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## Impact of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) Influx on Host Community

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## List of Acronyms

ASC	Advocacy for Social Change
BISIC	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
FDMN	Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HCMP	Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme
HH	Household
IDI	In-depth interview
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PSU	Partnership Strengthening Unit
RED	Research and Evaluation Division
TR	Test Relief
UP	<i>Union Parishad</i>
VGF	Vulnerable group feeding

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## Abstract

The Rohingya refugee crisis is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, it has been a contentious issue that has strained Myanmar-Bangladesh relations since the late 1970s. On the recent time after 25 August 2017, the crisis became a big concern, the huge influx of FDMN have fled violence and human rights violations. The latest influx has increased the number of Rohingya population living in the camps of Cox's Bazar from one million to three million. This incident has made the situation fastest growing 'refugee' crisis in the world with the highest concentration. Moreover, poverty prone local host areas have been largely affected by the Rohingya crisis. This study intended to recognise the impact of the crisis on the daily life of local host community people. In this study FDMN-makeshift, adjacent host community was in focus for realising the severity of the impact. Apart from the host community perception, the present situation of FDMN community was also taken into consideration due to capture a holistic notion of the impact that was created by the new arrivals. A qualitative driven mixed-methods approach was adopted to investigate the situation. The study showed that the influx created multi-dimensional impacts on the socioeconomic, socio-cultural and political aspect of daily life of the host community people. There were huge negative impacts of the influx on the local environment and agricultural operations. The insight of the findings give us a vivid understanding about the context of the humanitarian crisis (FDMN influx) and its impact on the host community. The findings of the study not only help to realise the severity of the FDMN crisis but also urge to take some programmatic initiatives targeting both host and FDMN communities.

# 1. Introduction

Historically a Muslim population has been living in *Rakhine* state of western Myanmar. This Muslim population of *Rakhine* state claim themselves as Rohingya Muslim. This Muslim population has been suffering a different level of discrimination (e.g., legal, social, political, economic etc.) for decades in Myanmar. There is also a long-term tension between the mainstream Buddhist Rakhine community and Rohingya Muslim community. In 1982, the Myanmar military junta did not list the Rohingya as one of the 135 'national races' of Myanmar. The Citizenship Act Of 1982, codified the legal exclusion of the Rohingya, and the human rights and humanitarian condition of the Rohingya was further exasperated (Abdelkader, 2013). As an aftermath, the Rohingya population has become stateless in their historical homeland as well as fallen into an identity crisis. The Rohingya are the single largest 'stateless' community in the world. Their "statelessness" or lack of citizenship increases their vulnerability because they are not entitled to any legal protection from the government (Abdelkader 2017). This Citizenship Law stripped the Rohingya community and legitimised to impose restrictions in their day-to-day life: banned from travelling without authorisation and prohibited from working outside their villages, they cannot marry without permission and, due to movement restrictions; they lack sufficient access to livelihood opportunities, medical care and education (ECHO 2018). The Rohingya refugee crisis is a contentious issue that has strained Myanmar-Bangladesh relations since the late 1970s. The Rohingya crisis emanated from the military junta's widespread violations of human rights in Myanmar against the Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine. Rendered stateless, the Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries to take refuge. Years of negotiation have failed to resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis (Parnini *et al.*, 2013). Ethnic tension had flared up in Myanmar in recent years, while Rakhine state is being most severely affected. The Rohingya population had been persecuted for years, and the crisis had sent a mass exodus into neighbouring Bangladesh for a number of years, pouring over the border areas. In the August 2017, violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State triggered a new massive influx of Rohingya refugees crossing their border to Bangladesh, stretching the capacities of humanitarian agencies operating there, which had already been strained since the previous influx in October 2016. The latest influx has increased the number of Rohingya population living in the camps in Cox's Bazar to nearly one million compared to approximately 300,000 prior to the event (ECHO 2018). New arrivals join existing Rohingya populations who had crossed from Myanmar into Bangladesh in previous months and years and had already settled informal refugee camps and makeshift settlements. These sites were expanding with the new influx, while new spontaneous settlements had also formed and been quickly growing. After 25 August 2017, a huge influx of FDMN has fled violence and human rights violations. Massive new arrivals have made the situation fastest-growing refugee crisis in the world, as well as the concentration of refugees in Cox's Bazar is also the biggest one. Moreover, poverty prone local host areas have been largely impacted by the refugee crisis (WFP 2017). Likewise, it was again reflected through qualitative investigation of this study; host community was oppressed in different aspects of their daily life mainly on a socioeconomic, socio-cultural and political aspect of life. There were huge negative impacts of the influx on local environment and agriculture as well. Available most of the literature were focused on FDMN struggle and their need, but there was a paucity of literature on host locality and how the local host community people have been facing a different level of problems due to the recent huge influx of FDMN. This study was initiated with an intention to contribute some insights and knowledge in this gap.



## 1.1 Objective

The objective of the study was to capture the impact of FDMN influx on local economy, socio-culture and environment. This study intended to go through the recent impact of the influx on host community in *Ukhia* and *Teknaf* sub-district (*Upazila*). In this study FDMN-makeshift, adjacent host community was in focus for realising the intensity of the impact. Apart from the host community perception, the present situation of FDMN community was also taken into consideration due to capture a holistic notion of the impact that was created by the new arrivals.

## 2. Methodology

This study adopted qualitative driven mixed methods approach. Mixed methods research is formally defined here as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). It has been acknowledged over time that mixed method provides an inclusive framework to avoid information biases by triangulation and generate comprehensive knowledge on evidence (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998). Adopting '*concurrent procedure*' qualitative and quantitative data collection was carried out. The qualitative method tried to capture the host community perception regarding the impact of the influx through an intensive qualitative investigation using different research tools. Besides the host community people, FDMNs were also taken under the exploration from the stand of a holistic approach. Since it was a qualitative driven mixed methods study, qualitative data has been collected from different types of respondents and continued up to data saturation level. On the other hand in the quantitative part, a small structured questionnaire (which was developed during the qualitative fieldwork) survey was conducted among 89 host community households and gained some numeric data. In this study, quantitative data supplemented and gave some numeric impression to realise the context as well. This quantitative sample size cannot give any statistically sound result, but it may provide numeric notion that is important to realise how the host community people notice the impact of FDMN influx on their economic aspect of daily life. As we know most of the makeshift camps of the new arrivals were situated in *Ukhia Upazila*, so all the households of the host community were taken from this *Upazila* for conducting the survey. Considering the geographical distance from makeshift camps we had defined two groups of households among the 89 households which participated in the questionnaire survey, one was hosting HH<sup>1</sup>s those situated less than 5 km far from the makeshift camps, and another was non-hosting HHs which situated more than 5 km far away from makeshift camps. In total there were 55 host-HHs and 39 non-host HHs. Impact on the price of daily commodities tried to understand by comparing host HHs with non-host HHs.

