

# Sustainable Livelihood for Displaced Rohingyas and Their Resilience at Bhashan Char in Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** The livelihood sustainability of the Rohingya refugees relocated in Bhashan Char, Bangladesh, has been questioned by various international stakeholders due to the remoteness and perceived vulnerabilities of the island. The Bangladesh government, a few international organizations, and some non-government organizations are working on developing livelihood opportunities in there. But there is scarce study about the livelihood opportunities and challenges of the Rohingyas living there. This study explores the vulnerabilities and livelihood opportunities of Rohingyas in Bhashan Char so as to help increase their resilience. The vulnerabilities include natural, geographical, and climatic shocks and stresses (e.g., cyclone, floods, storm surge, sea-level rise, geographical position). However, there are ample opportunities for their livelihood development, despite some challenges which can be overcome with concerted efforts. The opportunities include intensification and extensification of livelihood activities, such as modern agriculture, fish farming, livestock rearing, small business, handicraft, fishing net mending, crab fattening, biofloc aquaculture, and fish cage culture, but turning these opportunities into reality requires sufficient investment and internationally positive attitude. Better shelter, better disaster preparedness, cultural practices, education, and skill development can increase their capacity to bounce back, absorb shocks, and make them more resilient. National and international humanitarian organizations should plan to enhance the resilience of the Rohingya communities living in Bhashan Char and the island itself so that they can sustain in the long run, even after their anticipated repatriation to Myanmar.

**Keywords:** Rohingya refugees; livelihood vulnerability; livelihood resilience; Bhashan Char; Bangladesh; Myanmar



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## 1. Introduction

Bangladesh has a long history of sheltering Rohingya refugees of Myanmar [1] (Table 1). In 2017, millions of Rohingya were forced to seek refuge in Bangladesh after the brutal ethnic violence initiated by Myanmar [2]. These displaced Rohingyas are currently living in different makeshift camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, waiting to return to their homeland [3]. The total number of Rohingya in Bangladesh has increased from 767,324 (154,264 households) after the August 2017 influx to 918,841 (192,908 households) in December 2021 [4]. These extra populations have a social, natural, environmental, legal, and financial impact on Bangladesh [5–9]. The livelihood of the Rohingyas is mostly dependent on the humanitarian aid provided by the Bangladesh government and other

national and international donor organizations [10]. In addition, they are involved in small income-generating activities such as agricultural farming, fishing in the waterbody, cutting and collecting wood, small business, wage market, remittance, and non-food transfer, mainly as part of the capacity development support monitored by local and international agencies working there [11,12].

**Table 1.** Historical influxes of Rohingyas to Bangladesh and their repatriation between 1978 and 2021.

Periods	Historical Influxes of Rohingyas to Bangladesh and Their Repatriation
1978	200,000 Rohingyas fled the Myanmar army's Operation Nagamin (Dragon King). Around 10,000 Rohingyas remained in Bangladesh, another 10,000 Rohingyas died in the encampments, and 180,000 Rohingyas were forcibly sent back to Myanmar.
1991–1992	250,000 Rohingyas influxed because of forced labor, land forfeit, religious bigotry, rape, and different types of oppression by the Myanmar army government.
February 1992	UNHCR and international humanitarian organizations started an extensive relief operation in several encampments located in the Teknaf–Cox's Bazar regions.
April 1992	Bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the government of Bangladesh and Myanmar on Rohingya repatriation. However, it limited UNHCR engagement in the program.
September–December 1992	Bangladesh government started the repatriation program excluding UNHCR engagement that was stated to be forced. Several international humanitarian organizations including the UNHCR protested against it and withdrew themselves from the program until government permitted individual talks with the Rohingyas.
May 1993	UNHCR and government of Bangladesh signed MoU assuring Rohingyas safety in the camps and started voluntary repatriation program through individual talks with the Rohingyas.
November 1993	UNHCR and government of Myanmar signed MoU which permitted UNHCR to issue identity cards for the returnee Rohingyas and allow free movement in the Rohingya camps.
February 1994	UNHCR established a restricted field attendance in Rakhine, Myanmar.
July 1994	UNHCR announced promotion meetings and mass registration program for the returnees.
August 1994	UNHCR began mass registration program and reported that 95% of 176,000 registered Rohingyas were agreed to repatriate voluntarily.
March 1996	New arrivals of Rohingya influxes reported, and the government of Bangladesh imposed a “push-back” approach at the entrance of the border.
April 1996	Nearly 15 Rohingyas died due to boat capsizing as Bangladesh government did not permit landing in its territory.
January–May 1997	New arrivals of Rohingya influxes reported once again from Myanmar.

