi (the social leader), their life is at risk as the criminal group of people kills the leaders and they themselves claim as the leader.
- b. “Our life is too in secured here as the group of people burnt our housing (made of wood and clay) several times, even they killed our families -Fisherman”. Again, it was found that the majority people earns from fishing, but they are too scared of their lives and the temporary houses (low standard of living), which are only structured with clay and wood.
- c. “UNO have reduced funding for the *Rohingya Refugees*, that is why the institutions are breaking down and UNHCR is taking the small NGOs under one umbrella as well as the *Rohingyas* are selling their free food stuffs to us and making some profits from it -BRAC employee”. Here, the institutional breakdowns were observed as of the reduced funding from the UN organizations, which made dissatisfaction among the employees as of lowering their salary. On the contrary, as the refugees do not have a source of earning rather than only fishing, they earn few money, selling their own free food and stuffs.

It has also been claimed by another representative that highly technical jamming device, Jammer, installed by organization are employed to permit limited mobile phone communications within and outside camp locations. While energy supplied appeared inadequate, the minimum energy necessities seems have been attempted. This may show that organizations customized their modus operandi in partially meeting the energy needs.

Two different *Rohingya* refugee camps had been visited. These were both within the coastal district area of Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh. The camps, about eight kilometers apart, are the *Ukhiya* refugee camp and the *Kutupalong* refugee camp.

It was conceivable that the *Rohingya* in both the camp locations were sensitive to and recalcitrant in participating interviews and responding to questions in the questionnaire. Around 24 people respondents voluntarily expressed their frustration about:

- a) Medical treatment and healthcare,
- b) Meagre support for clothing,
- c) Discontinuity of vocational training few months prior the field observation,
- d) A little or no means of recreation (except for open grounds for games organized by refugees themselves) and
- e) An overall uncertainty of their forthcoming days, all that appeared to make them recalcitrant to cooperate in responding to research questions.

It was notable that none of the *Rohingya* refugees in these two camps had expressed any dissatisfaction about the victuals provided to these refugees. Thereby, interviewing the migrated refugees are worried of their accommodation which being providing by UNHCR as the houses are made for temporary basis of clay and wood, which is very risky. However, now the preparing some buildings made of concrete for the migrated refugee in order to make the environment more sustainable for living.

During the field observation it was observed that, organizations are breaking down as their budget is getting limited day-by-day. However, The UNHCR is planning to bring all organizations under one umbrella.

Furthermore, the interviews among the employees comes as- they are paid less as of shortage of funds along with the organizations are breaking down and institutional disruption were found. Here, leaders remain at risky zone cause of the refugee people are too frustrated and very sensitive. There majority *Rohingyas* works as fishermen, where they mentioned they are afraid of the opponents as killing became a common phenomenon to them.

## **2. The Humanitarian Organizations-**

Only a few organization managing many of the “34 congested refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar district” (IOM, 2022) that are corollary to this research has been briefed hereunder. These humanitarian organizations are:

- a. UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- b. UNICEF: United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
- c. BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
- d. IOM: International Organization for Migration
- e. OXFAM: derived out of the term Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
- f. WFP: World Food Program

*UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

Founded in 1950, initial role of the UNHCR was to help millions of Europeans in the post-2<sup>nd</sup> world war. At present, after 71 years of work, the UNHCR protects and assists refugees all across the world. The UNHCR is a donation-seeking organization which may have other funding sources (UNHCR, 2021-22a). With nearly 18,000 active staff in 132 countries, interplaying with humanitarian conditions that helped people “from major capitals to remote and often dangerous locations” (UNHCR, 2021-22c).

Since inception until 2020, the UNHCR helped more than 50 million to restart their lives that involved “personal stories of persecution, survival and new beginnings” (UNHCR, 2021-22a). The Global Compact on Refugees, a framework affirmed by the UN, “provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders” so as to ensure that host communities find their necessary supports and that “refugees can lead productive lives ” (UNHCR, 2021-22b).

However, as the UNHCR (2021-22e) reported, since COVID-19 started in the end of March, 2021, in Bangladesh a total of “3,231 COVID-19 positive cases and 34 deaths” had been registered in the refugee camps. Notably, both the COVID-19 test-positivity and the death rate “significantly decreased” in Cox’s Bazar district (UNHCR, 2021-22e).

#### *UNICEF: United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund*

The role the UNICEF plays for over seven decades is advancing the “rights of children, especially those who are unheard and disadvantaged” UNICEF (UNICEF, Undated-1). The UNICEF has been combating for ensuring “the rights of every child seeking safe shelter, nutrition, protection from disaster and conflicts, and equality UNICEF (Undated-3).

