

## Article

# A Depiction of Rohingya Refugees in India's Online News Platforms Following the Shift in the Indian Government's Stance in 2017

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**Abstract:** The media plays a crucial role in framing and representing humanitarian crises, significantly influencing public opinion. The representation of these crises in the media directly impacts the dissemination of information to the global public. One prominent international crisis is the plight of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, which dates back to the 1970s. News about the Rohingya refugees has been a major humanitarian topic on the global stage. The findings of this study reveal that Rohingya refugees are predominantly represented negatively in popular media platforms in India. Negative framing, including dehumanization and misrepresentation, is often employed in political discourse and developments. The portrayal of Rohingya refugees in Indian media frequently resorts to one-dimensional and stereotypical depictions. The frequent occurrence of dehumanization and misrepresentation, identifiable through the use of language and selective reporting practices, indicates a strong alignment of most Indian mainstream media with the government's position. However, it is noteworthy that some platforms maintain a critical perspective. The portrayal of Rohingya refugees in India's mainstream news outlet's online platforms, such as Hindustan Times Online, NDTV Online, The Times of India Online, and India Today Online, reveals a complex landscape with varying narratives and governmental alignments.



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**Keywords:** Rohingya refugees; India; Indian government's stance in 2017; NDTV online; Hindustan Times Online; The Times of India Online; India Today Online; media framing

## 1. Introduction

The internal conflict in Myanmar and the subsequent Rohingya crisis is one of the primary ongoing conflicts and refugee issues in the world. The conflict has persisted for more than six decades, making it one of the most extensive disputes globally. The root cause of this conflict can be attributed to factors related to ethnicity, religion, and history.

Thus, the international community, comprising entities such as states, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations [1] as well as internal actors, has not succeeded until now in devising a viable pathway towards achieving enduring and sustainable peace in this matter. The Rohingya Muslims have been widely recognized by the United Nations as a highly oppressed minority group on a global scale [2].

Intricate layers of complexities about identity, religion, nationality, and citizenship distinguish the issue of Rohingya history and the crisis of exclusion and injustice that follows. These complexities are particularly pronounced in the context of post-colonial society and how nation-states are conceptualized in the overall South and Southeast Asian region. These factors have led to a significant humanitarian crisis. For several decades, the Rohingyas have endured persistent and organized marginalization, discrimination, disenfranchisement, and violence, including persecution. These actions have been characterized as ethnic cleansing

and genocide by many observers [3]. Being stateless, Rohingya families are deprived of fundamental rights and safeguards, rendering them highly vulnerable to exploitation, as well as incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and mistreatment [4].

The Rohingya population has been subjected to military crackdowns spanning a period of more than five decades, specifically in the years 1978, 1991–1992, 2012, 2015, and 2016–2017. As a result of the prevalence of violence, crackdowns, persecution, and human rights violations perpetrated against the Rohingya population in Myanmar, a significant proportion of them have relocated to countries such as Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, and India [5].

The current population of Rohingyas residing in Myanmar is approximately 484,000, whereas an estimated 947,000 Rohingyas are believed to live in Bangladesh. Furthermore, reports indicate that 350,000 Rohingyas reside in Pakistan, 40,000 in India, 500,000 in Saudi Arabia, 50,000 in the UAE, and 150,000 in Malaysia. Approximately 5000 individuals are residing in Thailand, while approximately 1000 individuals are residing in Indonesia [6].

## 2. Myanmar and Rohingya Refugees

Myanmar is a country situated in the region of Southeast Asia and is geographically situated adjacent to India and Bangladesh in the northwest, and also shares borders with Laos and Thailand. The southern boundary of the region is characterized by a coastal zone that provides views of the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Myanmar's total land area spans approximately 680,000 square kilometers, accommodating a population of roughly 40 million individuals. With a population of 55 million people and more than 100 languages and dialects, Myanmar is a country with a diverse ethnic population. It is home to diverse ethnic groups and a multitude of spoken languages. However, the majority of the population communicates in the official language of Myanmar. It is estimated that there are 135 ethnic groups in Myanmar [7].

Despite the potential for attaining a prominent economic position in Asia, the failure to establish peaceful relations among various ethnic factions has resulted in significant economic setbacks for the country. Following Myanmar's independence, the Buddhist demography has had a dominant influence over the country's legal and administrative affairs. Myanmar has been involved in multiple conflicts with its ethnic minorities, including the Karen, Kachin, and Shan. However, the conflict with the Rohingya minority is distinctive due to its association with the issue of statelessness [8].

Myanmar is characterized by significant ethnic diversity, which has historically posed challenges for governance. The demographic composition of the region comprises a predominant Burman majority alongside seven principal ethnic groups and numerous minor groups. The ethnic minorities are distributed throughout the persistent colonial structure, which consists of seven peripheral states, alongside seven divisions that are exclusively dedicated to the Burman majority. As per the most recent official census conducted in 1983, it was observed that the Buddhist-majority population comprised of 41% ethnic minorities [9].

The Rohingya refugee crisis has significantly strained relations between Myanmar and Bangladesh. Bangladesh endured a severe influx of refugees between 1978 and 2017 due to the brutal expulsion of Rohingya minorities from Myanmar. Despite residing in Myanmar's Arakan state for centuries, Rohingyas have been systematically denied citizenship, as well as fundamental rights such as freedom of movement, marriage, and legal ownership of property or land in their homeland [10]. The refugee crisis precipitated by the Myanmar military regime stemmed from its classification of the Rohingya populace as undocumented migrants, compelling their displacement into Bangladesh under the assertion of Bengali identity. The authorities contested the term "Rohingya," characterizing it as a contemporary construct devised for political, economic, and religious motives [11].

The primary source of internal strife in Myanmar is the conflict between the government, which receives backing from the military, and the anti-government factions, predominantly comprised of ethnic minority groups. The ongoing conflict involves a multi-

tude of significant and pressing concerns, including the perpetration of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya population and the government's refusal to acknowledge the Rohingya as citizens of Myanmar. The official stance regards Rohingya as Bengali ethnic who are residing in Myanmar without legal permission, and as such, they are not eligible for Myanmar citizenship as per the provisions of the Citizenship Law of 1981. The Rohingya have historically faced discriminatory treatment from the Myanmar government with regards to their access to education, religious practices, marriage and family planning, mobility, and other basic rights. The military forces of Myanmar have perpetrated acts of unlawful homicide against individuals of various genders and ages [7].

After gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1948, Myanmar faced significant difficulties, including ongoing armed ethnic conflicts and political turbulence during an extended period of political transformation. In 1962, a military coup led to the formation of a single-party military government, which was influenced by socialist governance principles. This regime persisted for over six decades. Throughout that period, the Burmese military perpetrated a multitude of violations of human rights, including but not limited to homicide, sexual assault, and physical torment, against the Rohingya Muslim community residing within the state. The group was subjected to mass expulsions by the army in 1977 and 1992, which has resulted in a persistent refugee crisis in the neighboring country of Bangladesh. This event has been widely acknowledged. After a period of two years, a significant number of Rohingya individuals were compelled to repatriate to Myanmar.

The process was marred by incidents of disproportionate use of force by the Bangladeshi security personnel and the Burmese troops who were responsible for receiving the Rohingya, leading to fatalities. The repatriated Rohingya were provided with restricted privileges pertaining to their mobility and job opportunities. To this day, a significant number of Rohingyas remain displaced and reliant on international humanitarian assistance, all while enduring severe oppression at the hands of state border guards. The Rohingya's human rights and humanitarian situation is exacerbated by their official status as stateless people. The Rohingya, who currently amount to around one million people, have been legally excluded through the denial of citizenship rights as codified in the citizenship Act of 1982. The Act formally acknowledges 135 ethnic groups as eligible for citizenship.

The Rohingya Muslim community is excluded from the aforementioned list, resulting in the deprivation of complete citizenship privileges due to their "nonindigenous ancestry" as classified by the Burmese government. The historical and contemporary absence of political will to revoke the law can be attributed to the pervasive societal bias against the group. Undoubtedly, the deprivation of Burmese citizenship has led to further instances of inequities and injustices. The Emergency Immigration Act is a Burmese legislation that mandates all citizens to possess National Registration Certificates, serving as an illustrative example of the country's legal framework. The Rohingya, being noncitizens, are only eligible to hold Foreign Registration Cards, which are not accepted by several educational institutions and employers. The government has imposed limitations on the entitlements of individuals to engage in matrimony, possess property, and travel without constraint. These rights are safeguarded by international law for both citizens and non-citizens [2].

The Government of Myanmar (GoM) has endeavored to implement a unifying policy of one nation, one language, and one religion within the nation. Since 2012, the Rohingya in Myanmar have been subjected to persecution that is classified as genocide [12]. The authorities in Myanmar perceive the group as individuals who arrived during the colonial era or as migrants who entered the country illegally after the Second World War from Bangladesh (previously known as Pakistan). They frequently refer to them as Bengali. As of 2018, the Rohingya community constituted one of the most significant groups of individuals without a recognized nationality [13].

The State of Rakhine (also known as Arakan) is situated along the western coast of Myanmar and is recognized as one of the most economically disadvantaged areas within the nation. The total surface area of the subject in question measures 14,200 square miles. According to estimates, the population of Rakhine comprises 3.8 million individuals, among

whom 59.7% follow the Buddhist faith and 35.6% belong to the Rohingya community, while the remaining populace adheres to other religious denominations. The Rohingya community possesses a unique ethnic identity, complete with its own language and cultural practices, and a deep historical association with the Rakhine State. Reportedly in 1978, a large-scale census initiative named Nagamin (Dragon King) was purportedly implemented with the aim of eradicating unauthorized immigrants. The GoM has carried out a severe operation involving the demolition of mosques and historical Islamic educational institutions. The utilization of violent tactics such as brutality, rape, starvation, torture, and murder by Government forces has resulted in the displacement of over 200,000 Rohingya individuals from northern Arakan to Bangladesh. This exodus was prompted by the suffering and trauma experienced by 50 Rohingya individuals who were subjected to these atrocities. Between 1991 and 1992, a significant number of approximately 260,000 Rohingya individuals were displaced from Myanmar and sought refuge in Bangladesh. This marked the second instance of a mass exodus within a 15-year period, with the affected population residing in temporary camps.

The year 2001 witnessed the occurrence of anti-Muslim riots throughout Myanmar, which had a significant impact on Rakhine State and resulted in the forced migration of the Rohingya population [14]. Since 2001, the Government of Myanmar (GoM) has expropriated lands belonging to the Rohingya ethnic minority and compelled them to resettle elsewhere within the nation's borders. During the period spanning from 2008 to 2009, a minimum of 6000 individuals belonging to the Rohingya community endeavored to undertake a maritime voyage towards Malaysia and Thailand.

