Unexpected Neighbours: The Impact of the Rohingya Refugee Influx on the Education of Indigenous Communities in Teknaf

By

Priyong Sabastini

19117010

Submitted to the Department of Economics and Social Sciences in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Social Sciences in Anthropology

Department of Economics and Social Sciences

January 2023

Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where it is appropriately cited through with full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

_____

Student Full Name: Priyong Sabastini

Student ID: 19117010

Approval

The thesis titled "Unexpected Neighbours: The Impact of The Rohingya Refugee Influx on The Education of Indigenous Communities in Teknaf" submitted by Priyong Sabastini of Fall 2022, has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelors of Social Sciences in Anthropology on 29/01/23.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor: (Member) _____

Dr. Shahidur Rahman
Professor, Department of ESS, BRAC University

Program Coordinator: (Member) _____

Dr. Shahidur Rahman
Professor, Department of ESS, BRAC University

Departmental Head: (Chair) _____

Dr. Wasiqur Rahman Khan Professor and
Chairperson, Department of ESS, BRAC University

Acknowledgement

I would like to begin my acknowledgements by expressing gratitude to all my respondents. I am truly grateful for the patience with which they answered my questions and the kindness they demonstrated. I also want to thank Noman Bhaiya, Kawser Bhaiya, Akash Bhaiya, Aman Bhaiya, Aynul Bhaiya and Fatmi Uncle for connecting me to all my respondents and familiarising me to Teknaf and guiding me throughout my study.

I want to thank my thesis supervisor, Professor Shahidur Rahman for the guidance that he has provided all throughout my undergraduate journey at Brac University and during my thesis work. I will be forever thankful for the lessons he has offered through his lectures, constantly pushing me to think out of the box, try harder, and teaching that learning can be transmitted from anywhere, including student to teacher. I am also incredibly grateful for the many research opportunities he has given me, which has helped me gain valuable new experiences and grow. This paragraph alone cannot do justice to how thankful I am to have had Professor Shahidur Rahman as my mentor. Thank you, Sir.

I wish to thank Professor Seuty Sabur for all the practical life lessons I have received from her. Professor Seuty Sabur's insights on class, gender and religion has been an integral component in shaping me as a person throughout my time at Brac. I am grateful to Shehzad M. Arifeen as well, for sparking my passion in reading anthropological texts and pushing me to do better. I am also thankful to the lecturers who have helped me during my time here, including Seema Amin, Zareef Karim and Aftab Alam.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people in my life who have motivated me- my parents for their unfaltering support and the safe space they have created for me to explore who I am, the friends I have made through this program who have helped me grow as a person and have influenced how I think about the world around me, including, Tasfia, Mashaekh and Adiba and lastly, Afra, for her constant support. Thank you all, so much.

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Abbreviations & Acronyms

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BSEM	Brac School for Ethnic Minorities
CDD	Centre for Disability in Development
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Abstract

Following the genocide on the Rohingya people in Myanmar back in August 2017, about 1 million refugees have entered Bangladesh, which has created astronomic pressure on the host community. Beyond immediate issues of accommodation and social cohesion that have risen, a secondary challenge has been the impact of the refugee camps on the education. In this context, this dissertation examines the impact of the Rohingya refugee camps on the education of nearby indigenous community members and how all the immediate effects due to the creation of camps synergise and decrease their ability for them to access education. This research focuses on the indigenous community members in order to explore how difficult it may be for them to cope with such difficulties because of their already-marginalised status, hence, their lack of social and cultural capital compared to their Bengali counterparts. Given the paucity of data on indigenous communities and their education as well as a lack of detailed information on the impact of the camps on the host community, the following research is a qualitative and exploratory study, where its primary data has been directly collected from the effected members through focus group discussions, and also NGO experts through one-on-one interviews. The subsequent findings of this research indicate that due to the combination of factors such as increased distance, lack of mobility, the additional responsibility of accompanying children, decrease in financial capacities, following the creation of the refugee camps, and finally, Covid-19, school attendance had greatly reduced and dropout rates also increased for the children of the indigenous Chakma communities of Teknaf. The aforementioned findings have been analysed using Amartya Sen's theory of social exclusion and capabilities deprivation to understand how the reduced access to education may shift the community's ability to cope with economic or social adversities that go beyond simply education. The following dissertation therefore contributes to existing studies standing as research conducted solely on

the indigenous communities near the refugee camps and to existing theory by showcasing how lack of access to functional resources impact their capabilities to cope with adversities and how under specific circumstances, an external community has the capability to further marginalise a nation's own members.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

Following the genocide on the Rohingya people in Myanmar back in August 2017, around 740,000 Rohingya refugees came to Bangladesh, where, as of October 2022, almost 1 million refugees reside in Ukhiya and Teknaf, Cox's Bazar (Ansar and Khaled, 2021). As a result, the host community has been under astronomic pressure to accommodate them and provide them with housing and basic amenities, leading to an extensive range of issues for the host community members. This refugee influx has had the most impact on the daily lives of locals living near the campsites. Following this influx, heavy deforestation has occurred, to make space for the refugees. Having lost forestlands, the scope of earning livelihood has been greatly reduced for the host community members (UNDP, 2019). Additionally, increased competition for work due to the availability of refugees willing to work for less has led to many locals having trouble sustaining their livelihood due to a great reduction in wages in tandem with price hikes in the area and loss of land due to the creation of the camps (UNDP, 2019). Given the challenges faced by host community members due to the creation of the camps near their homes, tensions between the local community members and refugees have been steadily and noticeably increasing (IFRC, 2020). Over the past few years, the Rohingya refugees have slowly become the majority population, which has led to locals feeling even more insecure (UNDP, 2019). Being surrounded by refugees gravely affects the ability of locals to access many resources, and host community members have not been prioritised by the government regarding the attainment of resources to sustain their needs (UNDP, 2019). Overall, the host community members identify the following as their most urgent:

unemployment, increased conflict and crime, price inflation, and, overpopulation (IFRC, 2020; UNDP, 2019).

While there has been a number of research that has studied the challenges the host community face due to the refugee camps, the impact of the refugee camps on the education of local children has received little concern. UNDP (2019) reports that mobility, i.e., the movement from one place to another, has also become an issue for the locals due to the deteriorating road conditions following the creation of the camps. The report also revealed that while traffic congestion is a problem faced by all the locals, young school-going children are especially affected as they face substantial risks when attempting to cross the roads, thus parents fear their children facing road accidents. Moreover, other findings from this report indicates that many parents are wary of sending their children alone to school following the influx due to the presence of the refugees as they worry their children may be negatively influenced due to their presence. Thus, a secondary challenge that has risen is the impediment to education for local children who live near the camps. Although these reports on the situation surrounding the campsites regarding education in Bangladesh outline the increased difficulty in accessing education for children, none of the studies go in-depth into what that entails for the indigenous children specifically, and, to what extent these issues impact their lives moving forward.

In this context, this dissertation examines the impact of the Rohingya refugee camps on the education of nearby indigenous community members specifically and how all the immediate effects due to the creation of camps synergise and decrease their ability for them to access education. While there is a lack of studies conducted on the impact on education for all host community members, this study has focused on the indigenous communities surrounding the camps as studies rarely focus on indigenous communities near campsites alone. Additionally, being an already-marginalised group, the consequences felt by the

indigenous communities, may be harder for them to cope with. Therefore, this thesis explores how and to what extent these limitations may restrict the development of an already-marginalised group using the framework of social exclusion stemming from marginalisation which may result in certain capabilities deprivation.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of this dissertation are as follows:

(i) Has the Rohingya refugee camp impacted the access to education for the indigenous community members?

(ii) Is there any significant relationship between attaining education and earning livelihood and the reverse as well?

(iii) How do the challenges surrounding access to education synergise to affect the development capacities of the indigenous communities?

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this dissertation are as follows:

(i) Explore to what extent education has become harder to access due to restrictions in mobility and social insecurity created by the camps

(ii) Explore the relationship between livelihood and the ability to attain education and, the relationship between education and the ability to improve livelihood options

(iii) Understand how these challenges synergise and affect the developmental potential of indigenous communities near camps

1.4 Theoretical Framework

To highlight the importance of creating scope for education of the indigenous community and the implications it holds for their future sustainability, this dissertation uses

the theoretical framework of social exclusion (as a result of marginalisation) for its analysis. In doing so, this dissertation aims to showcase how the capabilities deprivation faced by the indigenous community members may be more critical given their lack of social capital compared to the mainstream Bengali population.

1.4.1 Social exclusion as a result of marginalisation

Over the years, in academic literature, the concept of marginality has received many ambiguous definitions. A definition adopted by Gatzweiler et al. (2011, 3) defines marginality as "an involuntary position and condition of an individual or group at the margins of social, political, economic, ecological or biophysical systems, preventing them from access to resources, assets, services, restraining freedom of choice, preventing the development of capabilities, and eventually causing (extreme) poverty". In many studies marginalisation is discussed interchangeably with social exclusion, where, marginality has the ability to influence social exclusion for the following reasons- it may restrict people's access to resources due to geographical or geophysical limitations; it may influence an individual's ability to achieve opportunities (for instance, certain groups such as ethnic minorities may be excluded from certain opportunities as the mainstream ethnicity may be preferred); it can also influence one's capacity to take advantage of the opportunities that are made available to them (Mowat, 2015).

When specifically focusing on social exclusion that stems from being marginalised, it can be assumed it arises from the lack of equal opportunities, barriers to education, training and participation, social injustice, and stigmatisation of specific groups seen as 'vulnerable' (Mowat, 2015; Messiou, 2012; Petrou et al., 2009; Brann-Barrett, 2011).

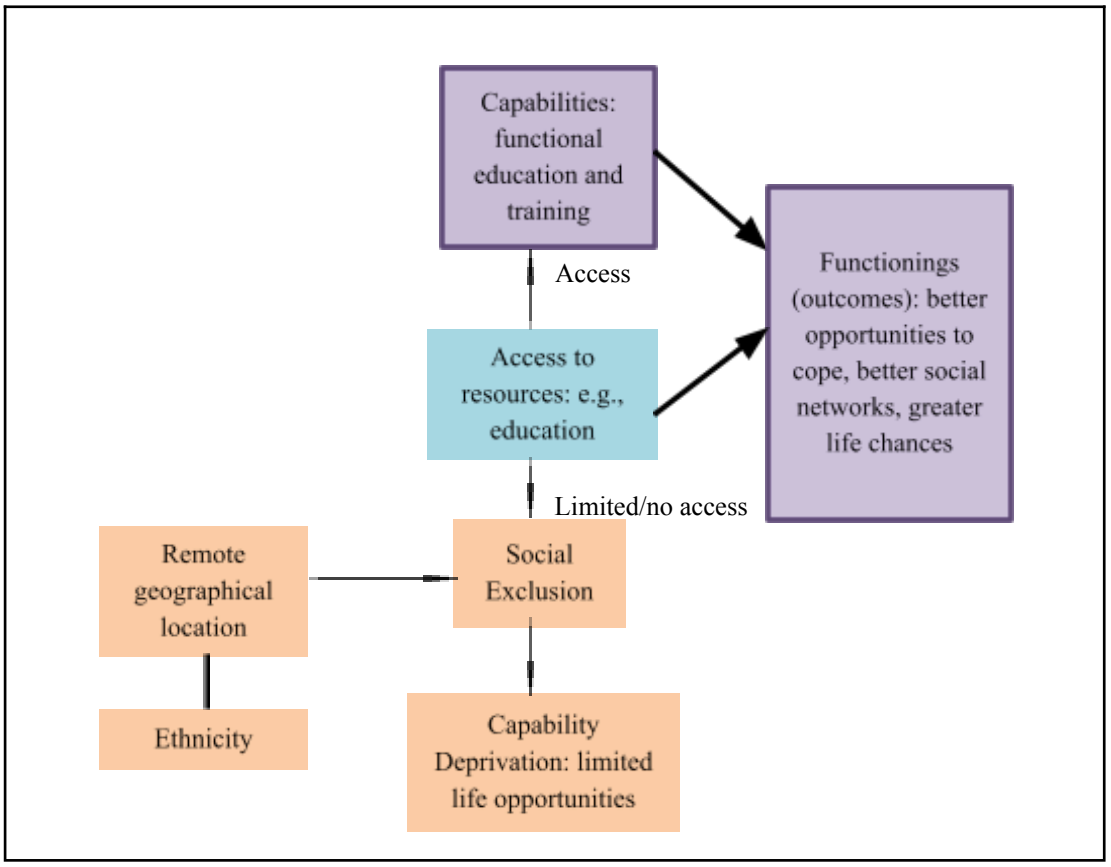
In order to understand social exclusion, this dissertation has used Amartya Sen's (2000) theory of social exclusion and its relation to an individual's access to capabilities. Sen frames social exclusion under the broad umbrella term of poverty and in doing so, he escapes

