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The Rohingya Crisis: Dehumanization and Denial of Hospitality in *First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*

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Abstract

This article explores the Rohingya refugee crisis by analyzing Habibhuraman's "First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks." It focuses on the Rohingya immigrants' horrendous lives after being stateless as an outcome of the ethnic conflicts in Myanmar since the decades of the 1980s. The prime concern is, why Rohingya people turn into the stage of dehumanization and how they wander across the world facing a lack of cordial hospitality. The study significantly unveils the government's severe acts of dehumanization by suspending the fundamental rights of the Rohingya minority. Thus, they are forced to begin a never-ending, precarious journey, abandoning their inherited land, Arakan Myanmar, and their overall identity. Instead of warm friendliness, the Rohingya are destined to face a stark denial of unconditional hospitality wherever they happen to visit across the world. This paper methodologically embraces the theoretical framework of Hanna Arendt and Giorgio Agamben to illustrate the plight of the Rohingya as a refugee crisis. In contrast, the ideas of Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas are employed to address the Rohingya refugee crisis as the solution. In this article, therefore, the researcher mainly emphasises the protagonist of the novel Habib to mirror the realistic misery of the Rohingya whose unsafe travel to more than dozens of countries as a non-citizen is an accurate depiction of the entire community. In his journey, the hardship from his ancestral to the visited countries is due to his stateless position. The Rohingya, hence, are in torture, humiliation, despair, and suffering since they are excluded from the political sphere.

Keywords: refugee, ancestral land, stateless, nation states, political sphere, human rights, plights

Introduction

Habibhuraman's memoir *First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* sheds light on the grim Refugee crisis faced by the Rohingya people of Myanmar since the early 1980s. The novel captures the large historical account of the Rohingya people and how they became stateless non-citizens in their ancestral land, the Arakan state of Myanmar as the consequence of the rise of the military Dictator U Ne Win in the year 1982. They are, in fact, thrown out of the political realm along with fundamental citizen-human rights. The Rohingya refugee crisis turned into a more critical situation because they not only became dehumanized but also happened to bear the extreme denial of hospitality across the world due to their displaced and non-citizen status. As Hanna Arendt in her book *The Decline of Nation-State and the End of Rights of Man. Origin of Totalitarianism*, with a clear image of both the dictatorship and the plight of its banished subjects, argues that the absolute regime throws minorities out of the political sphere into the stage of non-citizens who lose their entire identity. She claims, "The stateless people were as convinced as the minorities that loss of national rights was identical with loss of human rights that the former inevitably entitled the latter" (1958, p. 29). Arendt asserts that stateless minorities are out of every right, national as well as human rights. In Myanmar, Ne Win excluded the Rohingya from the list of 135 recognized ethnic groups out of the eight national races. As an outcome of the government's declaration of non-citizenship, thousands of Rohingya lost their fundamental citizen rights along with their human rights.

The protagonist of the novel, Habib, and millions of Rohingya fellows are forced to set out on a precarious journey after 1882 due to the autocratic move of Ne Win as the stateless mass in several countries. As a displaced person, Habib is destined to travel perilously from Myanmar to different countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, India, Nepal, China, and Australia and is the representative of thousands of his community. Habib not only holds on to a bare life inside his country, but he is also mistreated throughout his journey wherever he accidentally happens to visit. Being a refugee, Habib is tortured, brutalized, misbehaved, and dehumanized in numerous places. The exiled position of Habib is a genuine reflection of the plight of the refugees in the contemporary days. Refugees are not only displaced from their land of origin but also they are debarred from their ancestral legacy, erasing ethnicity names, land, culture, language, and complete identity. In other words, they are out of the political sphere, and the citizen rights losing everything. Hann Arendt firmly states that the decline of the nation-state is to end all rights of a man. She says the right to have rights is suspended after being displaced along with their political space in a state. Arendt says, "The decline of the nation-state and the end of the rights of man" (1958, p. 267). Being out of the political space means, for her, wiping out overall identity because one's identity depends on the sovereignty of a nation-state. Borrowing Arendt's idea, the stateless Rohingya, including Habib, have no identity to enjoy their rights as they lose the nation-state.