The year 2012 witnessed an inter-communal conflict that resulted in the complete demise of roughly 240 Rohingya individuals, including minors, and the complete displacement of 140,000 individuals who were compelled to reside in various Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps located in Rakhine State. These camps were characterized by substandard living conditions that were deemed inhumane. During August of 2014, a significant number of approximately 87,000 Rohingya individuals had migrated from Rakhine State to Bangladesh via boat through the Bay of Bengal. Tragically, this event resulted in the loss of approximately 200 lives.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of August 2015, over 143,500 Rohingya individuals continue to be internally displaced in Rakhine [15]. In May 2015, a discovery was made on the border between Thailand and Malaysia of approximately 139 graves believed to contain individuals of Rohingya descent from Myanmar. Since 25 August 2017, over 620,000 Rohingya refugees have sought refuge in established camps located in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. According to the UN News Centre in 2017, the situation has been characterized as a prime illustration of ethnic cleansing [12]. The Rohingya refugee crisis of 2016–2017 is not an occurrence that exists in isolation, but rather represents the culmination of prolonged military operations that have systematically targeted the Rohingya community over the course of the past fifty years [16].

According to the International Development Committee's report in 2018, the number of Rohingya migrants in various countries by the end of March 2018 were as follows: Bangladesh had over 1.1 million migrants, Malaysia had 133,263, Thailand had 102,553, India had 40,000, Pakistan had 55,000, and Indonesia had 1000 [12].

### 3. Rohingya in India

The Rohingya population has sought asylum in multiple countries to evade ethnic discrimination, military aggression, persecution, and human rights abuses in Myanmar. For several decades, a small number of Rohingya refugees have been seeking refuge in India. The Rohingya population has sought asylum in multiple countries to evade ethnic discrimination, military aggression, persecution, and human rights abuses in Myanmar.

The greatest population exodus to India occurred in 2012, following a period of turmoil in Myanmar [17]. According to an official report from India's Ministry of Home Affairs, approximately 40,000 Rohingyas reside within the country. Under the governance of the

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rohingyas have been characterized as “illegal” immigrants and deemed “a threat to national security” [18].

As a significant power in South Asia, India bears the responsibility to adhere to established international standards. However, India does not possess distinct refugee legislation and has not acceded to major international refugee conventions. The absence of a defined asylum law that delineates eligibility criteria has resulted in complexities in determining the status of Rohingya refugees, who have endured severe hardships due to the actions of Myanmar’s military forces, reducing the issue to mere political posturing [19].

The Rohingyas in India are predominantly residing in urban areas such as Hyderabad, Kanpur, Jammu, and the periphery of Delhi [6] and experiences a state of precariousness in their daily lives. The 40,000 Rohingyas who live in India are not considered refugees whilst the country has not ratified the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention. In addition, since 2017, there has been a discernible shift in the position of Indian government [20]. The Rohingya community residing in India were initially accused of providing assistance to terrorist organizations. Subsequently, the Indian police and army began to engage with them in a more overt and confrontational manner [21]. The Rohingya refugees were referred to as “illegal immigrant grants” to India by Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijju in August 2017. He claimed that certain members of the refugee community residing in India were engaged in unlawful conduct, posing a potential threat to the nation. The central government submitted an affidavit to the Supreme Court, characterizing them as a national security risk due to the possibility of radicalization and reaffirming India’s non-compliance with the principle of non-refoulement [20].

The majority of Rohingya refugees in India reside in impoverished circumstances within settlements that resemble slums. The absence of official identification documentation constrains their ability to avail themselves of health, education, and financial amenities. More and more services are linked to the government-issued Aadhaar cards, which have unique identifying numbers. The Rohingya population holds identification documents authorized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which may not always be recognized by governing bodies. In the absence of proper identification, individuals are precluded from accessing formal financial services and participating in the formal workforce. Consequently, individuals are compelled to participate in the informal sector, rendering them susceptible to exploitation. The majority of Rohingya residing in India are employed as daily wage laborers, frequently engaged in activities such as rag picking or construction [17].

The Rohingyas have been forbidden by the Indian authorities from erecting any kind of long-term constructions. This constrains individuals to a limited set of choices, including leasing parcels of land in isolated communities or erecting makeshift dwellings resembling slums, commonly known as “jhuggis”. In rare instances, a few individuals may have the opportunity to lease urban apartments from compassionate property owners; however, such occurrences are exceedingly uncommon. Rohingya people residing in Jhuggis are known to encounter significant levels of adversity. This is due to their engagement in rag picking, which is considered as one of the most dreadful types of informal and low-paying occupations. The Rohingya population is subjected to surveillance practices that can be perceived as a form of harassment, as government officials persistently demand the submission of biodata, paperwork, and fingerprints. According to a statistic, the Rohingyas in India are “foreigners, Muslims, stateless, presumed to be Bangladeshi nationals, illiterate, and impoverished”, and as a result, they are “naturally made illegal, undesirable, the other, a threat, and a nuisance”. The Rohingyas are treated with suspicion wherever they attempt to settle in India [21].

The current BJP government in India has labelled the Rohingya population as terrorists, utilizing the same derogatory term of “illegal Bengali” that is employed by the Myanmar government. In a span of fewer than ten years, the government has deprived the Rohingya refugees of fundamental entitlements, including employment opportunities, educational access, healthcare services, adequate housing, hygienic facilities, and basic human respect.

There appears to be a trend among Indian officials to frequently disregard both international and national legal standards in their interactions with Rohingya refugees. The Indian government has recently discontinued the recognition of UNHCR-issued cards that grant refugee status to the Rohingya population [21].

Since the onset of the violence in Rakhine in August 2017, the current administration under Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has not only obstructed the entry of Rohingya but has also advocated for the forced repatriation of those already within its borders, contrasting sharply with the approaches of earlier governments. One perspective posits that India's current stance towards the Rohingya contains elements of continuity, aligning with its historical reluctance to automatically recognize asylum seekers as refugees. This viewpoint suggests that India has traditionally implemented measures to deter refugees from settling permanently, as exemplified by its treatment of Bangladeshi refugees during the 1971 war. During that period, India provided substantial assistance to Bangladesh but did not classify those fleeing as refugees, thereby facilitating their eventual return post-conflict. A second perspective interprets the current policy as a clear departure from past practices, emphasizing the potential adverse implications for India. This argument contends that framing the Rohingya crisis primarily as a security issue is myopic and may inadvertently exacerbate security challenges, including the potential radicalization of an oppressed community, which could have serious repercussions for India. Critics argue that the problem with India's approach is not the prioritization of security over humanitarian concerns per se, but rather the imprudent and potentially counterproductive manner in which this prioritization is executed. Given its historical commitment to refugee protection, India is urged to transcend narrow domestic political interests and rise to the occasion [22].

Rohingya refugees residing in India are confined to densely populated and hazardous encampments, presenting significant public health concerns. These settlements, located in areas such as Delhi, Hyderabad, Jammu, and Haryana, consist primarily of overcrowded makeshift dwellings vulnerable to fires and other health hazards. The Indian government neglects to address severe illnesses resulting from these living conditions, denies even urgent medical care, and fails to protect the Rohingyas from violence perpetrated by both state and non-state actors, particularly in Jammu and Delhi. The government exhibits marked discrimination against the Rohingya population, providing them with substantially less support compared to other refugee groups, such as Sri Lankan Tamils. Furthermore, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, designed to expedite citizenship and grant access to services for certain persecuted minorities, explicitly excludes the Rohingyas from its provisions [23]. Rohingya refugees in India are experiencing a range of health challenges such as tuberculosis, malnutrition, and communicable diseases. According to 2020 WHO statistics, a significant proportion of Rohingya refugee children (54%), women (60%), and pregnant women (10%) are currently residing in India. Nutritional deficiencies are notably prevalent among this demographic, particularly affecting children. Studies conducted within Rohingya refugee camps reveal high rates of anemia among children aged six to 59 months, with one-fourth of this group suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) [24].

In October of 2018, a group of seven Rohingya men were repatriated to Myanmar from the Manipur border. Additionally, in January of 2019, a family of five was deported from India. These actions have been documented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2018 and 2019. After that, a petition was submitted to the Supreme Court of India protesting the repatriation of the Rohingyas, and E. Tendayi Achiume, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary types of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and associated intolerance, offered to help. She cites the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child as the conventions that India would be in violation of if it deported the Rohingya [20].

In 2020, the Rohingya community experienced something major that instilled profound fear within them. This emergence pertained to the new citizenship law of India, which

involved an amendment to India's Citizenship Act of 1955. The amendment granted citizenship rights exclusively to non-Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh [21]. The policies of the current administration, which are extremely divisive and sectarian and wish to build a "Hindu-Rashtra" by expelling everyone else, particularly the Muslims, are what is fueling this mania of labelling the Rohingyas "terrorists." India is unwilling to recognize the Rohingya outside their religious identity. The visibility of the recently enacted citizenship law was also apparent amidst controversy [3].

#### 4. Media Representation of Rohingyas

The media's ability to select and present news stories plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and setting the public agenda [25]. Moreover, the media and the manner in which narratives are portrayed and presented play a crucial role in shaping and communicating collective memory. They are instrumental in framing occurrences, disseminating information, and offering a platform for public discourse [26].

Numerous studies have shown that the mass media has assumed a pivotal role as a primary conduit of information pertaining to global issues and affairs. Furthermore, different studies showed how media and social media has changed and affected the audience opinions and impressions in humanitarian, political issues, and crises [27–31].

Over the last several decades, communication institutions have grown to be very important to global economic and political affairs and have radically changed the dynamics and sources of influence and authority on a national and international scale. As well, the confluence of transformative developments in the realms of politics and communication has given rise to a new governance structure characterized by media dominance. Lugar has used the term "medialism" to describe this system. Studying media representation including images of refugees caused by war is an essential part of the social psychology of war and peace [32].

Presently, the Rohingyas are widely recognized as being among the most marginalized and oppressed minority groups globally. Most media outlets and scholars have referred to them as the "nowhere people" or the "new boat people of Asia" [3]. The media landscape may have undergone changes in the narration and representation of the Rohingya following the declaration made by Rajnath Singh, then-federal home minister, that the Rohingya are categorized as illegal immigrants rather than refugees or asylum-seekers.

As posited by [33], media representations within news media have the capacity to evoke cognitive and emotional reactions from viewers with more efficiency and immediacy when juxtaposed with textual content. The reason for this phenomenon is because the cognitive load associated with processing pictures is lower, which tends to make viewers more receptive to accepting the frames with less skepticism. However, it is important to note that the magnitude of these effects is frequently contingent upon the audience's prior knowledge. The same basic principles also explain why frames are easier to remember than verbal ones. However, there is a vacuum of scholarly research examining the media representation of Rohingya refugees in the Indian media.

Prior to the cessation of prepublication press censorship in 2012, Myanmar was recognized as having one of the most stringent news media landscapes globally. Several generations of Myanmar's population have not had the opportunity to encounter an independent domestic press. Myanmar was a belated participant in the Internet revolution. In Myanmar, a significant number of individuals were introduced to Internet technology through their smartphones, utilizing Facebook as opposed to a desktop computer and a search engine such as Google or Yahoo. The exploitation of new media freedoms by Myanmar nationalists to propagate anti-Muslim and anti-Rohingya sentiments has garnered global scrutiny.

The social media platform, Facebook, has garnered significant usage among nationalist groups and has faced notable scrutiny for its perceived sluggishness in removing objectionable material. After the liberalization of media in Myanmar, the general populace has been exposed to a consistent flow of messages that are anti-Rohingya in nature, emanating from sources such as Buddhist nationalists, political figures, and the military. The correlation

between violent attacks against the Rohingya in reality and negative messages propagated on social media is evident [34].