Table 1. Cont.

Periods	Historical Influxes of Rohingyas to Bangladesh and Their Repatriation
October 1998	Numerous male Rohingyas were detained and the repatriation program was ceased.
November 1998	Repatriation process resumed, but the Myanmar government issued bureaucratic complications and refused to receive 7000 Rohingyas.
January–April 1999	UNHCR started to narrow down humanitarian activities in the camps to close repatriation program by May 1999.
April–May 2000	Numerous Rohingya refugees were identified as “unfit” to repatriate as they were severely wounded and listed as “vulnerable”.
October 2000	Many newborns were not registered and as a result, they were not entitled to receive food or health care facilities.
February 2001	Bangladesh government agreed to record all newborns that had not been accurately recorded.
March 2001	UNHCR listed 200 unrecorded babies dating back at least 2 years.
January 2002	UNHCR announced strategies to resuscitate repatriation, with registration and counselling meetings.
February 2002	UNHCR and the government of Bangladesh announced strategies to transfer 5000 Rohingya refugees “cleared” by the government of Myanmar.
2003	Two camps—one in Nayapara near Teknaf and another in Kutupalong near Ukhiya—existed in Bangladesh which were built in the early 1990s. However, living environments remained awful.
2006	Maximum shelters in the 2 existing camps in Bangladesh became inundated during rainy season.
2009	Only a trivial number of Rohingyas were formally documented as refugees by the government of Bangladesh.
October 2016	New arrival of over 87,000 Rohingyas in the border of Bangladesh.
August–December 2017	Around 600,000 Rohingyas influxed in the district of Cox’s Bazar.
August 2019	Over 912,000 Rohingyas were still living in the same encampments that were made of bamboo structures since they arrived in Bangladesh two years ago.
December 2020	Government of Bangladesh moved over 20,000 Rohingyas to Bhashan Char.
April 2021	Bangladesh government organized a tour for overseas delegates to showcase Bhashan Char.
May 2021	UNHCR launched its 2021 Rohingya Joint Response Plan.

Source: modified from [13,14].

To reduce such pressure of this massive population in Cox’s Bazar, the Bangladesh government has built a rehabilitation project in Bhashan Char, Noakhali, for 0.1 million Rohingyas [11]. This relocation initiative is perceived to give rise to a controversial debate among the international humanitarian and donor organizations [14,15]. The debate comes due to remoteness and disasters such as cyclone susceptibility posed by climate change phenomenon, limitation in movement, etc. [14]. Since 3 December 2020, around 20,000 Rohingya refugees have been relocated to Bhashan Char [14]. Bangladesh government has taken some initiatives to build livelihood opportunities for the Rohingya community in Bhashan Char [16], but are those livelihood options enough for them?

How will these options be sustainable in the long run? There is no study highlighting these kinds of issues in Bhashan Char despite some related study from other regions of the country [17–19]. This study aims to explore the livelihood vulnerabilities and opportunities of displaced Rohingyas in Bhashan Char Island in order to increase their resilience. The study will also contribute to ongoing controversies and debate by UN and other humanitarian agencies on Rohingya refugee resettlement in Bhashan Char by the government of Bangladesh.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Data Sources

We used secondary data from published peer-reviewed journal articles, reports published by national and international organizations, and newspaper reports (where no published data are available). Relevant studies were reviewed after being identified through Google scholar, Web of Science, and Google searches using the keywords—“Rohingya”, “Bhashan Char”, “Livelihoods of Rohingya”, and “Livelihood challenges of Rohingya”. A time filter was also used to access the literature published after 2017.

As part of this study, we also conducted some key informant interviews (KIIs) with the people who have visited and worked in the Bhashan Char that include experts and NGO workers. Six KIIs were conducted to triangulate the information collected through literature review.