Habib, repeatedly wanders in multiple places, hiding his true identity, and taking help from his relatives. He even takes an ID card with a fake name as a Muslim from Shan State in Yangon Meeting in support of Alie in Minghala to cross numerous checkpoints and be free from detestable interrogations from authorities. Habib is informed that “It’s for an identity card. Muslim from Shan State. I am told to sit down, confirm the details, and pay. Come back in three days. Your ID will be ready” (2019, p. 91). This instruction uncovers that he has no alternative but to take the fake documents and false identity to keep on his precarious journey. Habib not only travels but also to pursue his higher studies in electronic engineering. He received a fake card named Aung Soe Naing,-Nyi Nyi, swapping in a bribe to the local authority. In addition, in Malaya, Habib is sold by Thai immigration officers to Human traffickers to a Mafia of Thai fishermen in the Andaman Sea. Lastly, after 2009, Habib was at the detention centre on Christmas Island and was tagged with a new identity with a specified number. He mentions, “I am given a new identity and will henceforth be known as Habiburahman-1979512-03C-00571 MAL-001 Sg-HABI (2019, p. 150). Thus, Habib’s despicable status stands as a stark reflection of the dehumanization and denial of hospitality against Rohingya refugees and immigrants who are treated and valued less than animals in the contemporary world.

Statement of Problem

The Novel *First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* is the true reflection of the plight of the Rohingya minority due to the ethnic conflicts between Rohingya Muslims and the majority of Rakhine Buddhists in the Rakhine State of Myanmar since the decades of 1980s. As Habib notes “Many Rohingya are beaten. Rakhines vandalise our mosques and homes. We have no choice but to defend ourselves” (2019, p. 73). The violence shifts Rohingya into the non-citizen in their birth land excluding them from the list of 135 ethnic groups. The military chief U Ne Win’s ascent to the government of Myanmar in 1982 encroaches on the political domain of the Rohingya even in their ancestral land. The Rohingya are consequently forced to leave their land and scatter into different parts of the world as stateless immigrants. They are dehumanized, tortured, humiliated, and ill-treated wherever they happen to travel to save their life. Thus, the novel genuinely covers the torture, misery, pain suffering, and miserable condition of the refugees who are dispersed in several corners across the globe.

The Protagonist of the novel Habib holds a dejected life like Homo Sacer a mythical figure not only in his land of origin but also in several countries. He is exiled physically, socio-culturally, and even emotionally in his life just moving from one country to the next to continue his life. He travels from Myanmar to Australia from the early 1980s to 2009 coming across several places and during his journey, Habib gets no more than torture and humiliation. Furthermore, Habib’s overall identity is erased because he is detached from his family members, traditional heritage and birthplace. As entailing Agamben’s term,

Habib hangs in two perplexed spheres deserving the bare life between the Zeo biological and the Bios political life. The novel, actually, does not seem to advocate securing the fundamental human rights of the stateless Rohingya. They are biologically human beings but politically they belong to nowhere as non-citizens to enjoy even the basic human rights. Hence, this article poses the following questions to explore the real trouble of immigrants and refugees worldwide. Why do the Rohingya become stateless even in their ancestral land and get dehumanized? How does Habib face denial of hospitality wherever he visits? What would be the solutions to the existing Rohingya crisis? This study addresses these questions to uncover the Rohingya refugee and immigrant crisis.

Objectives

1. To explore the dehumanized position of the non-citizen of the Rohingya population in their ancestral land.
2. To examine the denial of hospitality against the Rohingya community in numerous countries.
3. To offer a solution for the existing Rohingya crisis in the contemporary world.

Literature Review

Habibhuraman's novel *First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* has been a primary text of critical analysis. Several scholars have interpreted it in multiple ways adopting diverse theoretical lenses. Most of the critics have analyzed it as a memoir, civil conflicts and political issues. The major reviews of the scholars are captured and outlined based on the chronological order of their publication time respectively as follows:

Ken MacLean a researcher in his article titled "The Rohingya Crisis and the Practices of Erasure" discusses the Rohingya problem with a greater political-military basis emphasizing the pattern of violence. The large numbers of armed forces are used against the minority Rohingya ethnic population to control another area. He asserts "The political infighting occurred amidst a series of major military operations in which the Tatmadaw targeted Rohingya, displacing them from many places in Rakhine State where they had lived for generations" (2019, p.5). For Maclean, due to political tussle launching a series of large-scale military actions Rohingya are forced to flee from several areas of Rakhine state which were their ancestral residence for them. It means Rohingya are forced to flee from the many residential locations of their native land forcefully by imposing the armed forces picking up the political issues as a misuse of the government's power against the marginalized community.

