

Awareness Raising Session with Police

Police Station, Vikaspuri

31.05.2016

India does not have any specific legal framework for the protection of the refugees. The Indian constitution is very much silent on the issue of refugees, apart from the provision provided under Article 21, which is 'right to life' that is applicable to both citizens and non-citizens of India.

In such a situation, refugees and asylum seekers are most vulnerable and marginalised in the society. Their ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities made them easy target for the discrimination and harassment from host population including authorities.

Most of the time police authorities find it difficult to differentiate between a foreigner and a refugee owing to the lack of awareness on the issue of refugee protection principles. It is imperative to enhance the goal to protect and promote the rights of refugees and to disseminate awareness about refugees to general population and authorities in particular.

An awareness raising and interaction session with Police and refugees was jointly organised



by SLIC and BOSCO on 31 May 2016 at PS Vikaspuri. The main objective of the awareness programme was to sensitize the police officials about the rights and status of the refugees in India and also to develop a comfort level for the refugees to engage with police whenever required so that eventually they become empowered in legal matters.

The session was attended by forty one (41) police personnel including the SHO Insp.

Sunil Kumar. SLIC was represented by Sunil Kumar and Dr. Murshed Mussarraf Choudhury and from BOSCO by Hitesh and Zung Thang. Four Burmese community leaders namely Lal Lian Bik, Khai Sian Paw, Shane Cheey and Salai attended the session including two SLIC interpreters Chharaliana (Burmese), Hujzeat Islam (Rohingya).

The Session started with introduction by Mr. Sunil Kumar (SLIC) about the role the organisation including BOSCO's and its services to refugees and asylum seekers. Role of UNHCR as an UN refugee agency and its operation in India was highlighted including the relation between UNHCR and Government of India.

General socio-economic condition of the refugees and their legal status was shared and requested the police officials not to treat refugees as a foreigner as they are registered refugees. A brief description was provided to the police on how and in what circumstances refugees flee their home country to escape persecution and seek asylum in another country. The documentation process and issuance of refugee ID card by UNHCR were shared. They were also informed about LTV issued by FRRO to refugees. A sample of refugee ID card and LTV were shared with the police for knowledge through which they can also differentiate refugees from other foreigners. The police was requested to cooperate and treat refugee cases on humanitarian grounds as they are already vulnerable and unprotected. In case of any doubt, police can always verify the refugee ID card from UNHCR.



Mr. Hitesh explained in detailed about the role of BOSCO and services provided to refugees in terms of medical and educational assistance.

The SHO and the Beat officers shared their respective phone numbers with the Refugees present and were open to any complaint for police assistance whenever required. The session saw good participation and receptiveness from the police.