### 2.2. Sustainable Livelihood Approach and the Research Framework

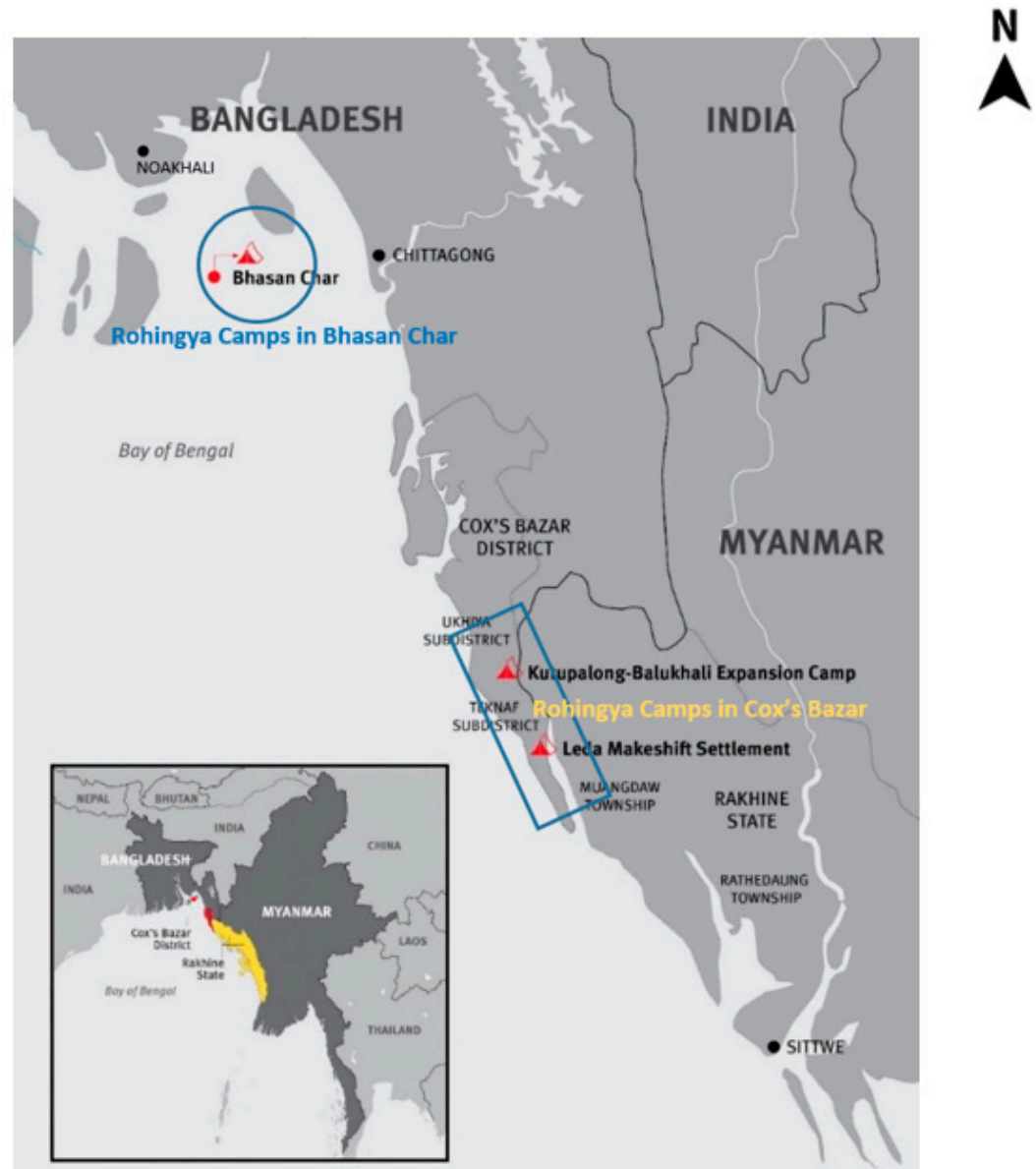
The authors’ own synthesis, along with literature review, has formed the conceptual framework of the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) for the vulnerable Rohingyas in Bangladesh. The SLA has been widely used as a fundamental analytical tool for livelihood development [20–22]. It includes six capital assets, namely, natural (i.e., natural resource stocks and environmental services), physical (i.e., any physical assets owned and used for livelihood development), financial (i.e., capital base essential for livelihood development), human (i.e., skills, knowledge, and physical capabilities), social (i.e., social resources such as social relation, networks, and association), and institutional assets (i.e., institutional supports such as training and advocacy) [20,23]. These assets are affected by external or internal factors such as shocks, trends, and seasonality. The transforming structures and processes such as government laws, regulations, rules, and policies along with the livelihood assets lead to livelihood outcomes. The SLA helped us to articulate different development activities and to organize the key factors that constrain or enhance livelihood opportunities and illustrates how they are related to each other. The SLA is mostly based on growing critics of the way the Rohingyas live their lives in Bhashan Char and the importance of policies and institutions to make them resilient to return to their homeland, Myanmar.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Bhashan Char as New Rohingya Habitation

