

## **Migrants, Crises & Statelessness:**

### **Exploring Media Representations of Rohingya Refugees in India**

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Refugee movements and their representations have often been positioned in terms of crises. Within the larger debates and complexities of such crises, some of the prominent crisis positionings are predicated on qualifying the refugees in terms of criminality and foreignness, and in asserting migrant movements with illegality and national/civilisational fears. Associated to such locations for crisis, are political demands for restricting entry through militarising borders, tightening legal and regulatory frameworks, as well as practices which seek to separate the citizens from the aliens. Particularly since 2015, such positionings as well as the associated politics have gained prominence in some countries in Europe (e.g. UK, Hungary etc) to define the European Migrant Crisis. Such positionings are not limited to the North, and attempts to mainstream similar crisis positionings for Rohingya refugees have gained prominence in India.

Based in these crisis positionings, the paper is an attempt to explore the media representations of Rohingya Refugees in India, and to contextualise this with the prominent academic discussions on the crisis discourse, its positionings and the associated politics in Europe. The attempt is to examine questions, like: How are refugee crises constructed? How are identities and borders positioned? and How do such crisis positionings affect the migration debate and the response to refugee flows?

The analysis is limited to media texts concerning Rohingya refugees – Print and TV – accessed from websites of four prominent media organisations in India (Two Print and Two News Channels). The qualitative analysis focuses on particular periods when media attention to the Rohingya refugee movement peaked. Based on this limited probing, it is observed that frames of othering of refugees, particularly with regards to crime and terror, operate alongside frames which are empathetic to the refugee experience.