

Calcutta
Research
Group –
Institute for
Human
Sciences,
Vienna

January - June

2020

The first of the biannual project reports on the
Europe-Asia Research Platform on Forced Migration
(2020)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following is the first bi-annual report (January-June 2020) on the CRG-IWM collaborative research programme on migration and forced migration. It covers the progress, the current state, and plan for the completing the various segments of the programme in the next six months. The work started a little late for some technical reasons and had unanticipated roadblocks in the form of ‘lockdown’ imposed in India in late March and in different European countries by the respective governments in the wake of the spread of deadly virus of COVID-19. In spite of these initial difficulties, this collaborative research programme has taken off well, as the two partners in Europe and Asia were able to readjust the work templates soon to cope with the new and somewhat unprecedented situation. All the concerned researchers and other supporting staff in CRG and IWM started working from home with some modifications in the collaborative research agenda. In fact, CRG also had to work against odds posed by Cyclone Amphan that devastated the southern parts of West Bengal and the city of Kolkata, disrupting electricity, water and internet connectivity for nearly fifteen days. However, the preparation of the Winter Workshop-Conference, the research agenda, and other related activities continued more or less as per schedule on the basis of exchanges of ideas through meetings, webinars, roundtable discussions in virtual mode, and committee formation and working group functioning mandated to guide the reorientation of specific segments of the overall programme.

In these six months, the CRG-IWM research collaboration has been able to achieve at least three objectives that were either set in the beginning or decided later in view of the emerging situation due to the outbreak of pandemic.

1. First, the sudden outbreak of pandemic has encouraged CRG to explore the impact of this pandemic on migrant labour, as India started witnessing a massive march of migrant workers in millions back home in view of the clamping of ‘lockdown’ by the Government of India at a very short notice. The outcome is the two complementary volumes entitled *Borders of an Epidemic* and *Burdens of an Epidemic*, both edited by Ranabir Samaddar. These two volumes have already drawn immense global attention of academics, media-persons, policy-makers, and activist groups engaged in solidarity work with migrant labourers. These two volumes and the resultant exchanges have generated new debates and discussions on the issue of migrant labour and their entitlements, and in general the place of migrant labour in migration and forced migration studies.
2. Second, this collaboration has already effectively set in motion a Europe-Asia academic platform for exchange of ideas and experiences on migration and forced migration. The two-day workshop preceded by a round-table discussion in June 2020, organized by the IWM has provided an opportunity to all the concerned researchers from Europe and Asia to interact with one another. Originally, there was a plan to hold a workshop in Vienna in May, which probably would not have been able to accommodate all the researchers together. The cardinal principle followed in the June workshop in virtual mode was to have reaction of European scholars on Indian draft research papers and vice versa. CRG kept IWM informed of the changes it had planned and effected regarding its work style, schedule, and partial reorientation and adjustment of themes. IWM’s advices were helpful. This principle of exchange and intermingling of ideas has decidedly set the ball rolling for the creation of a Europe-Asia platform for collaborative research.
3. Third, the onset of pandemic has encouraged researchers at CRG to look at the issue of migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people from a new perspective as this crisis has unveiled in an unforeseen way and exacerbated the everyday vulnerabilities of all these population groups, their precarious condition, and what may be termed the “rightlessness” of a large section of society.

TIMELINE

	Original Timeline (Before COVID-19)	Month	Date	
	Programme			
	Section I: Annual Research and Orientation Workshop			
	SIX day Annual Winter Orientation Workshop and Conference with its year-long preparation (part of the cost)	November	23(Mon)-28 (Sat)	
	Annual Research Agenda - at least four publishable research papers on select themes (ethics and politics of protection, protection regimes, intersecting histories of human rights and humanitarianism, IDPs, migration and conflict, statelessness, migration and gender with focus on health, and education in conflict zones and migrant settlements, mothers without borders, migration and politics, juridical reasoning, security, migration, and the State, labour mobility and historical forms of labour flows under conditions of servitude and semi-servitude, comparison between the Euro-Mediterranean and the Asia-Pacific regions, <i>migration and global</i> governance, etc. This will also include allied research themes, such as conflicts and dialogues, women in peace, labour flows in South Asia and Asia with focus on transit labour, borderland studies, etc.)	March-September	1 (March)-31 (September)	
	Four one-month long fellowships (including travel and all other relevant items like field visit, etc.)	July-August	1 (March)-31 (Aug)	
	Public lectures in universities (at least 2 in a year) / RBU, Mumbai, Vidyasagar, Delhi, GB pant, South Asian, Punjab, TISS, Mumbai	July and October		
	Preparatory and Follow up Programmes (Including Investigative Field Visits, and at least 1 Dialogue on Migration and Conflict) / One dialogue in Darjeeling in March-April and investigative field visit to NE in September	Visit to the NE and other places in September		
	One Advisory Committee meeting and one programme planning cum evaluation meeting (in all	Evaluation and advisory	27	

	2 meetings)			
	Visits and participation in conferences and research workshops (such as IASFM, UN High Commissioner's Annual Dialogues, Annual Human Rights Commission meetings, etc.)	to be re-planned		
	Section II: Allied Necessary Activities			
	Refugee Watch (2 issues of the journal, along with Refugeewatchonline) /Paula and Samata	April and November	30 & 10	
	Workshop for university faculty members on (a) research methodology, and (b) syllabus making exercise (Samir and Sibaji)	July-August		
	Preparation of audio-visual material for education (Samata/ Kolkata A Migrant's City)	October	29-30	
	Website and digital resource (including subscription to web-based resources like J-Stor)	April-July		
	Translation programme in regional languages (including languages of the indigenous population groups)	December	15-16	
	A media workshop on the theme of conflict, migration, and media and a media pack as a tool (Bharat and Rajat)	August-September	15-15	
	Library and archive building, book acquisition and journal subscription (this will include part of the rent for the separate premises of the library that CRG acquired two years before and has extreme difficulty in maintaining)	Acquisition by 31 October		

With the onset of the global pandemic of COVID-19, India went on a nation-wide lockdown from March 24, 2020. It prompted CRG to adapt and thereby introduce necessary changes in the timeline given above, also the mode of work and thematic orientation. The details are mentioned in the following sections of this six-monthly project report.

**I. FIFTH ANNUAL RESEARCH & ORIENTATION WORKSHOP ON GLOBAL PROTECTION OF
MIGRANTS & REFUGEES**

Winter Workshop, 2020



Calcutta Research Group (CRG) invited applications to its annual Workshop on Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees in collaboration with Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and other organizations and institutions in India. The advertisement has been floated on www.merg.ac.in, on print media – *The Economic and Political Weekly* (March 14, 2020), and *The Statesman* (March 15, 2020); emailed the notification to the entire contact list of CRG. It was also posted on the IWM's website.

Virtual Reworking

India imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 24, 2020 to combat the global pandemic of COVID-19. In keeping with the government's rule, CRG shifted its mode of operation to complete virtual, web-based interactions from 24 March 2020 to 10 June 2020 and made the following changes:

Extension of Application Deadline

Initially, the closing date of applications was marked as April 10, 2020; but with the outbreak of COVID-19 and the resulting lockdowns in India and most other countries in the world, CRG decided to extend its submission deadline to May 31, 2020. The procedure for application was also revised to accommodate issues arising out of the lockdown with the following announcement: *For those who cannot access reference letters due to lockdowns/other pandemic-related hindrances, your referees must be copied to your application emails and be requested to send their letters in a 'reply' to the mail thread.* The full advertisement can be accessed on http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2020/Migration_Fifth_Annual_Research_and_Orientation_Workshop_2020.pdf

Task force

To administer the workshop procedure efficiently in the work-from-home format, CRG constituted a **Task Force** with *Ranabir Samaddar*, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies at CRG, *Nasreen Chowdhury*, Vice President at CRG, *Samir Kumar Das*, Honourary Director at CRG, *Paula Banerjee*, Professor at University of Calcutta, *Manish K. Jha*, Associate Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and *Samaresh Guchhait*, staff member at CRG with *Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhuri*, Vice Chancellor at Rabindra Bharati University as its convenor. The Task Force, along with the Forced Migration Studies Desk at CRG has convened 3 virtual meetings until now to calibrate the international workshop to the 'new normal'.

Module reorientation

Module A: Global protection of refugees and migrants with emphasis on protection in the time of a pandemic; (previous name: Global protection regime with focus on the Global Compacts), coordinator- Nasreen Chowdhury. The module coordinator is working on issues of protection of migrants and refugees which will include the theme of mobility and the pandemic. She will concentrate on the global protection measures with a focus on the South Asian situation. The module will also look into the national laws and municipal laws while talking about pandemic and labour mobility; and explore the potential and inadequacies of international laws. There will be issues of common interest between Module A and E, but approaches will vary.

Module B: Migrants and the epidemic: Gender, race, and other vulnerabilities; (previously: "Race, gender, religion & resources and other faultlines in the Protection Regime), coordinator: Samata Biswas

The module coordinator will give special emphasis on race and other fault lines during epidemics in history. The module will discuss the global scenario and will look into the historiography on epidemic and migrants which will focus on the fault lines of race, gender, minority, caste and religion.

Module C: Neo-liberalism, migrant labour, and the burden of the epidemic; (previously: Neo-Liberalism, Immigrants Economies, and Labour), coordinators- Arup Sen and Iman Mitra

The module will look into the post-pandemic restructuring of the capital and how that will affect labour movements. The module will combine theory and ethnographic studies from the National Capital Region which

houses multiple global chains like automobile sector; and study neo-liberalism as the political ideology of globalisation. During this pandemic there is a change in the institutional order. Through this module, participants will explore questions like - how does this change affect labour movement? What shape will labour regimes take now?

Module D: Statelessness with emphasis on de facto statelessness and the rightlessness of sections of population; (previously: Statelessness) coordinator – K.M. Parivelan

The module will provide theoretical and conceptual framework of statelessness with examples from the Chakmas, Urdu speaking Biharis, Rohingyas, West Pakistanis and others while considering international movements like #IBelong campaign in the UN. It will also extensively focus on the NRC and the Citizenship debates, and the challenges faced by people who do not hold citizenship in the time of COVID 19. Statelessness and citizenship will be explored as a continuum. It may look into the present context and study how new borders are formed due to the pandemic, when migrant labourers are treated as disfranchised, de facto stateless population groups.

Module E: Legal regimes of protection and the time of the pandemic; (previously: Laws of Asylum and Protection) coordinator- Oishik Sircar

The module tutor will delve into case laws to look at the relationship between border control and diseased bodies. A discussion paralleling the detention centres and quarantine will be attempted. The module will also interrogate the idea of rights as being virtuous and instead look into the reality of rights as regulatory mechanisms. The module will seek to inquire how law unfolds with each case and judgment, and will orient participants to the corpus of laws. Legal regimes will cut across all the modules of this year especially due to the current situation.

Module F: Ethics of care, public health, and the migrants and refugees, (previous: Ethics of Care and Protection), coordinator- Paula Banerjee

It will review the history of pandemics (SARS, Ebola, COVID-19) and discuss how missing in all these pandemics was a plan and policies of care. Care has always been ad-hoc. The module will study the concept of care from a historical perspective. Ethics were eroded in each case of a pandemic and COVID-19 overturned the whole notion of ethics. Citizens are becoming non-citizens and when the authorities talk about the care and protection of frontline workers, it is rather limited to those at higher positions. The centre of care is the body and that is diminishing. Care is a claim making process where those who can claim care will receive it. The module will look into the legislations and policies on epidemics and the gaps in them.