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) Bangladesh started the life-cycle approach working for the refugee children in which “activities are organised to provide support to children based on their age group” (UNICEF, Undated-2). This life-cycle approach allows “convergence of sectoral arms and coverage of diverse situations effecting” children in Bangladesh. (UNICEF, Undated-1).

As regards interaction with the COVID-19 criticality facing *Rohingya* refugees, the UNICEF partnered with the ICDDR, B (International Center for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh) in supporting a 200-bed *isolation and treatment center* in Cox’s Bazar district. Also, the UNICEF Bangladesh has been working with the Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which can augment “the infection prevention and control, case management and data system-related issues concerning the COVID-19” (UNICEF, 2020a).

In addition, the UNICEF had endeavored and procured important “critical medical equipment and supplies” to strengthen the COVID-19 prevention and treatment, covering “nationally” and for “those living in Cox’s Bazar” (UNICEF, 2020a).

#### *BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee*

After the war of independence in 1971 separating from Pakistan, the BRAC was created in 1972 to support Bangladeshis in improving the national economy. In these 50 years, BRAC changed lives in Bangladesh and around the world in “education, health care, youth empowerment, financial inclusion, agriculture,” and so forth – reaching 100 million people across Asia and Africa (BRAC, 2021b).

BRAC has been a leading international nonprofit organization having a mission “to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease, and social injustice” (BRAC, 2021a). BRAC endeavor to “equip people with the support, skills, and confidence” so as to facilitate them to “lift themselves out of poverty and achieve their potential” (BRAC, 2021a).

In Cox’s Bazar *Rohingya* crisis, BRAC has been serving as the “largest responder to the Rohingya refugee crisis” through delivering lifesaving assistance and empowering “refugees and host communities helping to overcome the crisis, recover livelihoods, and rebuild their lives.” (BRAC, 2021c).

#### *IOM: International Organization for Migration*

The International Organization for Migration (hereinafter, IOM), a related entity of the UN system under the Charter of the UN, started its progression since 1951, as one of the leading “intergovernmental organization” – as far as it relates to humanity and migration. To benefit migrants and society, the IOM has been committed to its principle of humanity and orderly migration and remains as a “key source of advice on migration policy and practice” (IOM, 2022).

In addition, IOM works in “emergency situations, developing the resilience of all people on the move, and particularly those in situations of vulnerability.” Respect for the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants take precedence in IOM’s working (IOM, 2022).

IOM Bangladesh, established in 1998, having the country office in Dhaka, has local offices in Sylhet, Chattogram, Teknaf and Cox’s Bazar (IOM Bangladesh, 2022). IOM cooperates and collaborates between the Government of Bangladesh. In 1992, IOM Bangladesh supported the Government of Bangladesh in rescuing “63,000 stranded Bangladeshi migrant workers” in the Persian Gulf Crisis.

As a collaborator, IOM intervention in Cox’s Bazar supported the “forcibly displaced” Myanmar *Rohingya* nationals. In addition, IOM is supporting in other areas that include shelter, site management and development, health, gender based violence, alternative energy, and communications with communities. From 2017, IOM emphasized “focus on counter trafficking” and “capacity building of law enforcement agencies” (IOM Bangladesh, 2022).

#### *OXFAM: Oxfam International*

Oxfam International, the moniker derived from *Oxford Committee for Famine Relief* (hereinafter, Oxfam) envisions a “just and sustainable” in which people and planet are at the “center of just economies” whereby women and girls are not subjected to “gender based violations and discriminations” (Oxfam, 2021a).

As learned from different web sources, Oxfam was founded in 1942. Combining 21 independent charitable organizations, Oxfam deals in activities focused to global poverty alleviation. Operating

at least in 19 countries around the world, of the two major roles, Oxfam (2021b) has been active in *Ending Poverty* through five streams of operations that appear to take a long-term perspective. The other, *Responding to Emergencies*, with more five streams of engagements, adapting to new conditions, Oxfam interplays with calamity.

*Ending Poverty* deals in Water & Sanitation; Food, Climate, and Natural Resources; Conflicts and Disaster; Extreme Inequality and Essential Services; and Gender Justice and Women's rights. Interestingly, *Responding to Emergencies* dealing in BRRC: Bangladesh *Rohingya* Refugee Crisis as well as the other four, all responding to calamities, involves in Climate and Food Crisis in East Africa, Crisis in Syria, Crisis in Yemen, and Hunger Crisis in South Sudan.