### 2.1 Study area

In this study, highly affected two *Upazilas* (*Ukhia* and *Teknaf*) of Cox's Bazar were selected purposively for getting insights about the impact of FDMN influx on host community as well as on host locality. Mainly most of the FDMNs' makeshift camps were settled in four unions of these two *Upazilas*. These four unions were *Rajapalong* and *Palongkhali* from *Ukhia Upazila* and *Hnila* and *Whykhoang* from *Teknaf Upazila*. Since the settlements on the makeshifts were very spontaneous, many villages became surrounded by the makeshift camp settlement and some were very close to the makeshifts. This study kept attention on those host villages which were severely affected by the new arrivals. Especially adjacent villages of the main three makeshift camps (*Kutupalong*, *Balukhali*, *Tajminarkhola*) of *Ukhia Upazila* and in the same way villages close to the three main makeshift camps (*Ledapara*, *Nayapara* and *Unchiprang*) of *Teknaf Upazila* were selected as the field of data collection.

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<sup>1</sup> HH- household

## 2.2 Study period

Fieldwork of this study was conducted from 11 November to 20 November 2017. It was about two weeks long intensive fieldwork. Two researchers themselves conducted entire qualitative fieldwork. Apart from this two volunteers were worked on quantitative data collection.

## 2.3 Respondent selection and data collection tools

In-depth interview (s) (IDIs), Key Informant Interview (s) (KIIs), Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), and field observation along with informal discussion were used in qualitative data collection. A diverse group of respondents from both host and FDMN community were selected for conducting the different research tools with an intention of getting a comprehensive scenario. All qualitative data collection tools were being collected until it came to a saturation level.

## 2.4 Matrix of research tools

Name of tool	Number of uses	Number of Respondents
In-depth Interview (IDI)	45	45
Key Informant Interview (KII)	9	9
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	6	60*
Informal group discussion	10	10
Structure questionnaire survey (quantitative)	89	89
Observation	Researchers made a comprehensive observation on different issues while they were conducting fieldwork. Researchers also stayed on the spot entire tenure of the fieldwork.	

\*In an average 10 respondents participated in a FGD

## 2.5 Diversity of respondents from both host and FDMN community

Group	Host Community	FDMN (old and new)
Army Personnel	✓	
BGB Personnel	✓	
Blacksmith	✓	✓
Day labourer	✓	✓
Farmer	✓	✓
Firewood collector	✓	✓
Fishermen	✓	✓
Govt. officials	✓	
Housewives	✓	✓
Journalist	✓	
<i>Majhi</i> (Rohingya Representative)		✓
NGO worker	✓	✓
Police personnel	✓	
Political leader	✓	
Small Business Holders	✓	✓
Teachers	✓	✓
Transport Business holders	✓	
Transport worker	✓	
Union Parishad Member	✓	
Vulnerable FDMN women		✓

## **2.6 Data triangulation**

Data was triangulated and crosschecked in both point of views inter tools, inter respondents and inter methods. Upholding the norms of inter methods triangulation qualitative data was triangulated with the numeric data. Qualitative data got some strength from a quantitative impression as well as become worthy to investigate the context and process of the impacts.

## **2.7 Data analysis and interpretation**

Electronically recorded data was transcribed first. Then the data was coded and after completing the coding data was arranged under theme and sub-theme. Grounded theory approach was used in data analysis and interpretation. In grounded theory approach researcher attempt to derive a general, abstract theory of process, action or interaction grounded in views of participants in a study. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (Strauss 1998).

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Economic Aspects of the host community

##### 3.1.1 Increasing living expenses

From both FGDs and KIIs, it emerged that prices of necessary daily goods increased after the FDMN influx because there was a high demand for these commodities in the local market. During the time of the fieldwork, they noticed that the price of vegetables, fish, chicken etc., were much higher. They assumed, the prices of the daily food commodities increased almost double from the normal time, as a result, their living expenses also increased highly. Besides the price hike of the daily commodity, they also identified some other expenses increased by the influx and for which their household expenditure was expanded. They especially emphasised on two costs- firewood and transportation.



**The scarcity of firewood** in the host community was a concern in this regard they narrated that usually, they did not need to buy firewood from the market much. They could collect their firewood from the neighbouring forest. They relied on the market for firewood only in rainy season, and that was highest for one or two months across the year, and even the price of firewood was also low. However, after the arrival of FDMN, neighbouring forest already had been completely ruined. Consequently, they not only lost merely the

source of firewood but also faced environmental damage. Then they were fully dependent on fuel market where a huge demand for firewood existed carrying with obvious scarcity in the supply chain. Moreover, logically the price of firewood was high too. Respondents also noticed that many of them had already bound to shift from conventional uses of firewood to an alternative fuel, like a gas cylinder and which was hard to afford. In this circumstance, host community households were bound to bear additional expense.



**Transport or commuting cost** has been also increased along with vehicle scarcity and sufferings of a traffic jam. They informed that their children could not go to the school normally they needed to pay more transport fair, they had to wait a long time for getting a little space into the overcrowded vehicles. Moreover, the accidental incidents have been increased in the roads. The overall usual mobility of them has been interrupted in many ways. For the rise of commuting expenses, they also faced loss in their income too. So, there were both obvious and dubious expenses, and they had to pay an additional budget for commutation.

During a FGD with housewives in the host community, a woman said, *'Now, each and every commodity is costly. Sometimes price of rice, pulses and oil remains little low only when the Rohingyas come to sell their relief in the village. They do not come regularly because there is a restriction on selling relief. But in the market, everything is in high price. Transport cost already has been increased, and even the Rohingya women have started to wear local dresses, prices of dress and clothes have also increased'*.

Quantitative data also give same impressions which make the impact more visible. This numeric impression would afford to take into light the mood of price hike of daily commodities in the local market (Table 1).