Selection committee

In keeping with CRG's usual procedure for the annual winter workshop, a selection committee comprising of two CRG members and an external member has been instituted to choose this year's participants from the pool of applicants. The committee will begin its process in early July.

Digital lectures

In keeping with the norms of social distancing and minimum travel, the Task Force has decided to upload module lectures on CRG website by end of August as part of online resource for workshop participants. All the module coordinators will prepare short lectures of their respective modules as part of November workshop. The module coordinators will prepare 30-35 minutes lectures, amounting to approximately 7-8 pages of text. By August, CRG will start uploading them. The lectures by module coordinators will be accompanied by visual materials and bibliography. They will be of maximum 30 minutes followed by a 10 minutes discussion of bibliography which will shed light on new literature, challenges and critical thinking. These lectures will also contain images and videos as supplementary materials. The module coordinators will submit their complete audio-visual lectures by

the end of July to CRG. All the lectures will serve as online resources for 2020 winter workshop.

November Conference

CRG is still in the process of planning the conference. With the new situation, the workshop segment will have to be finalised first. This plan is nearly ready. Following this the preparation of the conference segment will begin in earnest.

Collaboration with the IWM

It is important to mention that in all these and planning of the followings segments, CRG has been in close touch and consultation with the IWM. CRG has benefited immensely from the inputs received regularly from the latter. Information and announcements have been exchanged regularly. CRG's winter workshop, research segment, public lecture segment, and advisory segment have particularly gained from these consultations and advices.

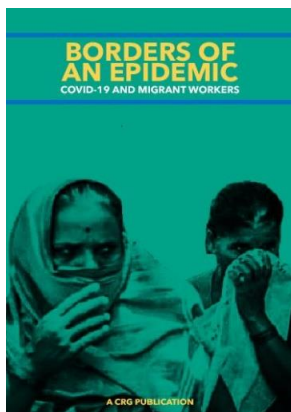
II. Annual Research Agenda

i. Publications

Situating Social Media: Gender, Caste, Protest, Solidarity

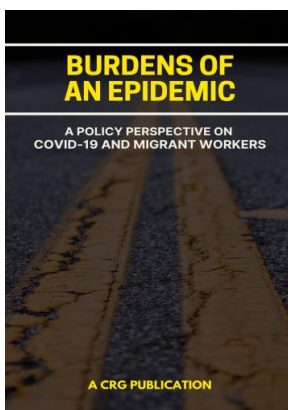
The finishing touches to CRG's Social Media volume published by Women Unlimited were undertaken with the generous assistance of IWM. It is now available for purchase on <https://www.amazon.in/Situating-Social-Media-Protest-Solidarity/dp/9385606271>.

In the wake of an unprecedented situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, CRG under the leadership of its Distinguished Chair in Migration & Forced Migration Studies, Professor Ranabir Samaddar, published two research documents on COVID-19 and Migrant Workers that are now being discussed widely on various platforms. The volumes are titled:



Borders of an Epidemic: COVID-19 and Migrant Workers Migrant workers from different parts of India trekked back hundreds of kilometres carrying their scanty belongings and dragging their hungry and thirsty children in the scorching heat of the plains of India to reach home in the wake of the sudden announcement by the government of a complete lockdown of the country amid the spectre of Corona virus. Yet while scenes of migrant workers walking in long processions caught the attention of the journalists, it still requires to be asked: What lay behind these long marches? How do caste, race, gender, and other fault lines operate in governmental strategies to cope with a virus epidemic? If the fight against an epidemic has been compared with a war, what are the forces of power at play in this war against the pandemic? What indeed explains the sudden visibility of the migrant workers in the time of a public health crisis? What measures could have been taken and need

to be taken now? This online publication by Calcutta Research Group highlights the ethical and political implications of the epidemic – particularly for India's migrant workers. This book is written as the crisis unfolds with no end in sight. The full book can be accessed on http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2020/COVID-19.pdf



Burdens of an Epidemic: A Policy Perspective on Covid-19 and Migrant Workers comes out close on the heels of *Borders of an Epidemic*. 'Borders of an Epidemic' was documentary in nature. 'Burdens of an Epidemic' analyses the issue of migrant labour from several dimensions of the epidemic. The purpose of this tract is to present a policy perspective of the contemporary situation and to draw out in the open the policy contexts of the reports published in the earlier book. This perspective on the policy world compels us to face the question: Who bears the burden of the epidemic and epidemic control measures? Who pays – finally in terms of life and livelihood? The question takes us to the heart of the rights framework, namely the issue of justice. The analysis points out how an epidemic control policy seen purely in terms of the mechanism of lock down and other administrative measures becomes deaf to the call for justice. The crisis of Covid-19 raises the question of life to be protected and renewed by a

different vision of public health. The issue is one of life itself. The full book is available for download on http://www.mcrgr.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2020/Burdens_of_an_Epidemic.pdf

Discussions

Institutions like University of Göttingen, New Zealand India Research Institute, Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna held webinars to discuss CRG's recently published book "Borders of an Epidemic: COVID 19 and Migrant Workers". Apart from that various news outlets carried the book review and interview with Prof. Ranabir Samaddar, editor of the book and Distinguished Chair of Migration and Forced Migration Studies, CRG.

1. **The New Zealand India Research Institute** hosted Professor Ranabir Samaddar (Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies at Calcutta Research Group) to discuss his recently edited book, *Borders of an Epidemic: Covid-19 and Migrant Workers (2020)* with Professor Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (Director, NZIRI) and Associate Professor Douglas Hill (University of Otago) on June 24, 2020.



**New Zealand
India Research
Institute**

TE PŪTAHI RANGAHAU O
INIA KI AOTEAROA

New Zealand India Research Institute Webinar Series 2020:
'Conversations in the days of pandemic'

WEBINAR V: BOOK DISCUSSION

1. **Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna** organised a roundtable conference to discuss 'Borders of an Epidemic: COVID-19 and Migrant Workers' on June 24, 2020.

Webinar, June 24, 4:00pm (CET)
 Follow the [link](#) to the Event
 Further details: www.iwm.at



Covid-19 Pandemic and the Spectral Presence of Migrant Workers and Refugees

A Round Table with Ranabir Samaddar, Alex Aleinikoff
 and Roger Zetter

The bordering processes unleashed by the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the existing fault lines of our present-day societies and deepened the current fissures and dilemmas of global capitalist order, state sovereignty, and governance structures. On the basis of Calcutta Research Group's book, *Borders of an Epidemic: Covid-19 and Migrant Workers*, edited by Prof. Ranabir Samaddar, which highlights the ethical and political implications of the pandemic, this round table addresses the changing landscape of visibility and invisibility of migrant workers, refugees as well as of national borders, which opens further questions about inequalities, public health, and politics of care.

Alex Aleinikoff, Director of the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, The New School, New York; former United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees

Ranabir Samaddar, Director of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata; recurrent IWM Visiting Fellow

Roger Zetter, Emeritus Professor of Refugee Studies; former Director, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford




Moderated by **Ayse Caglar**, IWM Permanent Fellow; Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna

Organized by IWM, in collaboration with Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group

2. **CRG** hosted the first of its webinar series [#bordersofanepidemic](#) on June 12, 2020 to discuss the sudden visibility of migrant workers in India basing on its publication, 'Borders of an Epidemic...'. The webinar has been recorded and uploaded on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-YxDbkwVqw&feature=emb_logo for public reference. A report on this webinar has been published on Refugee Watch Online – and can be accessed here <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2020/06/16/report-on-covid-19-public-health-and-the-sudden-visibility-of-migrant-workers/>





#bordersofanepidemic
CRG webinar series 2020

Lecture ONE: June 12, 2020, 1930 hrs IST
CoVid 19: Public Health and the Sudden Visibility of Migrant Workers

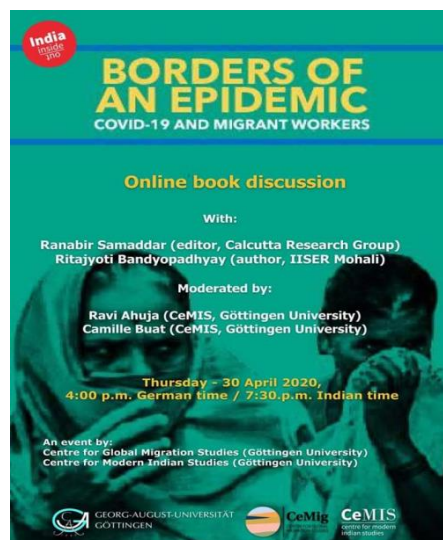
 <p>Ranabir Samaddar (Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, CRG)</p>	 <p>BORDERS OF AN EPIDEMIC COVID-19 AND MIGRANT WORKERS</p>	<p>Samita Sen (Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History, University of Cambridge; member, CRG)</p> 
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Moderator: **Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury** (Vice-Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University; member, CRG)

This webinar is a part of the CRG programme on migration and forced migration studies, organized in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, the Institute of Human Sciences, Vienna, and several other universities and institutions in India.

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3. **Centre for Global Migration Studies, University of Göttingen** organized an online book discussion where Ranabir Samaddar and Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay were invited to speak on CRG's latest book "Borders of an Epidemic: Covid 19 and Migrant Workers". The recording of the webinar can be accessed on:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yWRHyOML1E&feature=youtu.be>



BORDERS OF AN EPIDEMIC
COVID-19 AND MIGRANT WORKERS

Online book discussion

With:




Ranabir Samaddar (editor, Calcutta Research Group)
Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (author, IISER Mohali)

Moderated by:

Ravi Ahuja (CeMIS, Göttingen University)
Camille Buat (CeMIS, Göttingen University)

Thursday - 30 April 2020,
4:00 p.m. German time / 7:30 p.m. Indian time

An event by:
Centre for Global Migration Studies (Göttingen University)
Centre for Modern Indian Studies (Göttingen University)

 GEORG-AUGUST-UNIVERSITÄT GÖTTINGEN
  CeMig
  CeMIS

4. The **LIDCMigration Leadership Team at School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)**, London have published a blog extracted from the chapter 'Introduction: Borders of an Epidemic' of the recently published book 'Borders of an Epidemic: Covid-19 and Migrant Workers', the former written and the latter edited by Professor Ranabir Samaddar and published by the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (2020). It can be found on:
<https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/lidc-mlt/2020/04/22/borders-of-an-epidemic-the-covid-19-war-and-migrant-workers-in-india/>

5. **The Wire** published an interview titled '**At the Stroke of Midnight, Migrant Workers Became Aliens in a Double Sense**' where Ranabir Samaddar speaks about the factors behind the migrants' desperation to reach home and the dynamics of the visibility and invisibility of migrant labour on April 23, 2020. It can be accessed on <https://thewire.in/rights/interview-ranabir-samaddar-migrant-workers-invisible>
6. **Mainstream Weekly** published a review article titled '**Migrant Workers in the Present Time of Chaos**' authored by Arup Kumar Sen in its volume LVIII, no. 20, published on May 2, 2020. It can be accessed on <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article9357.html>
7. **India Resists** put up **Borders of an Epidemic: COVID-19 and Migrant Workers** on its website on April 30, 2020. It can be accessed on <https://indiaresists.com/borders-of-an-epidemic-the-covid-19-war-and-migrant-workers-in-india/>
8. **Countercurrents.org** published a review titled **COVID-19 and Migrant Workers: Review of Borders of an Epidemic** by T. Navin on April 29, 2020. It can be accessed on <https://countercurrents.org/2020/04/covid-19-and-migrant-workers-review-of-borders-of-an-epidemic/>

ii. Contracted Researchers



- a. **Francis Adaikalam** is an Assistant Professor at Loyola College, Chennai. He had done his MPhil on Social Medicine and Community Health from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. His publications include "The implications of neo-liberalism for social work: reflections from six country international research collaboration" at International Social Work Journal for a special issues on Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development. Accepted and Manuscript submitted for publication. Manuscript ID: ISW-13-0055.RI. "Microfinance System and Rural Housing: Generation of a Model from the Case of Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu, India" in a edited book Volume II: Environmental Change and Sustainable Social Development by Sven Hesse. Publisher Ashgate Publishing Ltd. Surrey, U.K. 2014.

