**The Stateless People – Rohingyas in Hyderabad, India**

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**Introduction**

Statelessness refers to a phenomenon whereby a person does not have a nationality or citizenship of any country under the operation of its law. There are a number of causes for this phenomenon of statelessness to occur, however one of the reasons maybe the conflict which exists in the laws of Nationality. There are two modes to acquire Nationality, one is called Jus soil which means acquiring Nationality through birth on the territory of the state and the second is Jus Sanguinis which means the acquiring of Nationality from birth through descent. This is usually done through a parent who is a National. Another very important cause of Statelessness is due to state succession. This happens when the territory of the state is acquired by another state or is under the control of another state. A good example of such statelessness is the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Statelessness might also be caused due individuals who renounce their citizenship. Individuals may voluntarily decide to give up their citizenship due to their beliefs. Lastly, statelessness can be caused due to the presence of non-state territories. The definition of a stateless person states that only states can have nationals so people who are residing or are citizens of non-state territories are stateless. A prominent example of this cause of statelessness is the Palestinian territories. Rohingyas are a group of people who have been rendered stateless as they are not recognised under any country’s legal framework.(UNHCR)

The term Rohingya has been a matter of debate for a long time now. To some Rohingyas are a group of people who originally belong to Bengal and migrated to Burma during the colonial times whereas the other school of thought states that Rohingyas are a part of Arakan in Myanmar. There are various tales that revolve around the origin of the Rohingyas and their original place of residence. According to a popular belief the term Rohingya has been derived from Islam meaning ‘Rahma’, which basically means mercy. It is believed that after a shipwreck near Ramree Island, the Arakanese king commanded the Arab Traders to be executed. These people pleaded to the King shouting Rahma meaning Mercy. Later these people were referred to as Rohang and then Rohingyas. Many historians are of the belief that there were no people called the Rohingyas before the 1950’s, it is only after the 1950’s we hear about a group of Bengali Muslims migrating to Burma who called themselves the Rohingyas. Whatever their origin might be the Rohingya due to their statelessness have been facing a number of challenges not only in Myanmar but also to the countries they have been migrating to. This paper specifically aims to look into the kind of challenges the Rohingyas face in India, particularly in south India, in Hyderabad.

**Legal Refugee Framework in India**

India's laxity in framing proper refugee laws only seems to have escalated the refugee quandary. Despite being asked to sign the Refugee Convention 1951 and Protocol 1967, and promulgate a legal framework for refugees, the Indian government has been lackadaisical. Interestingly, the UNHCR hails India for its record in supporting refugees. In a report, it says, "Overall, India offers safe asylum to refugees and asylum seekers. Even in the absence of a national legal framework for refugees, India has traditionally been hospitable towards refugees."

Meanwhile, judicial intervention has done some good for refugees. In respect of Articles 21 and 14 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court has declared that these (apart from other constitutional rights) are applicable to everyone residing in India, and not only to citizens of the country

**Rohingyas in India – In Hyderabad -**

Rohingya refugees have been crossing the international border and coming into India for a long time now. Like Mohammed Shaker, a Rohingya refugee, who reached the Muslim friendly city of Hyderabad, “Through a circuitous route travelling the first three days on foot through rough mountain terrain in the dead of the night to reach the Myanmar border. Then he boarded a boat run by smugglers to reach the Bangladesh border. Hours later, after he was stowed in a truck to be finally dropped near the West Bengal border. All in all, it took him nine days to finally land in Hyderabad.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

Delhi, being the national capital and the seat of the UNHCR office is naturally the place they get pulled to. According to UN estimates around 11,000 Rohingyas have moved to various parts of India in the aftermath of communal violence since June 2012.[[2]](#footnote-3)After sustained efforts and coordination with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 80 Rohingyas have been given refugee status, another 200 are now refugee certificate holders and 700 are yet to receive a letter of appointment from UNHCR. (TOI, 2013) Apart from New Delhi many have moved into Jammu in North India, Pune in West India and Hyderabad in South India. According to Malla Reddy, Joint Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, Hyderabad, many Rohingyas end up in Hyderabad while others move to Delhi, Aligarh, Mathura, Kolkata and other places.[[3]](#footnote-4)The Rohingya refugees believe that Hyderabad city, on account of its substantial Muslim population, would welcome them with arms wide open. In fact, Hyderabad-based Confederation of Voluntary Organisations (Cova), an NGO at the forefront of Rohingya rehabilitation says 1,200 asylum seekers have registered with them so far and many more are likely to come.[[4]](#footnote-5)