Another researcher Natalie Brinham in the article titled "Looking Beyond Invisibility: Rohingyas' Dangerous Encounters with Papers and Cards" analyses the Rohingya crisis by looking at the registered record of papers. She evaluates the experience of the

Rohingya people through historical documentation linking to their invisible identity in Myanmar. She presents:

Many Rohingya narratives tell of the extraordinary lengths to which they are prepared to go to retain possession of similar documents. The emancipatory qualities of identity documents and state registration procedures are at the heart of human rights approaches to reducing and preventing statelessness. Although everyone is entitled to human rights by being a human, within the international state system states are responsible for upholding those rights. (2019, p.163)

Brinham records numerous accounts from the Rohingya community keen to hold onto identical documents. The core of human rights lies in identification documents registered in the state. States are accountable for protecting human rights based on papers and cards even in international practice because such registered documents are strong enough to minimize the chance of statelessness.

Similarly, researcher Nehginpao Kipgen in his article “The Rohingya Crisis: The Centrality of Identity and Citizenship” studies the immediate phenomenon of the Rohingya catastrophe highlighting that the Rohingya problem is primarily related to ethnic identity and citizenship. The prime issue is political which leads to ethnic misunderstanding between two groups and is almost ignored by the government of Myanmar to address it assuming threats to the majority Rakhine. He points out:

After their return to Myanmar, radicalization can still happen for different reasons, such as the non-recognition of their Rohingya ethnic identity, the authorities’ reluctance to grant them citizenship, real or perceived threats from the local Rakhine Buddhists or the Myanmar security forces, restriction of free movement, absence of educational opportunities, and a threat or enticement from ARSA militants. (2019, p.8)

In Rakhine’s understanding, Myanmar Government authorities mistreat the Rohingya population by rejecting their ethnicity and not granting legal identity cards like citizenship. They are taken as a risk to the Rakhine Buddhists consequently the national security militaries restrict them in their fundamental rights such as free movement and education opportunities.

Scholars Adam Simpson and Nicholas Farrelly in their article “The Rohingya Crisis and Questions of Accountability” examine the Rohingya tension concerning the institutional, political, and legal internal grounds of Myanmar. In a coalition of multidimensional factors, Rohingya are permitted to be a part of their existing socio-cultural foundations. They write: “There are significant domestic barriers – institutional, legal and political – to the fuller inclusion of the Rohingya in Myanmar society” (2020, p.3). In their

observation, Substantial institutional, legal, and political obstacles exist inside Myanmar that prevent the Rohingya from being fully integrated into society.

Scholars Ipsita Chakrabarty & Agnidepto Datt additionally in their researched article entitled “The Silencing and Ostracization of Rohingyas: A Study of Habiburrahman’s Memoir *First, They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*” observe the documented cases and racial and ethnic partialities against the Rohingya population and their organized oppression and exclusion ultimately resulted in their departure. They claim:

The government’s endorsement of racial and cultural discrimination and segregation validated and fueled the ideological biases against the Rohingya community. In addition, the exclusionary policies that were implemented by the government further jeopardized the already vulnerable position of this community in the Burmese society. (2022, p.13)

According to them, the government systematically supports the racial and ethnic disparity to isolate Rohingya from the mainstream of the culture. Consequently, they helplessly deserve a shaky status in Burmese society.

The scholars, mentioned above have analysed different issues in the novel in their works adopting diverse theoretical lenses. They try to justify their arguments through references from several authentic sources. I don’t completely disagree with them because they have contributed from their sides to the existing body of knowledge. In this paper, however, I have discussed the dehumanized status of Rohingya following their exclusion from citizenship in their ancestral land, and how they are denied unconditional hospitality in many countries they visit merely to be alive, offering a solution to address the Rohingya crisis.

Research Methodology

This qualitative study analyses Habiburrahman’s memoir *First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* to disclose the real plight of the Rohingya immigrants of Myanmar adopting the theoretical lens of Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer Sovereign Power and Bare Life* and Hanna Arendt’s *Origin of Totalitarianism* raise problems. Both Agamben and Arendt discuss the pain anxiety, suffering, and problematic status of immigrants in the world. However, in dealing with the solution related to the Rohingya refugee crisis, Jacques Derrida’s *On Cosmopolitanism* applies the concept of unconditional hospitality and *Cities of Refuge* by Emmanuel Levinas concerning the ethics of faces. They propose specific notions to solve the existing Rohingya refugee crisis.

Dehumanization and Denial of Unconditional Hospitality

The Rohingya’s dehumanized status is a severe consequence of their exclusion from citizenship even in their land of origin Myanmar. With the rise of the dictatorship Ne Win

in Myanmar, the Rohingya community is denationalized which leads them into a state of bare life. The existing pro-Rakhine government treats the Rohingya disgracefully throwing them out of the political sphere. Due to the situation of statelessness, the Rohingya deserve the position of non-human beings. Scholars, Jonathan Leader Maynard and Aliza Luft, in their article titled “Humanizing Dehumanizing Research,” define, in brief, dehumanization means human beings as valued less than actual humans. They explain “Dehumanization refers to the perception of people as inhuman or as lesser humans” (2023, p. 1). In their illustration, dehumanization is a practice of seeing and behaving people as either partially or entirely non-human.