Abstract:

INVISIBILITY OF DECEASED INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRANTS: POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

Death of international labour migrants in Dirty, Dangerous and Demeaning (3D) work is accounted only for counting. The politics of recognition is either absent or abysmal in the case of migrant death and its impact on the life of the members of their family and their ordeal has eluded proper attention. The issue of compensation package the family received and the response of the State and the issue of corporate accountability should be addressed. The present study captures the neglect and distress situation of the deceased migrant family through a case study method in Tamil Nadu by selecting one destination country. Besides, the role of diaspora organisation and volunteers at destination country are examined.

- b. **Jyothi Krishnan** is an independent researcher and has worked on various aspects of marginalisation and vulnerability in the state of Kerala in India. She has worked on issues related to forest conservation and livelihoods of tribal communities, local governance reforms, social protection measures, social audit and accountability initiatives.



Abstract:

LIFE AFTER FLOODS: COPING WITH LIVELIHOOD UNCERTAINTIES IN POST-FLOOD KERALA

Globally, disasters have had a disproportionate effect on socially vulnerable populations. In the case of disasters triggered by natural hazards, disasters manifest an intersection between ecological and social vulnerabilities. It has been widely argued that there is a need for greater appreciation of the socio economic vulnerabilities that transform hazards into disasters for vulnerable sections of society. In most cases it is such pre-existing vulnerabilities that get aggravated in the post disaster situation. In addition, it is difficult to ensure the recovery and infrastructural rehabilitation needed for restoring livelihood of this vulnerable section. In all likelihood this livelihood related uncertainties could precipitate outmigration.

These issues will be examined in flood and landslide affected pockets of Kerala, a state that is known for its achievements in social development (notably achievements in health, education and literacy) and for the implementation of decentralised governance (*panchayati raj*) reforms. Acknowledging these achievements, this study aims to unravel the social vulnerabilities of the marginal section during such disaster and to assess the efficacy of the administration in restoring their livelihood. The study aims at assessing the livelihood impacts on the socio-economically vulnerable sections in the post disaster phase and would study the conditions of the affected migrants labourers who came to Kerala from other states in search of jobs during such disasters.



- c. **Anjuman Ara Begum** is a human rights researcher and women's rights activist based in Guwahati, Assam, India. She studied law and is a member of Calcutta Research Group. She is currently associated with Purba Bharati Educational Trust and WinG Assam, Guwahati; and is working on gender education and human rights.

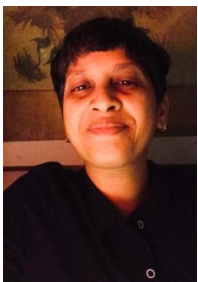
Abstract:

DEALING WITH ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS IN ASSAM: UNDERSTANDING THE JURISPRUDENCE IN PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Illegal immigration has been a perennial socio-political issue in Assam resulting in exceptional jurisprudence comprised of spectrum of legislations, executive policies, judicial orders aiming at detection and deportation of 'irregular immigrants' since partition of the subcontinent. Colonial legislations Foreigner's Act, 1946, Passport Act 1020 continues to define 'irregular immigrants' as 'foreigners' exclusively for the state of Assam. No uniformity of legal principles and norms of natural justice were maintained throughout the process. As a consequence state adopted discriminatory approach towards in imprisoning and even deporting some people unjustly. Those who couldn't be deported lawfully, remained detained for years under inhumane and horrific living conditions in transit/ detention camps which were an instruments causing collective trauma for the religious and linguistic minorities. Quasi-judicial institution like Foreigner's Tribunal was given the primary duty to deal with the irregular migrants. The Judiciary too acted in authoritarian manner defying the principles of natural justice and diluting the constitutional principle of separation of powers and often assumed supervisory role shunning its neutrality. The paper will discuss these aspects with a focus on functioning of the Foreigner's Tribunal, Judiciary and the administration along with field investigation by the researcher.

d. Sohini Sengupta has a PhD in Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London, Master of Arts in Social Work from TISS, Mumbai and Bachelor of Science with Honours in Chemistry from Miranda House, University of Delhi. She has experience in working with grassroots organization, drought response programmes and public policy making and has worked with Oxfam and as a research fellow with the World Commission on Dams-Social Impacts Team in South Africa. Her research interests include Indigeneity, Identity and Land Rights; Colonialism, Agrarian Change, Environmental History; Gender, Development, Feminist Anthropology; Digital Anthropology and New Media; Poverty, Culture; Social Protection and Social Policy.

Abstract:



CLIMATE CHANGE, DROUGHT AND MIGRATION IN MAHARASHTRA

Anthropogenic climate change, global environmental transformation and resultant forced migration are a humanitarian challenge. As policy makers view climate induced drought and migration as inevitable and governments reframe development policies as 'climate action plans', relating to local communities that experience drought are reshaped in the language of vulnerability or adaptation. Drawing on the concept of 'social nature' (Castree) and going beyond visions of local people as victims or adaptation experts, this research aims to understand the recent experiences of drought and migration in the state of Maharashtra,

from local narratives about environmental crisis and explore its relationship with community decisions and political engagements.



e. Nasreen Chowdhory teaches in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. She has completed her PhD in Political Science from McGill University, Canada, and Masters and MPhil from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has published several research papers in national and international peer-reviewed journals, and guest edited of a special issue on "Displacement: A 'state of exception'" in the International Journal of Migration and Border Studies, 2016. Some of her significant publications include *Refugees, Citizenship and Belonging: A Contested Terrains* (Springer 2018) and edited volume on *Deterritorialised Identities and Transborder*

Movement in South Asia with NasirUddin with Springer 2019. *Citizenship, Nationalism and Refugeehood of Rohingyas in Southern Asia* with co-edited with Biswajit Mohanty, Springer 2020, She is presently working on two edited volume on Gender, Identity and Migration in India (Palgrave 2020, forthcoming) with Paula Banerjee. She is holding the position of Executive member in International Association for the Study of Forced Migration and of Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata.

Shamna Thacham Poyil is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Delhi. Her research focuses on the narrative of statelessness of the Rohingyas and the politics of exclusion where denial of citizenship is used as a strategy for ethno-political nation building in Post-colonial Burma, rendering minorities like Rohingyas Stateless. Her M-Phil dissertation titled "Birds of Freedom: Depiction of LTTE militant women in Tamil Cinema" explored the representation of militant women challenging the binary of agency and victimhood. Apart from holding a Bachelors degree in Electronics and Instrumentation Engineering, she graduated summa cum laude from her Masters in Conflict studies and peace building from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her recent publications include '*National Identity and Conceptualization of Nationalism among Rohingya*' in *Citizenship, Nationalism and Refugeehood of Rohingyas in Southern Asia* (2020), ed. Nasreen



Chowdhory & Biswajit Mohanty; *'The Global Compact of Refugees: A viewpoint of Global South'*, Refugee Watch (2020) with Dr. Nasreen Chowdhory; *'The Idea of Protection: Norms and Practice of Refugee management in India'*, Refugee watch (2019) with Dr. Nasreen Chowdhory and Meghna Kajla, *'Transitional justice, reconciliation and reconstruction process: the case of the former LTTE female combatants in post-war Sri Lanka'* with Dr. Nasreen Chowdhory in *Transitional Justice and Forced Migration* (2019), ed. Nergis Canefe, Cambridge University Press.

Abstract:

BIOMETRICS AND THE NOTION OF GOVERNMENTALITY IN ROHINGYA REFUGEE CAMPS

Recently the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with the assistance of Bangladesh government issued biometric identity cards to nearly five lakhs of Rohingya refugees sheltered in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar refugee camps. The digitisation of bodies crossing the borders using biometrics possibly would assist the host countries to enforce strict policing of territories and ensure targeted delivery of aid resources. However this correspondingly also leads us to re-problematize the nature of liminal governance instituted in the administration of camps. Though camps can be normatively considered to be a humanitarian obligation fulfilled by the host countries or asylum states towards the vulnerable refugees, they are implemented as top-down structures of alternate governance carried out in collaboration with international government organisations and aid agencies. It precipitates an administrative framework that involves various entities such as state governments or INGOs that simultaneously or separately exercising power in the process of creating a humanitarian governance system. It is necessary to analyse the ramifications of introducing biometric registration within the existing patterns of "governmentality" within the camps. Through a detailed analysis of two scholarly postulations- "complex realm of hybrid sovereignty arrangements" (Ramadan & Fregonese, 2017: 950) and the notion of "governmentality" (Foucault, 1991) within the context of empirical case of biometric registration of Rohingya in refugee camps, we intend to introspect the way in which it impacts and potentially transforms the governance in camps and ask the following questions: How does the biometric registration of refugees shape their gender relations in 'exile' in relation to the traditional notion of masculine and feminine that was prevalent at 'home'? Using the lens of "governmentality", how does biometric data on refugees contest/ accentuate the power relations among multiple actors in the "hybrid sovereign" structure of camp governance?



f. **Kusumika Ghosh** holds a Master degree in Peace and Conflict Studies with the Institute Gold Medal from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India. Her research interests centre on the issues of gender, citizenship and socio-political implications of the two when combined, particularly in Northeast India. In 2019, she co-authored and published a volume of the Peace Studies Series at the North Eastern Social Research Centre titled *Landscape of Conflicts and Peace in the Northeast: the role of Religion*. She is currently associated with the Forced Migration Studies desk at Calcutta Research Group, India as a Research & Programme Assistant.