Bhashan Char—also known as Char Piya or Thengar Char—is an island located in the Bay of Bengal, around 25 km south from the nearest land area of Noakhali (Figure 1). The Bhashan Char project, named Ashrayan (meaning provided shelter), is currently monitored and managed by Bangladesh Navy, comprising 13,000 acres of land area in the island with 6427 acres of usable high land [24]. The project was constructed with an expense of USD 350 million and it is about 21 nautical miles away from Noakhali district headquarter of Bangladesh [25]. The project area has 1440 clusters of houses in 120 shelter stations, concrete roads and drainage system, schools, two hospitals, four community clinics, mosques, administrative buildings, fire station, police station, a 2 megawatt power plant, solar electricity systems, lighthouse, telecommunication services, office spaces for government and non-government organizations (NGO), playgrounds, recreational and learning centers, etc. [26]. An embankment around 12 km long and 9 feet high has also been

built with an integrated drainage system to protect the inhabitants from cyclone, storm surge, or other natural disasters. In addition, 120 cyclone shelters will protect the Rohingya population during cyclones [26].



**Figure 1.** Location of Rohingya camps in Bangladesh; the circle shows the location of Bhashan Char, and the triangles show the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar (source: modified from [14]).

### 3.2. Livelihood Challenges and Vulnerabilities

Hosting refugees in resource-limited countries, such as Bangladesh, creates challenges for both the host country and the asylum-seekers [27]. Violence, starvation, disease, and loss of family members and friends create an acute and chronic traumatic experience for the migrants, especially children [27–29]. In addition, refugees' food and nutrition, finance, and health—everything—depends on the humanitarian aid. Relocation of Rohingya refugees to Bhashan Char will create several challenges to their livelihoods. The Bay of Bengal, where Bhashan Char is located, is considered among the highest cyclone-prone bays globally [30]. Each year, severe cyclonic storms hit Bangladesh's south coast [31]. Bangladesh is also projected to be the worst affected area for sea-level rise, where a 10% intensification of the storm surge combined with a 1 m sea-level rise could affect 23% of the country's total



coastal land area [32]. These phenomena have made this island a major climate-vulnerable area. In addition, the island is detached from the mainland; the waterway is the only mode of transportation. It takes around two and a half to three hours to reach the mainland from Bhashan Char by engine boat.

The life of Rohingyas living on the island is not always smooth. The livelihood strategies of Rohingyas in Bhashan Char are affected by several factors, including various natural and anthropogenic disturbance and shocks, seasonality, and processes (Figure 2), for example, different natural and climatic hazards such as cyclones, floods, tidal surges, salinity intrusions, sea-level rise, etc., which might increase the risk of vulnerability of the Rohingyas on the island (see the dark red box in Figure 2 for details). On the other hand, poor adaptive capacity of the Rohingyas due to lack of knowledge and skills, lack of access to formal and informal credits, limited scope of alternative income-generating activities, etc., might exacerbate the vulnerability level in the island. Moreover, several regulations such as movement restrictions of the Rohingyas from the island to the mainland might narrow down their future opportunities to increase their adaptive capacity and, as a result, make them vulnerable.

It is a perceived notion among the Rohingyas that staying in Cox's Bazar is much better for various opportunities than Bhashan Char [33]. The key informant interviews revealed that there are two types of groups among the Rohingyas, where one group thinks that Cox's Bazar is a better option for them as they can easily obtain humanitarian aid and they have the opportunity to work outside the camp (i.e., in the host community). In addition, some Rohingyas have relatives who came years ago and settled in Bangladesh. They will have the opportunity to move from the camp if they stay here in Cox's Bazar. The other group thinks that moving to Bhashan Char is a better option, as the camp in Cox's Bazar is overcrowded and the laws there are deteriorating day by day. Conversely, in Bhashan Char, there are opportunities for livelihood, rules of law, opportunities for child education, and adequate free spaces. There are uncertainties about the climatic disasters in Bhashan Char, but the concrete household structures, dams, and cyclone shelter will save them from natural calamities. Thus, the creation of effective and sustainable livelihood, at least until the repatriation takes place, has to be seen as a priority to motivate a good number of Rohingyas to be relocated in Bhashan Char.

### 3.3. Livelihood Opportunities

In Bhashan Char, the government of Bangladesh has already taken some initiatives to improve the livelihood assets of the Rohingyas (see the green box in Figure 2 for details). Under the Asrayan-3 Project, the government has provided many sources of natural capital, such as agricultural lands for farming on the island, ponds, rivers, fish, seeds, woods, etc.