The algorithms employed by Meta, the owner of Facebook, and their pursuit of profit without due regard for potential consequences have been identified as significant factors that contributed to the perpetration of atrocities by the Myanmar military against the Rohingya population in 2017 [35]. Although non-state actors have been criticized for their use of extreme speech in Myanmar, with Facebook being specifically singled out for its role in promoting such speech, the active contribution of official Myanmar towards the mainstreaming of anti-Rohingya speech and attitudes has frequently been disregarded. The modus operandi of Myanmar's state-controlled media in covering issues related to Rakhine State plays a role in shaping the country's domestic political landscape, which in turn facilitates the continued oppression of marginalized communities such as the Rohingya. The Global New Light of Myanmar (GNLM), an official media outlet in Myanmar, can be viewed as an extreme form of speech in two distinct ways. Firstly, it portrays the situation in Rakhine State as one where the Myanmar authorities consistently provide developmental assistance and economic benefits to the state and its inhabitants, while the Myanmar population is under attack from Muslim terrorists and, by extension, members of the Rohingya community. Furthermore, it fails to acknowledge the heinous acts carried out by the Myanmar military towards Rohingya communities, leading to the most significant forced displacement in the region since the end of World War II. It also overlooks the prolonged history of deliberate mistreatment and infringement of human rights against the Rohingya minority. The GNLM prioritizes security concerns in Rakhine State, along with the radical rhetoric of nationalist parties. This strategy may cause readers to perceive Myanmar as being targeted by Muslims, who are allegedly involved in a concerted campaign of terrorism in the area. As a result, the GNLM may justify and explain the actions of the Myanmar military in Rakhine State as a reasonable response to this perceived danger. The GNLM, a government-controlled media source, provides the people of Myanmar with guidelines on acceptable forms of communication that are unlikely to result in punishment from the authorities. The GNLM played a pivotal role in fostering an atmosphere that condoned and facilitated nationalist hate speech, specifically targeting marginalized communities such as the Rohingya. This, in turn, emboldened and sanctioned the military's systematic efforts to purge ethnic minorities from Myanmar [34].

Myanmar has a total of five daily newspapers that are operated by the state. Myanmar Alinn is the primary official state-run newspaper that disseminates government propaganda. It holds the distinction of being the most enduringly published newspaper in circulation within the nation. The GNLM is an English-language newspaper in Myanmar that primarily disseminates government announcements and serves the foreign staff working at embassies, international organizations, and companies in the country. Its content bears a striking resemblance to that of Myanmar Alinn. Both representations portray the Rohingya as a uniform and dynamic collective of offenders who pose a menace to the stability of the nation. The GNLM has made derogatory comparisons between the Rohingya and "detestable human fleas" on 26 November 2016, and has proposed a solution that involves removing the "thorn" those pierces, as stated on 31 October 2016. The aforementioned was also published in the periodical known as Myanmar Alinn on the 30th of October in the year 2016 [36].

The utilization of international media coverage is a significant mechanism for initiating the mobilization process and shaping the opinions of the international community. This is achieved by highlighting severe violations of human rights in geographically distant regions. Following the occurrences in August 2017, which have been identified by the United Nations as possessing the characteristics of genocide, distressing individual testimonies and the extensive magnitude of merciless infringements of human rights promptly prompted global media coverage. The media was dominated by aerial footage of villages that had been destroyed by fire, as well as images of individuals making their way towards the horizon in search of sanctuary in neighboring countries. During this time, there was a

significant increase in online publications, with the New York Times experiencing a 408% rise and the Guardian experiencing a 295% increase [37].

However, during the mass exodus of the Rohingya people that began in 2012, when more than 200,000 people, mostly women, children, and the elderly left their homes, lands, and villages to escape the brutality and persecution of the Burmese military, renowned international media outlets like the BBC and CNN were conspicuously absent. Following their second exodus wave from Arakan State in August 2017, the Rohingya population settled in refugee camps in Bangladesh. This event garnered significant media attention, with various news outlets such as Al Jazeera, Sky News, BBC, and CNN reporting on the stories and news of the Rohingya refugees. The present news stories fail to adequately explain the historical causes of the war that led to the Rohingya humanitarian disaster. The media's portrayal of the crisis fails to provide a comprehensive sociopolitical analysis and instead focuses on the dramatic experiences of those impacted, often highlighting feelings of loss, sorrow, and helplessness. The presentation of news stories can evoke empathy and garner support. However, without a comprehensive analysis of the historical and political backdrop of a problem, viable solutions may not be discerned. Increasing awareness and galvanizing international public sentiment to support human rights and justice are essential measures in addressing such matters.

The mobile audiovisual communication applications, Imo and WhatsApp, were utilized in a covert manner to record instances of persecution and violence perpetrated by extremist Buddhists and military personnel from Burma. The dissemination of video footage depicting incidents of homicide, sexual assault, and immolation was facilitated through mobile applications and subsequently transmitted to social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. The Rohingya community predominantly utilizes Facebook as their primary social networking platform for communication and interaction pertaining to their pertinent concerns. The younger generation, particularly, employs their personal accounts to disseminate information regarding their predicament and refute the allegations made by the Burmese authorities that portray the Rohingya as terrorists and perpetrators of aggression [38].

The Rohingya population has been accused of being responsible for the dissemination of illnesses within Bangladesh. Media sources also present the Rohingya crisis as an enduring predicament that will impose a sustained strain on Bangladesh [39]. The Rohingya population was also portrayed as a perceived danger to the receiving nation. In numerous instances, the media cites local individuals who attribute the erosion of their language, cultural identities, local habits, and values to the Rohingya. A marked contrast between the indigenous population and refugees has emerged, leading to the formation of a "us versus them" mentality, despite notable similarities in language and religious affiliation between the two groups [40].

In some instances, media coverage of the Rohingya crisis has been reported to insinuate that the Rohingyas bear responsibility for the economic crisis in Bangladesh. The phenomenon of a baby boom was noted roughly a year subsequent to the onset of the crisis, however, its occurrence diminished in frequency over time. This statement posits a narrative that suggests that due to high birth rates among refugees, their population will exceed that of the local population, resulting in an increased burden on Bangladesh. Additionally, it is suggested that all newborn children will be granted Bangladeshi citizenship. The discourse surrounding the security threat emerged subsequent to several months of the crisis, and the media periodically reexamines the matter. With the exception of right-wing news sources, the media employed the security framing as a customary approach to reporting. A prevailing discourse exists in Bangladesh wherein the Rohingya refugee population is attributed with the responsibility of drug trafficking within the country.

Although anti-Rohingya sentiment has long existed in Bangladesh, the initial newspaper coverage in the country was largely supportive of the Rohingya. During that period, the Rohingyas were portrayed by the media as individuals who were subjected to victimization due to the inhumane policies of the Myanmar government and the brutality of its armed forces [39].

According to the study of [25], notable variations exist in the approach adopted by the media outlets of India, China, and Bangladesh while reporting on the Rohingya crisis. The media coverage in China and Bangladesh is largely aligned with the foreign policy objectives of their respective nations, as there appears to be a widespread agreement on this matter. Notwithstanding the prevailing policy ambiguity, the Indian media assumed a dualistic stance of critique and advocacy in its coverage of the crisis. Aung San Suu Kyi faced severe criticism in the media of both India and Bangladesh for her perceived inaction and alleged reliance on political gambits. According to reports from Bangladeshi media, the Myanmar military has been characterized as barbaric, while Chinese media outlets have commended the Myanmar military for their handling of the situation in Rakhine. The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army has been classified as an insurgent group by the Bangladeshi media, whereas the Chinese media has labelled them as terrorists. The coverage provided by Bangladeshi newspapers was primarily centered on the provision of multilateral and international aid, as well as the hardships experienced by individuals as a result of the conflict. In contrast, Indian and Chinese media outlets exhibited a different focus.

Madhura Chakraborty has observed in her study that there are two discernible strands of reportage on the Rohingya issue in India, as evidenced by news reports since 2012. The Indian media's coverage of the crisis in Myanmar exhibits an unwaveringly critical stance towards the Myanmar government. Regardless of not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the "calculated hospitality" of the Indian state towards displaced communities is extensively documented. The ethics of international law and the needs of hospitality directly meet with the post-9/11 surveillance regime, causing a schizophrenic swing between claiming sovereign power and showing hospitality. This has been replicated in the media. Numerous reports have illustrated how concerns regarding security within the realm of national discourse took precedence over any humanitarian considerations. In the year 2013, the Rohingya community garnered significant media attention on two distinct situations. The predicament of the Rohingya community gained significant attention in India subsequent to the rescue of a group of 109 Rohingya individuals by the coast guard in the northern Andaman region in March 2013. In July 2013, another instance occurred within the context of the serial blasts that took place in Bodh Gaya. Allegedly carried out by the Indian Mujahideen organization, the aforementioned incident was perceived as a response to the mistreatment of the Rohingya Muslim minority by the Buddhist community in Myanmar. In the aftermath of the Khagragarh explosion in 2014, the discourse surrounding the Rohingya in India centered on the notion of "Muslim infiltrators" undermining the integrity of a Hindu nation, which followed a prior narrative of Bangladeshi infiltrators threatening national unity. Despite sympathetic portrayals of the Rohingya people in various reports, there has been a consistent influx of Rohingya Muslims into West Bengal through Bangladesh, which has raised concerns for the security establishment. The Deccan Herald was the sole publication that consistently presented India's inadequate handling of refugees in a negative manner [41].

## 5. Methodological and Theoretical Frameworks

### 5.1. Methodological Framework

#### 5.1.1. The Problem Statement and Questions

In August 2017, a significant number of Rohingya were compelled to flee Myanmar's Rakhine State due to armed conflicts, widespread brutality, and severe human rights abuses. Many embarked on strenuous journeys through jungles and perilous sea voyages across the Bay of Bengal to seek refuge in Bangladesh, where over 960,000 have taken shelter, mainly in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest refugee camp [4]. The United Nations has labeled the Rohingya as "the world's most persecuted minority" [42]. Following the outbreak of violence in Rakhine in August 2017, the government of India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has not only hindered the entry of Rohingya refugees but has also supported their forced repatriation, in stark contrast to the policies of previous governments. This study aims to analyze the portrayal of Rohingya refugees in India

in light of the government's altered stance towards them. It specifically examines the representation of the Rohingya on the online platforms of four mainstream Indian media outlets from 1 August 2017, to 10 October 2017.

The study aims to answer these questions:

- To what extent did the depiction disseminated in media comply with the shift in the Indian government's position regarding the Rohingya community since 2017?
- Through what frames have Rohingya refugees predominantly been represented in the popular online platforms of India?
- Was there any dehumanization or misrepresentation of Rohingyas in certain frames used by various platforms in relation to the political discourse and developments that took place?

### 5.1.2. Study Significance

The significance of this study lies in its examination of the representation of refugees in the media, since it has a substantial impact on forming public attitudes about policies and the distribution of humanitarian aid.