Abstract:

HOW PROTECTED ARE THE REFUGEES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONTEMPORARY STATES OF GERMANY AND INDIA IN LIGHT OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION, 1951

The Refugee Convention of 1951 or the Geneva Convention, as known more popularly, is a multi-party treaty with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as its guardian that lays down the foundation of refugee rights in the post World War II world. Several protocols and compacts have been adopted by the member-states of the United Nations for regulating migration and asylum since the Geneva Convention, the most recent being the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018). While the differences between a 'refugee' and a 'migrant' constitute the major differentiation in policy, the nation-state views both as 'aliens' – hence outside the ambit of its citizenry. International treaties such as the Geneva Convention and the Global Compact seek to regulate human security outside the nation-state. Keeping the Geneva Convention of 1951 as the bedrock, this paper attempts a critical comparative study of the treatment meted out to refugees and asylum-seekers in India and Germany from 2015-2017; focusing specifically on the Rohingya and the Syrian refugees respectively.

iii. Instead of holding a mid-term meet at CRG, a combined event was held in form of the *Vienna workshop on 25 & 26 June 2020*.

Workshop, June 25-26, 2020, 3:00pm (CET)
The workshop will be held on ZOOM.
Informations on the Europe-Asia Research Platform: www.iwm.at



Europe-Asia Research Platform: Forced Migration

Initiating a new research focus at the IWM

Europe has been implicated in streams of contemporary migration, described as the continent's so-called migration crisis arising from the ongoing conflicts in West Asia and other parts of the Asian continent, as well as forced displacement from Africa. Issues around forced migration have also impacted the knowledge structures in social sciences, environmental sciences, area studies, and international relations. Against this background of an 'epistemic crisis' of knowledge, European universities and research centres are now beginning to engage with the „crisis“. Some have taken in scholars at risk, others have opened their doors to refugee students, and a few are already involved in critical migration studies. Yet lacking in this endeavour is the effort to situate this scholarship and debates globally and in relation to the dynamics in the Global South. More specifically, in relation to the Middle East, Asia, or Africa from where most of the migrants arrive in the wake of wars, natural disasters, ecological catastrophes, conflicts and economic decline. The recent COVID-19 pandemic sheds a new light on the contradictions and the fault lines in various interventions, consequences, and decisions by states to monitor and control the flows of migrants. Attention to global dynamics have attained a different urgency and visibility with the COVID-19 pandemic. An understanding of this interlocked situations in the two continents is at the heart of this proposed workshop. This workshop will use researchers' reports from India, Greece and Turkey as an entry point to address the fractured legal geographies producing and reproducing the uneven location of forced migrant labor in cities, in health access, in rights claims, and their entanglements with local, national but also international and supranational institutions.

The workshop will discuss the possibility of setting up a Europe-Asia research platform for the purpose of facilitating explorations, among others, of the various fault lines of race, religion, caste, sexuality, gender and class functioning in the global protection regime for refugees and migrants. In this context, it will be important to investigate the dynamics of immigrant economies and migrant/refugee industries in Europe and see how contemporary protection mechanisms are entwined with neoliberal capitalism. As such, migrants and refugees are turned form subjects of protection to subjects of development and the cheap and informal labour of refugees and migrants are harnessed to fuel the growth of neoliberal capitalism. The workshop will also provide an opportunity to take stock of the challenges to the global protection system for refugees and migrants, in addition to the new UN-initiated two global compacts for protection of refugees and migrants. Some of the common themes relevant to the goal of joint research platform emerge from factors such as:

- 1) cities of different scale in Asia and Europe are all faced with a growing humanitarian crisis as forced migrants live primarily in inhospitable urban environments;
- 2) there is increased racialisation of migrants and refugees along with securitization, evident in both Europe and Asia;
- 3) increasingly protracted state of displacement, thus minimizing chances of safe return, and consequently increasing statelessness, and the need to examine the conventions on statelessness in this context;
- 4) proliferation of legal categories vis-a-vis forced migrants and access to health
- 5) immigrant economy, migrant industry and the migrant and refugee labour in cities of different scale, and;

6) the contrast between the gendered nature of forced migration and a seemingly homogeneous global protection policy as evinced in the structure of camps, labouring profiles, family burden, access to resources, and personal freedom. The initial workshop of the platform aims to initiate in-depth discussion among a selected group of scholars from Europe and Asia around these topics.

ORGANIZED BY

IWM, in collaboration with Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group

iv)

- a. The workshop was held around 11 paper presentations in total (6 from CRG and 5 from IWM)
- b. Each researcher had been assigned a discussant,
- c. The South Asian researchers had been paired with European discussants, while the European researchers were discussed by South Asian scholars,
- d. All the presentations were to be done virtually over Zoom Meetings,
- e. IWM will scout for an international publishing house for the edited volume that will be compiled.
- f.** The programme was organised in the following format:

Workshop, June 25-26, 2020, 3:00pm (CET)
The workshop will be held on ZOOM.
Information on the Europe-Asia Research Platform: www.iwm.at



THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 3:00–6:00PM (CET)
ZOOM

3:00–3:15
Introduction

3:15–3:35
Report on EU Labour and Mobility Regimes of Temporary Work for EU and non-EU Labour Migrants
Neda Deneva
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology, Babes-Bolyai University
Discussant: **Associate Professor Arup Kumar Sen**, Serampore College

3:35–3:55
Invisibility of Deceased International Labour Migrants: Politics of Recognition
Francis Adaikalam
Assistant Professor, Loyola College
Discussant: **Professor Dona Giorgia**, University of East London

3:55–4:15
How Protected are the Refugees: A Comparative Study of the Contemporary States of Germany and India in the Light of the Geneva Convention, 1951
Kusumika Ghosh
Researcher, Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group
Discussant: **Sedef Dearing**, ICMPD

4:15–4:30 Break

4:30–4:50
Territorial Differentiation of the Refugee Protection in the Aegean Sea
Müge Dalkıran
PhD candidate in Area Studies, Middle East Technical University
Discussant: **Professor Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury**, Rabindra Bharati University

4:50–5:10
Biometrics and the Notion of Governmentality in Rohingya Refugee Camps
Nasreen Chowdhury
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi
Shamna Thacham Poyil
PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi
Discussant: **Professor Shahram Khosravi**, Stockholm University

5:10–5:30
Forced Migrants and Public Health
Gonca Savaş Doğan
Humanitarian Aid Specialist
Discussant: **Kumar Rana**, Pratichi Trust

5:30–6:00
General Discussion

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 3:00–6:00PM (CET)
ZOOM

3:00–3:15
Introduction

3:15–3:35
Forced Displacement and Access to Labour Market: The Case of Gaziantep
Dogus Simsek
Teaching Fellow in Political Sociology, University College London
Discussant: Senior Lecturer, **Paolo Novak**, University of London

3:35–3:55
Forced Migrants, Gender, and Race in a Satellite City
Meriç Çağlar
PhD Candidate, Gender Studies Department, Central European University
Discussant: **Professor Paula Banerjee**, Sanskrit College

3:55–4:15
Climate Change, Drought and Migration in Maharashtra
Sohini Sengupta
Assistant Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Discussant: **Professor Manish Jha**, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

4:15–4:30 Break

4:30–4:50
Life After Floods: Hoping with Livelihood Uncertainties in post-Flood Kerala
Jyothi Krishnan
Independent researcher, Kerala
Discussant: **Rector Shalini Randeria**, IWM

4:50–5:10
Dealing with Illegal Immigrants in Assam
Anjuman Ara Begum
Human rights researcher and women rights activists, Guwahati
Discussant: **Professor Samir Kumar Das**, University of Calcutta

5:10–5:40
General Discussion

5:40–6:00
Closing Remarks



g.

iv. The unused fund allotted for travel and logistics in the current year has been reassigned to undertake research on the theme of **migrants and public health**. Three papers will be written as part of this research:

a. **Migrant Workers in the COVID - 19 Pandemic: Crisis of Work and Life**

Authors:



Mouleshri Vyas is a Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai at the Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practices. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Mumbai University, Master of Arts in Social Work (with Specialisation in Urban and Rural Community Development) from TISS, Mumbai, and PhD in Sociology from Mumbai University.



Manish K. Jha is a Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai at the Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice, School of Social Work. He had served as a faculty in the Department of Social work, University of Delhi from 1999 to 2003. In an academic career spanning over two decades of teaching and research on Social Policy, Social Action and Social Movement, Rural society and State, Community Organization and Development Practice, etc., Prof Jha has had the opportunity to engage with students, academicians, development professionals, leaders of multilateral and non-profit organization across different parts of country and abroad. He has extensive engagement with post-disaster relief and rehabilitation intervention.

Summary:

While describing slum life of a bustee in Mechuabazar, Calcutta in the year 1919, Radhakamal Mukerjee writes

“I witnessed an overcrowding which is perhaps the worst on record. The busti is divided into several unequal and unsystematical blocks. The ground-space of each block is rented from the zemindar by a sub-lord who erects the dingy close-built bustee-huts, collects the rents from each of the block and handing over to the zeminder the rent of the ground space, appropriates, the surplus. Thus in one of these blocks, which measured 18 ft. in length and 15 ft. in breadth there is an over-crowding of 7 adults, 6 women, 3 boys, 6 girls (Mukerjee 1919:291).”

Probably, he had visited these slums immediately after Spanish flu and hence he indicated

“...under such overcrowded conditions the spread of diseases is easy and an outbreak of plague, cholera or small-pox will drive away all those *who can* escape. The recent influenza epidemic has affected the poorer classes in the Chawls and Bustees much more than the upper classes. How can it be otherwise? In Bombay some of the Chawls are absolutely filthy. In one in which no less than 2000 souls live, the Bhangi, Scavenger, has not been for a little less than a fortnight, and all the filth has accumulate... Whether in Calcutta or Bombay, Cawnpore, Bangalore or Poona, Ahmedabad or Madras, one is face to face in the bustees and chawls with living human misery, the dirt and disease of hell incarnate (ibid: 292).

The observation was made at a time when the “Spanish” influenza pandemic of 1918–1919 caused over 50 million deaths worldwide and posed a full-blown threat and warning to public health.

A century after, we are at the crossroads again; another pandemic ‘COVID-19’ has brought the world to its knees, and has brought the spotlight back on health and disease in general and aspects of public health in particular.

Though the pandemic has touched lives and circumstances across the class divide, the precarity and uncertainty around migrant workers, their habitat and access to health and hygiene is drawing attention in a renewed manner. We know that more than half of Mumbai's nearly 13 million people live in the city's slums and informal settlements. Stunting and chronic disease is part of life, and people think that this is how children are going to grow up in this environment. Access to safe drinking water, safe and ventilated habitat, access to toilet etc. remain a severe concern for the health and wellbeing of migrant workers who inhabit the slum and other unsafe spaces.

While rapid urbanisation is an acknowledged phenomenon globally, it is estimated that over 800 million people live in urban slums at present. In India, the urban population is expected to grow rapidly from a third to half of its total population by 2030, with a simultaneous expansion of its population of urban poor in urban slums characterised by poverty, overcrowded habitat,, poor access to water, lack of sanitation and other facilities, and challenging living conditions. All these factors work in concert to create a unique set of challenges that compromise the health of migrant workers living in the slum (Abdi *et al* 2018).

