

'Social acceptance key to integration of refugees, migrants'

Sonapat (Haryana), May 18, Social acceptance is a stepping stone to the integration of refugees and migrants, said an O.P. Jindal Global University professor at a UN symposium.

"The integration (of refugees and migrants) is a multi-group responsibility involving the host government, non-governmental organisations, communities and local residents," a statement quoted S.P. Sahni, Principal Director at the University's Institute of Behavioural Sciences, as saying on Friday.

The five-day UN symposium was held in Vienna from May 14-18.

According to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), there are about 65.6 million people forcibly displaced worldwide out of which 16.1 million refugees are registered with the council, while another 5.2 million are registered with United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and many of them are under the age of 18 years.

There are about 10 million stateless people who are

denied nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement.

The people who leave everything behind in the hope of finding safety and a better tomorrow are also on the risk of developing mental health issues, and thus need to be targeted in a "integrative and holistic" way, Sahni said.

"Mental health of refugees is dependent on a complex web that is governed by bio-psycho-social factors being mediated by government and other agencies at large," he noted.

Sahni emphasised about the need to build a conscious narrative where there is a cohesive social acceptability for immigrants that needs to be instilled among host citizens by making an "a robust policy" at the governmental level and involving non-governmental organisations.

The event also saw participation of leading global experts on refugee crisis, human rights crusaders, health care professionals and legal luminaries.

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