### 5.2. Theoretical Framework

The media significantly influences public perception by framing messages about specific groups, such as refugees. Certain themes are more frequently highlighted by the media than others. According to [43], a frame is a structured way of presenting information that guides public understanding of social events. He introduced the concept of framing in his influential work in 1974, suggesting that the way a communication is presented and structured can shape the audience's thoughts and actions towards that message.

Framing, as a theoretical concept, posits that the way news events are presented in the mass media can have a systematic impact on how news readers comprehend these events [44]. Entman said that news frames can be understood in two ways: as principles of information processing stored in the minds of the audience (audience frame) and as characteristics of the news content itself (news frame) [45]. He also explained the functioning of frames, stating that they can assist in defining specific problems, interpreting causes, making moral evaluations, and providing treatment recommendations. He argues that frames selectively highlight certain aspects of reality while concealing others, thus resulting in divergent audience responses) [46].

News institutions employ various linguistic and visual elements, such as metaphors, to describe and shape distinct subjects or occurrences [47] posits that press use framing as a functional tool to efficiently organize and present large volumes of information to their viewers. Statelessness deprives Rohingya families of fundamental rights and safeguards, increasing their susceptibility to subjugation, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and mistreatment [4]. These depictions have the potential to influence people's reasoning and attitudes towards these matters [48].

McCombs and Shaw's seminal work in 1968, which laid the foundation for agenda-setting theory, demonstrated a correlation between the issues emphasized by the media and the heightened public attention to these matters. The process of prioritization entails the shift of emphasis and focus from the media's agenda to the public's agenda. Populist administrations and symbolic elites play a significant role in shaping the media's agenda. According to [49], these actors are instrumental in the formulation and perpetuation of anti-refugee narratives.

Politicians must elucidate the circumstances surrounding the arrival of new immigrants at the borders. Right-wing populism exhibits certain discursive patterns, such as portraying immigrants as "others" or "invaders", which, as [50] describes, leads to a "victim-perpetrator reversal". When governments, as symbolic elites, adopt a racist stance, they become the primary source of racial biases and beliefs [51]. This phenomenon becomes evident when reflected in the media, which then contributes to the perpetuation of negative perceptions of specific groups through stigmatizing frames. Numerous studies

have explored the impact of anti-immigration rhetoric on refugees and immigrant communities, including works by [52–56]. Displaced individuals, whether classified as migrants or refugees, are represented in the media through four distinct lenses. According to [57], the most negative portrayals depict these individuals as potential burdens or threats to the receiving country [58–60]. Conversely, the most passive depictions cast them as victims, which can evoke sympathetic responses from viewers regarding refugees and immigrants. Additionally, they are sometimes depicted in a normalized context [61,62].

The exploration of underlying principles, viewpoints, partialities, and presumptions within a given text, specific field of discussion, or social behaviors in a particular cultural context, along with an analysis of the motivations and power dynamics that underpin these elements. As outlined by [63], the fundamentals of “Qualitative Analysis of Ideas and Ideological Content” offer a unique methodological perspective. An integrated analytical framework, termed the “VDP-triad”, is introduced as a foundational model. This framework is based on the premise that all social and political communication and language are composed of three essential cognitive dimensions: values (V), descriptions (D), and prescriptions (P). These dimensions are linked through semi-logical, disputative sequences of rational deliberations known as VDP-triads. These triads imbue social and political communication—whether textual or oral—with a directive influence, thereby imparting ideological or political significance.

### 5.3. The Methods and Procedures

In this study, qualitative approach was employed through thematic analysis methodology to analyze dominant themes featured in the studied news sites from 1 August 2017, to 10 October 2017. The aim is to elucidate the prevalent descriptions of Rohingya refugees in these media outlets. The units of analysis will be each news item published on those media platforms discussing Rohingya refugees.

The thematic analysis looked at how the four online platforms framed Rohingya refugees related news to report on the Rohingya refugee crisis in 2017. This analysis will be conducted with consideration of the evolving stance of the Indian government towards the Rohingya community since 2017.

The coding scheme is deductive, based on the theory of framing, and also inductive, based on the data themselves.

The gathered news items were coded and broken down into manageable codes categories for analysis. The texts were coded into code categories, the codes can then be further categorized into “dominant themes” to summarize data even further. Understanding these prevailing dominant themes holds significant importance, as they shape the public perception prevalent in media portrayals of refugees. Exposure to such prevailing depictions carries a potential peril of adversely influencing societal perceptions [64,65].

### 5.4. The Sample of the Study

Hindustan Times, NDTV online, The Times of India online, and India Today online were selected for the analysis as shown in Table 1. These outlines were chosen based on being the most extensively viewed online sources in India.

**Table 1.** The news about Rohingyas published in the selected sample in the mentioned period.

Hindustan Times	NDTV Online	The Times of India Online	India Today Online
<p>India in talks with Myanmar, Bangladesh to deport 40,000 Rohingya Muslims 11 August 2017 <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-in-talks-with-myanmar-bangladesh-to-deport-40-000-rohingya-muslims/story-lhk5mhZln1IjnxsnQ7MfVJ.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-in-talks-with-myanmar-bangladesh-to-deport-40-000-rohingya-muslims/story-lhk5mhZln1IjnxsnQ7MfVJ.html</a></p>	<p>Rohingya Population Shot Up Four-Fold In 2 Yrs To 40000, Parliament Told 10 August 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/40-000-rohingyas-living-illegally-in-india-says-government-1735673">https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/40-000-rohingyas-living-illegally-in-india-says-government-1735673</a></p>	<p>Deporting Rohingyas: Rajasthan police confused over Centre's guidelines 15 August 2017 <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/deporting-rohingyas-raj-police-confused-over-centres-guidelines/articleshow/60065235.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/deporting-rohingyas-raj-police-confused-over-centres-guidelines/articleshow/60065235.cms</a></p>	<p>Who are Rohingya Muslims and why govt wants to deport 40,000 of them? 10 August 2017 <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/rohingya-muslim-india-myanmar-deportation-1029075-2017-08-10">https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/rohingya-muslim-india-myanmar-deportation-1029075-2017-08-10</a></p>

Table 1. Cont.

Hindustan Times	NDTV Online	The Times of India Online	India Today Online
<b>Deport illegal immigrants like Rohingyas due to security threat: Centre to states</b> 13 August 2017 <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/deport-illegal-immigrants-like-rohingyas-due-to-security-threat-centre-to-states/story-5tdXTBkm5XEB6IxiGPrCWN.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/deport-illegal-immigrants-like-rohingyas-due-to-security-threat-centre-to-states/story-5tdXTBkm5XEB6IxiGPrCWN.html</a>	<b>India Should Not Forcibly Return Ethnic Rohingya Refugees: Human Rights Watch</b> 17 August 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-should-not-forcibly-return-ethnic-rohingya-refugees-human-rights-watch-1738742">https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/india-should-not-forcibly-return-ethnic-rohingya-refugees-human-rights-watch-1738742</a>	<b>Rohingyas say compulsions drove them to take shelter in J and K</b> 20 August 2017 <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/rohingyas-say-compulsions-drove-them-to-take-shelter-in-jk/articleshow/60145418.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/rohingyas-say-compulsions-drove-them-to-take-shelter-in-jk/articleshow/60145418.cms</a>	<b>Will rather die in India than return to Myanmar: Rohingya refugees on deportation reports</b> 18 August 2017 <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/fyi/story/rohingya-muslim-refugee-crisis-myanmar-prosecuting-india-deporting-rohingyas-living-illegally-1030259-2017-08-18">https://www.indiatoday.in/fyi/story/rohingya-muslim-refugee-crisis-myanmar-prosecuting-india-deporting-rohingyas-living-illegally-1030259-2017-08-18</a>
<b>India aims to deport all Rohingya Muslims, even those with UN registration: Govt</b> 14 August 2017 <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-aims-to-deport-all-rohingya-muslims-even-those-with-un-registration-govt/story-UhzebiCZ3zBt6qu8uj9iN.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-aims-to-deport-all-rohingya-muslims-even-those-with-un-registration-govt/story-UhzebiCZ3zBt6qu8uj9iN.html</a>	<b>At Least 71 Killed in Myanmar as Violence Erupts in Rakhine State</b> 25 August 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/at-least-71-killed-in-myanmar-as-violence-erupts-in-rakhine-state-1742069">https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/at-least-71-killed-in-myanmar-as-violence-erupts-in-rakhine-state-1742069</a>	<b>Why India is refusing refuge to Rohingyas</b> 6 September 2017 <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/why-india-is-refusing-refuge-to-rohingyas/articleshow/60386974.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/why-india-is-refusing-refuge-to-rohingyas/articleshow/60386974.cms</a>	<b>Agra: Braj region's Muslims come out in support of ...</b> 8 September 2017 <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/rohingya-muslim-crisis-myanmar-braj-muslims-pm-modi-1040827-2017-09-08">https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/rohingya-muslim-crisis-myanmar-braj-muslims-pm-modi-1040827-2017-09-08</a>
<b>Who are the Rohingya, why are they called 'security threat' and 'nowhere people'</b> 18 September 2017 <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/the-world-s-most-persecuted-community-who-are-the-rohingyas/story-PgNwZ4URpdpMpZXNryw88L.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/the-world-s-most-persecuted-community-who-are-the-rohingyas/story-PgNwZ4URpdpMpZXNryw88L.html</a>	<b>In The Heart of Delhi, 'Illegal' Rohingyas Have Long-Term Indian Visas</b> 17 September 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/in-the-heart-of-delhi-illegal-rohingyas-have-long-term-indian-visas-1751386#:~:text=But%20NDTV%20found%20Rohingya%20Muslims,both%20in%20south%20east%20Delhi">https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/in-the-heart-of-delhi-illegal-rohingyas-have-long-term-indian-visas-1751386#:~:text=But%20NDTV%20found%20Rohingya%20Muslims,both%20in%20south%20east%20Delhi</a>	<b>Rohingya are human, too: How we can deal with persecuted refugees and still keep India safe</b> 29 September 2017 <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/The-underage-optimist/rohingya-are-human-too-how-we-can-deal-with-persecuted-refugees-and-still-keep-india-safe/">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/The-underage-optimist/rohingya-are-human-too-how-we-can-deal-with-persecuted-refugees-and-still-keep-india-safe/</a>	<b>Rohingya crisis: Sikh volunteers go out of their way to help stranded refugees fleeing Myanmar</b> 12 September 2017 <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/fyi/story/sikh-rohingya-refugees-khalsa-aid-bangladesh-myanmar-border-1043257-2017-09-12">https://www.indiatoday.in/fyi/story/sikh-rohingya-refugees-khalsa-aid-bangladesh-myanmar-border-1043257-2017-09-12</a>
<b>Tracing history: Tension between Rohingya Muslims, Buddhists date back to British rule</b> 16 September 2017 <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/tracing-history-tension-between-rohingya-muslims-buddhists-date-back-to-british-rule/story-9mo9eTjOaj4JQmXGef0BHL.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/tracing-history-tension-between-rohingya-muslims-buddhists-date-back-to-british-rule/story-9mo9eTjOaj4JQmXGef0BHL.html</a>	<b>'We Will Kill You All': Rohingya Villagers in Myanmar Beg for Safe Passage</b> 18 September 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/we-will-kill-you-all-rohingya-villagers-in-myanmar-beg-for-safe-passage-1751743">https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/we-will-kill-you-all-rohingya-villagers-in-myanmar-beg-for-safe-passage-1751743</a>		<b>Dethroned Myanmar beauty queen to India Today</b> 6 October 2017 <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/myanmar-beauty-queen-stripped-of-title-rohingyas-shwe-eain-si-arsa-1059196-2017-10-06">https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/myanmar-beauty-queen-stripped-of-title-rohingyas-shwe-eain-si-arsa-1059196-2017-10-06</a>
	<b>Freedom Fighter or Curse? The Man Behind the Rohingya insurgency</b> 22 September 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/freedom-fighter-or-curse-the-man-behind-the-rohingya-insurgency-1753662">https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/freedom-fighter-or-curse-the-man-behind-the-rohingya-insurgency-1753662</a>		
	<b>'Deplore Current Measures in India to Deport Rohingyas'</b> 11 September 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/deplore-current-measures-in-india-to-deport-rohingyas-un-body-1748782">https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/deplore-current-measures-in-india-to-deport-rohingyas-un-body-1748782</a>		
	<b>'Myanmar Will Ensure Secure Environment For All Communities', Says Aung San Suu Kyi: Highlights.</b> 19 September 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/live-aung-san-suu-kyis-key-speech-on-myanmar-rohingya-crisis-today-1752054">https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/live-aung-san-suu-kyis-key-speech-on-myanmar-rohingya-crisis-today-1752054</a>		
	<b>Manipur Awaits to Deport Rohingya Prisoners from Imphal jail</b> 15 September 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/manipur-awaits-to-deport-rohingya-prisoners-from-imphal-jail-1750939">https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/manipur-awaits-to-deport-rohingya-prisoners-from-imphal-jail-1750939</a>		
	<b>Myanmar Beauty Queen Dethroned 'After Posting Rohingya Video'</b> 4 October 2017 <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/myanmar-beauty-queen-dethroned-after-posting-rohingya-video-1758318">https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/myanmar-beauty-queen-dethroned-after-posting-rohingya-video-1758318</a>		

