

The Embodiment of Violence and Liminal Space in Illegality: Rohingya Refugees

Authors : E. Xavier, B. Nandita

Abstract : Rohingyas are an ethnic and religious minority that resides in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. Post the military coup in 1962, Rohingyas have not been recognized as one of the ethnic tribes of Burma under the legislation. They have lost citizenship, education, health care rights, and instantly became illegal immigrants. While the historicization of this conflict is crucial, this paper wants to humanize the Rohingya population's embodiment of violence on three different levels - individual, social, and political. In addition, the study focuses on their liminal existence in refugee camps in Bangladesh and in other parts of the world, such as Malaysia and the United States of America. A multi-medium study, it includes first-hand interviews with the Rohingya community in Wisconsin and Chicago, second-hand interviews from documentaries and past ethnographies from scholars to draw meaningful conclusions about their experience as a community. In the end, it focuses on the group of Rohingyas who have managed to resettle in another country and their transitioning experience. Rohingyas embody violence on their individual, social, and political bodies in different ways. Along with rape, murder, and physical harm, the community also encounters sexually transmitted infections, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and poor mental health. On a social level, they encounter heightened gender discrimination, work industry shifting, and immense, shared emotional pain. As for their political body, the news media and journalism industry uses their bodies for purposes that benefit both parties and flirts with a tone of sensationalism in their reporting. In addition, the Rohingya community fluctuates with the concept of nationality, patriotism, citizenship, and refugee when they think about the future. This study provides a framework that future aid or health programs can use to determine the type of community need and its significance in the Rohingya community.

Keywords : embodiment, liminal, refugee, Rohingya

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