The Rohingya people, in truth, would hold a dehumanized position as they are totally out of fundamental human rights. They are deprived of the government's protection because they are not included in the political space of a nation. As Hanna Arendt believes people who lose the protection of the government immediately lose every legal protection. “The stateless people were as convinced as the minorities that loss of national rights was identical with loss of human rights, that the former inevitably entitled the latter” (1958, p. 292). In her view, the stateless are regarded as minorities who lose national rights that exclude human rights. The Rohingya are also disadvantaged in enjoying human rights because of the grim consequence of the loss of national rights. Rather the authority turns out to be hostile to them treating a nonhuman mass of minorities. Protagonist Habib shares his dehumanized experience in the village “Shut it, you dirty *Kalar* pig! We have orders to investigate this shop. A soldier kicks Dad and hurls him outside before he has time to react. Arms wrench Babuli and me from our stools. I fly through the air and land on the beaten earth, grazed and crumpled” (2019, p.38). These offensive remarks, replicate the real portrayal of miserable Rohingya who are badly deserted by the authority. They seem to deserve no more than humiliation, abuse torture and boycotting as non-humans in their native land.

Similarly, Agamben in his article “We Refugees” argues that to enjoy fundamental rights one should be a citizen of a state. It seemingly distinguishes the status between citizens and non-citizens regarding the delighting in inalienable rights. He claims “Rights, that is, are attributable to man only in the degree to which he is immediately vanishing presupposing (indeed, he must never appear simply as a man) of the citizen” (1995, p.117). For Agamben, relishing rights is not merely related to man rather it is largely associated with the state’s political domain as a citizen. Relating to Agamben’s ideas the Rohingya are also destitute of essential rights as they remain no longer citizens. The Rohingya are forced to evacuate their houses where they have been residing for ages which shows extreme inhumanity against them. They are insensitively brutalized if they do not leave their home. “Those who refused to leave their homes were slaughtered or arrested and tortured. The extremists looted whatever they could. Hundreds of Rohingya were left dead. Thousands were imprisoned. Maybe more. Who knows? Who will ever

care? Who will record the truth of such horror?" (2019, p.6). These lines ostensibly signify that Rohingya are treated less than human beings who have no human value in the eyes of authorities. Thus, neither does any government protect the Rohingya nor do they rejoice in their civil rights and freedom rather hundreds of them are slaughtered and thousands of them are imprisoned for no reason in their ancestral land Myanmar.

Arendt, further says that refugees would not be persecuted due to their wrong deeds but rather their inherited civilizational legacies can be the cause. The government deliberately penalizes the refugees labelling them into the wrong kinds of race and class. She writes "The new refugees were persecuted not because of what they had done or thought but because of what they unchangeably were-born into the wrong kind of race or the wrong kind of class or drafted by the wrong kind of government (as in the case of Spanish Republican Army)" (1958, p. 294). In her observation, refugees are categorised based on their inherited identities to build up thoughts against them. So they are victimised by the authorities evaluating them merely based on communal inheritance such as race, religion, place, and social class. Resembling Arendt's ideas, in Myanmar, the authorities regard Rohingya are just as hostile basically due to their race and religion rather than individual conduct. Habib mentions:

The authorities' subject us to special treatment because we are Rohingya. They are speaking to my parents and searching all their bundles. Dad gives them a wad of notes. They ask for more. It's the Kalar tax. Mum finally takes her place with the others on the boat. She stares at me with trembling lips and a melancholic smile. I watch as she gradually vanishes into the mist suspended above the river. My sisters are crying in my aunts' arms. (2019, p.14-15)

In these remarks, Habib desperately expresses the viciousness of authorities who subject them not because of their wrong actions but because they are members of the Rohingya Muslims. The most painful cause is that it is not the issue of an individual but the entire family and the whole community is dehumanised. It means, that being a Rohingya is to be humiliated whether a small boy, a grown-up or an aged member.

The Rohingya population appears to be steadily brutalised by the government for failing to provide their daily necessities of life. Indeed, the absolute government does not care about life-sustaining supplies such as food, water, shelter, and security. Instead of distributing necessities of life the Rohingya are terrorized through inimical activities. As Habib mentions the cruelty of government "The Government cuts off our electricity, water, and telephone lines. For three days, Sittwe is more isolated from the world than ever. Soldiers patrol the Muslime village of Nazi, Mawleik, and Pharagyi, and Sittwe market" (2019, p.66). The government stops supplying electricity, phone, water and more. Rather mobilized soldiers spread terror by marching among the innocent people. It

shows that the Rohingya are deliberately regarded not as human beings and neglected by lacking substances for their life needs.

