The Multidimensionality of Rohingya Crisis

Why in news?

\n\n

The UN Human Rights Commissioner issued a statement recently that was critical of India’s stand in the conflict.

\n\n

What is the Geo-political dimension?

\n\n

\n
- Rohingya crisis is multidimensional and complex.
\n
- It involves not just Myanmar’s internal politics but also the relationship between Myanmar and Bangladesh.
\n
- Myanmar is sandwiched between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh on one side and the ASEAN neighbours – Malaysia & Indonesia on the other, all of which have a large Muslim population.
\n
- There is also the global dimension with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) having taken a very strident role in this whole issue.
\n

\n\n

What is the historical dimension?

\n\n

\n
- The Rohingyas currently under scanner are Muslims belonging to the Rakhine whose origins are believed to be from Bangladesh.
\n
- **Geography -** Rakhine is province located in the north-western coast of Myanmar and is considerably isolated from the rest of the country because of a mountain range in between.

\n

- This region has historically had close interactions with present day Bangladesh.
\n
- Because of all this, people to people interaction was brisk.
\n
- **British Influence** - After the region came under British rule and there was an increased movement of people.
\n
- As the region was fertile, there was rice cultivation on a large scale.
\n
- The British got workers from Chittagong to cultivate the land similar to how the poorest of Indian Tamils were made to work in plantations worldwide.
\n
- Hence, eventually a lot of people settled down there.
\n
- Mosques and pagodas existed side by side and there was a cordial relationship for centuries.
\n
- The 2nd World War saw the first fissures emerge as the Muslims supported the British and the Buddhists supported the Japanese for their respective political aspirations.
\n

\n\n

\n

- **Citizenship -** Most bonded labourers who were forced to sail overseas in colonial times managed to gain the citizenship of their acquired homes on independence.
\n
- But sadly this is not the case with the Rohingyas even now.
\n
- The Rohingyas even petitioned Jinnah in the early 50s to let them join with East Pakistan but that were refused.
\n

\n\n

What is the security dimension?

\n\n

\n

- There has been a problem of growing Islamic radicalisation among the

Rohingyas since the Afghan War of the late 90s.
\n
- It has been established that extremist organisations like Jamaat ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh have strong networks among Rohingyas.
\n
- The Indian intelligence has also discovered Pakistani Army & ISI connections with the ranks of “Arakan Rohingya Army” which is currently involved in an insurgency against Myanmar.
\n
- Also, a lot of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh have been found to be using Rakhine as a springboard to get refugee status in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and even Europe.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Is it right to blame India?

\n\n

\n
- At least 40,000 Rohingyas have been estimated to have entered India and only 16,000 of them are documented.
\n

\n\n

\n
- This has been flagged as a serious security threat that pressured the government to announce the deportation of Rohingya refugees.
\n
- Although Indian has a reputation of welcoming refugees, it is not a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees and the Protocol of 1967.
\n
- While magnanimity is India’s character, it shouldn’t be at the cost of its own security.
\n
- On that note, the UN Human Rights commissioner’s statement that is critical of India’s position isn’t correct.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Business Standard

\n