

CONNECTING THE DOTS DEBATING DISPLACEMENT IN SOUTH ASIA

Kathmandu, Nepal 3- 6 November, 2023

South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and
Migration (SAN-CDM)





**South Asia Network for Communication,
Displacement and Migration (SAN-CDM)**

PRESENTS ITS SECOND IN-PERSON CONFERENCE

**CONNECTING THE DOTS:
DEBATING DISPLACEMENT IN
SOUTH ASIA**

organised by



**Calcutta Research Group
in collaboration with DW Akademie and Nepal
Institute of Peace**

**03-06 NOVEMBER, 2023
LALITPUR, NEPAL**

BIO-BOOK



AYEMAN NAFIA

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Ayeman Nafia works as a Manager- Advocacy, Communication, and Development in the BRAC Migration Programme. During her eight-year journey in the development sector, she has enjoyed working in various roles under diversified projects. What Ayeman loves about her work is that it not only holds great meaning for her but also allows her to explore her country, learn about different customs, people and locality, and collect stories. Ayeman loves creative work, wildlife, learning new software, and capturing moments of life in the rawest form. Lastly, Ayeman enjoys the quiet life and pursue peace of mind above all.



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Debasree Sarkar did her M.A. in History from the Presidency University and finished her M.Phil. from the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University. Currently, Debasree is pursuing her PhD from Diamond Harbour Women's University in History. The theme of her research has been reading the social history of colonial Bengal through women's autobiographical writings, with special emphasis on sartorial changes. Her research interests range from body images to gender studies and cultural construction. Debasree has joined Calcutta Research Group as Media Officer for the SAN-CDM in July 2022.



JALALUDDIN MUGHAL

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Jalaluddin Mughal is an independent journalist and author from Neelum Valley, a conflict-ridden area of the disputed Jammu & Kashmir region. He has been covering the Kashmir conflict, natural disasters, human rights, governance, migration, and displacement issues in Pakistan-administered Kashmir for years. His in-depth stories have been published in reputable publications such as The New York Times, Voice of America, Independent Urdu, and DAWN. Mughal has authored two books, "Resilience at Its Best" and "Losing Lives at LoC," which feature personal accounts of victims of the Kashmir conflict.



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With Nearly 7 years Experience in journalism. Mahrajah Manochithra is presently Holding the position of Journalist of Virakesari, Sri Lanka's widely circulated, 94 years Oldest and independent newspaper. Joined the newspaper as a trainee - journalist in 2017 - just after her secondary education. Manochithra has worked as a journalist throughout her entire career. starting as a news reporter covering the areas of defense, Health, Education, International Conferences (in Sri Lanka) & etc. Manochithra has also contributed as a feature writer covering Social Issues, human Interest Stories, Interviews & investigative reports.



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Dr. M.C. Rasmin is a highly proficient Media Development Specialist, boasting a 15-year track record of conceptualizing, overseeing, and evaluating over 25 media development projects in collaboration with both local and international organizations. His work has been dedicated to addressing rights-based issues affecting vulnerable communities, including women, migrants, local refugees, internally displaced individuals, and other marginalized populations, all through innovative media approaches. As the Founder and Director/CEO of the Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF), a prominent national organization committed to advancing development communication, he spent close to a decade applying a diverse set of journalistic and communication tools to foster democracy, pluralism, human rights, and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.



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Dr. Nasreen Chowdhory is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Delhi University. Nasreen's doctoral research enquired into refugee camps in South Asia. Nasreen is the author of *Refugees, Citizenship and Belonging in South Asia: Contested Terrains* and the co-editor of *Citizenship, Nationalism and Refugeehood of Rohingyas in South Asia*. Since 2021 Nasreen, along with Samata Biswas, has been coordinating the South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and Migration (SAN-CDM).