The Myanmar government, moreover compels the Rohingya to uproot from their land of origin deploying military power and frightening them. The Rohingya's centuries-long habitations are restricted by strict armed surveillance. The ancestrally occupied residential heritages of the Rohingya are crushed with the boots of soldiers breaking their harmonious life. Habib describes the village's suffocated circumstance "Expressions harden. No more singing, no more protesting. The village plunged into absolute silence. Soldiers patrol around the houses, sowing terror wherever they go. Spies skulk everywhere and suspicion grows. The solidarity that united us is shattered, replaced by fear" (2019, p. 20). These words portray how Rohingya are severely turned into silence imposing power. They are forced to live full of terror by the power misuse of the authority. It is supposed the Rohingya are not here on earth to deserve a valued life.

Ne Win's absolute government mercilessly traps the Rohingya to flee from their land abandoning what they have possessed for ages. This inhuman act of government reflects Agamben's idea that the stateless are no more than the imaginable figures of society. He asserts ". . . in the context of the inexorable decline of the nation-state and the general corrosion of traditional legal-political categories, the refugee is perhaps the only imaginable figure of the people in our day" (1995, p.114). For Agamben, as the nation-state fails to function and the general erosion of traditional legal-political groups non-citizens are simply an insignificant mass. The Rohingya bear a similar impoverished situation because they are thrown merely as imaginable figures in the world. The authorities seem to have no regret in calculatedly killing Rohingya by demolishing their houses. Habib narrates "They wanted to kill the Muslim kalars, they said. They stormed our homes and invaded our neighbouring villages. They overran the whole state. Swords swished through the air. Heads rolled" (2019, p. 3). According to him, the Rakhine's supported government plans to end the Rohingya Muslims demonstrating weapons, damaging property and eventually invading the village with no mercy.

Similarly, the novel *First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks* recounts the Rohingya refugees who have to face austere denial of hospitality in many parts of the world they are bound to visit. The protagonist Habib is destined to travel continuously from one to the next countries to save his life. However, despite his appeals for life in numerous places, Habib is not welcomed even in a single place. Instead of showing generous faces authorities treat him in a hostile manner in all countries. In fact, hospitality is an essence of humanity which should be implied for all and everywhere whether refugees, non-citizens or citizens. In his book *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* Jacques Derrida argues that Refugees should not be observed merely from the political eyes but also from the ethical perspectives. He stresses:

Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethnicity amongst others. Insofar as it has to do with the ethos, that is, the residence, one's home, in which the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others, as our own foreigners, *ethics is hospitality* ethic is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality. (2003, p. 16-17)

Here, Derrida relates hospitality to the wider sphere of culture and ethics. In hospitality, ethics are entirely ingrained, so others should also be viewed and treated believing in our own experiences and ethos rather than just foreigners.

Just as opposed to Derrida's concept of hospitality the Rohingya are prohibited in almost all places. Not considering even, a bit of cordiality the Rohingya are restricted in their movement. Thus, they are compelled to move from one to the next places hiding their true identity. Habib reveals unfriendliness against them

"The word Rohingya is forbidden. We only use it among ourselves in the hut. It is our secret identity. Dad insists that we use the term Muslim when we introduce ourselves. If we say that we are Rohingya, we would be singing the family's death warrant, he says. So we never do" (2019, p.8).

For him, the hostile situation forces them to hide their genuine identity to be alive otherwise they would be persecuted in no time. So, the Rohingya are harshly refused wherever they visit. In addition, the Rohingya are not permitted to stay a long time in a place. In the course of travel Habib is suggested to leave his uncle's house immediately as the suspicious eyes of neighbours. The local folks' suspicion is

I can't keep you here. Stay tonight, but tomorrow you'll have to leave. The neighbours don't like us living here. If authorities find you here, we will all be arrested and imprisoned. Since we left Arakan, we have told everyone that we are from a Muslim ethnic group in Shan State (2019, p. 90).

These words evidently signify that the world is unsympathetic to the Rohingya refugees. It means they have been accepted nowhere in the world after being stateless since the 1980s.