Even among the slum population, there are visible differences in the provisioning of basic amenities, due to various factors. Data suggests that in 2012, 59% of slum settlements in India were inhabited by people living in non-notified settlements and suffering from poorer access to piped water, latrines, electricity and public transportation when compared to notified slums (GoI). The divide between notified and non-notified slums is particularly complex in Mumbai as it is tied to "cut-off" dates and this exposes the politics and political economy that has huge implication for the migrant's access to health services. Slum households who can prove that they have been living in a slum located on state or municipal land prior to a specified cut-off date can obtain notified status. This policy arose in response to democratic pressure from slum dwellers, who form a large proportion of Mumbai's electorate (Subbaraman and Murthy 2015). People living in non-notified slums have historically been unable to legally connect to this system, forcing many of them to illegally tap into city water pipes out of desperation – a survival strategy that can compromise the safety of the water supply through cross-contamination. There is a high congruence between poverty, vulnerability and informal work in India (NCEUS 2007). Although the informal economy is marked by diversity in terms of occupations, conditions of work, terms of employment, nature of insecurity, ease of entry and so on, it is a fact that the slum dwellers and those living in informal settlements such as on the pavements, and along railway tracks, are those living in precarious conditions. Voka, Standing and the ILO have framed the idea of precarious work with labour market and broader social insecurity as defining elements (Arnold and Bongiovi 2012).

The informal economy, with more than 93 percent of the workforce in the country, comprises wage workers and self employed persons who provide a host of services and are engaged in manufacturing and marketing products across the country. Among them, sanitation workers, particularly those who work in precarious conditions on contract, contribute to and ensure public health. 'A sanitation worker is one who collects refuse from residential and commercial establishments in a truck designed for this purpose, and which he may also drive. Among risks involved in this occupation are those resulting from lifting heavy refuse receptacles, trauma and others...' (Mamtani and Cimino 1992: 27). Informal sanitation workers, confront lack of basic amenities and services, including health care, unless they are organised into unions. As a caste based occupation the social stigma that these workers - men and women - face, is something that has affected generations of households. As residents of slums, and as workers, this population, are deprived of water, sanitation, health care, education also suffer from social exclusion. Unfortunately, the people who ensure hygiene and sanitation for the society are denied of basic health care. A country's development infrastructure is expected to provide public health service capable of preventing the large scale outbreak of a disease through by ensuring sanitation and vector control, food safety, safe drinking water, ensuring hygiene and monitoring waste disposal. It is widely recognised that any compromise on public health has severe consequences for society at large. However, it is especially crucial for the labouring poor and the marginalised sections having reduced earning capacity, unable to afford health care and facing enhanced mortality rate. Public health services are thus both pro-growth, as well as pro-poor in that they are self-targeted

towards the poor, who face the maximum exposure to disease (Das Gupta 2005). Yet, the facts and evidence speak volumes about how health services for the migrants living in slums and other informal settlements are hugely compromised.

The COVID pandemic has highlighted the condition of the working poor in cities like Mumbai. Though public health concerns of migrants' neighbourhoods, ghettos, were never on the agenda of governance, the stark conditions of these areas have exposed them to the public health crisis and brought on a humanitarian emergency. In the backdrop of 'nativist' politics and hostility towards migrants, the politics of disenfranchisement and absence of social citizenship becomes an obvious outcome of this denial of civic amenities to them. Their unwillingness to update the data ever increasing population in these slums enables to avoid bringing in more services or creating more posts of Health officials. That more than 145 people have to share a community toilet is a telling statement of the reality of hygiene and sanitation. Whichever ward in Mumbai has a large slum population, the services are at the bare minimum.

One of the most densely populated slums of Mumbai, Shivajinagar situated in the Middle East Municipal ward of Mumbai is experiencing this crisis. The M-Ward in the city is an extreme example of skewed development in the metropolis, with virtually all indicators showing an urgent need for multi-dimensional, comprehensive and strategic policies to serve its burgeoning population. Currently, over 77% of the M-Ward population living in slums are being exposed to environmental hazards, and are deprived of basic civic amenities like safe drinking water and sanitation. Further, access to health care systems is simply not available. The Population-Health Centre ratio reveals the dismal position there, (one hospital for 66,881 people that one dispensary for 27,438 and one Anganwadi centre for 2,175 persons). The slum areas under this ward has recorded the highest infant mortality rate in Mumbai city. Infant mortality rate is one of the denominators for judging the extent of the vulnerabilities of slum dwellers. Several aspects of the life of low income communities continue to be invisible and their contribution to the city goes unrecognised and their aspirations and voices are ignored. The ward has been earmarked for using it for the most 'undesirable' activities (as dumping ground, hazardous industries) and as residence of migrant labourers and people from religious minority community and even beggars.

City cleaning work is an essential service at the time of the pandemic. The labour lives across the city, largely in slum settlements. Workers residing in one ward of the city may have to travel to another ward for work. For instance, contractual sanitation workers, who continued working, were provided with Personal Protective Equipment with the condition that they would have to maintain these. These are to be washed by them everyday before using them next day. However they refused to accept this proposal. Owing to shutting down of public transport system for several weeks, the ordeals of workers increased manifold till alternative arrangements were made.

Against this background characterised by unhealthy concentration of population, insanitary condition and subhuman living conditions the very concept of public health sounds hollow. Apparently there is no access to public health as far as the migrant workers living in slums are concerned. Their vulnerabilities during this pandemic can easily be felt. For them the idea of social distancing and isolationism carried no meaning. What emerges therefore, with a focus on the urban poor, is the aspect of continued and new struggle in The challenges of coping with the situation brought on by the pandemic are myriad.

Therefore through this study, we propose to: (a) Delineate the evolution and subsequent trajectory of public health policy in India in general, and Mumbai slums in particular, given the fact that health comes under concurrent list; (b) Highlight Social Policy prescriptions and shifts vis-à-vis health care: public, private; social security, social insurance and social protection (keeping the workers and migrants in the centre of exploration).

In this backdrop, with a focus on informal settlements (Shivajinagar) and informal work (sanitation work), we propose to study: The role of migrant workers in their community and through their work, particularly after the onset of the pandemic; and everyday experiences of migrants as residents and workers in regard to health care and services: access, alienation, refusal; the sight of fear and anxiety.

The site of residence and the site of work that are the focus of this study need engagement through policy and practice, and it is hoped that it will contribute towards this.

b. **Migrants in India's Health Infrastructure : Ethnography on India's frontline workers**

Author:



Ishita Dey is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology in South Asian University, Delhi. She is a food anthropologist with an interest in food, labour studies and forced migration. She has an M.Phil. and a Ph.D. in Sociology from University of Delhi.

Summary:

On 24 May 2020, Ambika P.K., a nurse at Kalra hospital, Delhi died. Somya Lakhani, in her report draws upon interviews with her fellow nurses who complained that while the doctors were given fresh PPEs, the nurses were asked to reuse PPEs. The management of Kalra Hospital, and few nurses denied this.. On 9 May Manipur Government gave transit clearance and travel permits to more than 185 nurses working in Kolkata, according to a newspaper report. On 20 May 2020, it was reported that 300 nurses from Manipur who worked with state government run and private hospitals left their jobs and returned home. They were heckled by their neighbours as Corona, or Chinese and could not go to stores to buy medicines. At the bottom of this pyramid are the ASHA workers and the sanitation workers. ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers are community health activists. They have played an important role in urban and rural areas to help with awareness around COVID 19, and played a key role in contact tracing. They receive a meagre allowance (except in Andhra/ Karnataka) of Rs 1000-3000 across Indian states and are the forefront of India's #frontliners - a taxonomical classification used for the health care professionals – doctors, nurses, and ASHA health workers. They are risking their lives with minimal protection in times of COVID 19 to assist in door to door survey. There are around 5900 ASHA workers in Delhi and they work on the basis of incentives, not fixed salary. Each worker caters to 400 households in her neighbourhood. In the initial phase of the lockdown, ASHA workers visited designated neighbourhoods but now they visit pregnant women with medicines and mostly try and coordinate over phone. ASHA – acronym for Accredited Social Health Activist – is a community health worker programme under the flagship National Rural Health Mission which came after a long process of deliberation in 2005. Dr.Sujatha Rao (2017) in her book on India's Health System, comments that the run up to National Rural Health Mission and fulfilling the mandate of Health for all came in at the turn of the millennial primarily due to the unconnected factors from 2000-2004. Rao observes that the year 2000 was critical. First it heralded the launch of Millennial Development Goals and secondly the Report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health was launched. Rao also points out that Manmohan Singh (who would later become the Prime Minister of India under UPA led Government in 2004) and Isher Judge Ahluwalia, two noted economists were part of this commission and Rao feels that they were instrumental in prioritising health in India's governance. Isher Judge Ahluwalia headed ICRIER initiate a study on health system and published a first comprehensive health report – *India Health Report* (2003) and by 2002 India had its second *National Health Policy*. What is significant to note it is only at the turn of the millennium the public spending on health was 2- 3 % of the GDP, primary health care became a subject of national concern, efforts to control and contain communicable diseases were some of the trends that were observed post 2000. Parallel to this, due to encouragement of public private partnerships in health care, there was mushrooming of private health care in the area of diagnostic clinic, speciality hospitals, treatment centres so much so that India became of the cheapest and attractive locations of medical tourism in the areas of assisted reproductive technology, neurology, geriatric care, ENT, Physiotherapy and Orthopaedic according to the

webportal dedicated to healthcare tourism by Services Export Promotion Council under Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Subsequent governments would push towards ‘insuring’ the medical care through rolling out of insurance schemes.

Questions

However in this imagination of health care, there is no overall roadmap for access of migrant workers to public healthcare. It is against this backdrop the proposed research would like to examine the following:

Firstly, a close examination of medical governance through a critical reading of lack of specialised bureaucracy (post dissolution of Indian Medical Service in British India) dedicated to healthcare apart from officials chosen through Combined Medical Services Examination (unlike Indian Revenue Service, Indian Forest Service, etc) under Union Public Service Commission.

Secondly, studying the insurance schemes targeted for rural poor and its efficacy in the life of the migrant worker.

Thirdly, the nodal points of access in India’s health care for a migrant worker.

Method

The proposed study will be based on review of health policies, and secondary literature with a special focus on Delhi – one of the cities that attracts migrant workers across India. For this study I will conduct telephone and / face to face interviews with bureaucrats involved in Ministry of Health, indepth interviews with pharmacy stores in migrant neighbourhoods of Delhi, and community organisers representing migrants/ interests alongside a collaborative participatory enquiry in one of the resettlement colonies in the border of Delhi – Gautampuri Resettlement Colony. This neighbourhood attracts a lot of migrant workers. I propose to collaborate with ShehriMahilaKamgar Union to conduct interviews with local doctors referred to as JhholaChhap (Bangalidaktar), ASHA workers, Sanitation workers and primary health care centre in the neighbourhood to understand the nodal points of health care for migrant workers.

c. Public Health, Migrant Workers and a Global Pandemic: From a Social Crisis to a Crisis of the Social

Author:



Iman Mitra is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at Shiv Nadar University. His research interests include History of the economic discipline; Economic History and Political Economy of South Asia; Urbanization, migration practices and informal economy in South Asia; State and non-state networks of dissemination of economic knowledge, especially in colonial and postcolonial contexts; Relation between economic rationalities and governmental reason.