The influx of Rohingya Muslims into Hyderabad has been taking place over the past five to six years, explains Mazher Hussain, executive director of Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA), implementation partner of the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) in Hyderabad. According to Mr. Hussain Hyderabad received around 100 refugees in 2010. According to COVA data, from about 150 settlers in early 2011, the number of Rohingya Muslims currently residing in the city stands at a rough estimate that ranges between1400-2000. Of the approximately 2000 who came in, some have been sent back to Myanmar by the UNHCR for being unable to prove that their life is under threat. Those who remain have settled in Hafizbabanagar, Balapur, Babanagar, Sainagar, Chandrayaangutta and Kishanbagh areas of the Old City. "Most of the refugees live in groups, with the highest number of them concentrated in Balapur," says Kiran Kumar, program officer at COVA, who looks after the welfare of these asylum seekers.

We visited the Kiskanabagh area in Hyderabad where we met Rohingya families living in rented houses. The first family we spoke to was of Rahman, his wife, Iffat and son Arfat. They came to Hyderabad in 2012 after the riots took place in Myanmar; initially there were living in a camp in Myanmar later due to mishandling by the camp staff they decided to migrate to Hyderabad. They took boats and travelled for days to reach here. Having reached, they confronted the greater problem of shelter, food and water. This family had come to Hyderabad with a group of other refugees, so on having reached here they all decided to go finding for places where they could stay. They happened to come to this area and due to lack of money they stayed on the footpath, streets, later on having found a job they collected money to rent the room they were staying in. When we asked them that what were the problems they faced, they mentioned that the other people staying in this area had a very cold attitude towards them, they are often discriminated by the local vendors and due to lack of money at times the shop owners talk to them in an inappropriate manner. Apart from this surviving each day without proper food is a major challenge for them. At times they do not have the enough money to buy food. This majorly stem from a greater problem of unemployment.

Thus the major issue which the Rohingyas face is that of survival, to be able to live people do anything they can and if they feel that their survival is under threat they choose other places to go to. Factors like fear of losing life and family is the main reason behind why people migrate. Proper healthcare, food, shelter, employment are reasons for communities to migrate but the biggest reason is that of survival.

This is the tale that is also narrated by Fatima and her son Farzan who are also living in Kiskanabagh. Their reason for their flight to Hyderabad was her husband’s death in the riots after which Fatima did not know what to do because the treatment she got in Myanmar was devastating. They were hesitant to tell us much about what they went through and while stating all their troubles tears welled up in Fatima’s eyes. She said that her husband was beaten to death and in front of her eyes, the trauma of that horrific incident in her life was still evident and it compounded her feeling of helplessness. This guilt in her is still there that she was unable to do much, she migrated to Hyderabad because all other families who got on to the ferry did the same. On having realised that she had come here she began to look for jobs and a source of income but all was denied to her. For around one year after she came here she had difficulty in finding a job and also a place to stay, but now she was working as a domestic help nearby to her place of residence so she is able to manage a little bit but even now she is not able to educate her son as she does not have that much money which she can save for her son’s education.

* **UNHCR Refugee Status – Identity Crisis -**

The reality is that getting refugee cards from the UNHCR Office in New Delhi is a long and tedious process, it can go on for as long as 2 to 3 years. According to COVA data, despite the presence of 1400 Rohingyas Muslims, hardly 100-150 of them have got refugee cards. Recognition, Malik says, is the most important thing. "Our cries are heard but not acted upon. We were born to see bloodletting. Now, we have resigned ourselves to torture and persecution," he says as his eyes well up.[[5]](#footnote-6)

A large number of Rohingyas are unable to get refugee cards which cause hindrance in their daily activities. Also, obtaining a refugee card is not simple, it is a long and a tedious process which may take somewhere between two to three years. Most of the organisations who work for the welfare of the ethnic community state that the general opinion amongst the Rohingyas is that their cries are heard but not adequately answered. The United Nation High Commission for Refugees is responsible to gather information about the asylum seekers. This process requires the asylum seeker to travel to Delhi with all details and after the UNHCR accepts their refuge they are given a refugee card. This again is a long drawn process and is cumbersome for the refugee himself to prove his identity. [[6]](#footnote-7)