the theoretical pitfall of categorising every issue faced by the lower socio-economic classes under social exclusion. Instead, Sen uses the concept of social exclusion as one of the possible reasons why an individual or group may be deprived of adequate opportunities that may be impeding their potential capabilities. According to Sen (2000), social exclusion includes being excluded from the following- being able to enjoy normal crops (some groups may be prioritised over others to receive produce in times of shortage), access to the food market due to lower purchasing power, food subsidy arrangements, and receiving employment opportunities. Landlessness also falls under this argument, as a family without land may be very deeply handicapped (Sen, 2000). More importantly, Sen states that unemployment is a very significant factor in social exclusion as it may result in individuals being subjected to exploitative occupations. Additionally, unemployment has many undesirable effects, such as the loss of productive output due to a number of the population being unemployed; the resulting skill loss as those who are unemployed 'unlearn' by 'not doing'; the loss of freedom to partake in social activities, economic opportunities, job-related insurance, medical pensions etc; and, resulting weakened motivation to find future work leading to further social exclusion (Sen, 2000). Continued unemployment may result in depriving individuals of the capability to live satisfactory lives. For individuals to be able to utilise 'positive prospects', Sen (2000) conceptualises that it is important that they are not excluded from effective employment opportunities that may be made available to them such as new patterns of information exchange, new methods of producing goods, new skills, new techniques for production etc. In excluding individuals from opportunities to learn such techniques and related opportunities due to national/international restrictions or lack of 'preparedness', then such individuals may be excluded from certain facilities that would aid their economic survival due to exclusion from newer ways of earning and maintain their livelihoods (Sen, 2000).

1.4.2 Capabilities deprivation and access to better life chances

Framing social exclusion under the concept of capability deprivation helps illuminate the various ways a person's freedom to access resources or opportunities may restrict their inclusion to living/conducting a better life (Sen, 2000). Sen's (1992, 1980) capability approach defines having access to necessary resources, as the 'centre' from where individuals attain and realise their capabilities. While many classical theorists have introduced ideas alluding to the capabilities approach, Amartya Sen was the one who pioneered this concept (The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2011). Sen (1980) states that access to resources and primary goods alone cannot result in equality, it depends on what people are able to do with the public goods they have access to that is actually of importance. In this way, Sen (1980) tries to move away from more utilitarian approaches to equality. He argues instead that the 'conversion of goods to capabilities' varies from person to person and it is important to understand how individuals can make use of the resources made available to them (Sen, 1980, p.219). Luhtanne and Crocker (1992, p.585) adds to Sen's theory by stating that an individual's wellbeing is shaped by their potential to achieve their 'functionings', that is, functional resources such as education or vocational training, which can help them with future career opportunities, where an individual's 'extent of potential functionings' is what determines what they can achieve in their lifespan i.e., their capabilities (Mowat, 2015). In addition, one's potential to attain functionings is not just individually determined, but also externally by the social institutions and their geophysical context (Dissart et al., 2011). Hence, utilising the capability approach in the analysis portion, has allowed this dissertation to elaborate on how one's ability to attain a quality life may be contingent on their ability to access and utilise resources (social, economic, cultural etc.) and therefore, education may play a pivotal role to further an individual's or a community's overall functionings.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



1.5 Methodology

The following research is a qualitative study on the impact of the Rohingya refugee camps on education for indigenous people. Given, the insufficiency of enough data to build any concrete hypothesis, the following dissertation is also an exploratory study where, the general aim of this research is to understand the extent of the impact on education for the indigenous community members due to the creation of the Rohingya refugee camps and how this, in turn, may affect their development capabilities due to the capacities deprivation they face. This research focuses on the indigenous community members specifically not because it assumes they are more affected than the local Bengali host community members, but more accurately, to explore how difficult it may be for them to cope with such difficulties because

of their already-marginalised status, hence, their lack of social and cultural capital compared to their Bengali counterparts.

1.5.1 Research Area

For the purpose of this study, the following research has been conducted at Teknaf, Cox's Bazar located in the Chittagong division. More specifically, the research was undertaken at Whykong Union. While Cox's Bazar has refugee camp areas all across, my choice of location was based on my desire to specifically study the indigenous communities affected by the refugee camps, and Whykong was the one location where a number of Chakma villages are located near the camps. Specifically, three different Chakma villages have been studied from Whykong union- Putinbunya, Horikola and Sukna Amtole. Out of all my three study areas, Putibunya is located directly next to the camp area, camp 22 to be more precise. Sukna Amtole is also near the camp areas. However, Horikola is located slightly farther away from the camps.

Figure 2: Map of Teknaf Upazila

1.5.2 Study Approach

Given that my research is based in a location outside of Dhaka, and accessibility to my research location was very limited, I conducted my research in three phases where, my first phase was to understand my place of study based on discussions with experts who have been to Teknaf. After conducting my first in-person key-person interview in Dhaka with an NGO worker from Red Cross who works in Teknaf, and is thus familiar with the geography there, I decided on my location of study i.e., Whykong. My second and third phases were the phases where, I actually conducted my fieldwork. As we get only one semester to fully conduct a full-fledged thesis and the fact that my choice of research location is very difficult to access without prior preparation, before beginning my thesis semester, I already once

visited Teknaf to get a preliminary understanding of how the refugee camp had impacted the lives of the locals. Once I started my thesis full-fledged in my thesis semester, I conducted fieldwork again at Teknaf to specifically research my area of interest and, given the dynamic situation of the refugee camps, see if anything had changed and shape my study accordingly.

For my second phase of the research and my first-time conducting research in Teknaf, I conducted my fieldwork over the span of three days, talking to both local Bengalis and indigenous community members. All throughout my visit, I was guided by two local journalists who had a strong bond with the community in Teknaf. They also doubled as my interpreters during my fieldwork due to the language barrier between me and the locals, especially the indigenous community members. Without the presence of the local journalists, navigating the area which was extremely close to the Bangladesh-Myanmar border would have been impossible for outsiders, given the strict security surrounding the border and restricted access to campsites. Even with the accompaniment of locals who were trusted in the area, the distrust of our presence at every border already showed how unwelcome I was. That said, their attendance while I conducted my interviews helped host community members be more comfortable in opening up. My fieldwork consisted of conducting focus group discussions in different indigenous villages, and seeing the various ways they had been impacted, and also, how based on distance from the camps the kinds of impacts and their intensities had varied. Additionally, to get an overview of the entire situation surrounding the camps, I also conducted discussions with local Bengalis living in the camp areas.

My third phase of fieldwork was conducted exclusively on the indigenous villages at Whykong, where I conducted my fieldwork in the span of four days. The indigenous villages were all located in very remote hilly areas of Whykong and I had to travel uphill, a great distance to reach each of these communities. In addition, the vehicle could go so far until the roads were too narrow for them. The difficulty in reaching the location itself portrayed to me

the extent of their remote geographical marginalisation and the physical disjunction between their individual community and the rest of Teknaf. I was again, guided this time by another NGO worker, who had expertise in regard to the matters pertaining to the camp and how it affected the locals. While my final fieldwork period initially had much more clarity as I had defined the purpose of my study beforehand compared to the time before. In my preliminary fieldwork, I noticed mobility was an issue that would come up in my interviews in regard to accessing health care and education. Hence, I wanted to see how the indigenous communities had been affected due to restrictions on mobility due to the camps. Unfortunately, given that my previous fieldwork was conducted one year prior, and the situation in Teknaf is very dynamic, much of my findings from my initial fieldwork did not align with the responses from my respondents. As a result, I had to evaluate what I had gathered thus far and match them with the limited findings from the year before they did align with, and reshape my study to focus on the general impact on education for the indigenous communities and also, rework my questions on-site accordingly.

Therefore, through the process of conducting my fieldwork, I finally decided to narrow down my focus to exploring the effects on education for the indigenous communities and the ways attaining and sustaining education may be harder for the indigenous peoples and what that may mean for the overall sustainability and development for their community as a whole. While I recognised that both local Bengalis and indigenous community members were equally hurt by the refugee camps, given their already-marginalised position I hypothesised they may have a more difficult time mitigating the adversities which I wanted to also explore. Moreover, due to my limited time in Teknaf and the need to re-adjust my thesis topic halfway through my research, I did not have the means to further interview locals and decided to use the indigenous communities as my research focus.

1.5.3 Data Collection

The following study has taken information from two categories of respondents to achieve a complete understanding. The first category has been from the indigenous people directly affected and the second by NGO experts who gave me an overview of the situation. As this research specifically focuses on qualitative methods, the questions designed for the indigenous community members have been mostly open-ended, while some follow-up questions have been semi-structured. Similarly, in my first phase of the research, prior to any fieldwork, the questions to my expert were also open-ended. However, the questions designed for my one-on-one interview with the NGO expert, following my fieldwork were semi-structured, as I utilised my final interview to fill in any remaining gaps.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

In the case of my indigenous community respondents, I conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) in three different Chakma communities of Teknaf. FGDs offer a number of benefits and is an effective way to bring people from similar backgrounds together when conducting research. According to Zacharia et al. (2021), responses in FGDs are usually spoken greatly in-depth and allows the research to gauge a better understanding of what their respondent is thinking or feeling. Additionally, non-verbal communication and group interactions also reveal great insight for a researcher (Zacharia et al., 2021). As such, the authors suggest that FGDs allow for a greater yield of information in a short period of time through FGDs.

Given the aforementioned benefits and my limited time at Teknaf, conducting FGDs on my primary respondent group seemed the most efficient. The Chakma communities at Whykong are the indigenous communities which are most directly affected by the camps, hence, my choice of location. All my FGDs were mediated by an interpreter, as there was a

significant language barrier between me and my respondents. In some cases, they could understand my questions answer able to directly respond to me. However, in many cases, my interpreter needed to break down the questions and they were more comfortable elaborating in their own language, which my interpreter would then explain back to me. Moreover, since a lot of the time, my respondents preferred to use their native tongue to answer certain complex questions, conducting group discussions made it easier for my translator to synthesise their responses and explain them to me rather than repeating similar responses multiple times.

My first FGD was conducted in *Unchiprang* camp (around camp 22) in Putibunya where I interviewed Chakma women from ten different Chakma families**.** My second set of FGDs were conducted at Horikola. However, as I will be outlining in my results section, given that my FGD consisted of younger men and women, without children or younger siblings in school, I was unable to retrieve my desired responses. As a result, I had to walk around the village myself and conducted a few one-on-one conversations to see what I could find out. My highlighted conversations from Horikola were thus from a Chakma businessman and the village headman, both of whom were in their early 40s, presumably. Finally, my third focus group discussion was conducted at Sukna Amtole, where all my respondents were male Chakma farmers, representing their families.

Table 1: Profile of FGDs

Location	Nature of Participants	Number of Female Respondents	Number of Male Respondents
Putibunya Unchiprang (Camp 22)	Farmers and day labourers	10	0
Horikola	Farmers and day labourers	3	2
Horikola	Village Headman	0	1
Horikola	Businessman	0	1
Sukna Amtole	Farmers and day labourers	0	6

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

In order to negate possible gaps in my research due to the communication barrier with my respondents, for which, at some points, I may miss certain valuable information, I had also decided to conduct KIIs. Ali et al. (2013) suggests that using KIIs can strengthen research papers, in the following ways- unclear issues can be clarified, rich detail can be retrieved, and, relationship can be built with experts on the field, which may aid future clarification requirements. Having considered all the possible advantages, I chose to conduct my KIIs with NGO experts working at Teknaf, who had already conducted relevant research regarding topics related to the refugee camps and could easily grasp what I was exactly trying to explore. Additionally, building rapport with them on-field would also allow me the opportunity to contact them later on, in the case that I would require any further clarification while looking through my data.