Hanna Arendt also argues that a stateless person is treated as a criminal and liable to be punished even without any crime. The refugees are just despised sans wrong deeds "Stateless person without to residence and without work had of course constantly transgress the law. He was liable to jail sentences without ever committing a crime" (1958, p. 286). Arendt's view is strictly reflected in the disgraceful condition of the Rohingya community. The protagonist, Habib, in his journey, gets threatened by the local authorities instead of support providing security. In most of the borders, he is tortured

asking for a bribe to pass for another place. At a checkpoint, Habib is repeatedly asked to pay money to the local authorities:

Give me some money if you don't want me to sequel on you. I try to ignore them as much as I can, but they carry on humiliating and baiting me. I concentrate on my parcel. Authorities are finally informed of my presence. After checking my false identity papers, two soldiers push me into a corner (2019, p.109).

This is just an instance of Habib's wretched reality, who has to face numerous misbehaves being a Rohingya. As he is unable to give money, two soldiers physically assault him, pushing him into the corner. It shows the accurate picture of the unhospitable world against the Rohingya Muslims.

The local authorities constantly seem to display inimical faces in several places for the Rohingya for no reason. Habib has to bear unethical monetary bargaining with officers to continue his life. He is warned for money "If you want to get out of here, we need cash. Otherwise, we'll send you to the military camp.' I am only too well aware that the military camp is a one-way journey for Rohingya" (2019, p.117). It is an open demand for cash as a threat to get out of the hands of authorities otherwise Habib would be sent to a military camp for persecution. It implies a depressed portrayal of the Rohingya. Habib and his uncle, in the course of the journey, make a trick of an assistant driver to get past a checkpoint. They converse for a pretend:

You'll be my assistant driver he says. 'When we go through the checkpoints, you'll help the passengers disembark for the checks. I am a retired army officer, and I know all soldiers. If things get tricky and they start asking you questions, say that you are my wife's brother's cousin and that you are helping me out for the day (2019, p. 121).

This forged relationship is a genuine outcome of the denial of hospitality. Habib and his uncle look as if they are cheating the government officials, but in reality, they follow this step only to save their lives. It proves that the entire world is intolerant and biased towards the Rohingya Muslims.

Habib would often hold fake documents and devious people on his journey from one place to the next. However, in reality, in the antagonistic world, fake documents and unreal identities are the obligatory traumatic tales of all the Rohingya refugees, as Giorgio Agamben claims. He stresses

The basic point is that every time refugees no longer represent individual cases but rather a mass phenomenon . . . evocations of the inalienable rights of man, to be incapable not only of resolving the problem but also simply of dealing with it adequately"(1998, p.115).

Quoting Agamben's view, for the stateless Rohingya to set precarious journeys is a matter of life rather than being honest by holding authentic documents and following honest people. Doing unethical deeds is the consequence of the uninviting milieu against the Rohingya. In Bangkok, the Rohingya are harshly denied shelters accusing them of troublemakers. "An old man scoffs, 'The Burmese here hide under false identities, no one knows that they are Burmese. They try to pass unnoticed because of the police raids. You'll have trouble finding anyone.'" (2019, p. 127). These remarks also ostensibly indicate the Burmese hide under false identities due to the complexities of assimilation and fear of being charged by authorities. Habib also follows the same strategies because he is warmly recognised nowhere in the world.

In the issue of hospitality, Jacques Derrida says the foundation integrity of the host country is to be a warm recipient for any asylum seekers by assuring administrative roles with restricting and adopting human rights. Derrida discusses

... it will be necessary to restrict the legal powers and scope of the police by giving them a purely administrative role under the strict control and regulation of certain political authorities, who will see to it that human rights and a more broadly defined right to asylum are respected (2003, P.15).

According to Derrida, in restraining the legal power, a host country should ensure the asylum rights of refugees. In other words, the host country should receive any visitors flourishing human rights and showing respectful gestures. Borrowing Derrida's ideas, however, the reality of the Rohingya refugees is full of overlooked and denied throughout the world wherever they visit to protect their lives. Habib expresses his exhausted situation referring there is not even a single country to receive them with hospitable faces. He articulates "I can't tell you which country might be most welcoming for stateless people like us. I have been in many places and each one is as horrendous as the next" (2019, p. 133). In his experience, almost no country is ready to welcome the stateless people. Wherever he happens to visit is horrific to the Rohingya refugees in the world.

Instead of hospitality, the Rohingya refugees are compelled to live hellish lives more than animals. They are regarded as animals who deserve almost no dignity and further lives. The protagonist, Habib, narrates a sour occurrence in Kuala Lumpur that degrades refugees to creatures. He explains, "We emerge from the shadows like zombies in a deserted building site. One hundred and fifty workers Burmese, Indonesian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi have been arrested and taken away in big navy-blue trucks" (2019, p.140). In this description, all immigrants are not portrayed as complete human beings rather they are analogised to Zombies in uninhabited areas who are from different countries. They are not only inquired but also arrested and loaded in a big truck for transport. If so, are the refugee's humans or creatures in the eyes of authorities in host countries? Do refugees deserve humanity? The answer remains absurd if we see the

miserable situation of the Rohingya refugees in almost all the host countries simply lacking the true ethos of hospitality. It means the Rohingya refugees are severely denied by the host lands throughout the globe.