The United Nations High Commission of Refugees gathers details of each asylum-seeker and registers the individual based on the area he has come from. The refugee then has to travel to Delhi where he has to undergo gruelling sessions of interviews to prove his identity and the purpose of migration. If the UNHCR is convinced, it would take another 3-6 months to process the application and give the asylum-seeker a temporary card. A Rohingya Muslim can only get a refugee card once he passes the temporary card stage. That again takes another two years, and the refugee card has to be renewed every five years. However, there are instances where the UNHCR can reject an asylum-seeker's card or not permit a refugee shelter in India. For instance, if the refugee is from the eastern part of Myanmar where there is no disturbance, the UNHCR will reject his request for asylum and send him back to his country. But, the refugee is also given a chance for second appeal. If the UNHCR isn't convinced even then, the refugees have no choice but to return to Myanmar.[[7]](#footnote-8)

* **Community and International Support**

Rohingya refugees thrive on community support and the networks that they have created amongst themselves as with little money and no aid from the government most of them are struggling to meet day-to-day expenses. While the UNHCR set up the Burmese Refugees Relief and Rehabilitation Committee (BRRRC), where the displaced can seek help, COVA and Civil Liberties Monitoring Committee seeks donations from local people that supports their travel to and from Delhi as well as their stay here,"Last year, during Ramadan, donations poured in. It was more like a Ramzan fad. Scores of people made donations to help them survive," informs Kiran, adding that donations have gone down this year. Lateef Mohammad Khan, the convenor of the Civil Liberties Monitoring Committee, India, an NGO in Hyderabad stated that some locals have decided to help them as a goodwill gesture.[[8]](#footnote-9)

NazimuddinFarooqui, Chairman, Salamah Trust, who set up BRRRC, said his organisation planned to help Rohingyas by providing necessary basic education to their children by enrolling them in schools and providing them hostel facilities, besides taking up issues including refugee status.[[9]](#footnote-10)

Even Iran had, last year, offered cash assistance to a group of Rohingya refugees in Hyderabad who had fled the ethnic violence in Rakhine state. The Iran Consul General in Hyderabad, Mahmoud Safari, handed over a cheque of Rs.65,000 to COVA, trying to help them get official status for the Rohingyas from the UN body's office in New Delhi in 2012. M Qaderi, Trustee Dargah Ali Shah Qaderi thanked Iranian consulate for extending the assistance. Stating that Iran was the first country which came forward to help the Myanmar refugees in Hyderabad, he added that, “Iran's spiritual and material support has enlightened a ray of hope among the victims of the ethnic clashes in Myanmar”.[[10]](#footnote-11)



Source:<http://www.siasat.com/english/news/rohingya-muslims-struggling-rehabilitation-hyderabad>

 A delegation from Siasat Daily had visited the refugee camp at Shaheen Nagar led by Mr. Zaheeruddin Ali Khan, editor Siasat and Mr. Iftekhar, interacted with all 42 families. “A programme of distribution of food grains among the refugees will be conducted on Tuesday, July 2, 2013.In the meantime, efforts are also on to donate rickshaws, bandi for vegetables to the male members of the refugees to earn their livelihood.”[[11]](#footnote-12) Ahmed Al Saadi, a businessman, was among those who donated his land for the refugees. "What I am doing is a kind of charity but they need a lot more help and support from individuals and organisations. They left everything back home," he said.[[12]](#footnote-13)

But resident locals sometimes fear differences cropping up in the larger community due to the presence of these refugees and they live in constant distress and fear of being attacked.

* **Police Persecution**

Although hundreds of Rohingya refugees have made the city their own, they are apprehensive about policemen knocking on their doors once again in the wake of serial blasts that had occurred in Bodh Gaya in Bihar in July 2013. Says Abdullah, a Rohingya refugee who came to Hyderabad in 2012, "The locals told us about the blasts. The police frequently ask us to produce documents and such harassment has become part of our lives”.[[13]](#footnote-14) The Rohingyas in Hyderabad particularly have been vary of needless police questioning and interrogation every time a Hindu or Buddhist structure comes under attack as the finger of suspicion invariably falls on them.

