

The conundrum of Statelessness, Refugeehood and Humanitarianism of the Rohingyas in India

Undoubtedly, the Rohingya crisis has been one of the most talked-about in the last few years. Political exclusion and persecution revolve around the fault lines of modern nation-states built along ethno-religious lines, making them the most persecuted minority in the world. Following the global condemnation of the military crackdown in August 2017 and the United Nations accusing the country of "ethnic cleansing and genocide," a massive exodus of people to neighbouring countries and beyond occurred. Yet, the existing political and protection space for stateless Rohingya refugees is extremely volatile due to the absence of legal mechanisms, undocumentedness, and rising security concerns globally that often criminalise them as illegal migrants or immigrants or threats to national security. Forcing them to live under the continuous threat of detention, deportation, and forced relocation further tarnishes their identity as a man and a citizen, dumping them into a socio-legal limbo. Based on the qualitative inquiry conducted among stateless Rohingya refugees living in semi-urban ghettos of India-Delhi, Mewat, Hyderabad, and Jammu, the objectives of this paper are twofold. Firstly, the article looks into responses made by national (host state-India) and international agencies to the crisis, and while doing so, it tries to understand the complexities of "everyday life" in asylum and protracted refugeeness in India. Thus, it seeks to understand practises and dilemmas pertaining to the care and protection of such refugee and stateless populations. Secondly, how do these outcast populations negotiate and assert their agency? Thus, the paper tries to provide a grim insight into the inadequate, inconsistent, and highly uncoordinated national and international response to care and protection and aid politics that has contributed to the collective failure in addressing the crisis. Therefore, the paper attempts to bring forth the wider debate on issues of state, rights, and humanitarianism within the nation-state paradigm.

Keywords: Rohingya, Statelessness, Refugeeness, Rights, humanitarian-aid and India.