Solutions

The Rohingya refugee crisis seems to be limited more to South Asia but it is one of the serious issues of the 21st century across the world. The Rohingya crisis could be addressed by applying Derrida's notion of unconditional hospitality and Levinas's ethics of face. The proper implementation of hospitality can pacify the tragic stories of the Rohingya. Derrida primarily expands the idea of hospitality by ignoring conditionality regardless of the identity, background and previous status of the visitors. He proposes flourishing morality "Unconditional hospitality implies that you don't ask the other, the newcomer, the guest, to give anything back, or to subscribe to any moral contract" (2003, p.77). Derrida's idea challenges the traditional concept of sovereignty that imposes conditions on hospitality, arguing instead for a more radical, ethical hospitality. It is suggestive that if the Rohingya refugees are not judged through the narrow circle of sovereignty piling up conditions, the crisis can be solved. Instead of othering the Rohingya refugees, should be received with open gestures and warm hospitality.

Derrida further says that any refugee should be invited not throwing unnecessary questioning regarding an individual identity. He argues a city should exemplify proper hospitality to receive refugees.

The city itself could determine the laws of hospitality . . . an unconditional law, both singular and universal, which ordered that the borders be open to each and every one, to every other, to all who might come, without question or without their even having to identify who they are or whence they came (2003, p. 18).

In his view, hospitality is significant everywhere on a local to global scale. Employing Derrida's ideas, if the Rohingya immigrants are excessed with an open border, without any troublesome questions related to their identity and ethnicity, the ongoing crisis would be positively solved.

Similarly, Emmanuel Levinas in his book, entitled *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures* illustrates the clear concept of cities of refuge and promotes the ideas of ethical hospitality which is more applicable to solving the Rohingya refugee crisis. Levinas focuses on easy asylum for all whoever and whatever the background. He writes

The law of Moses designates cities of refuge where the manslayer takes refuge or is exiled. Takes refuge or is exiled: there are two. The avenger of blood can no longer pursue the murderer who has taken refuge in a city of refuge (1994, p.39).

According to Levinas, the cities of refuge are common shelters for anyone who wishes to reside no matter whether the asylum seeker is the murderer or the avenger of blood can take shelter because previous records are not noteworthy there. Quoting Levinas, is it justifiable to torture the protagonist Habib based on his family heritage uttering humiliating words like Kalar pig Muslim in visited places? Of course not, instead he should be welcomed in the host country because any asylum seeker has the right to take shelter in a visited place. So, the adaptation of Levinas's ethics of face could lastingly close the decades-long traumatic chapters of the Rohingya crisis.

Levinas, additionally mentions the cities of refuge that imply the centre of civilization and full of humanity for all where the Rohingya refugees would also be effusively embraced. He clarifies "The city of refuge is the city of a civilization or of a humanity which protects subjective innocence and forgives objective guilt and all the denials that acts inflict on intentions" (1994, p. 52). As Levinas in the cities of refuge, the Rohingya refugees can get in and live because this place for all even it accepts previous guilt and inflicted intention. It means the cities of refuge could tenderly accommodate the stateless Rohingya ending their life-threatening precarious journey. Levinas's ethical philosophy further underlines the face-to-face encounter as the foundation of ethics along with an infinite responsibility towards the Other, transcending legal and political considerations. Levinas states: "The face, in its nudity and defencelessness, signifies: 'Do not kill me.' This significance is prior to the verbal expression: it is this that the face expresses." (1964, p. 86). Here, the "face" represents the presence of the Other, and this ethics of the face can be applied to address the Rohingya refugee crisis by promoting a sense of dignity, humanity and the notion of fraternity in the world.

The Rohingya are displaced out of the polis due to the despotic government against them in their ancestral land and are obliged to face the lack of hospitality in visited countries. As Aristotle's ideas, the Rohingya refugees are, in truth, to be placed out of a polis. He seems to attribute them either to the beasts or the god "Anyone who is without a polis (apolis) not by luck but by nature is either a poor specimen or else superhuman" (Quoted to Elden 2013, p. 43). Following Aristotle's words, the Rohingya, are without a polis neither technically remain complete human beings nor transform into superhuman or animals or beasts to reside outside of human society. Thus, to solve the Rohingya refugee crisis, in the first place, they should be treated as complete human beings in both home and host lands with dignified treatment ensuring the core ethos of human rights.