#### - Hindustan Times

HT Media Ltd., a leading media corporation and among India's leading media houses, is a 78-year-old publishing entity with a substantial workforce exceeding 4500 employees. It is recognized for its flagship publication, Hindustan Times, which stands as India's largest

circulated English daily. With a circulation surpassing 3 million copies and a readership extending to 8 million individuals across the nation, Hindustan Times holds a significant presence in the Indian media landscape [66].

#### - **NDTV**

NDTV, or New Delhi Television, originated as a content provider for Doordarshan during a period of state monopoly in India's television industry. It was initially a content provider for Doordarshan under state monopoly, commenced broadcasting with "The World This Week" in 1988. It evolved into a 24-h news channel and introduced the concept of "live news" broadcasting, a departure from the pre-recorded content prevalent at the time, which garnered attention and apprehension, notably from the Prime Minister's Office during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure. The channel's choice to air news live on its inaugural day caused alarm among government authorities, leading to modifications such as a 10-minute delay in transmission to alleviate concerns. Upon transitioning to Rupert Murdoch's STAR TV network, NDTV maintained operational standards, including the broadcasting of live events with a slight delay. The trip of this parallels wider industry patterns, such as the increasing number of satellite channels and specialized news networks. Furthermore, the transformation of NDTV from a broadcaster focused on public service to a profit-driven institution highlights the ever-changing nature of media corporations in modern times.

The channel's strategic focus on infotainment, exemplified by shows like "The Big Fight," represents a shift away from conventional news coverage towards a more entertainment-oriented approach. The transition mentioned highlights the coming together of media, entertainment, and economic goals in influencing modern broadcasting methods [67]. During the last 25 years, it has launched impactful campaigns that tackle social concerns and promote change, leading to government action and legislative reform. NDTV 24 × 7, the main channel of NDTV, is widely acknowledged as one of the most prominent news stations in the country, with the greatest numbers in terms of audience. Additionally, NDTV has demonstrated a commitment to corporate social responsibility through various initiatives [68].

#### - **The Times of India**

Founded in 1838, The Times of India is renowned as the eldest English-language newspaper in India. It has consistently targeted the English-educated intelligentsia since its inception and remains a prominent choice among businessmen, academics, bureaucrats, and the other strata of educated urban populace. As the preeminent press entity in India, it boasts six editions and enjoys a circulation of 573,552, surpassing that of The Times of London (441,000) but trailing behind the New York Times (1 million). Renowned for its comprehensive coverage, distinguished writing, and editorial independence, The Times of India has garnered international recognition, earning its inclusion in "The World's Great Dailies: Profiles of Fifty Newspapers" [69].

#### - **India Today**

Established in 1975 as a response to the Emergency, the India Today Group is a conglomerate encompassing diverse media enterprises. Primarily operating within the realm of broadcast and media production, the group comprises several subsidiary companies engaged in various facets of media production and dissemination.

## 6. Findings and Discussion

The findings show the most effective words and phrases used in the selective sample and the language used to describe the Rohingya Muslims. The articles of the **Hindustan Times** shown in Table 2 predominantly highlighted the government's concerns regarding security threats posed by Rohingya Muslims. They frequently use terms like "illegal migrants", "illegal Bangladeshi migrants", and "identify and deport", aligning with the government's narrative, can contribute to the dehumanization of Rohingya refugees by reducing their identity to their legal status. The description of Rohingyas crossing into "**Hindu-majority India**" and "**Rohingya Muslims**" in the title and content, using the image of Rohingya

students attending madrasas (an Islamic religious education system), implies a religious angle to their migration, which could reflect the government's stance on the issue.

**Table 2.** Hindustan Times.

<b>India In Talks with Myanmar, Bangladesh to Deport 40,000 Rohingya Muslims (11 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Emphasis on <b>protecting India's borders and sovereignty</b> by deporting illegal immigrants.	-Protecting India's borders -Sovereignty	Nationalism
Framing the deportation as a measure to address <b>potential security</b> threats posed by Rohingya Muslims.	-Potential security	India's Security
Discussion of issues related to <b>ethnic identity</b> , particularly in the context of Rohingya Muslims and their status as a persecuted minority.	-Ethnic identity	Ethnic Identity
Possible invocation of <b>human rights</b> ideology, discussing the rights of refugees and the need for compassion and support.	-Rights -Compassion -Support	Human Rights
Reference to <b>legal and political ideologies</b> related to immigration laws, international relations, and diplomatic strategies.	-Immigration laws -International relations, -Diplomatic strategies.	Legal and Political Ideologies
<b>Deport Illegal Immigrants Like Rohingyas Due to Security Threat: Centre to States (13 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Emphasis on protecting India's borders and <b>sovereignty</b> by deporting illegal immigrants.	-Protecting India's borders -Sovereignty	Nationalism
Framing the deportation as a measure to address <b>potential security</b> threats posed by illegal immigrants.	-Potential security threats	Security threats
Reference to legal and political ideologies related to immigration laws, national security, and the responsibilities of states in dealing with illegal immigrants.	-National Security -Illegal immigrants	Legal and Political Procedures
Discussion on the need for strict immigration policies and the responsibility of states to manage illegal immigration.	-Strict immigration policies	Immigration Policy
<b>India Aims to Deport All Rohingya Muslims, Even Those with UN Registration: Govt (14 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The focus on deportation as a policy approach to manage the presence of Rohingya Muslims in India.	-Deportation	Immigration Policy
Framing the deportation as a measure to address potential security threats posed by Rohingya Muslims.	-Potential security threats	National Security
Asserting India's right to decide its immigration policies and manage its borders in accordance with its laws	-Manage borders -Immigration policies	Sovereignty
<b>Who are the Rohingya, why are they called 'security threat' and 'nowhere people' (18 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Why Myanmar does not recognize the Rohingya	-Recognition	No recognize the Rohingya

Table 2. Cont.

Who are the Rohingya, why are they called 'security threat' and 'nowhere people' (18 September 2017)		
Description	Codes	Dominant Themes
The Myanmar government's refusal to grant Rohingya citizenship status or any legal documentation has effectively made them stateless.	-Refusal to citizenship -Legal documentation	Refusal to Rohingya citizenship
In the 1990s, the Rohingya Muslims were issued identity cards, known as 'white cards', categorizing them as temporary citizens.	-Temporary citizens -White cards	Rohingya Muslims are temporary citizens
The Rohingyas are denied basic rights, restrictions are placed on marriage, employment, religious choice. Coupled with this, the abysmal poverty and lack of development in the Rakhine region had fueled Rohingya migration.	-Denied basic rights -Restrictions -Poverty	Reasons fueled Rohingya migration
The minister of state for home affairs, Kiren Rijju, told parliament that the government has issued detailed instructions for deportation of illegal foreign nationals including Rohingyas.	-Deportation -Illegal foreign nationals	Deportation of Rohingyas
Tracing history: Tension between Rohingya Muslims, Buddhists date back to British Rule (16 September 2017)		
Description	Codes	Dominant Themes
It traces the origins of tension between Rohingya Muslims and the Buddhist majority in Myanmar back to British colonial policies in the early 19th century, which aggravated communal divisions.	-Buddhist majority	Historical Roots
The historical and religious identities of Rohingya Muslims and Buddhists in Myanmar have shaped their interactions and conflicts over the decades.	-Religious identities -Conflict	Ethnic and Religious Identity
Political changes in Myanmar, particularly shifts in governance and nationalist sentiments, have exacerbated tensions between these communities.	-Nationalist sentiments -Tensions	Impact of Political Changes
The human rights abuses faced by Rohingyas, often linked to discriminatory practices and violence fueled by ethnic and religious differences.	-Human rights abuses -Discriminatory -Violence	Human Rights Concerns

The selective portrayal of incidents, such as focusing on attacks by Rohingya militants while downplaying violence against Rohingyas by state forces or Buddhist nationalists, can skew perceptions and contribute to misrepresentation.

Some news articles of the **NDTV Online** shown in Table 3 echo the government's concerns about security, others adopt a critical stance, questioning the government's decision to deport Rohingyas. The mention of Home Ministry's clarifications and critical comparison with the treatment of other refugee groups suggests a nuanced approach, sometimes diverging from the government's stance. However, the use of language such as "**Rohingya militants**" to describe attackers, while referring to attacks against Rohingyas by the Myanmar state and Buddhist nationalists in more general terms and even in some reports as "**alleged**" attack, can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes about Rohingya violence.

Table 4 shows the analysis of **The Times of India Online** news. The use of the term "**illegal Bangladeshi**" in news of The Times of India Online to describe Rohingyas without critique aligns with the government's position. Articles titled "**Why India is refusing refuge to Rohingyas**" may present a one-sided narrative that portrays Rohingyas solely as security risks without adequately exploring the broader context of the crisis or considering alternative perspectives. However, the inclusion of interviews with Rohingya refugees provides a balanced perspective, indicating a departure from complete alignment with the government's stance.

Table 3. NDTV online.