Summary:

On 23 May 2020, the Gujarat High Court has admonished the state government in a remarkably harsh language by comparing the condition of one of its largest public hospitals with that of a dungeon facing the COVID-19 outbreak. It has also invoked the metaphor of the Titanic – the large ship, which famously sunk in 1912 – in the context of the rising number of positive cases in the state and the government’s ineffectiveness in containing the disease and has appealed to the private hospitals to admit as many patients as possible without any profiteering intention: “The foremost reason for their (private hospitals) existence is to treat sick patients and it would be utterly shameful on their part to shy away from this responsibility at this point in time, when the country and its people need them the most. Profiting off a poor man’s health can be considered morally criminal.”

Although quite timely and necessary, the intervention by the judiciary in the matter of increasing privatisation of the Indian health sector is rare and could be interpreted by many as infringement of the right to do free business. However, it indicates a major crisis, to which the public health system has been heading over the last few decades. The government of India does not only recognise it but also endorses it in the latest National Health Policy (NHP) published in 2017 where it mentions quite casually four changes that have occurred since the last NHP in 2002: “First, the health priorities are changing. Although maternal and child mortality have rapidly

declined, there is growing burden on account of non-communicable diseases and some infectious diseases. The second important change is the emergence of a robust health care industry estimated to be growing at double digit. The third change is the growing incidences of catastrophic expenditure due to health care costs, which are presently estimated to be one of the major contributors to poverty. Fourth, a rising economic growth enables enhanced fiscal capacity. Therefore, a new health policy responsive to these contextual changes is required.” Apart from the first point, which is probably the most undisputable observation once supported by medical data, and the third, which coldly presents a depressing fact that affects almost everybody in the country, the second and fourth points are connected to each other and present the crux of the neoliberal orientation of the present dispensation. In an ironic twist, the catastrophic increase in the cost of health care is argued to be taken care of by the emergent, rapidly growing (and seemingly private) ‘robust health care industry’ in the presence of an ‘enhanced fiscal capacity.’ This clarion call for privatisation does not take account of the majority of the population who will barely have access to this robustly industrialised health care sector and it does not acknowledge poverty itself as one of the causes of the depleted medical infrastructure and poor average health condition.

A farther reading of the NHP 2017 shows how far we have come from the Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee published in 1946. Constituted by the British government and chaired by Joseph Bhore, a senior civil servant, the Committee went on to recommend establishment of a ‘progressive health service’ that aimed to accommodate “all citizens, irrespective of their abilities to pay for it” with “all the facilities required for the treatment and prevention of disease as well as for the promotion of positive health.” It also introduced the idea of ‘social medicine,’ which would study the disease “as a community problem” incorporating “social and economic factors such as housing, nutrition, poverty and ignorance of the hygienic mode of life.” Evidently, the Bhore Committee was trying to infuse the postcolonial imagination of a ‘healthy’ nation with a specific biopolitical infrastructure sustained by a wide variety of governmental techniques, institutions and knowledge practices. The ‘social’ in social medicine, therefore, was a dynamic process, which would evolve out of an experimental modality of nation-building where surveys and “controlled experiments directed towards influencing the life of selected communities through the provision of improved health services, better nutrition, a cleaner environment and health education” would also create the ‘public’ of the public health system. It took the government of India a long time after independence to formulate its first National Health Policy in 1983, but even there one may find the reverberation of the Bhore Committee’s imagination mixed with the socialist rhetoric of the Indira Gandhi regime: “The Constitution of India envisages the establishment of a new social order based on equality, freedom, justice, and the dignity of the individual. It aims at the elimination of poverty, ignorance and ill-health and directs the State to regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties, securing the health and strength of workers, men and women, specially ensuring that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner.” By making public health a constitutional responsibility of the state along with eradication of poverty and enhancement of knowledge, the NHP 1983 gave the ‘social’ a firm definition, which the later NHPs would try to dismantle.

It was the second NHP in 2002, which brought the private sector into the discourse of public health infrastructure. Dismissing the ‘spirit of optimistic empathy’ of NHP 1983, which promised universal health care by 2000, the new NHP set out ‘realistic’ parameters for a policy framework corresponding to the existing financial and administrative capacities. One such realistic consideration was to welcome “participation of the private sector in all areas of health activities” and conceive a combination of “social health insurance scheme funded by the Government” and “service delivery through the private sector” for “an appropriate solution” to the problem of scarcity of public resources. The involvement of the NGOs and other civil society organisations in delivering health services was also encouraged and the need for simplification of the procedures of government-civil society interfacing was emphasised. The public-private partnership model thus envisaged relieved the government of its ‘social’ responsibilities of reaching out to the greater public and re-inscribed ‘service’ in the private domain of corporate healthcare and NGO-based community development. The apparent de-socialisation of the

governmental state actually initiated a reconceptualization of the social in terms of a series of risk management activities within the global networks of finance capital and prepared the ground for complete privatisation of the health sector.

In this context, the Gujarat case shows how, even when facing as big a crisis as a global pandemic, the governmental agencies have little or no control over the private sector: “It was noticed that 23 private hospitals had inked memoranda of understanding (MoU) with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) to treat Covid-19 patients, but several corporate hospitals such as Apollo Hospital at two locations, Zydus Hospital, KD Hospital, Asia Columbia, Global Hospital, UN Mehta Hospital remained out of the list.” Whether the High Court’s intervention would lead to a stronger policy regarding the handling of the private sector at a time of need is a separate question, but the whole fiasco points to two possible lines of enquiry. First, how deeply entrenched is the Indian public health system in the networks of global capital and what is the postcolonial trajectory of its privatisation? This question needs our special attention also to understand the neoliberal agenda upheld by the present government and its attitude to the federal structure of the Indian nation-state, since health as a concurrent subject is often a matter of contention between the central and state governments. The other important question deals with the precariousness of the migrant workers at the time of the COVID-19 outbreak. One does not need to be an expert to realise how callously the issues of movement and survival of the workers stuck at their work towns were dealt with by the various authorities over the last two months. Rather than looking at it as an exceptional situation, one needs to consider whether there is any structural inequality implicit in the formulation of the National Health Policies and the overall imagination of public health in India as regards the migrant population. In the last couple of months, the horrible indifference (or severity) with which the migrant workers were treated has exposed a deepening social crisis in India. However, this social crisis needs to be studied in conjunction with the crisis of the social that the consecutive health policies have engendered after the liberalisation of the Indian economy. The proposed study will attempt to explore these moments of crisis by taking up the intersecting historical trajectories – the histories of privatisation of the health sector in India and the absence of the migrant worker in the public health discourses – against the backdrop of a global crisis of capital. The purpose of the study, therefore, is not only to describe the precarious conditions in which the migrant workers find themselves during the spread of a global pandemic, but also to elucidate on the discriminatory politics of production of an authentic ‘public’ in postcolonial India.

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III. VISITING FELLOWSHIPS

4 visiting fellows – 1 each from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Afghanistan have been chosen to work with CRG. The original schedule was designed to have them visit in March 2020, but had to be reworked due to COVID-19. The plan is have them in the second fortnight of November. Below we present brief information on the visiting fellows and the respective themes of research:



Neetu Pokharel is a programme officer at Alliance for Social Dialogue, Nepal. She is responsible for their Access to Justice Portfolio with particular focus on legal empowerment and women's rights. She is engaged with policy advocacy, campaigns and research related to access to justice and statelessness in Nepal. For her visiting fellowship with CRG, she will work on:

Statelessness and the plight of women in Nepal

Nepal has entered into the democratic republic country with an adoption of new constitution in 2015. The constitution is marked as a progressive constitution. The constitution guarantees the civil political and socio economic rights of people in more progressive way. It also guarantees the marginalized people's socio economic rights progressively. The constitution guarantees the right to equality and right to justice as a fundamental right to all citizens. Any forms of discrimination based on the sex, race, gender, caste, physical ability is strictly prohibited by the constitution. However, in reality, women in Nepal have been deprived of enjoying their civil, political and socio economic rights in full fledge. Many women in Nepal lack the citizenship, legal identity documents due the discriminatory constitutional provision and discriminatory laws. More than this, many women in Nepal lack the citizenship because of discriminatory behaviors from the government's service delivery institutions, and because of discriminatory practices from the family and society. Because of lack of citizenship, many women have been living as a status of stateless in their own country. Because of lack of citizenship, many women lack the marriage certificates. Women who do not have citizenship, have further been deprived of obtaining their other legal identity documents; marriage certificate and birth certificates to their children. They are deprived of accessing other socio economic entitlements. There is a vicious cycle between the violence against women and statelessness in Nepal. This paper will explore how women have been discriminated by the state, society and family on their access to citizenship that has led them to live a life of statelessness in their own country. The paper further explores the impact of being a statelessness in women's lives and women's rights including their rights to nondiscrimination and equality. The paper will be based on literature review, interviews, case studies and the focused group discussions.



Mujib Ahmad Azizi is a research officer at Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. His expansive experience with the Mercy Corps, Aga Khan Foundation and Red Crescent Societies testify for his expertise in matters of migration, community development and health. For his visiting fellowship with CRG, he will be working on:

War, Conflict, Climate Change and Internal Displacement in Afghanistan

The international community and governments claim that they are putting extra attention on the issue of IDPs; if so, why the number of IDPs is not decreasing? Today migration, refugee and Internal Displacement People (IDPs) have become a serious matter for the world that most of the countries in the world are struggling with this phenomenon. The Internally Displaced decision is less like migration decision, which is taken by the individual household, based on the obstacles they face like the influence of demographic, economic or for searching for a better life, environmental and disaster issues, political and social factors. War, conflict, and climate change are the main drivers for Internal Displacement People (IDPs) in Afghanistan. The IDPs in Afghanistan are facing lots of problems like lack of place for living, lack of access to services, education and many other issues.

Based on the findings by the IOM, young returnees and IDPs are particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges, in many cases suffering from depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorders. However, some of the representatives of IDPs in the different provinces highlighted this that most of the IDPs are suffering from depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorders or facing poverty and lack of job and source for running daily livelihood. They join the insurgent's groups.

However the donors try their best for resolving of the IDPs issues in the country but they are facing with some issues. Lack of political will and weak cooperation between ministries due to having union government are like obstacles for the donors. Moreover, the conflict, war, climate change, and natural disasters, becoming force factors for increasing of IDPs in the country.

One of the main partners of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations is the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) for supporting IDPs in Afghanistan. The State Minister for the Natural Disaster Management said: *"Due to having not enough staff and budget we can't manage all the natural disaster in the country which caused increasing of IDPs due to Natural Disaster"*. In recent years the cases and incidents are increasing but lack of a political will and other political issues between the decision-makers of the country facilitated the situation for life threat of IDPs and returnees.

This paper will seek to add to the literature on the factors that affect IDPs such as the continuity of war and the effects of climate change. The paper will concentrate on War, Conflict, Climate Change and Internal Displacement in Afghanistan. The scope of this study is limited only to the IDPs in Afghanistan and will focus on responses to the following questions:

1. Is there an official framework, strategy, and policy available in Afghanistan to address the issues of the IDPs in the country?
2. If yes, to what extent are the policies and migration laws useful for the management and reintegration of the IDPs in the country?
3. Considering the security situation of the country and the increase in natural disasters, how do MoRR and relevant donors support IDPs in terms of accessing services and basic needs?