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Neetu Pokharel is a Program Manager at Purak Asia with over 10 years of experience in women's rights, community legal empowerment, social inclusion, and the protection of minority rights. Currently, she leads the socio-economic justice portfolio with a particular focus on land and housing rights, gender justice, and sustainable development goals in Nepal and South Asia. She has been engaged in policy advocacy, campaigns, and research related to access to justice, migration, and statelessness in Nepal. Previously, she worked with the Women's Rehabilitation Centre Nepal (WOREC) on women, peace and community development. Ms. Pokharel completed her Master's Degree in Conflict, Peace, and Development Studies from Tribhuvan University, Nepal, and the Ruhuna University of Sri Lanka. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree on law from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.



SAHER BALOCH

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Saher Baloch is a bilingual correspondent with the BBC World Service in Islamabad. Saher has been working for past 17 years for multiple news organizations including Dawn Newspaper and The News in Karachi. Her work largely focuses on human rights, minorities and political economy.



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Dr. Shyamalendu Majumdar retired as an Associate Professor of Political Science from Shivanath Shastri College, Kolkata, Dr. Shyamalendu Majumdar is the current Honorary Director of Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group. His research interests are forced migration and the internally displaced.



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Surabhi has been a journalist and filmmaker for approximately four years. During this time, she has written and produced videos on various topics, including disability, caste, labour, gender, and religious persecution. She's also one of the founding members of Newsreel Asia, a visual journalism platform based in India, where she currently works. Surabhi dreams of a society that is less unequal and just.



SAMTEN DOLKAR

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If versatility has a definition in human form, that'd be Samten. By day, Samten is a mild mannered reporter, but by night, and on weekend, Samten transforms into a Koala, the sleepest creature. Samten does stories from social issues to climate change, economy and finances which she thinks she is nill at. This is her 7th year as a journalist and 5th year as a TV news anchor.



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Dr. Esther Dorn- Fellerman is a project manager at DW Akademie and also a lecturer in DW Akademie's International Media Studies Master Program. Esther's focus is on participatory media and their contribution to democratization processes as well as media in conflict and crisis situations. Esther advised CRG on the conceptual design of this conference.



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Saurabh Kumar, based in Mumbai, India, is a researcher, multimedia journalist, and documentary filmmaker with over seven years of experience. He co-founded Public Bolti for citizen journalism and advocacy. Saurabh initiated Opia Films, specializing in non-fiction films on critical societal issues. He contributed to the Repeal Sedition initiative, examining India's sedition law. Currently, as an Inlaks fellow, he's developing peace education modules for Cinema in School. Saurabh also conducts workshops on audio-visual documentation and social media campaigns.



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YK Poudel from Dagana, Bhutan works at the national newspaper of Bhutan. Since a young age, Yam has been closely interested and involved in the community engagement programmes as a social advocate and social worker. Yam is the vice chairperson on G17 UAC Bhutan, initiating several projects and programmes in the country involving over a thousand of college going students in impactful projects. Yam is working as an Environment and Climate Reporter with Kuensel.



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Shaheen Abdulla is a multimedia journalist covering human rights and minorities in India.



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Mahfuzur Rahman Manik is a devoted journalist. He is working as Senior Sub-Editor (Editorial department) at the Daily Samakal, a leading Newspaper of Bangladesh. He graduated from The University of Dhaka. His book 'Rohingya Crisis: Third Eye' was published in 2022. Mahfuzur has been working with some national and internal organizations as a translator as well. His activities can be followed at:
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Bhumika Saraswati is an independent photographer, writer and filmmaker based in India. Her work has been published with various international and national news organizations like The Associated Press, Washington Post, The Independent, SCMP Films, The Wire, The Caravan magazine and more. She was awarded the UNFPA Laadli Media Award 22, for gender sensitive visual documentary work. Her sensitivities and the stories she tells are largely informed by her lived reality. She believes in telling stories of underrepresented communities, through visual mediums. For her, visuals transcend the boundaries of language and have ability and reach for wider impact. Her latest documentary film “Sex Workers and Their Children” (watched by over 10+million people) recently won the ‘Human Rights Press Award 2023’ by Human Rights Watch. Bhumika is currently the ASIA-PACIFIC visual journalism media fellow for Asia Pacific Women, Law and Development (APWLD) from India. She is currently working on a long-term visual project around increasing Heat and its intersection with marginalization.