<b>Rohingya Population Shot Up Four-Fold In 2 Yrs To 40,000, Parliament Told (10 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The acknowledgment and announcement by the government of the presence of 40,000 illegal Rohingya immigrants in India.	-Rohingya immigrants	Immigration Policy
The concern raised by the government regarding the potential security implications of this illegal immigrant population.	-Concern -Potential security implications -Illegal immigrant	National Security
The classification of the Rohingya population as illegal immigrants, implying their lack of legal status in India.	-Illegal immigrants, -Lack of legal status	Legal Status
Likely discussions or plans by the government regarding the handling or deportation of these illegal immigrants.	-Deportation -Illegal immigrants	Government Action
<b>India Should Not Forcibly Return Ethnic Rohingya Refugees: Human Rights Watch (17 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The call for India to abide by its international legal obligations and not forcibly return ethnic Rohingya refugees.	-Call to abide -Ethnic Rohingya refugees	International Legal Obligations
Emphasis on the importance of protecting refugees, especially those facing persecution in their home countries.	-Protecting Refugees -Persecution	Protection of Refugees
Highlighting the vulnerability of Rohingya refugees and the risks they face if forcibly returned to Myanmar.	-Vulnerability -Risks -Forcibly return	Rohingya's Vulnerability
The humanitarian need to provide safe haven for refugees and respect their rights regardless of their nationality.	-Humanitarian need -Respect rights	Humanitarian Considerations
<b>At Least 71 Killed in Myanmar as Violence Erupts in Rakhine Stat (25 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The report of at least 71 people killed in Myanmar as violence erupts in Rakhine State.	-Violence	Escalation of Violence
Concerns about the impact of the violence on civilians, including displacement and humanitarian needs.	-Concerns -Violence	Impact on Civilians
Analysis of the conflict dynamics in Rakhine State and the parties involved in the violent clashes.	-Violent clashes	Conflict Dynamics
The risk of a humanitarian crisis unfolding in the region due to the violence and its aftermath.	-Humanitarian crisis -Violence	Humanitarian Crisis
<b>In The Heart of Delhi, 'Illegal' Rohingyas Have Long-Term Indian Visas (17 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The presence of Rohingyas in the heart of Delhi, highlighting their settlement despite being termed "illegal".	-Illegal	Rohingyas' settlement "illegal"
Many Rohingyas have obtained long-term Indian visas through a legal process, contrasting their 'illegal' label.	-Visas for Rohingyas	"Illegal" label for Rohingyas

Table 3. Cont.

<b>In The Heart of Delhi, 'Illegal' Rohingyas Have Long-Term Indian Visas (17 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The challenges faced by the Rohingya community in Delhi, including their living conditions and access to basic amenities.	-Challenges -Basic amenities	Rohingyas in Delhi face many challenges
The broader legal and social issues surrounding their presence, such as debates over their rights and the legal framework governing their stay.	-Rights and the legal framework	Legal and social issues
<b>'We Will Kill You All': Rohingya Villagers in Myanmar Beg for Safe Passage (18 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Rohingya villagers in Myanmar face severe threats and violence, as evident from the desperate plea for safe passage amid fears of being killed.	-Severe threats -Safe passage -Fears of killing	Violence and Threats
Persecution and ethnic cleansing, with Rohingya Muslims being targeted by state and non-state actors.	-Persecution -Ethnic cleansing	Persecution and Ethnic Cleansing
The international outcry and humanitarian concerns surrounding the plight of Rohingyas, as witnessed by global reactions and protests.	-Humanitarian concerns -International outcry	International Attention
The Rohingya situation as a humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by ongoing violence and displacement.	-Ongoing violence -Displacement	Humanitarian Crisis
<b>Freedom Fighter or Curse? The Man Behind the Rohingya insurgency (22 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Ata Ullah is viewed by some as a freedom fighter standing against persecution faced by the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.	-Persecution -Rohingya Muslims	Freedom Fighter against Persecution
Ata Ullah is also criticized for his leadership style, which some consider reckless and responsible for exacerbating the suffering of Rohingya civilians.	-Exacerbating the suffering of Rohingya	Controversial Leadership
Ata Ullah's actions and decisions have significant implications for the ongoing Rohingya crisis, influencing both the internal dynamics of the conflict and international perceptions.	-Conflict and international perceptions -Crisis	Impact on the Rohingya Crisis
The complex nature of the Rohingya insurgency, where Ata Ullah's role is pivotal in shaping the narrative of resistance and struggle against oppression.	-Rohingya insurgency -Resistance -Oppression	Complexity of Conflict
<b>'Deplore Current Measures in India to Deport Rohingyas' (11 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The UN has expressed strong disapproval of India's plans to deport Rohingya refugees, citing humanitarian reasons and the potential violation of international law.	-Deport Rohingya -Humanitarian reasons -Violation of law	Humanitarian Concerns
The UN's stance that Rohingyas in India should be protected under international law, emphasizing the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits sending refugees back to countries where they face persecution.	-Non-refoulement -Persecution	Legal Protections
The balancing act between India's security concerns and the Rohingyas' rights, reflecting broader debates on national security versus humanitarian obligations.	-National security -Humanitarian obligations	Security Concerns vs. Human Rights

Table 3. Cont.

<b>'Deplore Current Measures in India to Deport Rohingyas' (11 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The international community's role in urging India to uphold human rights standards and find compassionate solutions for Rohingya refugees.	-Compassionate solutions -Human rights standards	International Response
<b>Aung San Suu Kyi's Key Speech on Myanmar Rohingya ... (19 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Suu Kyi emphasized Myanmar's right to handle internal issues without external interference, asserting national sovereignty.	-Myanmar's right -External interference	National Sovereignty
Framing the Rohingya crisis as a response to terrorism, contrasting it with humanitarian concerns raised globally.	-Terrorism -Humanitarian concerns	Terrorism vs. Humanitarian Crisis
Suu Kyi portrayed the situation in Rakhine State as a complex internal conflict rather than an ethnic or humanitarian crisis.	-Complex conflict -Ethnic or humanitarian crisis	Internal Conflict Perspective
She highlighted Myanmar's efforts towards development and reconciliation in Rakhine State, aiming to address underlying issues contributing to the crisis.	-Reconciliation -Crisis	Development and Reconciliation
Suu Kyi indirectly addressed international criticism, defending Myanmar's actions and policies regarding the Rohingya minority.	-International criticism -Rohingya minority	International Criticism
<b>Manipur Awaits to Deport Rohingya Prisoners from Imphal jail (15 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The Indian government views Rohingya refugees as potential security threats, prompting measures like deportation.	-Security threats -Deportation	National Security Concerns
The deportation raises legal and humanitarian concerns regarding the treatment and status of Rohingya refugees.	-Deportation -Legal and humanitarian concerns	Legal and Humanitarian Issues
The move has sparked debates locally in Manipur and internationally, reflecting differing perspectives on refugee rights and national security.	-Refugee rights -National security	Local and International Reactions
There are political and ethical dimensions to the deportation decision, addressing both domestic concerns and India's international obligations.	-Political and ethical dimensions -International obligations	Political and Ethical Dimensions
<b>Myanmar Beauty Queen Dethroned 'After Posting Rohingya Video' (4 October 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The incident highlights the conflict between individual expression and the political repercussions of addressing sensitive issues.	-Political repercussions -Individual expression	Freedom of Expression
The ongoing ethnic tensions in Myanmar, particularly the persecution of the Rohingya people.	-Ethnic tensions	Ethnic Conflict
The beauty queen's dethronement underscores how political and social issues can impact personal and professional lives	-Political and social issues	Political Repercussions
The case brings attention to the broader human rights violations in Myanmar, particularly against the Rohingya minority	-Human rights violations -Rohingya minority	Human Rights in Myanmar

Table 4. The Times of India online.

<b>Departing Rohingyas: Rajasthan police confused over center's guidelines (15 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Rajasthan police's confusion regarding the implementation of the Ministry of Home Affairs' guidelines.	-Rajasthan police	Confusion in Implementation
Discussion on the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs for identifying and deporting Rohingyas.	-Deporting Rohingyas	Guidelines for Deportation
Consideration of legal and ethical concerns surrounding the deportation of Rohingya refugees.	-Legal and Ethical concerns	Legal and Ethical Concerns
Analysis of the political and social impact of deporting Rohingyas from India.	-Deporting Rohingyas	Political and Social Impact
<b>Rohingyas say compulsions drove them to take shelter in J and K (20 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Rohingyas in Jammu and Kashmir claim they were driven to seek shelter in the region due to compelling reasons.	-Seek shelter	Rohingya Refugees in J and K seeks shelter
The article may discuss the challenges and complications associated with the potential deportation of Rohingyas.	-Potential Deportation	Complications of Deportation
Consideration of legal and humanitarian aspects related to the situation of Rohingyas in J and K.	-Legal and humanitarian	Legal and Humanitarian Concerns
Analysis of the political and social implications of the presence of Rohingyas in the region.	-Implications of presence of Rohingyas	Political and Social Dynamics
<b>Why India is refusing refuge to Rohingyas (6 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
India cites potential security threats and links to terrorism as reasons for not granting asylum to Rohingyas.	-Security Threats -Links to terrorism -Asylum	National Security Concerns
The government references legal frameworks and policies that do not obligate India to accept refugees, stressing its non-signatory status to the UN Refugee Convention.	-Legal frameworks -Non-signatory status	Not obligating India to accept refugees
There is concern over the potential demographic changes and social tensions that might arise from accepting a large number of refugees.	-Potential demographic changes	Demographic and Social Impact
Domestic political pressures and public opinion play a significant role in shaping India's stance on the Rohingya issue.	-Political pressures -India's stance	Political Considerations
The balance between humanitarian responsibilities and the sovereignty of the nation in deciding refugee policies.	-Refugee policies	Humanitarian vs. Sovereignty Debate
<b>Rohingya are human, too: How we can deal with persecuted refugees and still keep India safe (29 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The need to recognize the humanity of the Rohingya and their right to seek refuge from persecution.	-Refuge from persecution	Humanitarian Perspective
Concerns over national security, suggesting that India can implement measures to ensure safety while still providing refuge.	-National security -Ensure safety	National Security

Table 4. Cont.

<b>Rohingya are human, too: How we can deal with persecuted refugees and still keep India safe (29 September 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
India's ethical duty to help persecuted refugees and explores legal frameworks for providing asylum.	-Persecuted refugees -Legal frameworks -Providing asylum	Legal and Ethical Responsibilities
Finding a balance between humanitarian aid and maintaining national security, advocating for a compassionate yet cautious approach.	-Humanitarian aid -National security	Balancing Act
Specific measures such as thorough vetting processes and international cooperation to manage the refugee situation effectively.	-Vetting processes -International cooperation	Policy Recommendations

As shown in the analysis in Table 5, some articles of the **India Today Online** mention the government's position, others offer alternative perspectives, such as reports on Agra's Muslim community supporting Rohingyas and Sikh volunteers helping them, showcasing diverse responses to the crisis within Indian society and emphasizes the importance of compassion and assistance towards displaced communities. Inclusion of diverse perspectives, including those of Rohingyas, Indian communities, and the international human rights organization, contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the crisis, which can mitigate the risk of dehumanization and misrepresentation.