**Table 1. Change in expenditure of daily commodities after the FDMN influx**

Head of expenditure	Non-host community		Host community		Change of expenditure (Non-host community) (BDT)	Change of expenditure (Host community) (BDT)
	Before (BDT)	After (BDT)	Before (BDT)	After (BDT)		
	three days average expenditure/ HH					
Rice	240.32	262.06	153.93	145.34	21.74	-8.59
Dal/ Pulse	63.79	68.18	53.06	42.90	4.39	-10.16
Fish	349.56	442.35	212.04	280.74	92.79	68.70
Meat	379.35	432.90	414.49	487.35	53.55	72.86
Milk	157.00	162.00	191.86	178.72	5.00	-13.14
Egg	55.74	62.06	53.06	61.04	6.32	7.98
Vegetable	78.24	104.85	91.67	101.11	26.62	9.44
Oil	103.59	106.47	84.02	76.52	2.88	-7.50
	Average monthly expenditure/ HH					
Fuel	1566.18	2075.00	1727.27	2524.29	508.82	797.01
Education (commuting cost)	4181.82	4772.73	2287.40	2528.60	590.91	241.20

### **3.1.2 Impact on the livelihood of host community**

Almost all of the respondents agreed during the FGDs that little earning and day labourer groups of the host community who lived from hand to mouth were mostly affected group due to livelihood interruption. Day labourers and those some people who were dependent on collecting firewood from the forest have been facing a miserable situation of livelihood distraction.

### **3.1.3 Impact on local day labourer and labour market**

They informed that a large number of Rohingya people were searching for works in the host community. They were favoured by the local community as their wage rate was lower than the local labourers. Rohingya people were able to continue with a low wage as they were aided by the essential life-saving relief and they expend the money only for those necessary goods which were not covered by the relief baskets.

On the other hand, the day labourers and their households of host community were fully dependent on their daily wage. So, when a huge number of Rohingya wage earners got entrée into the local labour market with low wage rate, day labourers of host community faced a situation of job/work scarcity. People also opined that the usual lives of the host communities were severely affected due to the Rohingya influx. The livelihoods of the poor and extremely poor in the host communities are facing terrific constraints as they are losing their daily labour and the daily wages has been reduced from BDT 450 to BDT 200 because of the Rohingyas' influx and their willingness to work for low wages. They faced hindrance to adjust with low wage rate as Rohingya labourers did because they had to lead their entire household and living expenses by their daily earnings. This is a huge challenge for the host community labour because their demand has reduced in the local market especially in agriculture, salt field, earthen work etc. The local wage labourers have a negative impression on the inflow of Rohingya labourers.

Although NGOs were hiring some literate youth from the host community illiterate, remain unemployed, as NGOs and government are then instead they are hiring Rohingyas in the camp.

As a result, a large number of day labourers fell into a situation of severe wage crisis and competition. Many of them were still struggling to cope up with the changing context of the local labour market. Some of them were trying to migrate from their livelihood in that locality as well as to other places for searching for a new livelihood.

#### **3.1.4 Impact on 'Forest oriented livelihood'**

'Forest oriented livelihood' is a phrase which bears versatile dimensions. There were different types of livelihood based on the forest dependency. Pro-poor households of the host community were dependent on collecting firewood from the forest and selling out in the market. Many women headed HHs were leading their livelihoods on that way. However, due to loss of the forest, they had been pushed back from the livelihood. Though firewood scarcity in the host community was a big concern, those who were mainly dependent on collecting and selling firewood from nearby forest became unemployed now. Another vital group was 'forest-worker' who gave their effort and time on social forestation project under the forestry department of Bangladesh government. After the arrival of the new arrivals, FDMN households were given places in the forest to set their tents through massive destruction of the natural and social forest. So, forest-workers faced a huge financial loss because of this crisis. Day to day deforestation had already and was happening and no control over it. FDMNs were cutting trees mainly for making their shelters and also for firewood. A plantation project in the FDMN occupied area has been destroyed, and thousands of trees had been cut down by the influx. Caretakers from the host communities taking care of this plantation project could not save the project.

#### **3.1.5 Impact on livestock rearing**

It has emerged from the FGDs and IDIs with housewife and farmers in the host community that they had been already facing a huge problem in livestock rearing since the crisis emerged. All the neighbouring cattle grazing places were occupied by the FDMNs' makeshift shelters moreover incidents of theft also increased. They also perceived that diseases of the poultry and ducks had been increased due to environmental pollution for population density. Some of them notified that they had already sold out a large portion of their cattle and poultry; they identified the main reason of rearing livestock was short of cattle-food and enough place for rearing. In this regard,

a respondent Saddam from *Ukia* said, *“I had three cows and two Oxen, in our household we used to consume milk every day, but after the influx, I bound to sell out three cows along with calves due to the changed situation, all cattle grazing hills were occupied by the Rohingya camps. I have now only two oxen rent for ploughing my lands. My wife also used to rear hens in the homestead place, she had about eighty hens, but now only ten of them were survived or lost”*. Also in FGDs while asked about the type of changes host community have in their daily life due to Rohingya influx; they said that all neighbouring cattle grazing places were occupied by the Rohingya makeshift shelters. Some of them notified that they sold out a large portion of their cattle and poultry; they identified the main reason of selling livestock was a scarcity of cattle-food and enough place for rearing. Other reason was lack of cash and also a high mortality rate due to poor feeding and water contamination, the host communities are left with no livelihood or income generating activities.



## 4. Impact on Agriculture

### 4.1 Impact on Cropping

Intense of impact on cropping was found in the camp adjacent localities and also in the border areas. The mode of impact was different as per geographical location as well. More impact on cropping was found in Teknaf *Upazila*; in that *Upazila*, many cultivatable land was occupied by makeshift camps directly. Especially some villages of the two unions Whykhoang and Hnila were most affected in Teknaf. According to the grassroots agriculture extension officer, *Unchiprang*, *Raikhang* and *Chakmarpul* were the most affected villages in *Whykhoang* Union and *Nayapara*, *Jadimora*, *Alikhali* in *Hnila* Union. In those areas, many cultivatable lands went under makeshift camps, and some crops were also damaged during the influx. Through an informal group discussions, people from *Unchiprang* village informed that they had lost their some vegetable plots whenever makeshift camp was set up in the village as well as some other consequences had been emerged from the makeshift camp which was also creating a different level of problem in their usual practice of cultivation. Including rice, vegetable and betel leaf they faced loss in their yield of the crop this year. *Upazila* agriculture extension officer of *Teknaf* informed that more than 30 hectors of cultivable land in Teknaf was affected and occupied by the settlement of FDMN camps till 15 October 2017.