Around 170 Rohingyas in Bhashan Char received seeds for fast-growing vegetables, including water spinach, amaranth, spinach, long yard bean, bottle gourd, sweet gourd, and sweet potato, to meet the nutritional needs of the family and to enhance self-reliance [34]. The agriculture team of BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) also provided fertilizers, seeds, and materials for vegetable-gardening among Rohingyas in the Char. They were also acquainted with different forms of gardening such as rooftop, vertical, tower, and sack-bag gardening. In addition, the government released over 10,000 fish fries into 38 ponds in the area [13].

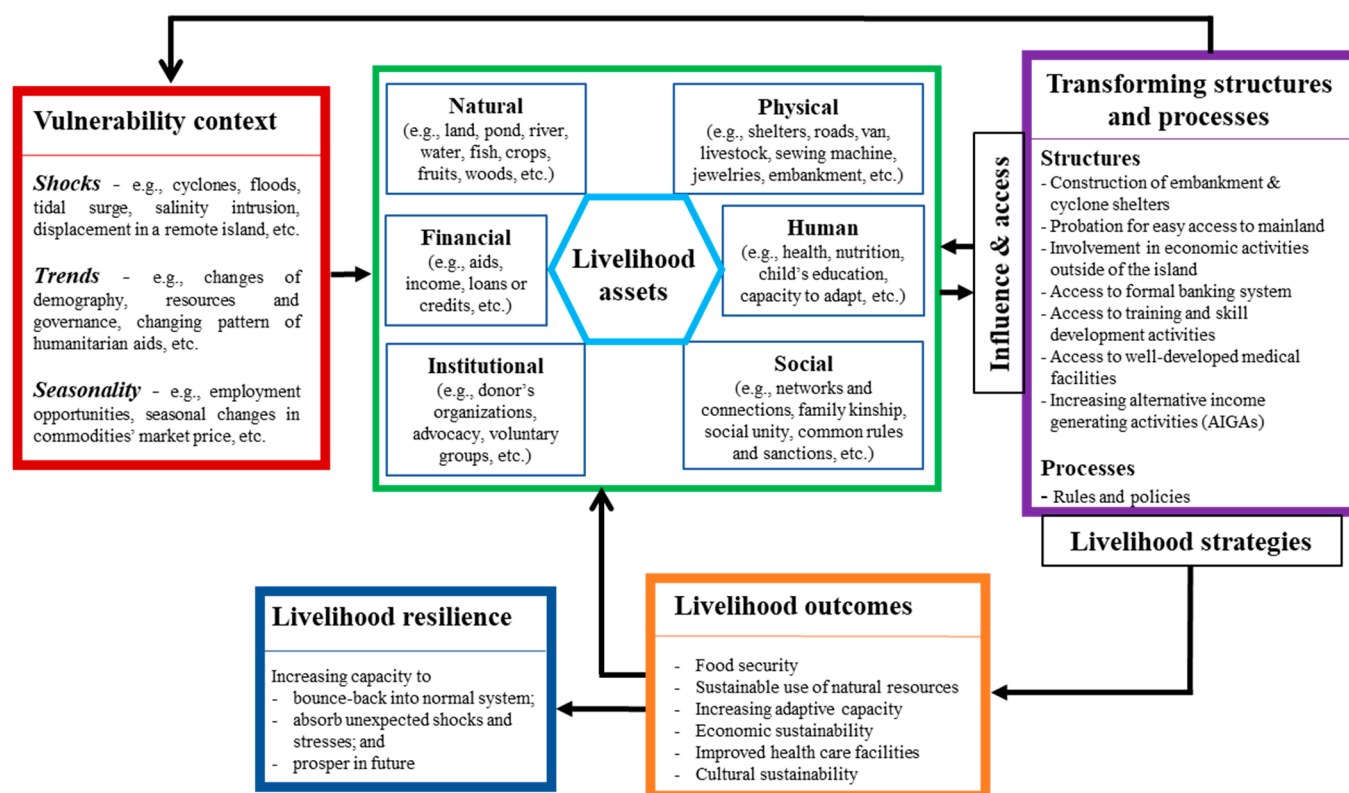
Under the Asrayan-3 Project, the government distributed fish fry to 200 Rohingyas involved with fish rearing and harvesting in the ponds. In addition, a crab-fattening program could be a viable revenue-generating option for the Rohingyas in Bhashan Char. It is a highly productive business that can provide livelihood opportunities for many Rohingyas living on the island. The Rohingyas will need special training and capital support to start the fattening program. Biofloc aquaculture could also be an excellent income-generating livelihood option for them if a few days' training and some capital supports are provided [35]. International donors can provide credits and training facilities

for them. In a word, the potentials for employment creation are ample, and Rohingyas can avail all the untapped opportunities in this land.