My first KII was actually conducted in Dhaka, prior to any fieldwork with an NGO worker from Red Cross. From my discussion with the development personnel from Red

Cross, I was able to understand the overall situation in Teknaf. Following my final sets of FGDs in my third phase of research, I conducted another KII with an expert from CDD (Centre for Disability in Development) who has been working with affected host community members since 2018. Given how close the Chakma communities were to the devastating effects they faced due to the camps, in many cases, they would emphasise certain points instead of elaborating on specific questions. As such, my KII was able to clarify certain issues that I could not gauge from my FGDs alone, to put my study into perspective.

Table 2: Profile of KIIs

KIIs	Number	Nature of Interview	Justification for Selection	Information Sought
Red Cross worker	1	In person	Worked with the refugees within the camps and was well-versed regarding all issues to do with the camps and host community	Overall landscape of issues surrounding the refugee camps, conditions of host community, host community and refugee relations, where to conduct study on indigenous people in Teknaf
CDD worker	1	Virtual	Worked with the refugees within the camps as well as host community members, was well-versed regarding all issues to do with the camps and host community	Benefits of NGO schools for indigenous community members, method of teaching within such schools, differences between NGO schools and Whykong schools, whether or not NGO schools created employment, changes to school attendance following closure of NGO schools

Secondary Research

In addition to primary field data collection, this dissertation also incorporates secondary data to add further depth and context to the study. As stated by Sindin (2017), secondary data allows research to increase the breadth and scope of its research. Given that

most data on the refugee camps have been limited to NGO or INGO reports, such reports have been used to create a picture of the context of the situation in which this research was conducted. In addition, academic literature on the rights of indigenous people worldwide and in Bangladesh, along with the status of their education nationally has been utilised in the literature review section to create a background understanding of their general educational status, as not much data on the effects due to the camp on their community has been specifically or separately been produced. This is also contingent with the literature which highlights the importance of secondary data, as they may also offer scope for cross-cultural comparison and augment the richness of a research (Sindin, 2017).

1.5.4 Data Analysis

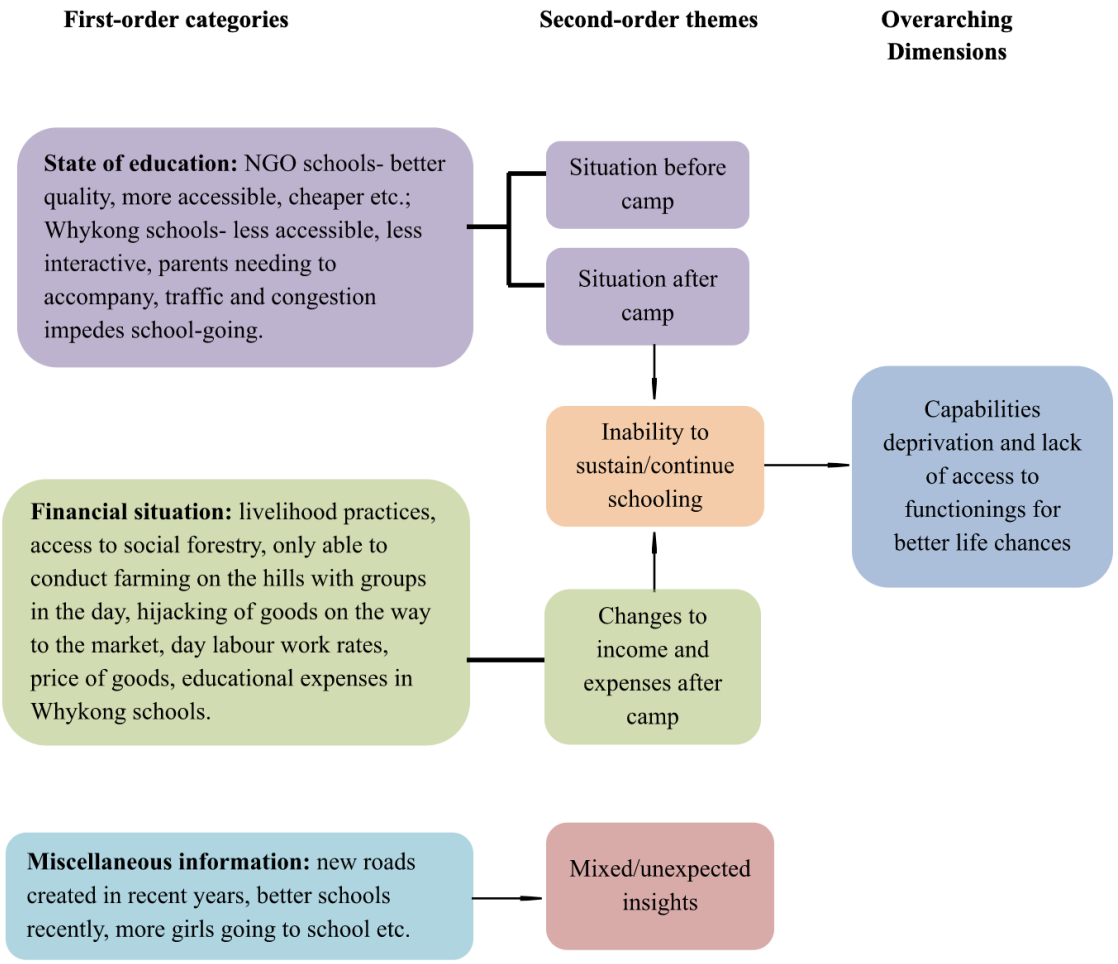
Interviews conducted were all voice recorded with the permission of each of our respondents. I myself transcribed and translated the data in the recordings and opted not to use any statistical analysis tool as the scale of my study was very small. I had also taken pictures, with the consent of my respondents to keep track of my research area and minute details about their villages and livelihood practices, which I may later need in my analysis.

To analyse my results, I first coded my findings based on my transcriptions, to find categories of data which I could then analyse. The coding was done in three stages. My first coding session narrowed-down the differing impacts on their livelihoods and education due to the camps, where I categorised, the effects based on whether they were related to education or livelihood. Next, I devised secondary themes from my first coding, where I separated my findings based on changes before and after the camps. Finally, by the third coding, I developed the overarching themes for my study.

To comprehensively understand both facets of the education issue, stemming from both reduced access to education and livelihood, my research has utilised Amartya Sen's

framework of social exclusion and subsequent capabilities deprivations to see how social exclusion results in the deprivation of resources such as education thereby, reducing one's scope of development due to a reduction in their 'capabilities'. Using this framework, I have tried to understand the extent of education's relation to development and also take account of possible external variables, to contrast the study and decipher the ways this linear relationship may not be applicable as well.

Figure 3: Thematic arrangement of qualitative data



1.6 Significance of the Research

As little to no dedicated academic research exists on the impact of refugee camps on indigenous communities of Teknaf alone, the following dissertation contributes to existing studies standing as research conducted solely on the indigenous communities near the refugee camps. The issues stated in this chapter is more so exacerbated for the local indigenous community members living near campsites as a result of their ethnicity, their remote geographical locations and their lack of financial resources, for which they are already marginalised in society, and they may be even more deeply affected due to the creation of the camps. However, there is a lack of literature exploring the ways in which their reduction in the scope of livelihood practices, social insecurity due to the presence of the refugees, restricted mobility due to their already-existing remote locations coupled with increased congestion and, deteriorating access to education due to the loss of teachers to NGOs, may mean for the sustainability of their community as a whole.

Furthermore, even though all host community members have been drastically affected due to the influx of the refugees, as an already-marginalised community, the indigenous community members may lack the social or cultural capital other locals may have to mitigate the effects, for instance, sending their children to schools in another town where they may have extended family. As the indigenous populations are usually geographically confined to their ancestral location, they may lack the extended social network to create such alternate solutions for themselves. For this reason, this dissertation explores the possible impacts and resulting implications due to reduction in access to education for the indigenous community members specifically, and find out whether it may be more difficult for the ethnic community members to cope with such adversities. In this way, this thesis hopes to add to existing theory on social exclusion by showcasing how lack of access to functional resources impact their capabilities to cope with circumstances. Additionally, this dissertation hopes to add to

existing theories by also showcasing how an external community has the capability to socially marginalise a nation's own members through the power granted to them by their exigent circumstances, and resulting international support. Most literature on social marginalisation showcase how such communities are marginalised within their borders as the mainstream ethnicity receives economic, social and political priority. However, in this specific case, the social exclusion has now evolved and is now stemming from an external community whose needs are also being prioritised over theirs, as opposed to the more traditional cases where, the exclusion happens internally.

Finally, this research has the potential to aid policy makers to understand the reasons behind increased dropout rates within the indigenous communities of Teknaf, and which specific issues they need to tackle in order to mitigate this issue and ensure functional uptake of education increases steadily.

1.7 Organisation of the Dissertation

This dissertation discusses the impact of the refugee camps on education for the indigenous communities near the camps, and if/how it affects the overall prospects and sustainability of its community members. This dissertation is organised in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the problem, and also includes the research objectives, methodology, framework, significance of the research and how this dissertation is organised. This is followed by Chapter 2, which reviews existing literature on indigenous communities and their rights internationally and nationally, along with their educational status nationally. The third chapter presents the results of this research based on my FGDs, KIIs and own observations. In Chapter 4, I discuss and analyse my findings under the framework of social exclusion and capabilities deprivation to showcase how such forms of marginalisation may make it difficult to cope with the difficulties that these communities now face. Finally,

Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation, summarising my findings and discussion and including limitations and recommendations for further research. Additionally, at the end of this dissertation I have attached my study approach for this research in the end notes section, to further expand on my on-field decisions while conducting my study.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to conduct this exploratory study, the first two sections of the literature review in this thesis will outline the history of indigenous rights internationally and nationally to understand the state of the majority of indigenous peoples and to what extent they may be deprived by the State/governing structures themselves. The second section which focuses on the history of their rights in the context of Bangladesh will further work to establish what position rural indigenous communities may hold in Bangladesh and showcase the paucity of data on indigenous communities which are not from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs). The third section specifically discuss the state of education for the indigenous communities of Bangladesh and what factors may impede them from attaining proper education or continuing schooling. Finally, the last section outlines the gaps in existing literature regarding the Rohingya crisis and its impact on education for local indigenous host community members. Having established the aforementioned points, this thesis connects these points to showcase and explore how in tandem with the challenges rural indigenous community members may already face to attain and sustain primary schooling, an external factor such as the refugee camps may also add to the existing challenges.

2.1 State of indigenous communities worldwide

While there is no universally accepted definition of "indigenous peoples," The World Bank defines them within a broad umbrella which includes criteria such as attachment to ancestral lands, self-identification, distinct customary systems and languages. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions 107 and 169 also expand on the criteria to be identified by indigenous. The conventions outline that to be identified as indigenous

people they must have descended from populations which long inhabited the country or territory during colonisation, foreign conquest, or establishment of state boundaries and also, hold onto their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. Hossain (2013) defines “indigenous people” or “indigenous communities” as distinct social groups with their own socio-cultural identity that is different from the dominant society, making them susceptible to vulnerability and disadvantage within the development process of a country. Indigenous people are distinct in how they have “unique cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems” (Roy, 2005). The author further states that even though the indigenous populations are indeed part of the socio-political framework of their respective countries, many of their sociocultural and even legal practices are guided by their own traditional laws referred to as customary laws. However, these customary laws and institutions are continually suffering from the risk of deregulation and neglect by the state body due to discriminatory practices and state-vested interest in assimilating minority groups under the larger social framework.