#### *WFP: World Food Program*

With a mission and the Global Goal, WFP, established in 1961 WFP is poised to end hunger by 2030 (World Food Programme, 2022). “In a world of plenty, where enough food is produced to feed everyone on the planet, hunger should be a thing of the past. However, conflict, climate change, disasters, inequality and – most recently – the COVID-19 pandemic mean one in nine people globally is still going to bed hungry and famine looms for millions.” (WFP, 2022)

Powered by the passion, dedication and professionalism of our 20,000 staff worldwide, the World Food Program (WFP) works in over 80 countries to bring life-saving food to people displaced by conflict and made destitute by disasters, and help individuals and communities find life-changing solutions to the multiple challenges they face in building better futures (World Food Programme, 2022).

We work to enhance nutrition in women and children, support smallholder farmers in improving productivity and reducing losses, help countries and communities prepare for and cope with climate-related shocks, and boost human capital through school feeding programs.

Moreover, WFP was found to have been contributive in field activities, such as distribution of free food that included rice, lentils, edible oils, vegetables, and other necessities. Including the WFP, total of six organizations was approached for this empirical study and observation. An NGO (non-governmental organization), named, *Fresh Food corner: Direct Fresh*, were providing food to *Rohingya* refugees at lower prices having been verified through *Rohingya* refugee identity card. Short descriptions of the organizations visited have been appended below.

#### *Rohingya Refugees – Brief History*

North of Myanmar, formerly Arakan, later Rakhine state, is where the ethnic minority *Rohingya* people have been living as natives (BBC, 2017) and have been reported as one of “the world's most persecuted people” (Broomfield, 2016). According to Hussain (2016), in 1982, the *Rohingya* were not allowed to avail Myanmar citizenship by their government. Since then, *Rohingya* have

regularly been subjected to persecution by their government and the nationalist Buddhists. (Hussain, 2016).

In 2017, the persecution broke out in the Rakhine state, therefore maximum number of *Rohingya* people sought refuge in Bangladesh. A large majority of them are children, women, and senior citizens that were suffering from various diseases, including diarrhea, diphtheria, and other ailments. The health and hygiene of women and children became uncertain. Notably, among the *Rohingya* refugees, over half are “children” (UNICEF, 2020b). The Southern part of Cox’s Bazar district in Bangladesh became the largest refugee camp globally (UNICE, 2020a).

### *Bangladesh Government*

Bangladesh Government, its concerned ministries, various agencies, diplomatic overseas offices, and its paraphernalia arrange to accommodate multifarious institutions and organizations that include, among others, humanitarian organizations. As of 2020, a total of “23 UN agencies, funds and programs, convened under the UN Resident Coordinator” (United Nations Bangladesh, 2020, p. 28) as well as other international, and supportive local organizations have been in respective operations surrounding *Rohingya* refugees and concomitant issues.

Bangladesh being one of the top refugee-hosting countries globally, houses also several volunteering organizations that are serving the refugees to make a sustainable social structure. COVID-19 affected people among the *Rohingya* refugees in Bangladesh formed a model of sustainable development (ACAPS, 2022).

### **Discussion:**

In exploring the overall configuration of correlated theories and ancillary concepts—as discussed in the Literature Review (see above)—that can reinforce the process by which organizational and multi-sector environmental interrelations emerge (Lindberg & Walter, 2013), this study discovered room for further coordination and essential improvements to bring forth cooperation among institutions, multi-sector stakeholders, and their environments so as to enable interact with boundary work and practice work.

In this regard, the UNHCR, dealing in *Rohingya* issues, already undertook steps to unify efforts of multi-sector organizations in bringing them together to be part of a newly formed larger organization that involved in the work facilitating management of *Rohingya* refugees and the associated challenges.

How this newly formed organization under the UNHCR advances to meet the required refugee support is a point of consideration that warrant specific future research. Therefore, it can be supposed that it would be a favorable step on behalf of Myanmar, if they come to a mutual

understanding with the refugees and take them back to their motherland ensuring their basic needs. As of Mar 2019, Bangladesh declared not to receive any more Rohingya refugees in future as well as agreement to Myanmar to take back the fled away refugees with a guarantee of getting Myanmar citizenship which made more disruption (Islam, M. M., & Yunus, M. Y. (2020. Aug.).

Therefore, this study has been designed to explore the overall configuration of these correlated theories and ancillary concepts – given that these can reinforce the process by which organizational and multi-sector environmental interrelations “emerge” (Lindberg & Walter, 2013) so as to suit the multi-sector stakeholders and their environments.