People in *Ukhia Upazila* did not notice that their cultivable land was occupied largely by the settlement of the makeshift camps, but they noticed that some camp adjacent cultivable land was severely affected by the sewerage water. Some farmers from *Lambasia* village adjacent to *Kutupalong* camp informed that they faced a huge loss in their rice production in those plots which were beside the makeshift camp. Moreover, they could not go to that plots any further vegetable cultivation this year because sewerage water had already polluted the soil; one farmer is showing his hands and legs said, “*look I have been suffering from skin disease due to working in those plots, it itches whenever I try to work on that land. Labours also do not want to work there.*” *Upazila* agriculture extension officer of *Ukhia* informed that 10 hector farmland was occupied by the shelter as well as two hectors of papaya orchard under threat at *Madhuchara* in *Ukhia*.

Besides these, homestead vegetable production has come to a halt as there are very limited spaces left and in some cases occupied by FDMN makeshift although the government is shifting them gradually into the camp. According to personnel of BISIC<sup>2</sup> and the local people, production of salt in *Teknaf Upazila* was hampered as many lands of salt cultivation were gone under the FDMN makeshift.

### 4.2. Impact on the conventional pattern of irrigation

It has emerged from both FGDs, IDIs and informal discussion with the farmers of host community as well as KIIs with the grassroots staff of agriculture extension department - there were some natural sources of water which usually used for the source of irrigation. However, after the FDMN influx, there was some problem, NGOs are using those sources of natural water for meeting the water crisis of FDMN makeshift camp; as a result farmers of the local community could not get enough water for their

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<sup>2</sup> Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation

cultivation. Moreover, sewerage water also entered the canal and contaminated the water sources. Farmers could not use the water for irrigation. Especially in the case of *Raikhang* village beside the *Unchiprang* FDMN camp, one of the natural spring water used for irrigation before the *Rohingya* influx, now delivering to the Rohingya Camp in *Teknaf*. As a result, farmers of the local community were not getting enough water for their farm cultivation. Moreover, sewerage water entered the canal and contaminated the water sources and also agriculture land. Therefore, this year production was very little in this area.



#### **4.3 Impact border adjacent farmer**

From both of IDIs and FGDs, one thing spotted that the struggle of the people of border adjacent host community was deferent in terms of some specific issues from the camp adjacent host community people. Especially people of the village *Anjumanpara* and *Balukhali-east* expressed their hardship during the influx.

Border adjacent farmers from *Balukhali-east* informed that they could not plant their paddy field this year for the crisis, they thought that a war might be held between Bangladesh and Myanmar, and there was an uncertainty in their mind. There was a sense of fear in their mind that they might have to move from the border.

#### **4.4 Impact on fishery**

*Anjumanpara* is an adjacent border village and was a route of the influx of the FDMNs, a huge number of FDMN entered through the village. There was a dam beside the river which is very important for the 'fish-projects' of the villagers. During the influx people first gathered on the dam and later crossed it like a flow. As a result, the essential dam of the villagers was wounded and also damaged in some places. The people of *Anjumanpara* were concern how they could repair their dam because most of the households of the village live on prawn cultivation, and the dam was very necessary for their fishery. The inhabitants of the village *Anjumanpara* informed another issue that they had lost some of their cattle due to an unrest situation between Bangladesh and Myanmar border. During the unrest situation, some of their cows and buffalos crossed the border, and they could not take them back from the border.

## 5. The livelihood of the fishermen dependent on the Naf River

Due to unrest situation in the border between Bangladesh and Myanmar, fishing in the Naf river was prohibited by the Bangladesh border guard authority because the Naf is a river which is in between of the two countries. Moreover, the river was also previously suspected as a route of illegal drugs smuggling. As a result, the fishermen of the river Naf became workless, and they had been leading a miserable idle life at the fishermen village on the bank of the Naf. Since their main occupation was fishing, they did not have other skills for alternative livelihood as well as were not interested in too and only relied on fishing. In a FGD of the fishermen, one expressed his displeasure, *“We do not have any other skills except fishing in the Naf, we cannot even go to the sea, we are not sea fisherman, and we don’t have a large fishing boat. We are poor, and we survive depending on our small boats and the river Naf. Now fishing in the Naf is restricted, as a result, we become workless, some of us are trying to get some other work like daily casual labour, but the income from daily labouring is much lower than the income of our previous fishing. We used to earn about 1000 BDT per day from fishing, and now it is only 300-400 per day from daily labouring.”*

On this issue, a local government representative of Hnila union parishad in Taknaf said that government had introduced vulnerable group feeding (10 kg rice/month/family) to support for families, who solely depend on fishing for their livelihoods, but the allocation was almost half than the actual requirement, this was inadequate in terms of number of beneficiaries as well as amount of rice/family. These people are not getting help from any organisation to tackle this sudden, unanticipated situation.



## 6. Impact on Market

### 6.1 Price of commodities

Most of the respondent opined cost of living has raised and the price of vegetables, fish, meats were double. Recently the price of rice, pulses and oil are little low as 'Rohingyas' were selling these relief items in some places, but they did not sell these regularly, and that was illegal too. During KIIs with local government representatives at *Rajapalang Union Parishad, Ukhia* on 25 November 2017, they also echoed that living cost has highly raised due to increasing prices of most of the necessary daily commodities.

### 6.2 Impact on local small business

It was observed that among many Rohingya, either started establishing small shops near campsites or some opulent Rohingya launched a business within their habitat by the money or assets they carried with them when they left Myanmar. A common vibe was reflected through FGDs and IDIs that, local small businessmen in the host community faced problem in their livelihood, some of them informed that many FDMNs had already started small shops in their camp adjacent areas. Small businessmen of the host community also faced a competitive market situation where they had to compete with the FDMN competitors. In this regard, small businessmen from the host community said, *"Rohingyas have been getting relief to meet their basic life survival needs so, they do not need to make much profit. They just think about this amount of money which is needed for meeting the expenses that do not get covered through relief package. So, they sell products at comparatively lower cost."*

Host community people also informed that many "Rohingyas" received remittance help from their relatives from countries like the Middle East and Malaysia and were investing it in building livelihood along with relief from donor Agencies. Since there was a restriction on FDMNs' free mobility, starting a small business in the camp area was a comparatively easy way for them to pursue a livelihood. From a FGD with farmers at *Balukhali* village in *Ukhia*, it came to the light that there was a syndicate of 'Rohingya' and host community people who were handling the mobile vendor market of vegetables at both places camps and local market.