Then in November 2014 Khalid Mohammed, arrested by the NIA from Hyderabad in connection with the Burdwan blast, turned out to be a Rohingya Muslim from Myanmar, who had spent considerable time in Myanmar training batches of militants along with members of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), before slipping into India in 2013. According to intelligence officials Khalid mentioned receiving large funds from Rohingyas based out of Karachi, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.After slipping into India in November last year Khalid confessed having travelled extensively to meet with other Rohingya refugees in Delhi, Lucknow and Jammu before setting up a base in Hyderabad.[[14]](#footnote-15)

This event irreversibly cast the entire Rohingya community under a shadow of suspicion. It confirmed the suspicions of the Intelligence Bureau of India that unfortunately, terror groups like Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and the Al-Qaeda have been managing to infiltrate their men into the camps of Rohingya refugees in India.

* **Language and Cultural Barriers**

Source:<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Hyderabad/hyderabads-rohingya-refugees-fight-language-barriers/article4866622.ece>

Language is another major barrier for the community in India especially in Hyderabad where Rohingyas face a major language problem as they are not aware of the local language. This restricts their employment and their livelihood suffers. Rohingya Muslims speak a mix of Bengali and Mongoloid. Since some of them speak Urdu, they help out others who do not know the local language. Thus job opportunities elude them as they do not know either Urdu or Telugu.

Their food habits and culture is completely different. They do not eat the rice or roti and cannot even converse with the local Muslims. All this leads to problems in assimilation leading to the Rohingyas feeling insecure and discriminated against. The feeling of alienation continues within them as they do not feel a part of the larger community. This feeling of alienation is the major reason behind all conflicts. These conflicts cause a lot of disharmony between communities leading to a situation of turmoil everywhere.

* **Search for Livelihood**

With suspicious eyes nearly always on them, their search for livelihood becomes even more difficult. To make a living, they work as daily-wage labourers and many have found odd jobs to do. They do petty jobs in small shops to earn their livelihood. Some manage to get a security guard's job while others take up petty jobs, describes Lateef Mohammed Khan of Civil Liberties Monitoring Committee, an NGO that is trying to mobilise the local community to help these refugees make a living in the city. AsDuduMiyan, another refugee, pointed out that around 150 men went to the local 'labourer adda' in Babanagar, but only 50 found work as labourers. The trend is the same everyday. "A man who is busy looking for work everyday has no time to even think about causing trouble," he said, pointing to allegations of Rohingya Muslim role in any incident related to the violence in Myanmar.[[15]](#footnote-16)

At the Balapur Camp, during our interviews we asked the Rohingyas living there a number of questions like from how long are you here? What kind of work do you do? How much do you earn? What was the reason that you came to Hyderabad? How do you find living here? What are the problems you face? Do you want to go back to Myanmar? Does staying in Hyderabad satisfy your needs? Abu Hussain, who has been living the camp from the past two years said that he came to the camp in 2012. He said that there is no fixed work that he doe;, they go to a nearby place where they are given daily jobs, if there is no requirement on a certain day for a job, they come back home not earning anything. On days they work they earn around 400 rupees a day. The reason why he came to Hyderabad was that he thought that if he stayed in Myanmar for any more time his family will gradually be eliminated by the people in Myanmar.

* **Living conditions**

The hundreds of Rohingya that are settled in makeshift camps in the Hyderabad fight a daily struggle for survival.The conditions in which the Rohingyas live in camps are devastating where they have no water to drink and no cleanliness at all. Many have been camping in the city for more than a year, but basic amenities such as food, clean water, medicine and clothes still eludes them.[[16]](#footnote-17)Instead tarpaulin sheets and open sewage greet visitors. At the Balapur Camp the Rohingyas had faced water problems in the past, but thanks to the efforts of the Salamah Centre a bore well has been instituted to tackle with the issue.

* **Women and Children**

A number of widows and pregnant women are living in precarious conditions, but children are the worst affected, with many falling sick due to the lack of proper food and medicine.[[17]](#footnote-18) The UNHCR, has said many children were working to support their families instead of attending school. "Sanitation and health issues are of concern, especially in the makeshift settlements, including maternal and child health," a spokesperson of the agency said.