Bangladesh is over density populated country and by now around 01 Million Rohingyas already fled to Bangladesh as well as Ukhia, Cox’s Bazar became the largest refugee camp. So, it can be marked as the highly risky region during COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the interfacing limitations that restricted this study, it has been conceivable that while the organizations continue to provide their feasible best, regardless of these provisions, the *Rohingya* refugee expectations appear to stipulate in equipping them with more conducive arrangements that may render them a foreseeable future where the refugees would live a progressive civic life with commensurate lifestyles.

Furthermore, the interview questions are both in open and closed questions through surveying, observing and interviews along with the officials of the institutions and the refugees in the Kutupalong and Ukhia camps located at Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, which is the main element in this qualitative research. The qualitative and methodology of a research brings up something new, studying data from early studies. So, I plan to make some field observations, take field notes and to use brain memory (storing information from field site) in terms of social sustainability using the organizational phenomenon along with the questionnaire for both the employees and the migrated refugees will be provided to get the answer of either the Rohingya refugees are managed by the organizations in a sustainable way or not?

Based on the field observation, the environment i.e. the context, how they are living, overcoming the challenges as well as to meet the employees of the organizations working with the migrated refugees and the refugees also. I will pay more attention and analyze how the organizations are managing the refugees during the COVID- 19 pandemic and what are the challenges they are facing.

I acknowledged their behaviors during and aftermath of the disasters like- flood, diseases along with what measures are they taking to prevent from the COVID- 19. Moreover, are their health, accommodation, sanitization, resources are really sustainable or not. Lastly, my questionnaire of around 10 questions for the institutional representatives along with another set of questionnaire of 13 questions for the Rohingya refugees has been prepared along with meetings or else the interview

questions will find out the organizational phenomenon and the challenges towards the Rohingya refugees during the COVID- 19 during pandemic is either socially sustainable or not?

Among many, (a) supplying of electrical energy, (b) vocational skilling, (c) basic knowledge on language, literacy, and numeracy; and (d) healthcare and sanitation can be considered important frontages that would be instrumental to this end.

Also observed during the field research that considerable number of *Rohingya* refugees have been selling off food stuffs—received free from the WFP and other organizations—at a price lower than the going market price existent in the local area.

*Rohingya* refugee accommodation was found to have been funded by the UN organizations that were constructed using bamboos, wooden planks, clay-coats, and overhead cover made up of either elephant grasses or corrugated tin sheets. The refugees appeared to have no issues with these accommodation types.

However, during the field observation it was found that, the organizational breakdown is going as on as of the reduction of salary of the employees for the shortage of budget. The findings of the study can be an example of the present war in Ukraine, in order to manage the Ukraine refugees.

### **Conclusion:**

The aim of the study is to focus on the roles and competition among the humanitarian organizations: international, local and NGOs during the COVID- 19 pandemic. Moreover, the study plans to make some field observations during the visit the two largest *Rohingya* refugee camps, *Kutupalong* and *Ukhiya*.

It is possible that organization are aware of these abovementioned expected needs of the refugees. Meeting, wholly or partially, such necessities could be taken as indicators of satisfaction of *Rohingya* refugees as organizations or their combined entity would render.

Furthermore, to overcome an ephemeral arrangement on the part of the humanitarian organizations, it would be a sustainable solution and an utmost achievement for *Rohingya* refugees if the Myanmar authorities can be pursued to form legal contracts with the *Rohingya* population—under the UN arrangements—to devise a mutual understanding for economic development of Myanmar, in general and of *Rohingya* (or *Rakhine*) population, in particular.

Accordingly, the *Rohingya* refugees would need to be taken back to their homestead where they belonged ensuring allocations and provisions for their physiological and other basic needs that are conducive to a progressive civic life.

The UNHCR in 2019 had a budget of 8.6 billion US dollars. In 2022, the UNHCR requires over 285 million dollars for its operations (UNHCR, 2021-22d). Camp related information acquired after field visit as regards involvement of the UNHCR has been added under the caption *Rohingya Refugee Camps*.

In order to conclude from the field observation, organizational disruption were seen, where the small organizations were breaking down, employees' dissatisfaction were shared to bring all these small organizations as of the shortage of funds. Moreover, UNHCR is planning to bring these small firms under one umbrella.

Lastly, as a result of the study, it can be said that, the challenges were faced by the institutions and the refugees and the way they managed themselves can be the example for the present Ukraine Refugees.

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