### 6.3 Some new market scopes for the host community

From IDIs and FGDs it came to light; host community people commonly thought that there was no good happening thing to them from the FDMN influx; they perceived that FDMN influx destroyed their usual flow of life and livelihoods. However, in some points, they also opined that the FDMN crisis created job opportunities for the educated youth in different NGOs as local language interpreters or volunteers. The number of employed youth is not enough because of many educated youths still unemployed in the locality.

They also noticed that due to the influx new small business opportunities (eg tea stall, vegetable vendor, poultry, gas stove and cylinder, firewood business) had been created and some of the host community people started that sort of business.

Opportunities of medium and large business, such as selling tubewell, sanitary materials, plastic household stuffs also increased. However, that types of business

needs a huge capital, so only the rich businessmen and outsiders were availing this opportunity and dominating and controlling over these businesses.

There was a bloom of some skill based business like goldsmith, blacksmiths, and transport business. Host community people expressed their concern that most of these skill people were not come from the affected host locality, but other districts of the country. Many FDMNs have similar skills and they were engaging with this sector.

## **7. Social and cultural aspect**

### **7.1 Reflection of the host community regarding the FDMN influx**

A common reflection of host community was expressed during IDIs, KIs and FGDs; since FDMNs and they all are Muslim, it was their holy duty to protect the Muslim brotherhood from the persecution. Furthermore, Bangladesh government decided to, shelter them, and expanded the helping hand towards FDMNs from the very beginning of the influx (after 25 August 2017). It was necessary for that moment, but this huge influx of FDMNs was creating a various dimension of problems to the host community people. Most of the host community people thought they have already fallen into a deep problem and sufferings. They were affected in every aspect of their daily life and often they had been experiencing some problems from the point of the socio-cultural aspect too. They notified through the FGDs that the price hike of commodities, unrest situation of the locality, density of population in the roads, problems in the local commute system, traffic jam, accidental incidents, trouble in the health service system, damage of agricultural land, unsafe condition of livestock, insecure reserved forest hills and ultimately yielding the harsh impact on their livelihoods as well as social life.

### **7.2 Host-community's sensation on FDMNs' involvement in the illegal network**

Some respondents of FGDs and KIs talked on the illegal drug selling and smuggling network. They said that during the influx of FDMN, the border was open, everyone entered in Bangladesh without checking. They also amused that a portion of the FDMNs were involved with drug smuggling. There was another dimension of smuggling, some people from the host community who had been previously involved with smuggling, drugs and other commodities from Myanmar the influx of FDMN yield a chance to manipulate it and they used that properly. A grassroots political activist from the host community said, *"Most of the smugglers had been maintaining a marital family relation with the FDMN families before the crisis. They married many FDMNs women intentionally so, that they could get support in the land of Myanmar whenever they smuggle. It is a strategy of the smugglers and border traders."*

It was also emerged from the FGD that with the help of some local community people and older FDMNs they had developed an illegal network for selling drugs and sex trading. Though law enforcement agencies were trying to control these sorts of outlawed activities, the massive context of the crisis was hard to keep under control. They kept continue their patrolling and check posts, but there were some remote areas in the forest where the illegal network was active. Respondents also said they had observed that some of the FDMN women often came from their camp and went with some host community people somewhere. They also went to Cox's Bazar using the alternative paths where law enforcement authorities were not active adequately.

### **7.3 Host community perception about 'Rohingya'**

There was a 'stereotyped' perception about FDMNs among the host community people that they are rude and cruel. They do not want to understand anything logically. They react roughly, they are very much religious conservative, so there is a chance of religious extremism. They do not know about the rules and regulation of Bangladesh; they do not become aware of the verdicts of crimes properly. They even do not know how to cross the roads. They were in such a situation of social and economic exclusion

where they do not get the access to education, health and other basic human rights. They even do not have awareness regarding hygiene, family planning etc. Host community people perceived that FDMNs community is a backward one, so it is a challenge to coexist with such 'uncivilised' community. In this regard, they also put some example of crimes committed by FDMN people in recent time. They place some example of theft, illegal drug and arms dealing, prostitution, killing etc. Overall host community was very concern about the coexistence and cohesion with FDMN.

#### **7.4 The sense of being a minority in the mind of the host community**

During the focus group, discussion host community people perceived that their locality became overcrowded and FDMN population was about three times large than the host community population. A local UP member said, *"Rohingyas did not have awareness about family planning, in future they will be larger, and it was also a threat for host community of being a minority in a number of population in the locality. Rohingya were in a critical situation, they did not have an identity, and they were in such a situation where they want to get access in the mainstream host community anyhow. They are always searching for a way to get a chance. This situation can be manipulated by some bad people of the host community to pledge crimes."*

In both *Ukhia* and *Teknaf Upazila*, there were some Buddhist ethnic communities. They have been living in the host community, and there was a good climate of social cohesion with host Muslim community, though sometimes few Islamic religious fundamentalist groups tried to create a chaotic situation but mass norms of Muslim host community never supported them. The Buddhist ethnic minority groups and mainstream Bengali Muslim community both lived together within a cultural harmony. After the FDMN influx, the Buddhist ethnic minority group of the host community was in the sense of fear because, FDMNs (Muslim Rohingya) were persecuted by the Myanmar army and ethnic Rakhine Buddhist who were the majority in the Rakhine State, Myanmar. Muslim FDMNs might take revenge on the Buddhist community in Bangladesh; they thought if any religious riot outbreaks they would be the most vulnerable group. As a result, the Buddhist ethnic group of host community perceived FDMNs as a threat for them. In this regard-

A female member of that community said, *"Rohingyas are rude, they are now the majority in the locality. If they want to do anything bad with us, we have no ability to protect ourselves. There is an anxiety; we stay alert particularly at night."*

Another male respondent from the Buddhist minority group said, *"Now there is not enough work in the village since I'm day-labour, I often go to other places searching for work. I used to stay a week or more away from my house. However, after the inflow of the Rohingyas I cannot stay outside of my home at night, always I feel tension for the safety of my wife and children."*

#### **7.5 The concern of HC on socio-cultural aspect for social cohesion and coexistence with FDMNs**

##### **7.5.1 Linguistic aspect**

Host community people perceived that Rohingyas' language was similar to the host community's language even though their language and communication were 'rougher' than the host community. They used dirty slangs which were not acceptable in the local

host culture. Host community children already started using of abusive slangs. It was a concern from the host community in the point of “cultural Diffusion”<sup>3</sup>.