Under the Asrayan-3 Project, the government also distributed some assets, such as grocery store items for 100 Rohingyas on the island [16]. Some Rohingyas may be involved in fresh vegetables and fish marketing produced on the island. Another financial capital such as rearing livestock might be a viable livelihood opportunity for many Rohingyas. There are enormous opportunities for farming poultry and ducks on the island due to huge open areas and forest facilities. The government distributed 5000 ducks and 5000 chickens to the Rohingyas to support their livelihoods on the island [16]. Rearing cattle, buffalos, and goats in the vast grazing fields of the island might also support their livelihoods. The demand for fresh vegetables, fish, and meat can easily be met through planned cultivation inside the island. To ease transport facilities throughout the island, the government has distributed 50 vans (non-mechanized three-wheelers pulled by a human) to the Rohingyas [16]. Such infrastructure can be improved further if the Rohingya population increases in future to meet the demand.

The Bangladesh government has also distributed 50 sets of carpenter's tools, 45 sets of haircutting kits, 25 sets of van repair kits, and seven sets of electrician's equipment to the Rohingyas [16]. However, proper training is needed for the respective professions because these professions require specialized skills. The international organizations should invest in supporting such small businesses for the Rohingyas in the Bhashan Char. The role of international organizations should be to facilitate the income-generating activities of the government. Only donation is not enough for sustainable job creation and sustainable employment opportunities. Moreover, supports should be given to build a self-sustainable infrastructure in Bhashan Char that go beyond the project-based approach.

Human capitals involve potential skilled workforce, good health, and capacity to adapt to adverse circumstances. The Rohingya men and women can mend fishing nets if they receive proper training. It can be a viable livelihood opportunity for them, particularly for women. They can sell those fishing nets to other fishers and earn revenue to support their families. The women Rohingyas can be involved with handicrafts if they receive training in pottery, artificial flowers, woven jute products, cane basketry, traditional decorative textiles, etc. Government can take initiative to sell those products in national and international markets. Rohingyas can make dresses for them and their neighbors. If they receive sufficient training and instruments, this kind of handicraft activity may change their fortune and entitlement. It shows the potential of an informal economy based in Bhashan Char, which would motivate other Rohingyas to relocate to Bhashan Char.



**Figure 2.** A conceptual framework for sustainable livelihoods and resilience for Rohingya refugees in Bhashan Char (modified after [22,36]).

The government distributed 100 sewing machines to Rohingya women to support their livelihoods. During the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, around 284 refugee women of the Rohingya community were involved in producing face masks, which eventually helped provide free face masks to the community and create income opportunities [37]. The Rohingyas who know the Burmese language and have educational skills can teach their children. BRAC initiated children's education in the island where 400 Rohingya children are enrolled in the learning centers [34]. Teachers have been recruited and BRAC provided a five-day training on the curriculum for this community. Such education would be beneficial for the Rohingya children when they would be repatriated to Myanmar.

Rohingyas can also be engaged in the island's voluntary security activities, which might help improve their social capitals. Training and voluntary workshops can be organized to increase Rohingyas' family kinship, social unity, common rules, social networks, connections, etc. These might help them adapt to any adverse environmental changes such as floods, cyclones, etc. The community people can be engaged in cleaning activities of the island, and this might help them to support their livelihoods. According to [34], the WASH team is carrying out its interventions with 26 clusters. Thirty-five Rohingya participants (30 men and five women) from these clusters are engaged as day-laborers recruited to clean the drains of the community.

### 3.4. Resilience of the Rohingya Community

Resilience is the ability of a community or individual to absorb external shocks and stress [38] and bounce back in the presence of stress or change [39]. However, "social resilience is the ability to cope with and adapt to environmental and social change mediated through appropriate institutions" [38]. Resilience enables a group or individual to strengthen their livelihood capitals through the use of the existing assets or with the help of others. Here, the resilience of the Rohingya community has been used to absorb shocks and sustain their livelihoods such as their knowledge, skill, capability, health, finance, etc., even



after their repatriation to Myanmar. The Rohingya communities currently living in Cox's Bazar have numerous complications regarding livelihood constraints, food shortage, social collision, cultural barrier, financial difficulty, limited health support, movement restriction, etc. The contrast of current livelihood opportunities in Cox's Bazar and Bhashan Char, and resilience opportunities for Rohingya communities in Bhashan Char are discussed below.