Generally, in most Asian countries, Roy (2005) states without formal legislative or judicial recognition, customary law is always under threat and needs to be proved by the indigenous leader invoking said laws. According to the author, this is due to the fact that these traditional laws are usually subordinate to the formal written laws of the State and whenever in conflict with State-legislated legal provisions, they are not enacted usually. As a result, Roy (2005) states that information on indigenous peoples and their communities is also scarce in literature due to such social, political, and economic marginalisation in tandem with their relatively more “remote” geographic locations. From the limited literature that is available, we see how the lives of indigenous peoples worldwide are strife with deprivation and exclusion. While customary practices in regard to land and resources are generally upheld worldwide where there has been a practice of strong formal recognition of land rights

such as in some North-East Indian states, Sabah and Sarawak, these are the exceptions (Roy, 2005). Roy further elaborates that some of the most devastating cases of land rights being violated have been generated from a State's own government programmes which try to coerce its indigenous populations to abandon their long-held farming practices and opt for more market and profit-oriented schemes. A clear example stated by the author can be seen in Vietnam, where the government's "sedentarisation" programme relocated indigenous communities without their consent and conducted in-migration of the majority ethnic population in their ancestral lands to "secure borders". Similar programmes have also been undertaken in Bangladesh such as the relocation of indigenous communities from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) of Bangladesh, in order to make space for rubber plantations or fruit orchards. Hence, we see that forestry and land policies have a long history of completely disregarding the claims of indigenous peoples when they can benefit the rest of the state as can be seen from the above examples. Although there are a few exceptions, such as in some parts of India and Borneo, these cannot compare to the insurmountable scale of decline in customary laws and rights all across Asia and other parts of the world (Roy, 2005).

Furthermore, when thinking about individual barriers beyond the right to customary laws, indigenous people worldwide lack fundamental needs such as food and shelter (Hossain, 2013). Moreover, the author discusses how their literacy rate is much lower than the rest of the population of their given state as well as creating a big hindrance for them to become self-sufficient, which is doubly expounded through language as theirs is different from the mainstream population. Their remote geographical location further adds to their impediment as many resources and facilities are far away from their homes which hinders their development. Finally, all of these disadvantages combined result in indigenous peoples generally being very economically deprived wherein The European Commission (2003) found that indigenous populations are more likely to be stuck in poverty traps and have high

degrees of unemployment. Overall, it is evident that not only are indigenous populations politically at a disadvantage, but they are economically, culturally, socially and geographically marginalised as well, which stems from their political marginalisation as this tends to limit their access to resources.

2.2 State of indigenous people in Bangladesh

Most of the existing literature on the recognition of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh highlights the drastic discrepancies between the demographic information recorded and claims made by leaders of the indigenous communities themselves. In the Small Ethnic Minority Cultural Institute Act of 2010 (UNESCO, 2010), Bangladesh recognized 27 different ethnic minority groups. However, various human/indigenous rights-based organisations believed the real number of groups to be more than 45 (Chakma and Maitrot, 2016; Nath, 2012; Sarker and Darvey, 2009). Again, in the 2011 census, the government of Bangladesh recorded the total indigenous population to be 1,586,14 while indigenous community leaders claimed that it was greater than 3 million (Roy and Chakma, 2015). Such incoherence within the demographical data collection already acts as an indicator of the perpetual neglect faced by indigenous communities in Bangladesh. This is contradictory to the goals set by the government itself as Bangladesh has officially endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was passed on back in 2007 (Roy and Chakma, 2015). In the 6th Five Year Plan meeting of Bangladesh, the Government of Bangladesh pledged their consideration of the UNDRIP, and yet, Bangladesh still does not directly recognize indigenous groups and allow them their rights (Roy and Chakma, 2015). That said, rather than recognising rights, what happens instead, is that the State often disregards their customary rights and wellbeing to take control of the resources of the indigenous peoples (Dewan, 2019). This can be seen through the lens of the Rohingya

refugee crisis and the influx of the refugee camps near the lands of the indigenous populations and the subsequent ancestral land grabbing, which is the focus of this dissertation.

While there are some laws pertaining to land use in the CHTs, there are almost next to no laws for their plain land counterparts, which makes it even easier for the State to refute their customary rights in other areas (Roy and Chakma, 2015; Chakma and Maitrot, 2016). Studies conducted specifically on the land rights of the ethnic communities of the CHT demonstrate how livelihood is hindered through government interferences and policies. Historically, before the British colonisation, most of the forest areas were directly under the control of their local indigenous communities, but following colonialism, control over resources shifted over to the governing bodies of the State (Rasul, 2007). Even so, in 1900, the Chittagong Hill Tract Manual Act, allowed its people protection over their livelihood and culture, wherein "external" people were restricted from entering (Chakma and Maitrot, 2016). That soon started to shift as the governing bodies shifted as well. During the Pakistan era, the indigenous community started losing their homeland due to various government interventions. In 1960, due to the building of the Kaptai Dam about 100,000 indigenous people were removed from their homelands (Chakma and Maitrot, 2016). Again, in 1964 the government withdrew the special status of the CHT and outsiders could then enter the area at will (Chakma and Maitrot, 2016). This trend of violating land rights and dispossession continued as the governing body again continued, following the independence of Bangladesh. Even when regulatory government bodies had been created specifically to help mitigate any land issues and conserve the rights of the indigenous community, their rights are rarely protected. After the inception of the CHT Land Commission, it had been reported that the District Commissioner himself would violate the laws set by the commission itself (Adnan

and Dastidar, 2011). In this way, even since the inception of Bangladesh in 1971, ethnic communities have struggled to gain official recognition (Chakma and Maitrot, 2016).

Even though the CHTs were granted special sanctions by the State, those very sanctions were still subsequently violated. This highlights just how dire the circumstances may be for indigenous peoples throughout the rest of Bangladesh without any such "rights". From the above-mentioned account of the CHTs, we can surmise that low economic opportunities, geographic locations, marginalisation and land dispossession lead to not just economic poverty of ethnic minorities but also, deprivation of many opportunities for them in Bangladesh, much like it does internationally with most indigenous populations. Non-income-related poverty indicators are also widespread for indigenous populations such as access to healthcare and education which is evident through Sen and Ali's (2015) study of the CHTs. In fact, it has been estimated that about 85% of the plain land indigenous peoples are landless wherein the literacy rate amongst them was only 9% and most of them work as sharecroppers, that is, as labourers for lands owned by others (Roy and Chakma, 2015). Health conditions are also a matter of concern, especially for communities living in the remoter regions of the CHTs where food insecurity is very high and deaths from malaria and dysentery often occur (Roy and Chakma, 2015). In this manner, systemic poverty deepens the inequality faced by the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh, especially for indigenous women and children who are even more acutely affected by the lack of access to education, healthcare services, housing, etc. Dhamai (2006) also adds that the root problem of indigenous people is land dispossession through forestry projects, restricted access to education and racial discrimination from the non-indigenous mainstream population.

Therefore, through these studies we are witnessing a series of neglect and disregard of rights, that is being catalysed by State practices. However, most of the studies conducted focus on the dynamics between state interference and the livelihood of indigenous

communities in the CHTs. On the other hand, as reported in many studies, there are very few laws pertaining to the security of land rights in plainland or non-CHT communities. In that regard, there is a clear gap in identifying how government intervention and inappropriate state planning affect indigenous communities in other areas. This gap is especially alarming in regards to Cox's Bazar as of 2017, given the refugee influx as it is not solely governmental practices that are depriving the ethnic populations there, but also, international organisations whose interests are vested solely in helping the refugees while not prioritising the locals (including indigenous populations) being affected as well.

2.3 Education in indigenous communities of Bangladesh

Although the net enrolment rate at the primary level amongst children aged 6-10 years has increased over time to 87% in 2005, the overall completion rate of primary education alone still falls below 50% (UNICEF and BBS 2004). Lack of completion of primary education is an issue of great concern for the indigenous communities of Bangladesh especially. Given the already marginalised position of indigenous peoples in Bangladesh and their exclusion from mainstream society, the education of indigenous children has also been shown very little priority. Much like the discrepancies in their overall population census, there exists little to no statistics on their education as most studies simply focus on the mainstream population or the country as a whole unit (Sarker and Darvey, 2009). Many surveys regarding attendance in schools have been confined to the dominant ethnic groups and date on the attendance of indigenous children especially is lacking (Sarker and Darvey, 2009). The little data that is available showcases that 22% of indigenous children actually complete primary education and the net uptake of primary education by ethnic communities itself lags behind at 49.1% compared to that of the majority population at 67.4% (UNICEF 2007; BBS, 2007). In fact, certain research hypothesises that it is likely a majority of the

indigenous population remains illiterate (Sarker and Darvey, 2009). Following the CHT accord, a survey was conducted on the major ethnic groups of Bangladesh in 1998, where, it was found that 45% of Chakma, 49.7% of Marma, 63.4% Tripura and, 90.4% of the Garo children between ages 6-15 were not enrolled in school (Nath, 2001). Seven years later another survey reported that 20.2% of the indigenous children within that age demographic left school which indicates a major improvement (Nath, 2012). Amongst the small ethnic groups, Chakmas are the largest group and have surpassed other groups in terms of school enrollment. In the CHTs, when 26.2% of children within the aforementioned age demographic have been out of school from other ethnic groups, 19% of Chakma children had stopped enrollment in school (Nath, 2012). However, studies still indicate that the majority of indigenous children remain illiterate (Nath, 2012; Sarker and Darvey, 2009). In fact, a study has shown that the literacy rates of children in the CHTs (43.9%) are lower than that of the national average (51.8%) (Hossain, 2013).

There are two primary factors attributed to the lack of access to education for indigenous people. Firstly, one of the largest barriers is language. The medium of education in local schools is in Bengali or English, which is not actually the primary tongue of the indigenous peoples, which leads to difficulties in learning and subsequently dropping out from school (Dhamai, 2006; Roy and Chakma, 2015; Sarker and Darvey, 2009). Even though Bangladesh has ratified the ILO Convention No. 107 and also, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, primary education in their mother tongue is still not available for the indigenous population (Roy and Chakma, 2015). The second factor is the limited geographical access to schools faced by indigenous community members. Most communities live in remote and dispersed villages, from which schools are located much farther away, sometimes many miles away (Roy and Chakma, 2015; Sarker and Darvey, 2009). Moreover, due to their remote locations, in many cases, they lack the basic infrastructure needed in those areas that would

be optimal for commuting (Hossain, 2013). Given the shanty school conditions and inadequate options for commuting to the schools, many indigenous children do not attend school or drop out (Hossain, 2013). Furthermore, limited livelihood options and lack of money accentuates this issue as first and foremost, education is not their first priority and, bad or lack of communication infrastructures makes it expensive for families to send their children to school leading to lower school attendance compared to the mainstream population (Hossain, 2013; Sarker and Darvey, 2009). As a result, education may take a secondary position in terms of importance for the marginalised and poor indigenous community members. Many parents (usually belonging to the poorer rural indigenous communities) are not convinced to send their young children to school at age 6 as ages 10-11 are considered the prime time to send their children to work anyway (Nath, 2012). As a result, the duration children usually remain in school is very limited and many do not complete their primary education.

Hence, it is evident that as the majority of the indigenous community members of Bangladesh are some of the poorest members of society, they may face a multitude of issues such as unemployment, landlessness, lack of proper healthcare and housing, limited socio-cultural integration, and, illiteracy (Sarker, 2002) which further delimits their opportunity to improve their life chances. Their exclusion from mainstream society has resulted in low priority being given to improving the status of their education (Sarker and Darvey, 2009). In addition, very little is known about their education as most of the data focus on the mainstream population as a whole and much of the data on indigenous education has been considered to be inaccurate such as the 1991 census which reported the adult literacy rate of indigenous people (Sarker and Darvey, 2009). Although some studies highlight the discrepancies between indigenous literacy rates and that of the mainstream population, and what the major factors are behind the high dropout rates of indigenous

children, they rarely go in-depth to see the impacts that children leaving school have on their community as a whole and how that may have a multi-layered effect on their community, which is already marginalised. Again, most of this research has been conducted on the CHTs, and, as a result, not much attention has been paid to other areas where other factors may also be at play such as in Cox's Bazar, where, the intrusion of the camps and influx of the refugees may act as an external and additional detriment to education and its connected impacts.