Table 5. India Today.

<b>Who are Rohingya Muslims and why govt wants to deport 40,000 of them? (10 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
The acknowledgment and announcement by the government of the presence of 40,000 illegal Rohingya immigrants in India.	-Illegal Rohingya immigrants	Immigration Policy
The concern raised by the government regarding the potential security implications of this illegal immigrant population.	-Illegal immigrant population.	National Security
The classification of the Rohingya population as illegal immigrants, implying their lack of legal status in India.	-Illegal immigrants	Legal Status
<b>Will rather die in India than return to Myanmar: Rohingya refugees on deportation reports (18 August 2017)</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Dominant Themes</b>
Overview of the crisis, including the persecution faced by Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.	-Persecution	Rohingya Refugee Crisis
Discussion of India's position on deporting Rohingya refugees living illegally in the country.	-Deporting Rohingya refugees	India's Stance on Deportation
Statements from Rohingya refugees expressing their reluctance to return to Myanmar due to persecution.	-Persecution -Expressing reluctance	Rohingya's Preference
Consideration of the legal and humanitarian aspects of deporting refugees to a dangerous situation.	-Legal and humanitarian aspects	Legal and Humanitarian Concerns
Mention of international reactions and concerns regarding India's approach to the Rohingya crisis.	-Rohingya crisis	International Response

Table 5. Cont.

Agra: Braj region's Muslims come out in support of ... (8 September 2017)		
Description	Codes	Dominant Themes
The solidarity shown by the Muslim community in the Braj region towards the Rohingya refugees. This support is manifested through public demonstrations and calls for humanitarian assistance.	-Humanitarian assistance -Solidarity	Community Solidarity and Support
The humanitarian aspect of the crisis, with the local Muslim population urging the Indian government to provide refuge to the persecuted Rohingya. This reflects an ideological stance prioritizing human rights and compassion.	-Ideological stance -Human rights and compassion -Crisis	Humanitarian Concerns
The crisis is creating political challenges for the Narendra Modi government. The government's stance on the Rohingya issue is under scrutiny, especially as it tries to balance national security concerns with international and domestic pressures.	-Political challenges -Scrutiny -National security	Political Tensions
The religious and ethnic solidarity among Muslims in India with the Rohingya, who are also Muslims. This ideological idea is rooted in the shared identity and collective empathy for the suffering of fellow Muslims.	-Ethnic solidarity -Collective empathy -Suffering of fellow Muslims	Religious and Ethnic Solidarity
The involvement of local communities in the discourse surrounding the Rohingya crisis indicates the role of media in shaping public opinion and mobilizing support for humanitarian causes.	-Rohingya crisis -Support for humanitarian causes	Media and Public Discourse
Rohingya crisis: Sikh volunteers go out of their way to help stranded refugees fleeing Myanmar (12 September 2017)		
Description	Codes	Dominant Themes
Khalsa Aid volunteers exemplify the spirit of humanitarianism by offering essential relief, including food and water, to the Rohingya refugees. This act of solidarity showcases the universal Sikh principle of "Sarbat da Bhala" (well-being of all).	-Essential relief -Spirit of humanitarianism -Solidarity	Humanitarian Aid and Solidarity
The Sikhs, despite being a different religious community, extend their support to the Rohingya Muslims, highlighting a significant ideological stance on interfaith compassion and the importance of aiding those in need, regardless of religious affiliation.	-Ideological stance -Religious affiliation -Compassion	Interfaith Compassion
The volunteers' efforts underscore a broader sense of global citizenship, where individuals and groups take responsibility for addressing international crises and providing support across borders.	-International crises -Global citizenship	Global Citizenship and Responsibility
By actively participating in relief efforts, Khalsa Aid not only provides immediate assistance but also raises awareness about the plight of the Rohingya, advocating for more significant global intervention and support.	-Immediate assistance -Plight of the Rohingya -Global intervention	Activism and Advocacy

Table 5. Cont.

Rohingya crisis: Sikh volunteers go out of their way to help stranded refugees fleeing Myanmar (12 September 2017)		
Description	Codes	Dominant Themes
The Sikh tradition of “seva” (selfless service), which is deeply ingrained in Sikh ideology and drives their community service initiatives worldwide.	-Service initiatives -Sikh tradition	Community Service
Dethroned Myanmar beauty queen to India Today (6 October 2017)		
Description	Codes	Dominant Themes
The incident highlights the conflict between an individual’s right to express their views and the restrictions imposed by institutions, which in this case, include the beauty pageant organizers.	-Conflict -Restrictions	Freedom of Speech vs. Institutional Censorship
The video posted by Shwe Eain Si underscores the complexities in conflict zones where different narratives (such as those of the Myanmar government and the Rohingya militants) compete for legitimacy and attention.	-Conflict zones -Legitimacy and attention	Narratives in Conflict Zones
The responsibility of public figures in using their platforms to discuss sensitive political issues, and the potential consequences they face for doing so.	-Sensitive political issues -Potential consequences	Responsibility of Public Figures
The Rohingya crisis is rooted in deep-seated ethnic and religious tensions, and Shwe Eain Si’s video contributes to the ongoing debate about the portrayal and treatment of the Rohingya community.	-Rohingya crisis -Ethnic and religious tensions -Portrayal and treatment of the Rohingya	Ethnic and Religious Tensions

The analysis of the of Rohingya refugees in India’s online news platforms subsequent to the shift in the Indian government’s stance in 2017 reveals a multifaceted scenario characterized by divergent narratives and ideological alignments. Across the four prominent online news platforms scrutinized—**Hindustan Times, NDTV Online, The Times of India Online, and India Today Online**—distinct patterns emerge in the depiction of the Rohingya crisis (Table 6 below).

**Table 6.** Dominant Themes of the depiction of the Rohingya on the four online news platforms: Hindustan Times, NDTV Online, The Times of India Online and India Today Online.

Dominant Themes	Hindustan Times	NDTV Online	The Times of India Online	India Today Online
<b>Security Threats</b>	Predominantly highlights government’s concerns regarding security threats posed by Rohingya “Muslims”.	Some articles echo government’s concerns, while others adopt a critical stance, questioning the government’s decision to deport Rohingyas.	Uses derogatory to describe Rohingyas without critique, and give salience to one sided story aligning with government’s position.	Some articles mention government’s position, others offer alternative perspectives, showcasing diverse responses to the crisis within Indian society.
<b>Illegal Migrants/ “Bangladeshi”</b>	Frequently uses terms like “illegal migrants” and “illegal Bangladeshi migrants,” aligning with government’s narrative, potentially contributing to dehumanization of Rohingya refugees.	Refers to Rohingyas as illegal migrants, but also questions government’s decision to deport them, indicating a nuanced approach at times.	Uses the term “illegal Bangladeshi” to describe Rohingyas without critique, aligning with government’s position.	

Table 6. Cont.

Dominant Themes	Hindustan Times	NDTV Online	The Times of India Online	India Today Online
<b>“Identify and deport”</b>	Uses phrase “identify and deport” to emphasize government policy regarding handling of Rohingya refugees, aligning with government’s stance on deportation.	Mentions Home Ministry’s clarifications and compares treatment of other refugee groups critically, sometimes diverging from government’s stance.		
<b>Religious Angle</b>	Implies religious angle to Rohingya migration by portraying “Rohingya Muslims” crossing into “Hindu-majority India,” and attending madrasas (visual), possibly reflecting government’s stance within the context of India’s demographics.		Refers to Rohingyas as Rohingya Muslims in the content, potentially framing the issue in religious terms, in line with government’s narrative or societal perceptions.	Refers to Rohingyas as Rohingya Muslims in the title, potentially framing the issue in religious terms, in line with government’s narrative or societal perceptions.
<b>Selective Portrayal</b>	Selectively portrays incidents, focusing on attacks by Rohingya militants while downplaying violence against Rohingyas by state forces or Buddhist nationalists.	Uses term “Rohingya militants” to describe attackers, potentially reinforcing stereotypes about the issue, contrasting with more neutral terms for the attacks by the state and Buddhist extremists.	Articles titled “Why India is refusing refuge to Rohingyas” may present one-sided narrative, potentially contributing to misrepresentation.	
<b>Alternative Perspective</b>		Mentions Home Ministry’s clarifications and compares treatment of other refugee groups critically, indicating a departure from complete alignment with government’s stance.	Inclusion of interviews with Rohingya refugees provides balanced perspective, indicating departure from complete alignment with government’s stance.	Inclusion of diverse perspectives, including those of Rohingyas, Indian communities, and international human rights organizations.

**Hindustan Times** predominantly underscores the government’s apprehensions concerning security threats posed by Rohingya refugees, employing terminology such as “**illegal migrants**” and “**illegal Bangladeshi migrants**” to conform to the government’s narrative. The representation of Rohingyas entering “**India, where Hindus make up the majority of the population**”, and the picture of Rohingya Muslims attending religious schools imply a religious aspect to their migration, possibly reflecting the government’s position. Moreover, the deliberate act of selectively reporting, which emphasizes the actions of Rohingya militants while minimizing the atrocities committed against Rohingyas by state troops or Buddhist nationalists, has the capacity to skew people’s understanding and contribute to the misrepresentation of the situation.

**NDTV Online** takes a more nuanced approach by presenting certain items that reflect the government’s worries, while others take a critical stance by challenging the decision to deport Rohingyas. However, the use of vocabulary like “**Rohingya militants**” to characterize the individuals accountable for the attacks, contrasted with more impartial terms for attacks carried out by the government and Buddhist extremists, might unintentionally

sustain misconceptions of Rohingya violence. Nevertheless, NDTV makes a conscious effort to refrain from providing a religious explanation of the problem and instead conducts a thorough analysis of the maltreatment of Rohingyas by drawing comparisons to the treatment of other refugees in India.

**The Times of India Online** exhibits a strong alignment with the government's stance by using the word "illegal Bangladeshi" to refer to Rohingyas without offering any critical analysis, which may result in a skewed portrayal. Nevertheless, the incorporation of interviews with Rohingya refugees provides an impartial viewpoint, suggesting a deviation from total conformity with the government's position. **India Today Online** sets itself apart by offering a wide range of viewpoints, including those of Rohingyas, Indian communities, and international human rights groups. This helps to improve comprehension of the problem and reduces the chances of dehumanizing or distorting the facts.

The Rohingyas are depicted as individuals who have suffered harm, and the utilization of appeals to humanitarianism within this depiction was observed. The aforementioned frame was solely observed during the initial phases of the crisis. Over the course of time, the framing of humanitarian concerns was notably lacking, save for within right-wing publications. The utilization of a humanitarian framing could have been employed to rationalize the governmental determination to provide refuge to the Rohingya population during the initial phase. After the initial phase of heightened concern, media channels began to scrutinize the potential economic implications that the crisis might have on the nation. The discourse surrounding the financial encumbrance emerged subsequent to several weeks following the onset of the crisis. The discourse surrounding the economic burden has been observed to have neglected the humanitarian and other related dimensions. The impact of media framing on communication is shaped not solely by the deliberate construction of frames, but also by the selective exclusion and inadvertent omissions by those controlling media messages [70]. Media outlets wield considerable influence in shaping public agendas and directing societal perception and understanding of various issues [71].