#### 3.4.1. Better Shelter

The Rohingya refugee shelter built in Bhashan Char is better than the shelters in Cox's Bazar refugee camp, in terms of facilities, disaster preparedness, and sustainability. The Rohingya refugee camp located in the Cox's Bazar area is mainly built by using corrugated tin, wood, bamboo, tarpaulin, polythene, and plastic (Figure 3). The materials are not sustainable and are prone to natural and anthropogenic disasters. Conversely, the cluster houses in Bhashan Char are concrete-made, where colored tin is used as roofs that are more sustainable and safer in disaster conditions (Figure 4).



**Figure 3.** Rohingya camp houses in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh (photo credit: Sharif A. Mukul).



**Figure 4.** Rohingya camps in Bhashan Char, Bangladesh (photo credit: Md. Touhidul Islam).

### 3.4.2. Better Disaster Preparedness

The current Rohingya camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf are situated in a hill area that is prone to many disasters [40]. Heavy rainfall in the monsoon season destroys the camp houses, temporary roads, and other temporary aid facilities such as health camps, but the camps built in Bhashan Char area are well planned, considering the events of the disasters such as heavy rainfall, flood, cyclone, and storm surge. The cluster houses are 4 m above the ground to avoid flooding [24]. A total of 120 cyclone shelters in 120 shelter stations will protect the Rohingyas from cyclones and other natural disasters. The infrastructures such as the cluster houses, cyclone shelters, and dams are adequate to protect this island and its inhabitants from natural disasters and environmental risks [41].

The cluster houses in Bhashan Char are well designed to prepare against any incidents such as fire. The island also has a fire station to tackle such incidents. In Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, a devastating fire broke out on March 22 2021 in three sites of Rohingya refugee camps, causing the deaths of 11 Rohingyas, with a vast majority with mild injuries [42]. It also caused internal displacement of 45,000 Rohingyas and damaged around 10,000 shelters [42].

Though the international community has rising concerns about the safety and security of the Rohingya community on the island due to its projected climatic vulnerabilities [14], Bhashan Char has better disaster preparedness management compared to the other coastal regions where Bangladeshi communities reside. The number of cyclone shelters and the height of the cluster house are higher than the conventional house structure of coastal Bangladesh, for example, Rangabali and Kalapara of Patuakhali district, Nijhum Dwip Island, etc. [24]. The spatiotemporal and geophysical analysis show that even a 10–15 feet high cyclone will not severely affect the Bhashan Char, and rehabilitation there is a safer option [43].

### 3.4.3. Crime and Security Issues

Rohingyas are increasingly engaged in various criminal activities, such as drug dealing, arm trading, robberies, rape, killing, and human trafficking, in Cox's Bazar makeshift area [44]. Recently, on September 29, 2021, the Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights (ARSPH) leader, Mohibullah, was shot and killed inside the camp by an unidentified gunman [45]. Enforcing laws inside the huge chaotic camp is near impossible, resulting in increased crime rate. The children of the Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar, especially girls, are at risk of human trafficking, child labor, child marriage, gender-based violence, and sexual abuse [46,47]. A Rohingya refugee in Cox's Bazar camp stated that though their safety here in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, is better than Myanmar, their overall condition is the same as Myanmar in terms of food security, inadequate education, medical facility, insufficient water and sanitation facilities, poor living conditions, and safety of women [48]. Conversely, the Bhashan Char has adequate sanitation and water facilities with the technology of rainwater harvesting and groundwater extraction possibility [41]. The island has a separate police station for ensuring the security of the refugees by regular patrolling in small groups [41].

### 3.4.4. Better Opportunity for Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock Rearing

The Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar is like an overpopulated slum area with limited space for agriculture farming or livestock rearing. As the Rohingyas are not allowed to leave the camp area without permission, there is less opportunity for fishing. Conversely, Bhashan Char is a fertile island with open spaces suitable for agriculture and livestock rearing [49]. According to local people in Bhashan Char, cattle rearing and fishing in the pond are good options for the Rohingya refugees living in Bhashan Char [41]. Each cluster has a pond where aquaculture is possible. The island itself is a considerable source of fisheries.

#### 3.4.5. Cultural Resilience

The Rohingya communities in Bhashan Char will have a good chance to withstand their cultural norms by staying in one place together. Their language, social norms, cultural practices, education, etc., can be preserved in Bhashan Char, whereas in Cox's Bazar camp, they have a conflict with the host community due to economic instability, unequal humanitarian aid, lack of political sustainability, etc. [50], and the fear of social tension is on the rise in various camps in Cox's Bazar. There is a fear of the loss of cultural heritage and tradition among Rohingya youth in camps in Cox's Bazar as they do not have much opportunity to practice and preserve their cultural heritage. Congested living conditions and the lack of appropriate social environment are not ideal for preserving and practicing cultural heritage. Thus, Bhashan Char could give a better opportunity for the Rohingyas to observe and practice various traditions and cultural heritage, which may also preserve their identity.

