Need for A National Asylum Policy

What is the issue?

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India need to reassess its approach to refugee protection particularly in light of the regional refugee crisis.

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What is the status of refugees in India?

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- India is host to over 200,000 refugees like her who have been forced to flee conflict and persecution in their home countries.
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- The refuges to India are from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Tibet.
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- Earlier India has hosted several persecuted groups such as Tibetans and Sri Lankans.
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- In recent times India is facing regional refugee crisis after the mass exodus of the Rohingya from Myanmar.
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What were the measures taken by India to host refugees?

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- India has reiterated its commitment towards the protection of refugees at various international fora, including the UN General Assembly.
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- One of the most significant affirmations of this commitment was demonstrated by India becoming a signatory to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which was adopted by 193 countries in September 2016.
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- In doing so, India has expressed its solidarity with those forced to flee and agreed that protecting refugees and supporting the countries that shelter them are shared international responsibilities that must be borne more equitably.
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- The Declaration sets the stage for a new framework for refugee protection the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).
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- Two of its key objectives are to ease pressures on host countries and enhance refugee self-reliance.
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What are the stressed refugees policies in India?

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- Although India has hosted refugees of varying nationalities for decades, the country has done little beyond providing asylum.
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- There have been some attempts to introduce a refugee law in the country, but the government continues to adopt an ad hoc approach towards this group.
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- Given that most refugees have been unable to return to their countries, leading to protracted refugee situations,
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- Due to their unclear legal status and lack of uniform documentation, refugees have limited access to essential services and almost no avenues for livelihood.
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What measures needs to be taken?

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- The solution to refugee concerns may lie within the GCR, which calls for States to identify gaps and opportunities for employment and income generation for refugees in a bid to enhance their self-reliance.
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- It specifies the need to include the host community in enabling mapping skills, vocational training and capacity-building among refugee populations.

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- It would also Foster to understand and cooperate among the communities and paving the way for a socially cohesive approach.
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- India’s commitment to refugee protection under the GCR is evident in its active participation in ongoing GCR consultations, where it has emphasised the need for a clear mechanism for the refugee response regime.
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- Therefore this is an opportune time for India to reassess the need for a national asylum policy which is compliant with the principles laid down in the GCR.
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Source: The Hindu

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