### ***7.5.2 Hamper on the usual social life of the host community***

There was a prevailing social structure and some principals in host society which led the society through a harmonious socio-cultural climate. Since the FDMNs and host community people were sharing same public places, many common and usual social norms and values in Bengali society (e.g. respecting to seniors, affectionate to youngers, exchanging greetings as well as helping to others) were being dishonoured by the FDMNs. FDMNs might not be aware of the existing social values of the host community, or their crisis did not allow them. Whatever it was, host community people perceived, the FDMN-influx hampered their usual social life. They expressed their grievance and noticed that the tea stalls and markets became overcrowded, the senior and respected citizens of the host community did not get due respect from the FDMNs. FDMNs did not care about the host community people. Child marriage and Polygamy were common practice among the FDMN community, so host community people feared that these might spread to their community. There were some cases that Bangladeshi men were getting married with FDMN young girls and women. There was an intention among FDMNs that if they could develop a marital relation relationship with host community people, they would get security and could merge with the host community.

### ***7.5.3 The threat for the young generation in host community***

During FGDs with host community people, some of the respondents informed that a number of FDMN women and girls were getting involved with prostitution. There was also a local culprit group who were patronising sex trading and illegal drug dealings. So they were observing that there was a chance of derailing the young generation of the host community. They also noticed that some of the local host community people were getting addicted, some were getting involved in an extramarital relationship with FDMN girls and women. As a result, the conventional notion of family bonding is under threat. In the host community, there were some examples of family separation too, so they were concern about it.

### ***7.5.4 Impact on education***

It was observed that many local schools and colleges were occupied by Army, in some places, food for the FDMNs was being cooked in School compounds and distributed on a daily basis. Teachers said that the school attendance rate dropped down from 90% to 65%, teachers were taking a class in open space. Students said that they were not comfortable and were not happy with that environment. Some of the poor absentee students went to camp for relief. Access to a schools was very difficult, uncomfortable and scary as huge numbers of FDMNs were moving around and the local transport cost escalated by two times and made the students’ lives harder. While talking to the students of a local Primary School, they also said that transportation cost was high and also they had a fear of accidents; the road was so busy now. During FGD with the host community, people noticed that the availability of private tutors was decreased as well as private tuition fees of their children increased because many teachers began to work with different NGOs. Teachers and UP representatives mentioned that involvement of the local student as a volunteer in different NGOs would badly impact on the education

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<sup>3</sup> Cultural diffusion is the spread of cultural beliefs and social activities from one group of people to another.



sector in future. Many students dropped out from school and college for the voluntary job in NGOs.

They alleged that education was being interrupted due to the use of school by the different force agencies for handling the crisis, as a result, absentee and dropout rate was increased.

## 8. Impact on the regular activities of local government at host community

Some similar issues came out through KIs and FGDs-

### 8.1 Social Safety nets

Host community people, as well as UP members, informed that the on-going VGF, TR<sup>4</sup> and Cash for Work schemes available to host communities by the government were being held-up due to the Rohingyas influx, and this causes immense disruptions among the host community households especially among the poorest of the poor living below the poverty line.

Under the coverage of safety-net programme some selected poorest households got monthly food support from the local government authority. However, this FDMN crisis created an emergency situation, and all the attention of the local government leaders shifted on tackling FDMN-crisis situation. As a result, the food support was also interrupted, and the poorest families of the host community struggled to survive.

### 8.2 The activity of *Gram shalish* (village court)

Host community people informed that one of the major tasks of the UP members and the chairman was to mitigate the different level of grievance and tensions among the host community in a village atmosphere. UP members and chairman played a vital role with the help of village leaders in resolving peoples' grievance and tension for the sake of holding social cohesion. However, now a day specifically after the FDMN influx, UP members and chairman were very busy with handling a crisis at their locality. They could not manage time for the host community people.

In this regard, a UP member of *palong khali* union said, '*I am the elected representative from the host community. Host community people elected me for ensuring their rights, but my intense involvement in managing the FDMN crisis I could not concentrate on the problems of my host community people. Routine works of the union council had been facing obstacles since the FDMN crisis broke out. Even I could not give enough time to my people who cast votes for me.*'

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<sup>4</sup> Test Relief

## 9. Environmental aspect

Collection and sale of fuelwood from the environment surrounding the makeshift settlements is a well-documented coping mechanism. A study by Sayed, *et al.* reported 85% of households collected fuelwood from *Teknaf* Wildlife Sanctuary (Sayed *et al.*, 2015), and according to an *Assessment of Fuel Wood Supply and Demand*, 25.16% of households went on to sell fuelwood for income (IOM and FAO 2017). The Rohingya are not uniquely dependent on the fuelwood, and competition for resources often creates tension between the Rohingya and the host community (D'Annunzio *et al.*, 2017).



In December 2017 Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina told a gathering of world leaders at an environment summit ('One Planet Summit') in France that Bangladesh's forest and natural environment had been severely affected by the large influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. She also said, 'On humanitarian grounds, we have given them shelter on 1,783 hectares of our forest land in Cox's Bazar. The Rohingya crisis has severely affected forest and environment in that area

(The Dhaka Tribune 2017)'. Thousands of Rohingyas occupied the lands and erected their shelters. This forest area was under national forest conservation. There were natural forests as well as social forests where forest workers from host community found a forest-based livelihood. Moreover, this forest area was a sanctuary of Asian Elephant. After 25 August 2017 the entire scenario of this area had been changed drastically. Due to huge deforestation, landslides are likely to happen especially during the rainy season, and it may cause a threat to local eco-system and lead to disasters.

It emerged from FGDs that as a huge number of deep and shallow tubewells are being installed in the Rohingya camps by different INGOs and local NGOs, and the groundwater level has come down, so there is a fear of damaging the local environment in the near future. The natural spring water was used in irrigation before the Rohingya influx, now delivering to the Rohingya Camp in *Teknaf*. As a result, farmers of the local community were not getting enough water for their farm cultivation. Moreover, sewerage water entered the canal and contaminated the water sources and also agriculture land. Therefore, this year production is very little in this area. Some people of the host community live on fishing from those canals but these became abandoned, there are no fishes now.