2.4 Unexplored Research

Available reports on the situation surrounding the Rohingya camps showcase how being surrounded by refugees gravely affects the ability of locals to access many resources, and host community members have not been prioritised by the government regarding the attainment of resources to sustain their needs (UNDP, 2019). As a result, the host community members face the following issues of unemployment, increased conflict and crime, price inflation, and, overpopulation (IFRC, 2020; UNDP, 2019). Additionally, available data on the impact on education focus on particular issues pertaining to the refugees specifically or, detail the impacts on the host community as a whole. For instance, NGO reports such as UNDP (2019), highlight the disruptions on education due to closure of schools and madrasas which were used as camps for refugees in the initial months of the crisis, loss of school teachers to NGOs, noisy construction projects due to camps, increased congestions and traffic making it harder to go to schools etc. However, none of these studies specify what the impacts of the Refugee camp are on education for indigenous community members. Most studies on the camps and their relation to education explore how education for the Rohingya refugee children has been affected and how their prospects have narrowed down due to a lack of efficient schooling within the camps (Rahman, Shindaini and Husain, 2022; Sohel, 2020).

Now, Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the literature review have thus far outlined the lack of research and also priority given overall, to the rural indigenous populations both nationally, and internationally. As such, it is evident that most of the existing data or research on issues pertaining to the indigenous communities of Bangladesh focus on the CHTs primarily, which has left the room to explore related issues in non-CHT rural indigenous communities. In addition, through Section 2.3, we see the existing discrepancies and lack of data on the educational status of the indigenous community members separately.

Therefore, as there is a lack of detailed research surrounding the creation of the camps and how it may specifically have an impact on the education of the indigenous peoples. Hence, given the pre-established impediment towards attaining literacy for most rural indigenous community members, and the lack of non-CHT data, this paper chose to focus on the indigenous population of Teknaf to explore to what extent this external factor may also be affecting their access to and ability to attain education. Although this research recognises that all the impediments as a result of the camps such as reduction in livelihood and ability to continue education, apply to **both** local Bengalis and indigenous community members alike, this paper has chosen to specifically focus on the indigenous communities of Teknaf given the paucity of data on indigenous education. Thus, given the lack of research on specific issues pertaining to the host community, and especially on the indigenous community, the following dissertation explores the gap in the data regarding the impact of the refugee camps and its effect on education due through the lens of the indigenous communities to ascertain to what extent there have been any additional ways in which the influx of the refugees has affected the attainment of education of an already-marginalised population.

Chapter 3

FINDINGS

In this chapter, my findings have been arranged thematically in accordance with my research objectives. For my three objectives, a total of five sections have been created, where the first two sections combined address my first objective. To understand the extent to which education has been affected due to the camp (RQ1), my first two sections showcase the scenario before and after surrounding education. In order to explore the symbiotic relationship between education and livelihood (RQ2), my third section explores how livelihood has been affected and how that may impact the ability to sustain education costs. The fourth section explores how all of these impacts synergise and affect the ability of indigenous community members to continue sending their children to school (RQ3). In addition, this chapter includes a final section that contains certain results that delineates from my initial hypothesis but may add new insight for the discussion, which is why I have chosen to include that section.

3.1 State of schooling for indigenous community members prior to the refugee influx

3.1.1 NGO-based schools

Given the remote locations of the indigenous villages in Teknaf and the terrible conditions of the roads leading to their villages up in the hills, going to school has been a hurdle for its ethnic community members even before the creation of the Rohingya camps. Vehicles can only go so far up to the villages due to the narrow roads, and even still, it takes much longer than it would on a smooth road given the bumpy conditions. Afterwards, in order to access the villages, one must walk up the rest of the hill which can even involve a lot of technical footwork as I had witnessed while doing my own fieldwork. This may involve

climbing up rocky portions of the hill, walking over makeshift bridges using tree logs when moving from one part to another over a stream of water etc. Even though these hurdles were more apparent to me as an outsider and involved a bit of technical trial and error whereas, for those who lived there, this footwork may be naturally ingrained in their muscle memory, it works to paint a picture of the additional work that is involved in any minor movement to and from their village, including going to school.

Given the fact that attaining education for indigenous community children has always been an issue, in some communities certain NGOs would establish schools to negate the problem. Sukna Amtole (located in Ward 02 of Whykong, Teknaf) is one such community, where there used to be NGO-based private schools within their villages namely, BRAC school and Ananda School. These schools were primary schools for grades 1-5 in the case of the BRAC school and up till grade 3 for the Ananda school. They were crafted especially for the indigenous communities and catered to their needs. For example, the BRAC School for Ethnic Minorities (BSEM) was a special initiative taken to create educational opportunities for the children of ethnic minorities where, after extensive research and dialogue with the communities in question and utilising expert aid at the national and international level the curriculum for the school had been developed (Nath, 2012). These schools are similar to non-formal schools created by BRAC and also other NGOs. Given the contextual reality of indigenous communities (communication gaps with the mainstream population, isolation, lower levels of education, etc.) these schools generally consist of 25 students and two teachers – one from their ethnic minority community and one who is Bengali (Nath, 2012). Education in these schools starts with the common language of the children and then gradually progresses towards Bangla. One such school by BRAC had been created for the residents of Sukna Amtole. The existence of these schools made it easy for the community members to send their young children to school without much effort as the only other nearby

schools are within Whykong town, which takes a long time to reach on foot. In addition, the education system in such schools was crafted in such a way that it would appeal to the indigenous children and make them want to attend school more. For example, they would teach counting using ropes and sticks and also by using rhymes. As Motoshi Chakma noted,

> "Before camps, we had private schools like Brac and Ananda that were NGO-based and were available to the Chakma communities. What they did, they would give biscuits and food as snacks, and the education would be very interactive and sincere as well. They would even play and whatnot."

After grade 5 however, children would go to Whykong Primary in town, which is about a 40–45-minute walk from their village but parents felt safe sending their children alone on foot, and children were also eager to go to school. Having received consistent schooling up until then, children had the habit of going to school ingrained and also, the desire to go to school even with the additional effort.

3.1.2 Villages without NGO schools

In Putibunya village of Whykong (next to camp 22), there was no pre-existing NGO-based private school that the community's children could avail. Hence the residents had to send their children to school in Whykong. However, as the school was not too far from their community, the children would walk to school and parents also felt secure sending their children to school alone on foot. Issues of traffic congestion, road safety and social insecurity regarding the influence of Rohingya children were not issues back then. The only issues to attaining education for such communities were similar to pre-existing educational barriers faced by indigenous community members already established through the literature.

3.2 Changes to schooling and school-going practices following the creation of camps

3.2.1 Place of schooling

In Sukna Amtole following the creation of the camps, the private NGO-based schools which used to be located within their community moved away from their homes and relocated into the camps. Sona Chakma noted,

> "Before the camps there used to be a Brac school in our village and an Ananda school, these are not here anymore. The teachers are not there anymore, neither is the school. We don't know how they left."

Following the Rohingya crisis as global attention fell upon the refugees, NGOs also shifted their focus and re-established their schools within camps which were specifically catered towards Rohingya children. Most NGOs have limited emergency funds for each project, and when the crisis became the more emergent issue, NGO school projects in indigenous communities closed their doors to move to the camps. Consequentially, the Chakma people who used to send their children to these schools cannot do so anymore as the curriculum has also been completely reworked for the refugee children. These NGO schools provide two sets of teachers for refugee children. They have Rohingya teachers who teach them their native language that is, Burmese and Bangladeshi teachers who teach mathematics and English. As a result, the Chakma community members of Sukna Amtole were forced to send their children to local schools in Whykong town.

3.2.2 Transportation and Mobility

Ever since the creation of the camps, children want to go to school less given the increased distance required to travel for school. In addition, the conditions of the road also augment this difficulty. Places that would require around 10 minutes to travel require over 40 minutes to reach following the creation of the camps and the surge of people who live in

Teknaf now. Traffic congestion has also increased which also adds to the difficulty in mobility. Not only have the refugees increased the overall population in Teknaf, but it has also created the flow of various development agencies such as NGOs or INGOs and along with it many development personnel. As a result, the coming and going of such development personnel has also added to the traffic congestion. Regardless, the Chakma community members of Sukna Amtole note that the primary difficulty in mobility still remains to be the pre-existing terrible road conditions for them as though traffic has definitely increased, difficulty in finding transportation have always persisted due to the terrible road conditions and their remote location. Had roads been better it would have been easier for community members to hail rickshaws or auto-rickshaws and send their children to schools which are now much farther away. Motoshi Chakma remarked,

> "The road is an issue. As you can see it is broken and bumpy and travelling is difficult. We don't get cars here so quickly that we can simply call for them. If the roads were clear we could call vehicles and reach nearby places in 10mins. Another issue is that even if vehicles come, they can only come so far. The statue you see is how far cars come, the rest of the way we have to walk and it's very difficult to do when it rains. Plus, if roads were better, it would have been easier to take a rickshaw or a CNG to schools near or far. We don't have that ease as we can't leave work to send kids to school so they have to go alone."

However, unlike Sukna Amtole which already had a pre-existing private school within their community, other Chakma communities near the camps that would send their children to primary schools in Whykong note the added difficulty in mobility due to the increased traffic and congestion due to the camps. With increase in construction work around the surrounding areas for the camps, development projects and so many more development offices and personnel around Teknaf, the overall population has significantly increased. The areas of

Teknaf which had only a limited number of people is not the same anymore. Hence, some places which may have been easy to walk towards requires the use of transportation now as there are too many vehicles on the road, making it impossible to just walk in such motor routes, that too, with young children. Dola Chakma said,

> "Before we could at least go and walk to these schools but now, that is also not a possibility so we have to take 'tom toms' or 'easy bikes' which used to cost BDT20-30, but now can even cost BDT60-80 for one round trip as prices overall have hiked up here."

3.2.3 Security and safety

Depending on the location of indigenous community villages and the routes required to send their children to school, security may also be an added dimension to the changes that have followed since the camps have been created. Near camp 22, as children cannot walk to schools anymore, parents have to accompany their children in vehicles they cannot feel they safely send young children on public vehicles alone in case of any road accidents due to the increased number of vehicles and congestion on the roads. Some may also fear sending their children alone to school due to the fear of any negative influence from the Rohingya children who may be inappropriately abusing substances. Moreover, due to the newly critical issue of certain refugees threatening locals, parents are fearful of sending their children to schools alone if the route to school requires going through camp areas. Thus, many parents are now having to accompany their children to school, which, in most cases are the mothers of the children.

3.2.4 Quality of schooling

Compared to NGO-based private schools the quality of education in local government schools in Whykong is significantly lower according to the Chakma community members.

The education system in the NGO schools was specifically catered towards the Chakma community and was ensured to be as intelligible as possible for the children. Teachers were much nicer and tried to make classes more interactive. Each grade had a designated teacher whose focus was that particular grade alone. On the other hand, schools in Whykong have one teacher teaching multiple grades and not paying particular attention to any specific grade. Unfortunately, as the NGO schools that move away and relocate within the Rohingya camps completely alter their syllabus and curriculum, availing education from these schools becomes an impossibility for the children. Dola Chakma added,

> "There are schools *in* the camps now. But we can't send our children there because out of say, 13 books for grade 6, 12 are in English and one is in Burmese but our children won't understand that. They don't teach in our language. Our children are Bangladeshi but Bangla isn't used much in those schools."