A focussed group discussion was conducted at the Balapur Camp. We spoke to around 11 women in a group, namely Kaushala, Zoharhati, Mariam, Alwar, Umahato, Arafa, Jamila Behen, Sanam, Swamina, Anawar Begum and Noor Fatima. Mostly all of them have been staying in the camp from the past 2 years, except Jamila Behen and Zoharhati who have been in Hyderabad from the past 10 years. During this discussion it was revealed that two women have been here from the past 10 years. Till now the general opinion is that Rohingya refugees have been migrating to Hyderabad quite recently but now we realised that it can be traced to far back. Their answers were similar, most of them believe that unemployment and healthcare are the biggest challenges they face, due to lack of money they go hungry for days, or sometimes they eat one day and the other days they don’t, the children in the camp live in unhealthy condition with no proper sanitation and nutrition. Language is a major problem for them, if they do not know the language they are not able to negotiate for jobs. The women feel that they are much safer in Hyderabad as compared to Myanmar where many women have been raped and abused frequently. The education of the children is also an issue faced by them, the money they earn is not sufficient for the education so they chose not to send the children to school.

* **Education**

Another major problem for the Rohingyas is that of education. Children are unable to get education due to lack of money and so this is another cause of concern for the Rohingyas living not only in India but also to other places they have migrated to. In Hyderabad there is an educational institution called ‘Salamah Centre’ run by Mr. Mansoor Ahmed where they take in refugees like the Rohingyas and give the children accommodation along with educational facilities. Field visits to Rohingya camps in Hyderabad have revealed that education can make so much of a difference, evident visibly when we met the children at the centre; they were well-read, well-spoken and more motivated to do something in life unlike the children we met in the Balapur camp. It is thus very clear that education can make a crucial difference in improving the conditions of the Rohingyas.

First Person Account of Researcher – “On January 7, 2015 I visited the Salamah Centre, the head office was in Char Minar. It is basically a relief and rehabilitation committee in India run by Mr. Mansoor Ahmed. I spoke with children namely, Sheikh Alkama, Farhana, Asama, Nazima, Farzan and Sheikh. All these students love staying in the hostel and coming to school every day. When I asked them do they miss home, they said a little but they enjoy being here. I asked them their favourite subjects; it ranged from Maths to English to Social sciences. Another feature of this school is that it’s not just an Islamic institution, it gives weightage to all subjects. I went to see the school and the hostel the girls were living in, it’s neat and clean, the kitchen is hygienic and the space is adequate. As students they are happy and do not see the difficulties their parents face, they are happy in the little space they have got. Talking to Mr. Mansoor Ahmed I gathered that this Salamah Educational Centre was a place for children from disadvantaged and backward sections of the society at it was a way in which Mr. Ahmed could do something for the society. The fees of the school are very nominal, 300 rupees per month; there is a hostel accommodation for students as well, and most importantly it’s an all girl’s school having classes from LKG to class 10. I had the opportunity to interact with the Rohingya children studying there, my first impression of the children was that they were so different from the children in the camp, they were well spoken and more polished.”

* **Health Facilities and Issues**

Rohingyas face healthcare problems not only in their country of origin but also in India. In India proper healthcare facilities can only be secured by those people who are affluent or who have a decent medical insurance in their name. In such a scenario to expect a large number of poor refugees who do not belong to India to get adequate healthcare facilities seems like an impossibility. Rohingyas in the Balapur camp suffer from cough, cold, fever due to their bad living conditions and their inability to afford a doctor who can treat them. There have been instances where the Rohingyas have collected money for months just so that they are able to afford medical tests and buy the prescribed medicines. Field interviews have shown that however, there are some clinics and doctors who take undue advantage of their vulnerability and ask them to come again and again for check-up so that they earn easy money. Many doctors ask them to take tests which are not even necessary. Such a scenario only proves one thing that is when a community is vulnerable; most people will only use them to further their individual interests and not really care about their conditions.

Abu Hussein at the Balapur Camp, during the interview reiterated that the major issue is healthcare. He particularly narrated an incident where he took his son Zia to a local hospital called St. Martha’s where the doctor asked him to do a number a blood tests and to pay a large amount of money for all the tests. Not having enough money, he could not get all the tests done so he started saving money for his son’s blood tests. When he went to the doctor again the second time, after the tests were done, he gave him a list of other tests to be carried out. This behaviour of the doctors towards the Rohingya refugees is a matter of deep concern for them. Abu Hussain stated that healthcare for the Rohingyas seem to be a money making business in Hyderabad.