Consequently, the findings answer the study questions as follow:

- **To what extent did the depiction disseminated in media comply with the shift in the Indian government's position regarding the Rohingya community since 2017?**

The media significantly influence public perception and thought on various issues by the manner in which they frame and present these issues. The coverage by the media profoundly affects the dissemination of information regarding global phenomena to the public. This process of media framing is crucial in shaping the portrayal of populist governments, symbolic elites, and a media agenda designed to mold public opinion with specific ideas and perceptions. This study, grounded in media framing theory, explores how the online platforms of four major Indian news media—Hindustan Times, NDTV Online, The Times of India Online, and India Today Online—have portrayed Rohingya refugees since the Indian government's policy shift in 2017. By analyzing the language, imagery, and reporting practices, this research reveals the extent to which media coverage aligns with governmental narratives and the implications for public perception and understanding.

The findings indicate that Indian media's depiction of Rohingya refugees largely complies with the Indian government's stance, reflecting a significant alignment with official narratives. Hindustan Times and The Times of India Online, in particular, show strong adherence to the government's position. These platforms frequently use terms such as "illegal migrants" and "illegal Bangladeshi migrants," emphasizing the legal status of the Rohingyas and portraying them as a security threat. This terminology aligns with the government's concerns about national security and illegal immigration, reinforcing a narrative that justifies stringent measures against the Rohingyas.

Hindustan Times highlights the government's apprehensions regarding the security risks posed by the Rohingyas. The emphasis on the need to "identify and deport" Rohingyas aligns with the government's policy and contributes to a portrayal that reduces the refugees' identity to their legal status and perceived threat. This alignment is further evidenced by the selective reporting of incidents, focusing on attacks by Rohingya militants while

downplaying or ignoring violence against the Rohingyas by state forces or Buddhist nationalists. Such selective reporting can skew public perception, presenting a one-sided narrative that supports governmental actions.

The Times of India Online also shows a significant alignment with the government's stance. By consistently using the term "illegal Bangladeshi" to describe the Rohingyas, the platform echoes the government's narrative without offering critical analysis. This uncritical adoption of official terminology can contribute to a biased portrayal that dehumanizes the refugees and fails to acknowledge the complexities of their situation.

NDTV Online, while generally more balanced in its coverage, also reflects some alignment with the government's position. Although NDTV includes critical perspectives and questions the government's decision to deport Rohingyas, it still uses terms like "Rohingya militants" to describe attackers. This terminology, while addressing security concerns, can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes about Rohingya violence. However, NDTV's inclusion of critical viewpoints and comparisons with the treatment of other refugee groups suggests a nuanced approach that diverges from the government's stance.

India Today Online has also shown a diverse representation of the Rohingya issue. The platform includes voices from Rohingyas, Indian communities, and international human rights groups, offering a broader spectrum of perspectives. This approach mitigates the risks of dehumanization and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Despite this, the general trend across Indian mainstream media shows a significant degree of compliance with the government's position, reflecting the complex interplay between media and political power.

- **Through what frames have Rohingya refugees predominantly been represented in the popular online platforms of India?**

The representation of Rohingya refugees in Indian media is framed through various lenses, with security, legal status, and economic burden being the predominant frames. These frames influence how the public perceives the Rohingya crisis and the policies addressing it.

**Security Frame:** The security frame is prominently used in Hindustan Times and The Times of India Online. These platforms emphasize the potential threats posed by Rohingya refugees, portraying them as a security risk to the nation. The frequent use of terms like "illegal migrants" and "illegal Bangladeshi migrants" reinforces this frame, presenting the Rohingyas as outsiders who pose a danger to national security. This framing aligns with the government's concerns and justifies measures to identify and deport the refugees. The selective reporting of incidents, focusing on attacks by Rohingya militants, further supports this narrative and contributes to a perception of the Rohingyas as violent and dangerous.

**Legal Status Frame:** The legal status frame is closely related to the security frame, as it emphasizes the illegal nature of the Rohingyas' presence in India. By consistently referring to the refugees as "illegal migrants," media platforms like Hindustan Times and The Times of India Online dehumanize the Rohingyas and reduce their identity to their legal status. This frame supports the government's stance on illegal immigration and reinforces the justification for deportation policies.

**Economic Burden Frame:** The economic burden frame emerged over time, with media discussions shifting from humanitarian concerns to the financial implications of hosting the refugees. This frame portrays the Rohingyas as a burden on the nation's resources, emphasizing the economic costs associated with their presence. This shift in framing can overshadow the humanitarian dimensions of the crisis, presenting the refugees as a financial strain rather than individuals in need of protection and support.

**Humanitarian Frame:** The humanitarian frame, while present initially, has receded over time. India Today Online seems to have used this frame mainly, presenting the Rohingyas as victims of persecution and emphasizing their need for humanitarian assistance. This frame highlights the suffering of the refugees and appeals to humanitarian principles, fostering empathy and understanding. However, the prominence of this frame has diminished as media platforms have increasingly focused on security and economic concerns.

**Religious and Ethnic Frames:** The representation of the Rohingya crisis is also influenced by religious and ethnic backgrounds. The portrayal of Rohingyas crossing into “Hindu-majority India” and the depiction of Rohingya students attending madrasas introduce a religious dimension to the discourse. This framing can reflect and reinforce communal tensions, aligning with the government’s narrative and potentially contributing to the stigmatization of the refugees based on their religious identity.

- **Was there any dehumanization or misrepresentation of Rohingyas in certain frames used by various platforms in relation to the political discourse and developments that took place?**

The analysis reveals significant instances of dehumanization and misrepresentation of the Rohingyas in Indian media.

**Dehumanization Through Language:** The frequent use of terms like “illegal migrants” and “illegal Bangladeshi migrants” dehumanizes the Rohingyas by reducing their identity to their legal status. This language, prevalent in Hindustan Times and The Times of India Online, strips the refugees of their humanity and portrays them as mere legal transgressors. This dehumanization can desensitize the public to the plight of the Rohingyas and justify harsh measures against them.

**Selective Reporting and Misrepresentation:** The selective reporting of incidents contributes to the misrepresentation of the Rohingyas. Hindustan Times and The Times of India Online focus on attacks by Rohingya militants while downplaying or ignoring violence against the refugees by state forces or Buddhist nationalists. This selective reporting presents a one-sided narrative that skews public perception and reinforces stereotypes of Rohingya violence. NDTV Online, while more balanced, also uses terms like “Rohingya militants,” which can inadvertently sustain prejudices.

**Visual Representation:** The visual representation of the Rohingyas also plays a role in their dehumanization and misrepresentation. The depiction of Rohingya students attending madrasas, for instance, introduces a religious angle that can reinforce communal tensions and align with the government’s narrative. Such imagery can contribute to the perception of the Rohingyas as religious others and potential threats.

**Economic Burden Narrative:** The shift from a humanitarian frame to an economic burden frame further contributes to the negative portrayal of the Rohingyas. This narrative emphasizes the financial costs associated with the refugees’ presence, overshadowing their need for protection and support. By presenting the Rohingyas as a burden on national resources, this frame devalues their humanity and reduces them to economic liabilities.

**Humanitarian Frame and Empathy:** The humanitarian frame, although less prevalent, offers a more empathetic representation of the Rohingyas. India Today Online’s use of this frame highlights the suffering and persecution faced by the refugees, fostering empathy and understanding. This frame counters the dehumanization and misrepresentation prevalent in other narratives, emphasizing the need for humanitarian assistance and protection.

## 7. Conclusions

The media significantly influence public perception and thought on various issues by the manner in which they frame and present these issues [72–75]. The coverage by the media profoundly affects the dissemination of information regarding global phenomena to the public. This process of media framing is crucial in shaping the portrayal of populist governments, symbolic elites, and a media agenda designed to mold public opinion with specific ideas and perceptions. Grounded in the theoretical framework of media framing theory, this study examines the representation of Rohingya refugees in Indian Media.

Although several platforms strongly adhere to the government’s position, others provide more balanced viewpoints, highlighting the humanitarian aspects and amplifying the voices of Rohingya refugees. However, the prevalence of potential instances of dehumanization and misrepresentation, discernible through linguistic and visual choices as well as selective reporting practices across the studied platforms, suggests a prevailing inclination

of the majority of Indian mainstream media toward alignment with the government's stance, notwithstanding some platforms maintaining a critical approach.

The examination of the Rohingya situation in Indian mainstream media reveals the complex interplay between political narratives, religious and ethnic backgrounds, and attempts to reconcile official opinions with alternative perspectives. The Rohingya refugee crisis has been a subject of extensive discussion in both media and political spheres. A significant concern is the manner in which Rohingya refugees are depicted across various media platforms. They have faced numerous societal challenges, including unfavorable representations, stigmatizing, and biased framing in the media. Such negative portrayals not only reinforce harmful stereotypes but also further marginalize an already vulnerable population.

Hindustan Times primarily highlights government concerns on security risks, while NDTV Online presents nuanced coverage of the government's worries and challenges the deportation of Rohingyas. However, the use of terms like "Rohingya militants" can perpetuate prejudices of Rohingya violence. NDTV aims to avoid presenting a religious perspective and conducts a thorough analysis of Rohingya abuse.

In conclusion, the representation of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Indian mainstream media reveals a complex interplay between political narratives, media framing, and public perception. The extent to which media coverage aligns with the government's stance reflects a significant compliance with official narratives, particularly in terms of security and legal status. The predominant frames—security threats, legal status, and economic burden—have contributed to a skewed portrayal that often dehumanizes and misrepresents the Rohingyas. The selective reporting practices and linguistic choices further reinforce harmful stereotypes and biases.

Although some platforms, like NDTV Online and India Today Online, offer more balanced and empathetic representations, the overall trend in Indian media reflects a prevailing alignment with governmental concerns. This alignment underscores the influential role of media in shaping public opinion and understanding of critical issues. The need for more balanced, humane, and comprehensive representations of the Rohingya crisis is evident, as media framing significantly impacts public perception and the treatment of vulnerable populations.

By examining the complex dynamics of media representation, this study highlights the importance of critical media literacy and the need for diverse and inclusive narratives that prioritize humanitarian principles. As the Rohingya crisis continues to unfold, the role of media in shaping public discourse and influencing policy decisions remains crucial. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, considering the evolving political and social contexts that shape media coverage and public perception.

## 8. Implications

In this study, framing theory was used to explain the frames have Rohingya refugees predominantly been represented in the popular online platforms of India from 1 August 2017–10 October 2017 to see the frames used by various platforms in relation to the political discourse and developments that took place.

## 9. Limitations and Further Research

The duration period of this study was restricted to a specific period, and data collection was exclusively derived from the online news portals of prominent Indian mainstream media platforms, such as Hindustan Times, NDTV Online, The Times of India Online, and India Today Online. The study concludes by underscoring the necessity for additional research on other media outlets within India as well as in other countries where the Rohingyas reside. Furthermore, more research is needed on the image representation of Rohingya refugees, as well as conducting interviews to understand the different points of view of the media and journalists on their coverage of the Rohingya.

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