In this regard, a male respondent from *Rajapalong* union said, "*Rohingyas have destroyed the entire forest as well as polluted the*

*surrounding environment. There was a canal in our village where we could catch shrimp and could earn by selling this to fishery owners, that was my livelihood. But now the canal is polluted now with the sewerage water of the camp.”*

People also expressed their concern on some issues of environmental pollution. Host community people explained that they used to live in a calm, quiet and fresh environment, There was green everywhere, but now this area became overpopulated. The air was no longer fresh, and dust was everywhere. As a result, risks of pulmonary diseases like asthma were high. They also noticed that after this massive influx the calm and quietness of the area had been faded away. Overcrowding was everywhere, heavy vehicles and loud honk created sound pollution in this locality. They were also in fear of an outbreak of the communicable diseases.

## 10. Suggestions to overcome sufferings of host communities

It has been suggested by the FGD and KII participants that Government, INGOs and donor agencies should come forward to assist host communities – particularly livelihood programmes for the poor and extreme poor. GoB is planning for a resolution for all INGOs/LNGOs to allocate at least 20% of the Rohingya budget for host community livelihood development. It was recommended to create alternative income-generating activities for local host communities through vocational training, skills training, strengthening the local market system and entrepreneurship development, etc.

Suggestions also include the introduction of Fuel Briquetting (using Rice Husk) as an income generating activities for the host and supply to Rohingyas through INGOs and local NGOs.

Local government representatives suggested that there should be relief programme for the local poor people, suggestions came to provide cash support in the modality of Cash for Work, the loan could be given with training, develop value chain approach and market linkage. During FDG and KII, it was noticed several times that host community people were dissatisfied due to Rohingya influx. It may burst out any time. So host community people also should be in to focus simultaneously. It was recommended to engage host young people to the response of creating employment opportunities. In addition to offering them alternative livelihood options, developing coping mechanism to tackle the adverse situation, support to poultry and cow rearing, IT related training for youth, also renovation of the infrastructure like rural road, school etc., tree plantation, support to agricultural work like seed and fertilizer distribution etc., provide training to the local government officials on Disaster Risk Reduction. Suggests to provide interest-free/ low-interest loan or loan with the flexible condition are needed for the affected people so that they can start income generating activities, in addition, some skill development activities are needed for the host community people. Training on Tailoring, Stitching, Poultry and Duck rearing, Home Gardening or Vegetable Cultivation will be useful in the context of the host community. Since Agriculture land and forest have been occupied, home based livelihood activities and engagement of women is necessary.

Connect poor host community people with *union parishad* to access to Social Protection Schemes and do advocacy for increasing the number of beneficiaries of each scheme.

## 11. Findings from FDMN community

FGD, KII, IDI and informal discussion were conducted with different groups of people from FDMN community.

### 11.1 The shelter-seeking pattern of the FDMN influx after 25 August 2017

The first wave of Rohingya refugees entered Bangladesh in 1978. An estimated 200,000 Rohingyas took shelter in Cox's Bazaar though there was a debate between Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma) in terms of claiming figures on the number of refugees. The Bangladesh government claimed 252,000 persons sought refuge in Bangladesh, while the Burmese sources stated that 143,900 persons. However, an agreement was finally reached on the repatriation of refugees to Myanmar and a total of 187,250 Rohingyas repatriated, and in 1991, Bangladesh again experienced another influx of Rohingya refugees in the *Teknaf, Ramu, Ukhia* and Cox's Bazar region (Abrar 1995). So, an incident of displacement of Rohingya Muslim ethnic group from Myanmar to Bangladesh is not a new phenomenon in Cox's Bazar area. However, the huge influx of FDMN after 25 August 2017 created an emergency crisis ever as well as broke the previous records, about 671,500 arrivals since August 2017 are reported on 15 March 2018 in ISCG's situation report. In the very beginning of the influx, it was a challenge to arrange spaces sheltering the large arrivals, people were under the sky beside the road, and the entire locality became overcrowded. Since previously there were some camps of registered and unregistered refugee in *Ukhia* and *Teknaf Upazila*, many Rohingyas sought shelter in those camps using their kinship relationship networks, and even some of the Rohingyas sought shelter in the host community. After the initiative of the government agencies, the situation began to come to a shape through the establishment of makeshift camps, however, the reserved forest of that area was severely damaged.

### 11.2 Perception about makeshift life

During discussion almost all the respondents expressed their struggles in Myanmar; they thought that this makeshift camp was far better than the persecution. They can at least sleep in the makeshift camps. They also said that they got relief from WFP, but they did not have cash to purchase some other stuff which was not provided in the relief package. They expressed their satisfaction that here they could do their religious activities freely here in Bangladesh.

### 11.3 Livelihood condition

They have no specific livelihood in the makeshift camps. There was also a restriction on their mobility for this reason they could not go far in search of a job. Since FDMNs could not move to faraway places for searching any work, so there was not enough work in the locality. FDMNs were passing their time idle gossiping, saying a prayer. Their main livelihood was relying on relief goods.

Adolescent boys had no specific job; they helped their families in different household chores like collecting firewood from the neighbouring locality. All the adolescent boys did not have any affiliation with education or skill learning in the makeshift camp. There was not enough space for playing for the adolescent boys.

Adolescent girls usually did not come out from their room. They also had no work; they passed their time by gossiping with others. Some of them who had some skill in tailoring and sewing they were trying to capitalise their skills through some individual initiatives. One of the respondents from adolescent girl informed that she had already rented a sewing machine and started to take orders from their neighbours.

Adult women were busy with their household chores and looking after their children. Some of the women went to collect relief.

Most of the adult men were workless. They always were thinking about their household's future. There was an uncertainty in their look.

Some of the FDMN boys and adult men became involved with some works below:

- Cheap day labour
- The waiter of tea stalls and salesman of shops
- NGO volunteer and Interpreter
- Blacksmith
- Small business
- Tailoring (renting sewing machine) etc.

#### 11.4 Engaging with small business

Some skilled people of the FDMN community started their livelihood in the camp setup few capital and social capital. A person informed that he did business in Myanmar and often came to Bangladesh in *Teknaf* for his business purpose. He had a good relationship with the businessmen of *Teknaf*; now he can take the product into credit and leading a shop in the camp. Another man who was a tailor now started a shop. Another man who had skill in mobile phone repairing started here a mobile repairing shop with small capital in the camp.