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Rajat Roy is a senior journalist who retired from the *Anandabazar Patrika*. He is the co editor of *Political Ecology of Survival: Life and Labour in the River Lands of East and North East India* and the editor of the Bengali volume *Mahamarir Nana Simanay*. Rajat regularly writes columns in various Bengali and English newspapers and web portals.



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Sagar Koirala is a youth climate advocate, climate mobility enthusiast, agriculture researcher, international election observer and DRR advocate from Eastern Nepal



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In Experience with journalism, community media and media development projects, currently Mafia is working with DW Akademie as Project Officer & Trainer in "Displacement and Dialogue South Asia Project in Cox's Bazar. Mafia has pursued her career in radio and television, beginning with a Community Radio, later working with a private radio and private news tv channel as a reporter. Mafia has also worked with a British Council Active Citizen project as a facilitator. Before joining DW Akademie, and with Fondation Hironnelle – a Swiss media development organization, as an editor for their radio contents along with Christian Aid. Mafia has contributed a chapter titled 'Radio in the Lives of Rohingyas in Camps in Bangladesh' in the book "Citizenship, Nationalism and Refugeehood of Rohingyas in Southern Asia", published by Springer.



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Dr. Bharat Bhushan is the Associate Editor and South Asia Editor of 360info. He is a senior journalist and columnist and former television show host on Foreign Affairs for RajyaSabha TV. Bharat has served as Editor of *Catch News*, founding Editor of *Mail Today*, Executive Editor of the *Hindustan Times*, Editor of *The Telegraph* in Delhi, Editor of the *Express-News Service*, Washington Correspondent of the *Indian Express* and an Assistant Editor with *The Times of India*.



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Chalika Thangaraja, is a Senior Lecturer (Transitional) attached to the Department of Communication and Creative Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She obtained her first degree Honours in Mass Communication in the year 2013 with a first class and Masters in Mass Communication (MSSc.) in the year 2019 at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Her Master's Degree thesis title was 'Political Factors Influencing the Media Policy Formulation in Sri Lanka'. Recruited as a Lecturer (Probationary) she has completed a Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (CTHE) at the University of Colombo (This programme was recognized by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) of UK) (2020). Ms. Thangaraja has published several research papers and made some presentations at national and international research symposia. Community media and social well-being, media policies, migration issues and the portrayal of media are some of her interesting research fields.



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Devika Pradhan is a reporter with the Bhutan Broadcasting Service Corporation Limited. Although Devika studied literature at University, she has always had a keen interest in Climate change and biodiversity. Nevertheless, her love for storytelling has taken her to many places expanding and sparking her interest in other fields as well. As a result, she also became a part of the media workshops organised by CRG. Devika aspires to learn and expand in whatever way possible instead of being rigid and stagnant. Hence, Devika is always looking for opportunities to expand her horizons and become a better storyteller.



RAFIQUL MONTU

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Rafiqul Montu is an award winning Bangladeshi Independent investigative journalist who started coastal journalism in Bangladesh; which is now known to many individuals and organizations in the world. Coastal journalism has generated a lot of interest among young journalists in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's climate change and coastal issues are the focus of Rafiqul's journalism. Migration is increasing due to climate change. He writes stories on climate change, disasters, women and children's rights, land rights, border disputes, environment, humanitarian, civil services, development and prospects for national and international media. Rafiqul has been the Earth Journalism Network (EJN) Fellow in 2020 and 2021. Under the fellowship he investigated the effects of climate change. Rafiqul was a finalist in Covering Climate Now's Journalism Awards 2022. In 2021 he won the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Investigative Journalism Award, the most prestigious recognition of investigative journalism in Bangladesh. Also won 20 national level awards at various times.



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Jayanta Roy Chowdhury is the Acting Resident Editor (Eastern Region) of Press Trust of India, with more than 30 years of experience as a journalist in three of India's best known newspapers: The Pioneer, The Telegraph and The New Indian Express. Jayanta started his career at the wire agency United News Service and was also the Honorary Secretary of the Commonwealth Journalists Association.



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Mainul Khan is currently working with DW Akademie as a project manager and trainer for the project Displacement and Dialogue Asia and responsible for its Rohingya response activities in Cox's Bazar.