#### 3.4.6. Education and Skill Development Opportunity

Education is an important component for psychological development of children, protecting and safeguarding children in emergencies, providing health and survival messages, increasing social cohesion, and reconstructing socioeconomic and cultural bases [51]. UNHCR, with their partner NGOs, are providing nonformal basic education to the Rohingya refugee children in Cox's Bazar camp but lack of physical space is hampering the scaling-up process [52]. In addition, language barrier, lack of defined curriculum, teaching quality, training of teachers, insufficient funding, and other logistic supports are impeding the basic education process for the Rohingya children [53]. The Rohingya community in Bhashan Char will have better opportunity to practice their language-based education. The island is furnished with infrastructures for both formal and nonformal education where children will be taught Burmese, English, and Arabic [41]. The international bodies should provide appropriate aid for facilitating formal education to the children by establishing their language-based education system. In addition, interested elders can be engaged with nonformal education.

The Bangladesh government has already initiated the skill development program for the Rohingya refugees. Many of them have the chance of self-reliance by starting small businesses. Skill development is particularly important and helpful even after their repatriation. Rohingyas would be able to use the skills in their homeland after repatriation.

#### 3.4.7. Health and Mental Wellbeing

Forced displacement of a community with prolonged displacement places the people at high risk of developing mental disorders [54]. Trauma caused by long-term violent public events may cause deeper silent scars that are difficult to heal. Besides lack of proper WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) facilities and health support in the refugee camp, the physical health of the migrants may deteriorate. Health fitness is an essential factor in the resilience of the migrants. Therefore, adequate and proper health facilities will strengthen their sustainability even after the repatriation. The Bhashan Char has four community clinics and two hospitals with doctors who are entitled to stay there all the time.

### 4. Conclusions

The study explores the livelihood opportunities of the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals moving to the Bhashan Char, Bangladesh. The Rohingya refugees are mostly dependent on the aid provided by the international community. Our review suggests that Bhashan Char could be a better option for Rohingya refugees to live until repatriation, considering the overall condition of the camp as well as sociopolitical, cultural, linguistic, economic, and environment issues raised in Cox's Bazar.

As a short-term strategy, the Bhashan Char can be considered instrumental in lessening the burden on the Cox's Bazar and the surrounding areas, where the Rohingya camps are creating long-term damage to the surrounding areas and their economy and environment. It

is to be understood that Bangladesh is a densely populated country globally. The relocation and transfer of the Rohingya population from camps to Bhashan Char, located in a sparsely populated area, may act as a reserve area. However, this kind of transfer is a short-run solution to an international migration problem closely linked with several nations.

There are debates that the relocation of Rohingyas in Bhashan Char or separation of them from the mainland might pose them in a climate-vulnerable area, especially if the process of repatriation becomes elongated. For the long term, this relocation might result in loss of a sense of community belonging, cultural integrity, and traditional knowledge. For example, one study reported that relocations processes disrupted the social connections among the affected indigenous people living in Chiapas, Mexico, since it did not pay attention to cultural way of life of the relocated people, who were allotted urban-type houses and no space for small farming or cattle grazing [55]. Displacement of indigenous communities or minority groups to more environmentally or climate-vulnerable locations in the United States and Latin America resulted in serious long-term social and economic consequences [55]. Thus, the relocation of Rohingyas in remote Bhashan Char for the long term might trigger general discontent, fuel social tensions, and ultimately provoke other negative outcomes such as crimes that affect generation after generation. The international community should come forward and help the government of Bangladesh so that these people may be helped to be redirected to their own place in the Rakhine state, Myanmar.

As of now, the government of Bangladesh is trying a short-term solution by temporarily shifting Rohingyas from different camps of Cox's Bazar to Bhashan Char. This kind of internal arrangement is viable because it provides them a special arrangement and prepares them well for shifting back to their land in Myanmar eventually. In addition, a careful approach has to be taken in creating livelihood opportunities for the Rohingyas in Bhashan Char, otherwise it could give a wrong message to the wider international community, and even to Myanmar, that Bangladesh has been in the process of integrating the Rohingyas, and Bhashan Char would be the first such example. Therefore, creation of any livelihood opportunity and skill development training have to be aligned with the first priority of repatriating the Rohingyas.

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