3.3 Financial sustainability following the influx of refugees

3.3.1 Loss of income and livelihood practices

After the refugee influx and the creation of camps, incomes for indigenous community members have decreased alarmingly. For instance, in Putibunya Unchiprang, after the Rohingya came their trees, lands and farms have been destroyed. The bamboo farms which were their main source of income have all been cleared out for farms. Be it to farm veggies, building houses or fences etc. bamboos are always necessary. Before the influx, there used to be bamboo farms in every plot around the area I passed through to reach Putibunya, however now, they have all become home to Rohingya refugees. In addition, they used to farm a diverse variety of fruits and vegetables such as tamarind, lemons, cucumbers, bitter gourds, pumpkin, ginger, and banana trees which have also been cleared away. In fact, Putibunya Unchiprang specifically used to be one of the most vegetable-producing areas in

all of Teknaf and their produce would get purchased, circulated and sold to locations such as Kutupalong and Thayangkhali, but now, that revenue has been completely reduced for the farmers of Putibunya. In fact, in order to make space for camps, many forested hills and slopes have undergone heavy deforestation. As a result, many of the former forest areas have been barred from any agricultural or homestead use by the forest department. Many of these restricted areas used to be part of the aforementioned farms or "home gardens" or, areas where shifting cultivation would be performed– a major source of revenue and sustainability for the local Chakma communities, which has now been completely cut off.

Now, those who have farms left can farm but on a limited scale while most are forced to opt for day labour work. Performing work as day labourers is not uncommon in Teknaf, as overall, the soils there are not the most fertile, the more fertile soils belong to the hilly forest areas. However, following the influx of refugees in Teknaf, it has become considerably harder for both the local Muslims and indigenous community members to sustain their livelihood through day labour as now they must compete with the Rohingya refugees for the same work. The problem here is that the refugees already get to avail many benefits and resources within the camps to sustain themselves, thus, whatever work they do as labours are additional and they work for significantly lower rates. As a result, farmers or land owners hiring labour opt to hire the Rohingya refugees who ask for a third of the standard rate. As a result, locals are forced to compete with the refugees for work and also, take up work at the same pay rate. Even when I myself was travelling towards the indigenous villages up in the hills, on my way I noticed many refugees working as day labourers in the plain land plots instead of the locals. This makes it exceedingly difficult for the locals (Muslims and indigenous community members) to sustain themselves with the money earnt through wage labour alone as their only source of income. Mongol Chakma remarked,

> “Rohingyas get financial support from NGOs. They don’t need to work outside. They have food. So, they work for a lot less. Before, we used to also go out to work as day labours and would earn around 300-400 BDT. Now, because of the Rohingya who work for even less like BDT 200, employers naturally go to them. But we cannot sustain our livelihoods at BDT 200.”

Apart from the loss of farming land and losing wage labour work to the refugees, a third dimension in regards to how the refugees have affected their livelihood has risen. This dimension arises from the social insecurity of having the Rohingya refugees near their farmlands and daily routes. Many fears being robbed on their way to the hills or at the hills where they farm and need to go in large groups as a result. Additionally, many Chakma farmers note how much of their produce is also at risk of being stolen since the Chakma community members fear going to the hillside farms later into the day and Rohingya refugees can come to take away their produce in the later times of the day. Patu Chakma added,

> “Before, we would go to farm in the hills. There used to be no problems. Like, we would go in the morning and check on our produce. There would be no stress over losing them or anxiety about our safety. Now we don’t get that. Now, if we go in the morning, we have to be back by 1 or 2 PM in the afternoon with our produce because they take everything. We are fearful of the refugees. So, we can’t even go alone, we need to go with 5-10 people. Before, we could go alone to farm in the forests. Now, if we want to farm and go even 2km farther into the forests we need large groups. Plus, we need to be back by 3 PM because we feel it is unsafe after that.”

Moreover, even when it comes to going to the marketplace to sell produce, many fear being robbed on their way as well, even during the daytime. As such, women cannot go to the marketplace alone either and have to go in teams.

3.3.2 Overall price hikes

Adding to the issue of reduction in income, is the drastic rise in prices of food items and produce since the creation of the camps. Before the camps, a certain number of vegetables and other produce would be sent to and made available in the market. After the influx, that number has stayed the same but there are more people buying them hence prices have gone up. And, on top of increased demand and competition over buying produce, many of the Rohingya refugees have family members abroad providing them with financial assistance and can afford to pay more money for goods. On the opposing end, the locals cannot afford to do the same. Thus, prices are gradually increasing but the locals are not earning enough anymore. Additionally, before, one *bigha* of land (around one-third of an acre) would cost around BDT 2000-2500 to rent for half a year in the plain lands. Now, it costs around BDT 6000-7000 and may even go as far as BDT 10,000. That said before most Chakma people did not need to opt for farming in the plain lands as they mostly conducted their farming in the hills, which are now mostly inaccessible to them for a combination of reasons as mentioned. Sona Chakma remarked,

> "We didn't need to pay rent when farming in the hills and the soils are better there. We are, after all, known as hilly area people. *Jhum* cultivation (shifting cultivation) has completely gone down since they came."

Hence, incomes have significantly been reduced, which, in conjunction with the massive price hikes and reduction in farming and subsistence opportunities, have led the local indigenous community members to be extremely financially insecure.

3.3.3 Additional costs incurred for schooling

Prior to the refugee influx of 2017, even in the communities where private NGO schools were not located inside the communities, parents felt safe sending their children alone to schools on foot. However, due to increasing congestion and social insecurity, parents now feel compelled to accompany their children and use public vehicles. The use of transportation itself is an additional expenditure for most Chakma families, and, given the overall 'double inflation' of prices in Teknaf, transportation costs are extremely difficult to sustain for the families, especially with their reduced incomes. Dola Chakma said,

> "Now, if we have to send our children to schools where they can learn in Bangla, then we have to send our kids 1 or 2 kilometres extra to schools in the town with our own money."

Boli also added,

> "Before we could at least go and walk to these schools but now, that is also not a possibility so we have to take 'tom toms' or 'easy bikes' which used to cost BDT 20-30. Now, it can even cost BDT 60-80 for one round trip as prices overall are higher now."

Furthermore, transportation costs are not the only additional expenditures. Schools are also more expensive in Whykong. NGO-based schools such as BRAC or Ananda would provide students with all the necessary materials such as stationery and books. They would also provide the children with snacks throughout the day such as biscuits. Sona Chakma stated,

> "Here (in Whykong schools) we have to buy copies for our kids, pens too, and now, we even have to provide them with some tiffin, which used to be provided for free in the NGO schools here. So, expenses have gone up a lot."

3.4 Ability to continue education

Given the changing landscape due to the addition of the refugees near their homes and the extra distance required to go to school from their already-remote villages, sending children to school has become very difficult. Children are also less motivated to go to school due to the extra distance required. Additionally, government schools lack the same quality and affordability which NGO-based schools had previously offered. The private NGO schools would cater to the children's needs very attentively and even appoint teachers from their own community. Hence, even if the curriculum was in Bangla, they could use their common language to explain the materials to the children more clearly and effectively. Unfortunately, in government schools, a language gap exists and teachers are neither bothered to nor are able to mitigate this issue. Thus, this also works as another reason for determining the reduction in interest to go. Moreover, families which have enough money can perhaps mitigate the extra food, transportation and stationeries costs but that is not the same for all families, therefore, as a result, dropout rates have increased since the creation of the refugee camps. Motoshi Chakma noted,

> "We obviously found the education given by the NGO schools here satisfactory. There have been many who studied with a focus in BRAC school till grade 5 and then could go as far ahead as college (Grade 10) and make something of themselves. And, for those who couldn't keep up academically, they, of course, dropped out and joined farming. Ever since the camps have come in and the schools have gone, the incentive to go to school I feel, has gone down specifically for the extra distance."

One point to note, however, is the matter of Covid-19 that has been prevalent since early-2020 in Bangladesh, whose effects have now carried over two years since the pandemic. The Covid-19 lockdown has meant children have had many days off from school, especially the first three months of lockdown when schools were closed all across the country

for three months at a stretch. Consequentially, the break from education has acted as a deterrent to education. The members of the Chakma community note that those who have had the financial capacity to hire private tutors could somewhat navigate the lack of flow in education for their children, but this was not a luxury most of them could afford mainly being farmers or wage labourers. When I inquired whether the Chakma families still want their children or siblings to attend school or if they would prefer not to take on this burden any longer, Mongol Chakma responded,

> "Most of us farm here in this village (**both** men and women) and many of us try to do work as day labourers as well, so that we can send our siblings to school. We don't have the capabilities to do much more but at least we want our younger siblings to have better so we are trying to send them to school."

This break in the flow of education coupled with the inability to finance education, has greatly diminished the education opportunities of the indigenous communities of Teknaf. Dola Chakma concludes,

> "Before (prior to the refugee influx and Covid) people have gone to college, and now, they are still working. Many even do NGO-based work in the camps now. Those who went to college used to go to Ukhiya. Even though it was far those who had that drive went. But, more importantly than drive, one needs financial means. Those who had that could go that far academically. And now that livelihood has decreased significantly, that minority number of people who did go to college back before camps existed, has gone down even more as they cannot afford it. Even if there is the motivation for people to go to college most cannot go now because of money problems. Going to college isn't an expense of BDT 1 or 2."

3.5 Mixed insights

Although the majority of my findings synthesised towards the same understanding that education has definitely become harder to continue following the refugee influx, my experience at Horikola at Whykong Union differed significantly. Given that I arrived at Horikola during mid-day I was unable to talk to the villagers with children or siblings of age who went to/goes to school. As such, I had to make due by talking to some of the younger villagers who were new parents at best and could not give me a clear idea about how sending children to school had been affected. Thankfully, I was accompanied by a local Chakma business man who had four daughters in school already, and, by the end of my visit, I was able to meet the village headman who also had daughters in school and could provide me with their insight.

Interestingly, my discussions with both the Chakma headman and my guide were ambiguous at best, as their inputs did not really align from what I had discovered so far both through my secondary research and my on-field research. Part of the reason may have been due to the BRAC primary school in their village which was still active. However, most of their "negative" answers such as the increased time needed to go to schools and increased costs for transportations were accompanied by highlighting the positive infrastructural and communication medium improvements such as the creation of roads near their village resulting in more vehicles on the roads etc. When asked regarding the difficulties faced for their community to send their children to school and sustain such a practice, the village headman stated,

> "Since we are so poor, us *adivasi* people, a lot is needed to go to schools, shirts, pants, shoes etc. Hence not all of us can go to school. Some go but not all, as we are such a poor and marginalised group. However, slowly there have been changes and the desire

to school is also there. But it takes time to go so sometimes the attendance is less for children from our community, but they still *do* want to go very much."

Hence, from the given findings, it is evident that due to the combination of factors such as increased distance, lack of mobility, the additional responsibility of accompanying children, decrease in financial capacities, following the creation of the refugee camps, and finally, covid-19, school attendance had greatly reduced and dropout rates also increased for the children of the indigenous Chakma communities of Teknaf. Although some responses delineated from my initial hypothesis, it can be possible other factors were involved which will be analysed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

The following dissertation has thus far tried to investigate the impacts of refugee crisis and camps on education for indigenous community members. The research so far indicates that since the creation of the refugee camps, attendance to schools for children have gone down, which, in tandem with the increasing difficulty to sustain livelihood practices, have made it more difficult to continue schooling and has even resulted in an increase in school dropout rates. In this section, I have started off my discussion analysing the ways career and employment opportunities have been reduced through the changes to schooling following the camps. Secondly, I have analysed the ways the division in labour within Chakma communities have been readjusted in order to negate the impacts of the camp (including sustaining education for their children). Finally, I end my discussion highlighting certain discrepancies in my findings and analysing how class hierarchy and power play a role in those discrepancies as they indicate who is actually negatively affected within Chakma communities.

4.1 Reduced scope in employment opportunities

From the findings we see that due to the combination of a multitude of factors i.e., decreased quality of education, lack of accessible NGO schools, mobility issues due to social insecurity and increased transportation costs, and increased expenditures that are hard to accommodate, school attendance has decreased while dropout rates have increased. The findings here align with other studies on education conducted across Bangladesh where we see dropouts result from a variety of interrelated problems (Ahmed et al., 2010). Similar to what we have seen in this study, poverty is the underlying cause for dropouts in Bangladesh, which is accompanied by only low-quality education being made available for the rural poor,

and, as a result parents prioritise utilising their children for household chores over sending them to schools resulting in dropouts as such low-quality education will not really help much with their future prospects (Ahmed, Rahman and Pal, 2010). In the same manner, studies conducted specifically on the education of indigenous children, presented in the literature review also showcase how the vulnerable livelihood options for the indigenous community members, alongside the additional difficulties they face, such as lack of geographical accessibility and language barrier which perpetuate the poor-quality of schooling, result in parents not prioritising their children's education (Barker et al., 2009; Chakma and Maitrot, 2016). As a result, children drop out of school and opt for jobs that their limited skill set and formal knowledge allows them i.e., domestic work and farming.