Dr. Niloy Ranjan Biswas is an Associate Professor of the Department of International Relations at the University of Dhaka. In 2016, he completed his Ph.D. in International Politics from City University of London. His thesis examines the implication of the role of state elites, local civil society organizations and international actors on civilian security governance in transitional and challenging environments with a special focus on Bangladesh's Police Reform Program (PRP). He was a recipient of Fulbright Fellowship (2010-12) to pursue MA in Security Policy Studies at The George Washington University, Washington DC. In

September 2017, he successfully completed the nine-month-long United States Institute of Peace (USIP)-Resolve Fellowship to conduct a post-doctoral study on community policing and its challenges in preventing violent extremism. His current research interests include forced migration, role of social agencies and preventing violent extremism, security governance, and South Asian contributions to United Nations peace support missions. His most recent articles are published in National Security (VIF), Asian Journal of Comparative Politics, The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs, International Peacekeeping (Taylor & Francis), Journal of International Peacekeeping (Brill) and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies Journal. He is working on:

The Remaking of Rohingyas in the Host Communities of Cox's Bazar: The Intersectionality of Identity, Politics and Culture

In 2016-2018, more than 750,000 Rohingyas were forced to leave Myanmar and take shelter in Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, and Ukhiya of Bangladesh. The Rohingya influx from Myanmar is not new for Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been hosting Rohingyas since late 1970s. While Bangladeshi government and international community are much concerned about safety and security of Rohingya refugees, it has hardly been a matter of academic investigation—how have the relations between host communities and Rohingyas evolved in post-forced migration phases in Bangladesh? Popular media vary scantily reported some patterns of racial hatreds between Bengali and Rohingya people in Bangladesh since their first migration in late 1970s. However, it does not help scholars to comprehend the evolving relationship between host community and Rohingyas in Bangladesh over decades. This study, therefore, aims to examine avenues of 'intersectionality' of identity, culture and politics in the context of forced migration of Rohingyas and their relations with host communities in Bangladesh. The paper lies at the intersection of scholarly literature on forced migration and politics of identity construction. It discusses multiple forms of discrimination experienced by refugees and the views of local host community in Bangladesh about Rohingyas. In doing so, the paper applies a constructivist approach to understand construction processes of Rohingya identity in host communities—local administration and Bengali citizens—by using content analysis of primary documents, popular local and national media reports and in-depth interviews of locals and refugees. A semi-structured content analysis of popular media (local newspapers) will be conducted to examine the appearances of some specific expressions that indicate Rohingyas' identity/ies. The data will be analyzed to highlight some critical markers of identity at the post-forced migration stages. Furthermore, qualitative narratives from selected in-depth interviews of refugees and host community members will also offer some descriptions of identity construction processes, which will highlight how Rohingyas are consistently prompted with their refugee identity/ies. The study acknowledges that the qualitative research is not generalizable. Findings from media content analysis and in-depth interviews nevertheless provide important insights into how 'selfness' for Rohingya refugees is a construction of interactions between Rohingyas and local host community. The study aims to argue that the notion of identity as a constructed narrative of 'locals' that reinforced 'othering' of forced migrants/refugees in the host country. This 'othering' processes is situated at the critical 'intersection' of identity, culture and political narratives constructed by powerful locals that may further lead to various forms of discrimination for Rohingyas—that is yet unaddressed by prevailing protection mechanisms in Bangladesh.

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We have not as yet received all the details from Nadarajah Sooriyarah (from Sri Lanka).

As mentioned earlier, CRG has postponed their visit to Kolkata, India to late November or early December 2020, depending on international travel resumption protocols and the situation both in India and their respective countries. The fellows have consented to the changed schedule.

IV. PUBLIC LECTURES

To accommodate the changes in the mode of delivering lectures from physical to virtual in the wake of the lockdown, CRG formed a Webinar Committee in April 2020 to specifically manage and organise public lectures and events to be held during the lockdown. The public lectures were shifted to the virtual platform to ensure greater and transnational participation also. CRG also planned to focus on the contemporary reality around migrant workers during the pandemic and initiated a public lecture series.

About the public lecture series:

A WHO declared pandemic has resulted in the redrawing of the boundaries of nation-states, states, cities, districts and containment sites, in which the figure of the migrant worker has emerged as the most vulnerable, while being imagined as the most infectious. Every day India has encountered endless sights of migrant workers and their families walking towards their homes, some dying, some reaching their destination and many being turned away. This crisis has thrown up a number of disturbing questions, answers to which will have deep impact on the state of the nation. Following up on CRG's book *Borders of an Epidemic: CoVid 19 and Migrant Workers*, this webinar series will deliberate upon the present crisis and its implications for migrant workers, public health, national and international borders, the state of the economy and the 'labour' market, the im/possibility of care and the faultlines in the structure care, public health, and protection.

Webinar One

COVID 19: Public health crisis and sudden visibility of migrant workers

The concept note of the webinar is as follows:

CRG's book *Borders of an epidemic: Covid-19 and the Migrant Workers* is a tract of the times, an initial set of reactions and analysis to the gradually unfolding human and economic disaster in India, the plight of the migrant workers and their struggle to return. The first webinar in CRG's webinar series #bordersofanepidemic (organised in collaboration with RLS and IWM, Vienna) takes off from the book--it enquires into the responses to this epidemic, the retrenchment of the economy resulting into further precarity for the labourforce, the possibility of a new politics of life and the importance of care in a transformed politics.

Speakers

Ranabir Samaddar (Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group)
Samita Sen (Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History, University of Cambridge; member of Calcutta Research Group)

Moderator

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury (Vice-Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University; member of Calcutta Research Group)


Date: June 12, 2020, Time: 1930 hrs IST

Link to the published report: <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2020/06/16/report-on-covid-19-public-health-and-the-sudden-visibility-of-migrant-workers/>


Link to the recorded video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-YxDbkwVqw&t=176s>


#bordersofanepidemic
CRG webinar series 2020

Lecture ONE: June 12, 2020, 1930 hrs IST
CoVid 19: Public Health and the Sudden Visibility of Migrant Workers



Ranabir Samaddar
(Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, CRG)









Samita Sen
(Vere Harmsworth Professor of Imperial and Naval History, University of Cambridge; member, CRG)

Moderator: **Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury** (Vice-Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University; member, CRG)

This webinar is a part of the CRG programme on migration and forced migration studies, organized in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, the Institute of Human Sciences, Vienna, and several other universities and institutions in India.

 Calcutta Research Group
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 mcrg MCRG

Webinar Two: It is scheduled to be held on July 8, 2020. It is titled, “Covid-19: Redrawn Borders, Redefined Lives”.


#bordersofanepidemic
CRG Webinar Series 2020

Lecture Two: July 8, 2020, 19:30 IST
COVID 19: Redrawn Borders, Redefined Lives






Sandro Mezzadra (Associate Professor, University of Bologna) in conversation with **Paula Banerjee** (Professor, University of Calcutta; member, Calcutta Research Group)

Moderator: **Samata Biswas** (Assistant Professor, The Sanskrit College and University; member, Calcutta Research Group)



This webinar series is a part of the CRG programme in migration and forced migration studies, organised in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, and several other universities and institutions in India.

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Webinar series with college teachers and studentst:

Shyamalendu Majumdar, CRG's Member Secretary has taken the lead to organise two such public lectures in the form of webinars – the first has been held in collaboration with the Netaji Satabarshiki Mahavidyalaya. The advertisement and the report of the webinar are attached below.

IQAC & Department of Political Science of
NETAJI SATABARSHIKI MAHAVIDYALAYA
 In collaboration with
MAHANIRBAN CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP

Present a webinar on
MIGRATION: DIMENSIONS & PERSPECTIVES
 DATE : 15th JUNE, 2020 TIME : 12 Noon Onwards

SPEAKERS:


DR. SHYAMALENDU MAJUMDAR
 ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
 SIVANATH SASTRI COLLEGE & SECRETARY, MCRG.


DR. SAMATA BISWAS
 ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
 THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY & TREASURER, MCRG.

THE WEBINAR WILL BE MODERATED BY DR. ARUP SEN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
 SERAMPORE COLLEGE & MEMBER, MCRG.

To Register

- The webinar will take place on the Zoom meeting platform.
- To register one must send their names through email to seminarism2000@gmail.com
- To join the participants must download the zoom app and create their id and the meeting id / password will be sent on 14.06.2020 to registered candidates through email.
- For details pertaining to the specific areas of discussion in the webinar kindly refer to the college website nsmashoknagar.ac.in on 12.6.2020.

E-certificates will be given to the participants.

The Department of Political Science with the Internal Quality Assessment Cell (IQAC) of Netaji Satabarshiki Mahavidyalaya in collaboration with Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group organized a webinar titled 'Migration: Dimensions & Perspectives' on the 15th of June 25, 2020 at 12 noon. The purpose of the webinar was to bring together teachers, students, researchers and academicians to initiate discussion on a very common but often unattended phenomenon of human migration in an integrated world, especially one caught amidst a global pandemic. Calcutta Research Group feels privileged to hold these webinars with colleges and universities. The webinar received very positive response and we received almost 195 registration requests. As per the zoom platform limit we were able to confirm registration of 90 candidates. The webinar was joined by 83 participants comprising of assistant professors, associate professors, research scholars and students of various colleges, universities and institutes. We had participants from Delhi, Tripura, Sikkim and various districts of West Bengal apart from Kolkata whose questions, quires and opinions contributed to the success of the webinar.

The webinar had two sessions followed by a question, answer cum discussion round. We had the privilege of having Dr. Shyamalendu Majumdar, Associate professor, Department of Political Science, Sivanath Sastri College and Secretary, MCRG and Dr. Samata Biswas, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sanskrit College & University and Treasurer, MCRG as our speakers for the day. The whole session was moderated by Dr. Arup Sen, Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, Serampore College and Member, MCRG. Our first speaker, Dr. Majumdar talked about the general concept of migration stressing mainly on forced migration and its manifestations. While highlighting the elements of coercion, violence behind forced migration he mentioned the predicaments of Rohingyas to asylum seekers. Dr. Majumdar succinctly put forward the perils of internally

displaced people (IDPs) citing how from environmental hazards to ethnic cleansing results in internal displacement of considerable population. He shared his own experience regarding the persecution of Bru people by the majority Mizos. He then presented a very crucial question concerning the protection of IDPs given they are often left at the mercy of the respective governments in absence of international conventions for their protection. He ended his discussion by making the audience think how the concept of care and morality have intertwined to further raise the complexity of the question of protection of these hapless masses. The second speaker Dr. Samata Biswas made a presentation on pandemic and migration. She started from the premise of who bears the burden of an epidemic or pandemic. She stressed on the fact that the globalized world have not only facilitated people's movements but also facilitated the movement of diseases on a faster pace. Through various images and visuals Dr. Biswas presented how since the plague of 14th century to the current Covid 19 marginalized people are victimized and often persecuted as the carriers of diseases or viruses. Coupled with the prejudice and ill treatment the migrants are the worst affected in times of an epidemic or pandemic. She depicted how the travel restrictions, contamination fear and dearth of funds aggravate the predicaments of migrants, asylum seekers or refugees who are left stranded, caught between borders and are forced to live in distressful, unhealthy conditions. She sums up her deliberation by succinctly adding that despite everything human migration will continue as the global order is depended on cheap labour but with the current trend of rolling out of stricter immigration laws by different governments across the globe underground migration will increase and will be controlled by traffickers resulting in further predicaments of the migrants in future.

