



IDEAS for helping the Refugees



We learnt from various media reports that the refugees from Myanmar are receiving humane treatment from Bangladesh's border forces. We thank the Government of Bangladesh for giving them such treatment. If Bangladesh now completely opens the border without giving effort to create pressure on Myanmar Government to stop such atrocities, we believe it will not act in favour of Bangladesh's long term interest. Under these circumstances we are in favour of taking a middle route, which we believe the Government of Bangladesh is now following.

If we were like a large country like the US or Canada, or if we were at least resourceful like them, we could now open the border completely for welcoming the refugees. But we are not like these rich countries.

Therefore, we fervently request those countries which have enough resources and considerable influence in international politics to come forward to create pressure on Myanmar so that this annihilation of Muslims is stopped for good.

This refugee crisis is not new. They have been taking shelter in Bangladesh for a long time. However, Bangladesh never raised this issue nationally to international forums to create awareness. We also had general lack of awareness about these thousands of refugees who have been living in Bangladesh for quite some time; we were not aware how they were living, what they were doing.

But now we feel that we should not be indifferent to this crisis situation any longer. So we believe we should all come forward individually and collectively to create an impact for the lives of the refugees.

Since our job is to give ideas, we are offering the following ideas that we believe would help the refugees to an extent. The Government of Bangladesh can consider such ideas for implementation:

1. Distribution of Refugee Cards

The Government should enlist all the refugees in a central database and give each of them a numbered identity card which they can use for getting future assistance. This numbered card will help us to know the skills and needs of each of the refugees. They can use this card as a valid ID.

2. Involvement of the Mass People

At this moment, we believe it is imperative to involve people of all class to help the refugees. For this purpose, Hon'ble Prime Minister can open a special fund in her office where individuals and corporates can give donations. The way we all always came forward in the past during different natural calamities like flood and cyclones, etc. should be rehearsed once again.

3. Location of the Refugee Camps

Instead of keeping all the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and adjacent areas, we believe multiple camps should be established in different parts of the country to reduce environmental degradation in present camp locations. New camps can be established following modern techniques and can be made environment friendly. At present, we have shortages of farm labourers in different villages. We think these refugees can fill up such shortages.

4. Diplomatic Efforts

Since Bangladesh is facing this crisis, Bangladesh should take the lead through appropriate diplomatic efforts to have a long term solution of this problem. It needs diplomatic initiatives with different countries all over the world. We should not forget that Indian past Prime Minister Indira Gandhi became famous globally by raising the crisis of Bangladeshi refugees in 1971.

5. International Aid

The Government should involve friendly countries and local and international NGOs with this issue. Bangladesh should request some countries to give shelter to a section of these refugees.

6. Identity of the Refugees

Now the whole world knows the refugees of Myanmar as "Rohingyas". Most probably the refugees themselves feel proud to be known like this. However, we believe such different identity is creating an obstacle to create mass awareness about this crisis.

The Syrian Refugees are being known as Syrians all over the world; the same is true for Afghan Refugees. But why then the Refugees of Myanmar are being known as "Rohingyas"? Due to such different identity, an average citizen who is not aware of this problem is becoming confused about the true identity of these refugees.

Such a different identity is actually helping the extreme sections of Myanmar who are willing to exterminate these Muslims. They are now able to easily declare, "Rohingyas are different, they are not our people".

Many people would believe such claims of Myanmar due to media campaigns. It would not have happened if these refugees were known as refugees of Myanmar from the beginning.

We believe the Government of Bangladesh should be cautious about this matter. These refugees should be known as “Myanmar Refugees” so long we will provide shelter to them. They are the citizens of Myanmar by birth, Myanmar is their homeland, and the Government of Myanmar, today or tomorrow, must take back their citizens to their homeland – this should be our national stance.

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