In fact, according to a study by Roy and Chakma (2015), it was shown that 85% of the indigenous people nationally were landless, where only 9% were literate and therefore, mostly took up work as sharecroppers (working on land owned by another party) or, as wage labourers. The preceding statistic works to showcase the narrow scope in prospects for indigenous community members due to their marginal status and limited access to resources. Analysing this situation through Sen's (2000) theory of social exclusion and poverty where, those who are poor and also socially marginalised lack the "capabilities to live a decent life," we can understand the possible importance of attaining education that is functional. Owing to their remote geographic locations and social exclusion, they already lack the external social relations which would aid them in gaining different employment opportunities, receiving credit etc. Initially when I visited, I looked at both local Bengali and indigenous host community members, even though both groups were affected adversely and in all the same ways, precisely because of their added social and cultural capital, it seemed as though the local Bengalis had slightly better coping mechanisms. For example, while all farmers indigenous or Bengali were affected, while the most viable alternate career choices for

indigenous farmers was wage labour work, for Bengalis, many were seen to have opened shops. This can be argued using Mowat's (2015) interpretation of Sen's capabilities approach, that is, individual's closer to a community's economic, social and political 'centre' thus have more 'functionings' or access to resources and commodities for their well-being. However, one important observation to point out here is the evident higher education level of the Bengalis who did own shops through the way they spoke and quickly understood the questions I had been asking. This example highlights the role of higher literacy and increased capabilities that lead to more potential employment opportunities. Ahmed and Williams (2008) also discuss how expansion of one's own human capital (skills, knowledge, experience etc.) allows them to improve their economic status. However, given the narrow scope of opportunities laid out for the indigenous community members, in my fieldwork there, it became apparent that once children dropped out from school, the only options left for them would be to do farming or wage labour, the only employment options available in their community. Some of my respondents noted how in the past before the camps, those who were able to hold on to their education and continue schooling and actually finish school, were able to go work in NGOs or schools outside their communities and in town. This indicates the correlation between educational attainment and upward career and social mobility for their community members, if not deprived of the opportunities and resources to attain their ideal 'functionings'. In this way, through further deprivation of education and schooling, the indigenous community members are also further marginalised in terms of employment opportunities which restricts their capacity for development.

Another facet of the employment equation and the role offering education to the community plays, comes indirectly. Given the geographical marginalisation of indigenous communities where they are contained in remote hilly areas, making coming down and going to town a very difficult endeavour, schooling in general is something that is not

enthusiastically taken up by them always. To mitigate this issue, we see that many NGOs build schools within their communities to enhance the uptake of school-going children. To further enhance the experience of school-going children, we see that such NGO-based schools also hire teachers from within the community to help negate any communication barriers between the teachers and students. Thus, such NGO schools have resulted in opening doors to another employment opportunity and source of revenue within these Chakma communities, through hiring such 'assistant teachers'. Once the refugee camps came in however, given that priority fell upon the refugee crisis (for all stakeholders, government and NGOs), these NGO schools along with their teachers and employment opportunities, left the community. The community teachers who would assist in these schools, although had substantial education (up until a few grades in school), compared to others in their community, did not have the right qualifications to go along with the NGO schools and teach within the camps. Their limited skills allowed them to communicate with the Chakma children in their native tongues and assist comprehension of their lessons, but inside the camps the language itself being taught in schools is different and their skill had no use, leaving them to be unemployed. This again showcases the limited access to resources such marginalised groups are offered and even when they *do* have access to resources, this access is limited and is contingent on how long donor groups or other bureaucratic bodies desire to share their resources, as we have seen through the existing academic literature. As such, indigenous communities do not really have a steady flow of resources supporting their community's development constantly, making the limited access they do gain extremely valuable.

Given that opportunities within the community are limited to day labour work or farming, once such NGO schools would move away, these teachers then have to opt to go down the employment ladder and back to such work. Moreover, the loss of their jobs and

then subsequent time off of such vocational work also leaves time for them to "unlearn by not doing," according to Sen (2000). This may further leave them at a disadvantage if/when such opportunities come again. With that said, this example re-highlights the necessity of having such skills which would in turn open up opportunities to access more resources. As we can see, given their socially marginalised position, opportunities rarely open up within their communities, unless there is some form of *external* intervention, such as with the NGO schools, which created new opportunities. Rarely are career or employment opportunities beyond labour or farming created for such socially marginalised groups, and as such, the loss of the NGO schools and its network to the camp also reduced the limited scope to build social capital that some of the community members had while teaching within these schools.

Additionally, unemployment itself can further exclude community members from accessing resources and result in unequal inclusion and exploitative occupations (Sen, 2000). This is evident in the Chakma villages as their only options for livelihood have now reduced to day labour work and farming, and they are not being paid the same amount for their wage labour anymore either as land owners can hire refugees now for much cheaper. And, knowing that they have the option to hire refugee as labour and that the fact that the Chakma community members are in dire need of money, the Chakma community members do not have the necessary bargaining power to demand a fairer wage.

In this way, we see that both through the increase in school dropout rates, and loss of NGO schools and the employment they offered, both school-going children who do not attend school anymore and former NGO school assistant teachers, are left behind with limited employment opportunities and are forced to go into the minimally paying livelihood options within their community, which do not offer any opportunity of career mobility or capacity development. Therefore, the effect essentially falls both on students and teachers, where, for students it is the education and for the assisting teachers, it is their jobs.

4.2 Reshuffled division of labour to cope with the challenges

Given the impediments to attaining education following the creation of the camps and the (implied) increase in social insecurity, we see that many Chakma families now feel uncomfortable sending their children alone to school, if there is a chance of contact with the refugees. Even in Sukna Amtole where they stated they did not have such an issue and the increased distance to schooling was their main problem, they all heavily implied that the sole reason for that is the route their children take to school does not fall under refugee territory. Additionally, beyond reasons pertaining to social cohesion, many families pointed out that since in many cases walking to school is impossible now, and taking transportation is an absolute necessity, some parents feel compelled to accompany their children for road safety precautions. As a consequence, for one reason or another, a majority of parents are seen to accompany their children to school now, compared to before.

In Chakma communities, most of the productive work is traditionally done by women who are the primary breadwinners. This is also true for the Chakma villages I visited where it was the women who were engaged in farming and subsistence practices mostly. Nonetheless, the traditional roles of domestic chores and child rearing still fell upon them as they are still subjected to the textbook patriarchal norms. Accordingly, the newly added responsibility of taking the children to school had also fallen upon the women mainly within these communities. This ends up taking away significant time from productive work. From my interlocutors, I understood going to school ranges from 20-40 minutes on average, and if parents accompanied their children that may mean an average of 40-80 minutes per trip for them (and a total of 80-120 minutes lost in accompanying their children per day). Being away for extra time thus may take a toll on their productivity which is even more so important following the creation of camps, and narrowed down income prospects, as it is now even

more important for them to work more and earn to maintain their previous livelihood or earn more to combat the increased costs (which, of course, they are unable to).

Interestingly, while in both Horikola and Putibunya, I noticed the men of the village to take a 'hands-off' approach in the production process, while the women did as much of it as they could while taking in the added burden, in Sukna Amtole the situation was actually different. All of my interlocutors were men who were also actively taking part in the production process. Additionally, as shown in my results, they heavily implied that even though most of them could not attain proper schooling and financially, times were much harder for them, they were trying their best to accommodate for the education of their children or younger siblings. This indicated and implied that in order to mitigate some of the adverse effects on livelihood and still try to sustain schooling practices despite increased costs, readjustments may have been made in their division of labour which now includes men actively working.

As already mentioned, the inability to receive credit or aid itself is also a capability deprivation which may impede attaining a quality life (Sen, 2000). Hence, given the exclusion of such groups due to their social and spatial marginalisation, resulting in limited access to resources and external human relations, the coping strategies which remain for such communities seem to be internal, and this reshuffling of their formerly heavily gendered division of labour may be such a strategy. Given the established patterns of labour division where men have almost always taken a laid-back approach to work, this new strategy itself may work to indicate the extent of their financial crisis and also, their economic and social marginalisation which had led to such a drastic adaptation to cope and continue availing such opportunities for the children of their community. Yet, despite such mitigation strategies, it is evident that the community is still struggling to make ends meet, showcasing the importance

of accessibility to external resources in times of crisis, something they are almost completely excluded from.

4.3 Not everyone is negatively affected

In conducting my study, my discussions with the male headman and Chakma businessman from Horikola put off some of my findings as their insights did not align with my discussions with other Chakma community members. Additionally, they seemed a bit too unwilling to disclose any negative insight regarding the influx of the refugees and creation of the camps. Through closer observation and inspection of their way of approaching my questions, it became evident that these two respondents specifically were much better off compared to the rest of the Chakma community members. Their attires also indicated that they had the monetary capability to buy nicer clothing. Moreover, unlike the rest of the interviews that I conducted, I did not need to use an interpreter when communicating with them, as they were quick to understand what I had asked. Both these factors seemed to indicate that they occupied a higher socio-economic class compared to the rest of their village. Hence, through this insight we may come to see that class also plays a role in the intensity of impacts felt. This is of course, understandable as a higher-class position automatically assumes access to more economic resources which can in theory mitigate the effects of an economic crisis more easily.

However, class alone does not account for both their unwillingness to give any negative insights on the camps. From situational observation, it seemed probable that they may have in fact been benefitting in some way either economically or politically from the placement of the camps. This is interesting as this shows that not all Chakma/indigenous community members may be negatively impacted and further feel the impacts of their social and geographical exclusion through lack of access to many resources, but the opposite is also

possible. Although most literature seems to frame indigenous communities to be homogeneously excluded from access to resources or marginalised socially, this aspect of my fieldwork showcases that such homogeneity does not actually exist in such communities, not completely at least. In most literature we see that lack of access to any political power deprives indigenous community members from valuable resources. In that regard, class position and access to political power is of utmost importance. Nonetheless, in homogenising indigenous community members as one socially excluded entity, studies do not highlight the fact that when certain individuals *do* have access to power, their relative marginalisation may actually be significantly less and certain opportunities may be open to them despite their ethnic identity.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

While poor schooling and high dropout rates are a common reality for the majority of Bangladesh's lower socio-economic classes, this dissertation has chosen to look into the state of accessing education for *adivasis* from Teknaf for a few specific reasons. Firstly, accessing education has always been an issue for the indigenous populations of Bangladesh, owing to their remote geographical locations, language barrier within schools, delimiting quality education and their impoverished status that results in them giving less priority to their formal schooling. Secondly, although all of the host community members have been drastically impacted due to the influx of the refugees, which includes their ability to access education for their children due to mobility issues, the issue with its local indigenous population is slightly more nuanced, as they already had trouble continuing and accessing proper education due to their geographical exclusion. As such, given these two factors combined this research explored whether an already-marginalised community faces further exclusion from attaining access to resources such as schooling due to an external phenomenon, such as the Rohingya crisis, beyond the pre-existent internal impediments.

As academic literature regarding issues pertaining to the Rohingya crisis is limited, given the dynamic situation of the crisis and the little that does exist is from a refugee-centric point of view rather than from the lens of the host community, my literature review has focused exclusively on the background status of indigenous people and their rights internationally and nationally and the status of their education in Bangladesh to outline their overall circumstances and position. My dissertation chose to draw from the background section to compare with the situation of ethnic communities in Teknaf and see whether their marginal status is similar or dissimilar to academic literature, as most if not all of it was exclusively based on the CHTs and there is not enough data on other parts of Bangladesh.