From almost every FGD with adult male and female, one thing came to light that they were concerned about their children's future. They thought that there was no school for their children, they could not learn in the camp. They wanted their children to be skilled and educated. All the people showed interest in the skill development of their children. One woman said during FGD, *'Our children need some self-reliance skills that can help them in future whenever we repatriate'*.

## 12. Discussion

The finding shows that a human-flood streamed into Bangladesh crossing the border of the 'nationalist' state Myanmar. This huge influx of FDMN after 25 August 2017 is a big incident of displacement and humanitarian crisis. Though these types of experiences are not new in Bangladesh the massive stream of FDMN shook the entire Bangladesh nation as well as the world society.

In the very beginning of this influx, Bangladeshi host community as well as old registered and unregistered 'Rohingya' community came forward and gave a helping hand towards the newly arrived FDMNs. It was even found that Bangladeshi nationals came from the deferent parts of the country to help the vulnerable FDMNs and their efforts were just from the point of humanity and Muslim brotherhood. As a result, the huge influx of FDMN got quick shelter in the nationally reserved forest beside the Teknaf-Cox's Bazar highway. Within a very short time, the Bangladesh government started to respond to handling the crisis. Over the night, the reserved natural forest became a keen "forest of makeshift shelters" of the new arrivals.

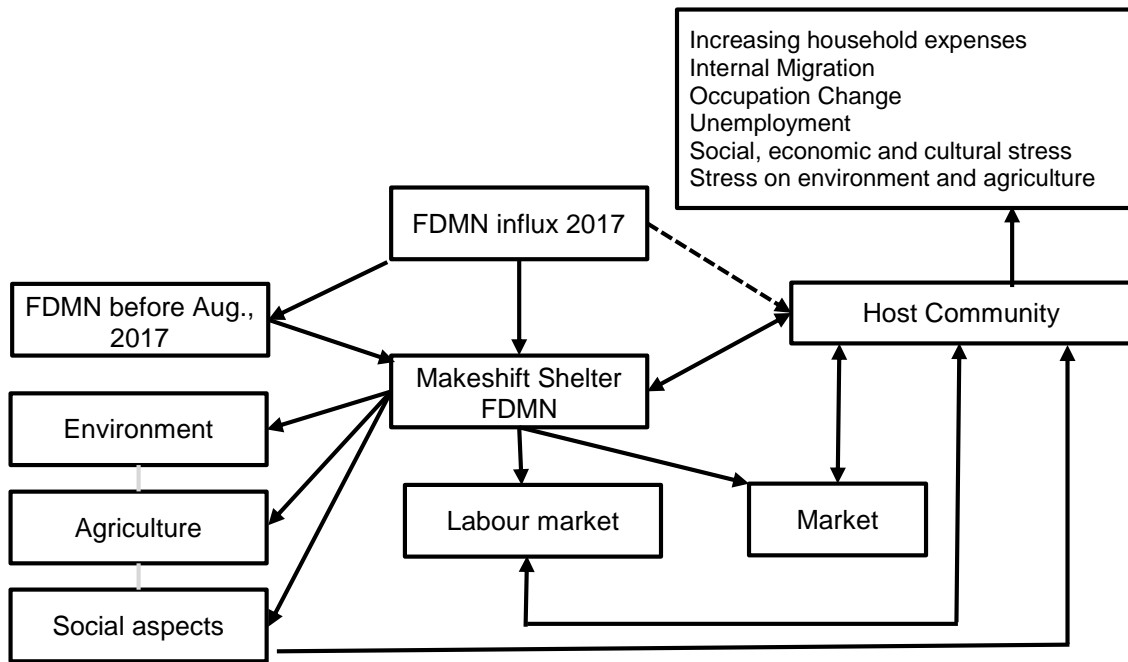
This huge FDMNs stream into the host locality created an innumerable dimension of problems. Including economic, social, cultural, environmental aspects of a society, a large-scale impact appeared from the instance of the FDMN influx. This study tried to put light on those issues broadly. It also emerged from the findings that this influx negatively affected the host community's socioeconomic harmony including market and labour market.

This influx of the FDMNs affected the livelihood pattern of the host community very harshly. Since Teknaf and *Ukhia Upazilas* have economies which are mainly agriculture and fishing based. Harmonies of these economic patterns were also negatively affected. Issues of health, education, social protection, social coexistence and cohesion also came to light.

In a broad essence, depressing impact of the makeshift shelters of the new arrivals was visible in the host locality (*Teknaf* and *Ukhia*); especially on environmental, agricultural, social and economic aspects which were flagging up the dimensions of problems as well as add a degree of hardship in the crisis. Impact of the FDMN influx on host community has been tried to describe through an impact-flowchart given bellow, by which we can get a rounded insight of the study in a nutshell.



Figure 1. Impact-flowchart



## 13. Conclusion

Impact of FDMN on host community in *Ukhia* and *Teknaf*, Cox's Bazar was an issue which had created a multi-dimensional problem. To realise the dimensions and intensity of the problem, this study gave its effort. The context of the humanitarian crisis (FDMN influx) and its impact on the host community may get an obvious pictorial shape in our mind from the insight of the findings. The findings of the study not only help to realise the severity of the FDMN crisis but also urge to take some programmatic initiatives targeting both host and FDMN communities. BRAC and other stakeholders who are keen to response in a humanitarian crisis can use the insight of the study fruitfully; they might utilise the insights for developing their programmatic intervention.

## 14. Recommendations

Since BRAC-RED initiated this study, some recommendations have been placed here considering BRAC's volume in regard of intervening programmatic approach to meet the humanitarian crisis.

- Unemployed day labours and forest-dependent households need to be taken under the coverage of microfinance, asset transfer based or skill transfer based programmes. BRAC's MF, TUP and SDP can intervene here.
- Some restrictions on FDMN community are required so that they cannot enter into the local labour market. BRAC's Advocacy for Social Change (ASC) can approach the local law enforcement authorities.
- Awareness regarding peaceful coexistence is needed for both host and FDMN community. Targeting the FDMNs with some visual and informative materials can be developed for creating awareness. BRAC's BEP, CEP and Communication can work together on it.
- Army and other law enforcement authorities need to be sensitive towards host community people.
- FDMNs can be encouraged for Kitchen gardening. BRAC may supply seeds. In the host community, the alternative irrigation system is needed to take into consideration especially for those places where existing irrigation pattern is under threat. BRAC's AFSC can work in this regard.
- Gear up the ongoing tree plantation scheme of BRAC.

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