Every Rohingya deserves equal dignity, and rights whether they exist within or outside of the native polis because the notion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 would be also implemented in their situation. In UDHR, Article 1 explicitly affirms, "We Are All Born Free and Equal. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (1984, Article 1). The provision of this declaration ensures that every Rohingya is

born free and equal. So, they should be welcomed with a sense of equality wherever they happen to move. Additionally, this statement of UDHR also strongly upholds the ethos of both Derrida and Levinas's concepts of hospitality and the cities of refuge because their advocacy is for the inclusion of basic human rights. It means the implementation of the essence of all born free and equal, would be an obvious step to appease the existing Rohingya crisis in the contemporary era.

Conclusion

The novel *First They Erased Our Name: A Rohingya Speaks*, is a memoir, the protagonist Habib's depiction is a true image of the miserable status of the entire Rohingya community in the world. The ethnic conflict between the Rakhine and marginalized Rohingya appears to be the critical period of the Rohingya's historical ruin. In the decades of the 1980s the immediate rise of dictator Ne Win, in Myanmar, destroys the Rohingya community excluding them from the 135 documented ethnic list out of the eight national races. They consequently lose everything, particularly both citizen rights and the rights of man since everyone needs to be a state citizen in order to enjoy fundamental human rights. In other words, there is no government to protect the Rohingya minority legally. So, without the state Rohingya's displaced life is no more than the bare life which means hanging in between natural life *Zoe* and political life *Bios* across the globe.

As borrowing the ideas of Aristotle the Rohingya refugees are out of a polis losing several things because they are displaced from their land of origin. Hence, the Rohingya get entirely dehumanized by erasing everything such as their name, culture, tradition, religion, business, language and way of life. The biggest thing they lose is their ancestral state which leads them to be a status of dehumanization, refugees and asylum seekers in the world. They deserve no other alternative than to set up perilous movements in different countries encountering indifferent people and a hostile world.

The denial of unconditional hospitality worsens the Rohingya refugee crisis as the protagonist Habib has to face unreceptive gestures, in more than dozens of countries. Even not a single country shows hospitality and ethics of face to him rather he is denied behaving like a criminal. Although Malaysia is a Muslim country, the Rohingya Muslims are not received in Malaysia with warm hospitality. In Malaysia's Tanah Merah camp, Habib is required to be naked and bend over by taking off his clothes which is not only against his religion but also a deliberate insult to all Muslims. It clarifies that stateless people are uninvited anywhere despite sharing the same background. In Kuala Lumpur, Habib is traded in a few hundred ringgits between the Malaya Thai traffickers and a Mafia of Thai fishermen. He as a consequence is made a slave in the Andaman Sea. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 openly advocates for the essence of human rights associated with self-worth. Upholding that all human beings are by birth free and deserving of equal dignity. However, to beg life, Habib is at the hands of notorious human

traffickers which is a bitter irony to the crux of human rights. The UDHR seems unable to ensure the rights of the Rohingya and encompass the ethics of faces in the contemporary world.

In 2004 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, Habib's arrest despite holding a temporary protection letter from UNHCR also explicitly exemplifies the lack of hospitality. Instead of showing humanitarian assistance, he is sent for detention by asking questions regarding his background. In addition, Habib's family members are either tortured to death or banished by authorities. His father and grandfather are tortured to death and the rest of the members are scattered holding dehumanized status by facing severe unwelcoming gestures in different places just to continue their lives. Habib's brother Babuli is in China, sister Habibah and her husband flee to Bangladesh after the demolition of their village. So, almost one million Rohingya now live in different lands of the globe encountering severe denial of hospitality and with no hope for the future.

The novel reveals the Rohingya refugee crisis depicting stateless conditions even in their land of birth. Along with autocrat Ne Win's ascent to the government in Myanmar, the Rohingya are thrown out of the political sphere as a stateless mass who finally lose their agencies. As a result, they are dehumanized as outsiders everywhere to the host countries. The protagonist Habib is a true representative of the entire Rohingya community. He is completely erased losing everything from citizen rights to human rights and home, family, land, cultural heritages to overall identity by degrading the status even lower to animals. Habib holds a bare life with the limbo self throughout his horrendous journey. He is denied wherever he accidentally visits to sustain his life. Thus, for the Rohingya, this entire world seems to be inhospitable, there is not a single country to welcome them with humanitarian gestures and faces of ethics. UNHCR could extensively encircle the Rohingya minority into its frame providing the already declared ethos of human rights.

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