Similar to the literature, through my results, it was evident that the spatial and social exclusion of such communities, language barriers in regular schools and their poor livelihood options and lack of enough capital to continue education made it already difficult for such communities to sustain schooling as much, compared to other Bengalis. As a result, some ethnic communities had received aid from NGOs, where certain NGO primary schools were implanted in different communities to mitigate the issues of accessing. However, following the Rohingya crisis and vested international interest on the refugees, both government and NGO attention and resources shifted focus onto the refugees– this also aligns with the literature which indicated a lack of priority given to indigenous communities (however, in this regard it is important to note again that both Bengali and indigenous populations lacked priority in the wake of the Rohingya crisis).

Following the crisis, the overall hardships of the indigenous communities have increased which has made sustaining their livelihoods and subsequently, schooling very difficult. As a result, my study showed that dropout levels have increased since the creation of the Rohingya camps. This poses as an issue of concern for a few reasons, especially given that it deprives valuable training and attainment of skills for the indigenous community members, which they could then utilise to expand their occupational options and therefore, increase their social and cultural capital. Moreover, NGO schools within communities had previously offered this advantage to the community members as they opened doors to an extra employment opportunity for them, which too has been lost. This loss of occupation opportunities is concerning as the only options available include exploitative wage labour where they are paid far less now.

Hence, in the following ways, this dissertation has tried to address its research problem and see how the indigenous population of Teknaf has been affected due to the Rohingya crisis in terms of schooling as well as how they have dealt with the issues that have

resulted from the creation of the camps. Furthermore, this study has also analysed the connection between livelihood and education and seen they have an extremely symbiotic relationship where, the lack of livelihood limits education opportunities and lack of education limits livelihood opportunities. Finally, I have also tried to connect my findings and also analyse the ways in which lack of education affects the development capacities of such communities using the framework of Amartya Sen (2000) and his concepts of social exclusion and capabilities deprivation to showcase the importance of functional education as a resource and other resources connected to it that opens up options and opportunities for individuals and communities to expand their networks– which has unfortunately decreased in the case of the Chakma communities in Teknaf.

5.1 Summary of Findings and Discussion

The data retrieved for this study indicates that following the refugee influx, problems such as the loss of in-community schools, increasingly constricted mobility, need to use transportation (along with increased transportation costs), concern for social safety and security and price hikes have become issues for the indigenous communities near camps. The combination of these problems along with reduced livelihood opportunities has had an impact in the continuation of education for the indigenous children. As a result, school attendance has gone down, and dropout rates have increased.

Furthermore, this dissertation also discovered an interesting coping strategy within the communities given their lack of existing social connections beyond the boundaries of their village, wherein they had to restructure their gendered division of labour which previously had the women doing majority of the work to include men. As parental obligations have increased due to the need to accompany children to school, as well as an increased pressure to earn livelihood as their earnings have significantly shrunk, men have been forced to also

actively aid in productive work to sustain themselves and the education of their children. This finding also illuminates the intensity of their hardship and lack thereof any external coping mechanism, as they had to alter an integral practise of their community to accommodate for more trying times.

However, with all that said, this dissertation also acknowledges certain caveats and negative results. Although most literature highlights the marginal status of entire communities, my findings showed how not all members are equally affected and power dichotomies actually state how and to what extent certain members felt the effect, where, Chakma headmen and more economically well-off business men actually possibly profited from the crisis and did not face the negative effects the same way the rest of their community did. This enables us to rethink the overall homogenising way literature generally describes indigenous communities, as it is evident it is a lot more nuanced in many ways, and different levels of class does exist in-community which responds to their external environment differently as well.

5.2 Recommendations

After close analysis of the research data, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- The creation of jobs for indigenous community members as teaching aids in local schools for its indigenous students. This will mitigate the issue of job loss as well as ensure indigenous children are able to comprehend their curriculum properly.
- Creating after-school learning programmes for students who may need help understanding the course materials– this can help indigenous children get a better comprehension in case there are any gaps in learning.
- The development of a subsidised peer-transportation system, where groups of school-going children can be accompanied together by a single guardian. This can

ensure the safety of the children as well as reduce the number of parents needed to accompany them.

- Donor funding to extend its focus onto the indigenous communities as well and create community schools in villages next to the refugee camps whose members may have more difficulty accessing education outside of their community.

5.3 Limitations

The limitations of this dissertation have been stated below:

- From the very beginning of my research work, a common difficulty has been the paucity of secondary data. Background data on indigenous populations of Bangladesh exclusively is itself limited. Additionally, given the nature of the refugee crisis, secondary data on the effects on the host community of the camps are limited to small mentions in NGO reports and there is not any specific academic literature on it, especially not ones which focus on indigenous populations alone. This made constructing a background quite difficult.
- One of my biggest challenges in this research work has been during my proper fieldwork for this dissertation where, I had to completely change my dissertation topic on-spot and had to spontaneously think of new questions to ask specifically around education, which I did not prepare or plan for in advance. This not only limited my number of findings and given a number of constraints I was unable to overall go in-depth into the issue as much as I would have liked to, but it also added a significant amount of mental duress as this was my first time facing such critical issues as a proper researcher.
- Additionally, another reason it was hard for me to go in-depth following my newly-developed dissertation topic, was the extensive pre-planning required to do

fieldwork in Teknaf. Given the critical nature of the surroundings there, owing to the camps and the various safety and accessibility issues that entailed, I could not access areas around or within the camps without the help of my journalist guides or the NGO development workers from Teknaf and their stickered vehicles as it would otherwise raise many questions what I was doing there. As such, a significant amount of planning was involved every time I went to a different community in advance. Moreover, travel in Teknaf is extremely difficult due to the long distances from one camp to another and the terrible road conditions, making one visit a very time-consuming event. Hence, due to these factors combined, and the added difficulty of scouting indigenous communities near the camps, I could not simply decide to go to more communities once my research topic changed as it required the guidance of a few working professionals and their valuable time, prior notification to the communities and overall pre-planning.

- Another on-field difficulty which became apparent during my fieldwork was the communication gap due to my interlocutors' preferred languages. Given the nature of my questions, a lot of the times, even with the mediation of my interpreter, the questions seemed a bit too complex for my interlocutors and I had to learn along the way to break up my questions and then ask. Moreover, given the extreme conditions the communities had been facing in terms of effects on livelihood and how a lot of their livelihood practices had been interrupted by the refugees, regardless of my questions pertaining to education, most of my respondents kept returning to the same livelihood issue to stress how much harder it has been for them financially.
- Finally, the biggest limitation within this dissertation for all of the reasons mentioned above combined, has to be time. Three months on a dissertation is not nearly enough time to expand too much on a topic and, given my need to re-adapt my topic, the

critical nature of my research area, and all other limitations I had to deal with, time became even more so crucial for me which I did not have enough on to properly elaborate and expand on my study to come to a desirable conclusion.

5.4 Further Research

As my research interest was on education and the social effects and circumstances surrounding the education of the indigenous communities near the Rohingya camps, I was also unable to dive any deeper into the new insight that had emerged due to timing and other accessibility constraints. This new result which I had discovered is how not all indigenous community members are affected equally and class is an important factor that studies have generally overlooked when discussing marginalisation. Therefore, this point may be further explored in future research to see how class and access to (some) political power result into differing extents of an individual's marginal status in indigenous communities— what kinds of resources can higher class positions within indigenous communities' access, and in which ways they may still face certain social exclusion. Additionally, this newly discovered dimension can also be used to explore how class position can shape to what extent an individual is affected due to the refugee crisis, and how it may shape their perception about it accordingly.

Furthermore, class and social cohesion with the refugees may also be an interesting facet to study further. Due to my limitations, even though my respondents heavily hinted at certain issues pertaining to social cohesion, I was unable to research extensively on the issues surrounding this matter. Hence, social cohesion can be studied alongside class to contrast with findings pertaining to class to draw a complete and overall picture of the relationship between indigenous community members and the refugees from different levels within the community.

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Appendix 1

Consent form

অংশগ্রহনকারীর সম্মতি পত্রঃ

গবেষণা প্রকল্পের শিরোনামঃ রোহিঙ্গা ক্যাম্প সম্পর্কে ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় অ্যানথ্রপোলজি বিভাগের থিসিস।

উদ্দেশ্যঃ ক্যাম্পে আশ্রয় নেয়া লক্ষ লক্ষ রোহিঙ্গা জনগোষ্ঠীর জন্য দেখা দিয়েছে প্রচণ্ড যানজট। যাতায়েত ব্যবস্থা ভেঙ্গে পড়ায়- স্থানীয় আদিবাসী শিশুদের লেখা পড়া হুমকীর মুখে পড়েছে। এছাড়া, একদিকে যেমন স্কুলে যাওয়া শিশুদের জন্য কঠিন হয়ে পড়েছে, অন্যদিকে স্বাস্থ্য সেবা পেতেও নানান সমস্যায় পড়ছে তারা।

গবেষণা সংস্থা ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় :

সম্মতিনামাঃ

আমি নিশ্চিত যে, আমি এই গবেষণা প্রকল্পে অংশ নিতে স্বাধীরভাবে সম্মত হয়েছি। এর সাথে কী জড়িত তা আমাকে জানানো হয়েছে, এবং প্রশ্ন করার সুযোগও পেয়েছি। আমি বুঝতে পারি যে আমার কথপোকথন রেকর্ড করা যেতে পারে এবং আমি আমার দেয়া তথ্য এই গবেষণা প্রকল্পে ব্যবহার করতে সম্মত। আমি বুঝি যে আমার অংশগ্রহণ স্বেচ্ছাসেবী এবং আমি কোনো কারণ এবং খরচ ছাড়াই যে কোনো সময়ে প্রত্যাহার করতে স্বাধীন। আমি বুঝতে পেরেছি যে - আমি যে তথ্য প্রদান করছি তা গোপন থাকবে। যতক্ষণ আমার তথ্য সর্তকতার সাথে বেনামী করা হবে, আমি আমার অনুমতি দিচ্ছি গবেষণার জন্য আমার তথ্র ব্যবহার করার। আমি স্বেচ্ছায় এই গবেষণায় অংশ নিতে সম্মত।

অংশগ্রহনকারীর স্বাক্ষর গবেষকের স্বাক্ষর

Appendix 2

Questionnaire (KIIs)

First KII

- What is the general situation surrounding the Rohingya refugee camps?
- What are the issues the locals are facing? Is there an impact on their livelihood?
- Are they having to relocate due to the camps?
- Are there any issues of social cohesion?
- Are the indigenous communities also affected due to the camps?If so, how?
- Which indigenous communities of Tekanf are affected specifically due to the camps?

Second KII

- Could you describe how the NGO schools functioned and how their curriculum differs from local schools in Whykong?
- Did such schools help increase attendance of Chakma students to school?
- What was the function of the teachers hired from within the Chakma communities in these schools?
- Did hiring such teachers create employment for the community?
- Did the existence of such teachers encourage the Chakma children to attend school more?
- Were these teachers mostly male or female?
- Did they create any difference for the attendance of girls to these schools?
- Where are these assistant teachers now that the NGO schools have moved away?

Appendix 3

Questionnaire (FGDs)

- Do you face any issues due to the refugee camps?
- If so, what kinds of issues?
- Do you face any issues travelling outside of your community to the market or to schools due to the increased traffic and congestion?
- Has there been any changes to the school-going practices of the children here following the creation of the camps?
- What factors would you say dissuades the children from going to school?
- What are the biggest issues with the system of education in the local schools of Whykong?
- How do the local schools compare to NGO schools present in some communities?
- Can you send your children to schools within the camps?
- Would you say children want to go to school less now? If so, why do you think that is?
- Has sustaining education become more difficult now?
- Is it common for children in your community to pursue secondary or tertiary education?
- What do children who drop out do?

Appendix 4

Photos from Fieldwork

FGD inside a shop at *Sukna Amtole*

With my FGD respondents at *Sukna Amtole*

FGD conducted at *Putibunya*

Village headman of *Horikola*

BRAC School at *Horikola*

View of a refugee camp from the outside