Previously Mainul used to work with several international media outlets, such as Anadolu Agency (Turkiye), Los Angeles Times (US), etc. In the course of more than two decades in journalism, Mainul has been a freedom of expression defender and has closely worked with Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, etc.



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Som Niroula is human rights activist promoting human rights and social justice, and he is also an executive member of NIP Nepal. He provides strategic support to organizations working in human rights issues in Nepal. He has a decade-long experience working in the field of human rights and has previously worked at the South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) based in Kathmandu. He holds MA in Peace Education from the United Nations Mandated University for Peace (UPEACE), Costa Rica. Som has recently completed a visiting fellowship at Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna.



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Sahana David Menon is an independent journalist based in Srilanka and covering Asia with a focus on amplifying the voices of indigenous and minority communities, environmental and healthcare issues, women's rights, and education.



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Ajit Acharya holds an M.Phil. in Population Studies from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He is the Secretary of Nepal Institute of Peace. He teaches at Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus Balaju, Kathmandu and has a long experience in the research sector as a consultant, team leader and various other capacities.



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Andrea Marshall is the Program Director at Deutsche Welle's DW Akademie in Berlin, Germany, for the program Displacement and Dialogue South Asia. Her team and its South Asian partners support freedom of expression and access to information for displaced people and migrants in the region, mainly for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and Afghan refugees in Pakistan and other countries. The team also promotes dialogue between refugees and host communities and qualifies and connects media practitioners and experts across the region. Andrea is also a qualified journalist trainer and an experienced journalist. For more than 20 years, she worked as a news editor, managing editor, reporter and author, in radio, television and online, mainly for the public service broadcaster RBB in the German capital. Andrea studied Communications, Political Science and English Literature in Berlin and London and holds a Master's Degree.



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Paula Banerjee is the IDRC Endowed Research Chair in Gender and Forced Displacement, and Director, Centre on Gender and Forced Displacement, at Asian Institute of Technology. Paula received the South Asian Border Studies award in 2023, for her commitment and significant work in the field of border and refugee studies in Asia. Paula is the author of *Borders, Histories, Existences*, the co-editor of *Gender, Identity and Migration in India*, *The State of Being Stateless in South Asia* etc. She is both a former Director of Calcutta Research Group and former Vice Chancellor of The Sanskrit College and University



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Partha protim Sarkar is an Accountant at Calcutta Research Group. He has more than 36 years' experience in this field.



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Dr. Samata Biswas teaches English at the Sanskrit College and University and is the co-editor of *Situating Social Media: Gender, Caste, Solidarity, Protest*. Working in the field of higher education for more than 16 years, Samata's teaching and research are geared towards texts dealing with colonialism, caste, gender, popular culture and forced migration, with special emphasis on the partition of British India. Samata curated the CRG film series "Calcutta Migrant City" and has been coordinating the SAN-CDM with Nasreen Chowdhory since 2021.



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Suchandra is a journalist and migration researcher. Currently she works as the Editor-Special Features at ABP Online. She has written her PhD thesis on representation of refugees in post-Partition theatre in Bengal. She specializes in human stories mostly related to border and gender. Along with her friends, Suchandra runs schools for not so privileged children in the Gorumara jungle of North Bengal and the Sundarbans.



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Sita Panth Bhandari is passionate about advocating for the rights of migrant workers and their families, and has dedicated her career to this noble cause. Her journey in this field has been a deeply rewarding and enlightening one, filled with challenges and achievements that have shaped her commitment to this important cause.



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Sujit Kumar Saksena holds Master's Degree in Anthropology from Tribhuvan University of Nepal. He has been involved in forced migration sector mainly on internal displacement. His ethnographic work *Mali of Nepal* has been published as a monograph. At present he has been engaged in issues of cross-migrant workers. His academic interests include disaster, public policy and inclusion, among others.



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Rhishav Sapkota is a law graduate from Nepal who wants to investigate the intersection of law, culture, and human movement and share what he learns with others in order to reach a shared understanding of the aspirations and struggles that all humans face in their pursuit of what they would call a meaningful life.

