

## **THE ROHINGYA SURVIVAL CRISIS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REFUGEE-HOST MARRIAGE IN BANGLADESH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper seeks to shed light on interethnic marriage, a survival strategy employed by the Rohingya who fled Myanmar for their lives and sought refuge in Bangladesh for decades. Considering the paucity of research on the citizenship and integration of the Rohingya, it offers an insight into how 'stateless' Rohingya refugees attempt to survive in the host country by engaging in interethnic marriage. The major research question of the study is: How effective is interethnic marriage in the survival of Rohingyas in Bangladesh? It examines the strategies, causes, and consequences of the establishment of marital relationships between Rohingyas and the host communities, drawing on empirical research conducted between 2018 and 2021 in various refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. Migration, marriage, citizenship, survival, integration, and sexuality were considered key concepts in the data collection and analysis of this study. The empirics of the study reveal that in the absence of adequate food, shelter, and security in refugee camps, Rohingya women try to manage their survival by marrying Bangladeshi men with the hope of obtaining citizenship and other basic rights. In the absence of adequate food, shelter, and security in refugee camps, Rohingya women attempt to ensure their survival by marrying Bangladeshi men in the hopes of obtaining citizenship and other basic rights, as revealed by the study's empirical findings. Although such interethnic marriages are 'illegal' and often include polygamy, child marriage, or abandonment, both parties see potential benefits in such unions. However, intermarriage hasn't been as beneficial to the Rohingya's survival as it could have been.

**Keywords:** Rohingya refugee, Myanmar, Bangladesh, forced migration, citizenship

### **Authors biography:**

I am a professor of anthropology at the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh. I extensively researched the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts. My primary research focused on the survival strategies of these indigenous peoples. My research interests span the Rohingya refugee crisis, social gerontology, religious pluralism, urban poor, health and culture, migration and diaspora, overseas migration of female workers, and forest management. I co-authored a Bengali book titled, *Theoretical Anthropology*, and authored several articles published in national and international peer-reviewed journals such as *Ethnopolitics*, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *Development in Practice*, *Social Anthropology*, *Asian Ethnicity*. In 2014, I was a Fulbright scholar in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of

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The Meaning of Marriage to the Rohingya Refugees and their Survival in Bangladesh. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(2), 2036–2051. DOI: 10.1093/jrs/feaa054