After interviews with the refugees as the researcher was leaving the camp, a man called Rehman came by, desperately asking for help, asking for money to be given to him as the doctor had prescribed him a few medicines and a number of tests for which he did not have money. The researcher herself took the prescription and went along with him to St. Martha’s hospital to look into the matter. On reaching there around late evening she found out that the doctors had left and the hospital was going to be closed soon. She tried to talk to the authorities but they refused to talk to me about anything and they were rude in all their replies.

**Humanitarian perspective**

Rohingyas have been facing a number of challenges with regard to their very existence in Myanmar as well as to countries they have been migrating to. In Myanmar there is massive discrimination which the Rohingyas face. In the 2014 census which took place in Myanmar the Rohingyas were conveniently kept away from it. Steps like this bring to light the unequal and unfair treatment The Buddhist Rakhines are hostile towards their existence in the state. They believe that the state belongs to them and not to the Rohingyas. Ethnic violence has become an everyday part of the lives of the people living in Myanmar. The intolerance of the majority communities towards the Rohingyas has led to a sense of fear within the minority group. The facilities given to the displaced Rohingyas in the camps set up in Myanmar are inadequate and of very low quality. The medical help is very poor, where most of the doctors treating the Rohingyas are Buddhists and this makes the minority group insecure and helpless as the doctors are not good intentioned. They would rather have these Rohingyas killed than to treat them.

**Legal Perspective**

The process of addressing any refugee issues has been hindered by the lack of an effective legal framework in India. If issues have been dealt in the past they have often been politically motivated or actions have been taken mainly to improve diplomatic relations with a particular country. The existing laws in India like the Foreigner’s Act of 1946 are completely outdated in the 21st century. This law simply defines any person as a foreigner who is not a citizen of India; this includes Refugees and Stateless people. A similar provision was also introduced through an amendment to the Indian Citizenship Act in 2003 which fails to make any distinction between refugees and their special circumstances and other foreigners and illegal immigrants (Acharaya, 2004).

Under Section 3 (2) of the Act, the Indian government has wide discretionary powers to regulate the entry and movement of foreigners within India. The Foreigners Order 1948 also restricts the entry of foreigners into Indian Territory at given entry points without proper authorisation. Every foreigner should be in possession of a valid passport and visa at the time of entry into India, unless exempted. Most often, refugees are not in possession of these documents and thus are refused entry into India (Acharaya, 2004).

India is not a party to the 1951 Convention, but it is bound by the international customary law principle of non-refoulement (this principle prevents a country from expelling refugees to countries where their life and liberty are under serious threat). The Foreigners Act lays down the fact that the Indian government canrefoule foreigners, including asylum-seekers, through deportation, and is therefore in violation of international customary law. Here again we see a conflict arising between the existing laws.

Article 51 (c) of the Indian Constitution provides that India "shall endeavour to foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another". Article 253 of the Constitution gives the Indian Parliament the "power to make any law for the whole or any part of the territory of India for implementing any treaty, agreement or convention with any other country or countries or any decision made at any international conference, association or other body". India is in favour of formulation of an international and domestic law consistent with its fundamental rights (SAHRDC, 2003).

A national model refugee law for granting statutory protection to refugees has long been considered in India but is yet to be implemented. The model law aims to harmonise norms and standards on refugee law, establish a procedure for granting refugee status and guarantee them their rights and fair treatment.

In India, refugees are placed under three broad categories. Category I refugees receive full protection from the Indian government (for example, Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka) Category II refugees are those who are granted refugee status by the UNHCR and are protected under the principle of non-refoulement (for example, Burmese and Afghan refugees); and Category III refugees who are neither recognised by the Indian government nor the UNHCR but have entered India and assimilated into the local community (for example, Chin refugees from Burma living in the state of Mizoram) (SAHRDC, 1997). Now the question arises that India needs a refugee law what are the advantages of framing this law.Till there is further clarity on the legal framework within which refugees and stateless persons stay on Indian soil, people like the Rohingyas will always be living in a state of limbo.

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