

People's response to the influx of Myanmar refugee in Mizoram: Implication and limitation of the State policy

With the recent subjugation of the people and their representatives by the Junta Government in Myanmar since February 2021, many communities choose to flee to the neighbouring countries where they have close affinity in terms of ethnicity. Among them, Mizoram, India has been one of the destinies of the refugees to take shelter taking advantages of the common culture, shared histories, economic ties and religious commonalities. The people, the civil society, the churches, and the state government made a prompt response to the influx of refugees who were forced to leave their homeland by providing shelter and food on need basis. But, the irony is that the Government of India has not made any positive response to accommodate the Myanmar refugee. The major assumption is that India was not a signatory of 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol which prevent the Government of India to take prompt action for Myanmar refugee. India's response to refugee and migrant is based on ad-hoc basis utilizing the State laws barring the international law on refugee. Though most of this refugee belongs to the minority religion, but among the neighbouring countries, Myanmar has been excluded in the CAA 2019. So, religion cannot be employed to accommodate them within India. Since the GoI is silence on the refugee's problem, with limited resources the state of Mizoram has been compelled to accommodate the Myanmar nationalities fleeing their homeland against military invasion because of close affinity among the people across the borders in terms of culture, history, religion. With the involvement of the civil society and the churches, refugee's camps are set up in some places, while many people have also joined their relatives mainly in the urban areas. In the process, the state government as well as the civil society has taken precautionary roles in responding the refugee problem. In the present situation, Myanmar refugee has been given recognition and categorise as '*raltlan*' which implies escaping the Junta military operation. Particularly the civil society registered the refugee in their local data for their record and this documentation in some way or the other differentiates the refugee and the local. But the major problem lies in the absence of proper law and guidance from the Government of India. The state government has been limited not only in term of resources but also on how to initiate proper plan and policy to check the continuous inflow of refugee. The only response made by the Government of India has no positive outcome either for the state or for the refugee. In this context, the study will analyse the response made by the state government vis-à-vis Centre government policy on refugee. Case study has been conducted on how the Myanmar refugee has been accommodated and given recognition in Mizoram.

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