The webinar was further enriched by the pertinent questions raised by the participants during the question answer round. Diverse array of questions were raised ranging from the idea of collective politics and shared infrastructure to branding of intra-state labourers as migrant labourers. Participants sought the opinion of the speakers on the limited coverage of the difficulties of migrants in mainstream media and also whether the sudden limelight on the migrant labourers in Indian media and social platforms can have any credible effect on the socio-political fabric. The program came to an end with respected moderator Dr. Arup Sen asserted that webinars such as this would be helpful in opening up dialogues and discussions on the challenges of migration. He mentioned that the success of the webinar rested on the fact that through the discussion it weaved the concepts of migration and pandemic to broader dimensions of nation state, women migration, media and others. On behalf of Netaji Satabarshiki Mahavidyalaya, Mr. Anindya Dey, Associate Professor of Sociology extended the valedictory address and expressed the hope of collaborating with MCRG in the future for more enriching academic endeavours.

Another seminar will be held in July with Sivanath Shastri College, Kolkata. All the resource persons will be assigned by CRG. In addition, a joint-organisational platform is being created to address concerns of migrant labourers in academia. A meeting with the concerned organisations is being convened on July 3, 2020.

Webinars will be held with universities also. These will strengthen CRG's planned workshop with college and university teachers for syllabus making exercises (report on item IX).

V. PREPARATION & FOLLOW UP PROGRAMMES

CRG held several preparatory meetings. However the following change was made due to COVID-19 induced restrictions.

Earlier CRG had planned a **1 day workshop on the issues around the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the Darjeeling Hills** in North Bengal. With this purpose, in January 2020 three CRG members including the Honorary Director and the Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies travelled to Darjeeling and had a discussion with the Ex-Mayor of Darjeeling Municipal Corporation, who now heads the North Bengal Development Council. With COVID-19 induced restrictions the preparation for the workshop had to be stalled. CRG has planned now to make a field visit and hold a dialogue there in January 2021. This is an important programme, and will be fully implemented in 2021. Discussions continued with interruptions due to lock down and the cyclone of 20 May 2020.

VI. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Advisory Committee Meeting – January, 2020

An Advisory Committee Meet for planning the CRG's work plan for the year was held on 24th and 25th January, 2020 at Hotel Sojourn, Kolkata with Manish K. Jha, Shyamalendu Majumdar, Arup Kumar Sen, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Paula Banerjee, Marvi Slathia, Ranabir Samaddar, Aditi Mukherjee, Ria De, K. M. Parivelan, Shalini Randeria, Pragya Khanna, Byasdeb Dasgupta, Bharat Bhushan, Rabin Daw, Pradip Bose, Ratan Chakraborty, Raj Kumar Mahato, Rajat Kanti Sur, Ashok Kumar Giri, Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, Shibashish Chatterjee, Rajesh Kharat, Rajat Roy, Samaresh Guchhait, Subhashree Rout and Shatabdi Das in attendance.

Brief description of the discussion with special reference to the collaborative framework

The welcome address was delivered by Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group. He briefed the participants regarding the plan of the meeting and introduced the programme, mentioning that the 'media' segment would be a new theme in the present year. He explained that the two themes of 'global compact' and 'protection' had culminated into major discussions in the last two years. He commented that the programme was still in inception and the design of the programme for the year would be shaped by the observations of last year's participants and the comments of experts. He thanked the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung for unstinted support for reviving CRG's programme in migration and forced migration studies, and their constructive suggestions from time to time.

He also informed the participants that in 2020 and 2021 the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna also will collaborate with the Calcutta Research Group in some of the new segments of the programme, and together the programme would work towards setting up a joint Europe-Asia research platform for work in migration and forced migration studies. There will emphasis on exploring new issues in gender and migration, various migration crises, issues of cities, refugees and migrants, focus on Afghan and Syrian refugees looking for sanctuaries in European countries; also refusal of sanctuary to refugees by European countries. Comparative studies in all these areas will be encouraged.

The following areas were identified for exploration:

- Strategically building a network in Europe of like-minded people who could help expand the network of research. Building a similar network in India to expand upon the European debates.
- Research on the so-called 'invisible migrants' of Europe, South Asian labourers in East Europe, whether to term 'out-of-place' and 'displaced' people as refugees or migrants, issues of citizenship and identity politics in the Indian context.
- 'Refugee Jurisprudence' would be an important aspect of research along with focus on the politics of dismantling of rights and people's experiences of life as refugees or migrants.
- Translating CRG's research into policies and practices through the amalgamation of the work of activists, academics, bridge-courses and exchange programmes.
- Studies on labour market, naturalisation in Europe, bindings of solidarity across the globe and the boundaries of exclusion or dispossession and inclusion in India in terms of protection.

Research Themes

It was noted that:

- Protection, refugeehood and citizenship, the concepts of 'alien' and 'the others', media, ethics of care and protection, refugee labour, the issue of resources, and discrimination on grounds of race, religion, and gender in the matter of protection should be taken up as themes of research agenda.

Likewise, climate change and environmental issues and related displacement should be taken up.

Follow up

Depending upon how the situation unfolds in India in regard to COVID-19, CRG will organise another advisory-cum-review meet between November and December, 2020.

VII. PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

With the outbreak of the pandemic and the following lockdown, the scheduled international and domestic workshops have been cancelled. CRG has planned to devote part of the money, as reported in the Annual Research Agenda, to the research on migrants and public health, and facilitating research publications.

VIII. REFUGEE WATCH & REFUGEE WATCH ONLINE

Refugee Watch

The last issue of Refugee Watch was published in January 2020 and can be found on <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/ci.asp>. The print edition was held up due to the nationwide lockdown and will be out as soon as the printing facilities resume. The next two issues are in the pipeline with the June 2020 one being composed now. The editor on Refugee Watch, Prof. Paula Banerjee is looking into the possibility of collaboration between Refugee Watch and SAAND – where she will be the editor-in-chief and may bring in co-editors from other South Asian countries.

Refugee Watch Online

Refugee watch Online (available on <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/>) has accepted its first bunch of interns and is continuing to produce short commentaries, reviews, reports and opinion pieces. The process for creating a common website for Refugee Watch Online and Refugee Watch (the journal) is underway.

IX. TEACHERS' WORKSHOP

As part of the project, CRG is planning a workshop for College and University Faculty Members in migration and forced migration studies. It will focus on:

- (a) Research methodology; and
- (b) Syllabus Making Exercise.

Objectives:

The workshop will be organized with the following objectives in mind:

- (a) Framing a Syllabus on Forced Migration Studies;
- (b) Inclusion of Forced Migration Studies as part of the existing Social Science/Liberal Arts Syllabi;
- (c) Sensitizing particularly young members of the faculty to the importance of generation and dissemination of policy-relevant knowledge in the field;
- (d) Exploring the possibilities of turning the workshop into a prelude to a longer Certificate Course with 108 contact hours to be hosted at CRG and creating a durable platform of teachers and researchers engaged in the field. [CRG may explore possibilities of obtaining recognition of the certification by competent authorities]

Other details:

1. One of the Kolkata-based Universities will be approached to collaborate.
2. Time: The time span agreed in the Advisers' Meeting is between July and September, 2020 depending on the mutual convenience of CRG and the host institution.
3. Duration: A two-day workshop that will kick off with an inaugural panel discussion to be held in the afternoon/evening of Day One.
4. Participants: Approximately 20-40 junior to mid-level members of the faculty will be selected from out of the applicants responding to a public call for the event. Each participant will send in advance a Statement of Purpose stating how the workshop might be of use to them and their institutions.
5. Faculty: While efforts will be made to take fullest advantage of the existing CRG resource persons, we will also invite leading scholars of Forced Migration Studies to enrich our knowledge repository.
6. Resources: Knowledge generated primarily though not exclusively by CRG will be circulated as course patch before the workshops.
7. A tentative list of themes: (a) Research Methodology of Forced Migration Studies; (b) Political Economy of Labour Migration; (c) Intersectionalities: Race, Caste, Gender and Sexuality; (d) Global Compacts and Global Governance of Migration and Protection.
8. Follow Up: The participants will evaluate the workshop and report on the follow up activities that they plan to undertake.

However, with the outbreak of COVID-19 and the lockdown induced by it, CRG has been compelled to shift the workshop to the virtual mode.

1. It is planning to hold a series of lectures/panel discussions and meeting with the College and University teachers.
2. The possible themes of these lectures are:
 - (a) Methodologies of Forced Migration Studies
 - (b) Epidemics, Borders, and Migration

(c) A Discussion on Our Book

The Series may end with one meeting on the Challenges of Forced Migration Studies in Academia. A consultative committee has been set up with academics such as AmitPrakash (JNU), NasreenChowdhury(DU) and KalpanaKannabiran(CSD, Hyderabad). The workshop will be held on September 25, 2020.

X. AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES

Audio visual material for instructional purposes:

For this purpose CRG will produce a short film that will be a continuation of *Calcutta a Migrant City* (available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpREEq7Ar-Y>), filmed last year. In so doing, it hopes to both address and contribute to urban and spatial history, but also to CRG's engagement with forced migration. Concentrating on a former refugee colony in South Calcutta, we will present a brief history of the space through interactions with people who were the first settlers, interviews with urban historians, archival material dealing with the distribution of land, the setting up of infrastructure such as schools and clubs, and a review of relevant literature (say of CRG's publication *Refugees in West Bengal* and or the one brought out by the residents of KatjuNagar, *Katjunagar: Itihaser Sondhane*). The film will also try to capture the life of Parul Mukherjee, a revolutionary freedom fighter, but also one of the first settlers in the colony, part of the colony's popular memory as one who stood guard outside the colony with a stick in her hand, in order to ward off the landlord's goons, but also the one who ensured that the colony children were enrolled in the school she founded. The interviews will primarily be in Bengali, with subtitles in English, and suit instructional purposes for courses such as partition Studies, Area Studies, Urban History, Modern Indian history and of course, Forced Migration Studies.

Status report: The shooting had started before the lockdown, but had to stop due to the lockdown. Review of literature relevant to the shooting, as well as to be used in the film, is ongoing, as other preparations are also being taken. The plan is to complete the documentary by October, so that it can be shown in the late November programme. Samata Biswas is the documentary film director.

XI. WEBSITE & DIGITAL RESOURCES

Website & digital resources

CRG already has a huge digital archive of material (including primary material) on ten select themes. It is available for registered library and archive users. Its focus is on material related to issues such as those of migration and forced migration, autonomy, popular movements, labour including transit labour, and urban studies. CRG's subscriptions to J-Stor and Economic and Political Weekly have been renewed. The process for subscribing to Project Muse has begun and will be completed shortly. Moreover select a list of similar holding platforms (such as of ADB, World Bank reports, etc., which are least costly or allow free subscription) will be prepared soon, and CRG will subscribe to them as far as possible. Select old journal holdings have been added to the digitized resource. The library section of the website has the relevant information - http://www.mcrg.ac.in/log_library.htm. A new section on COVID-19 is under construction on <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/>.

In March, CRG decided to prepare a 'Living Archive' using material from media and other sources on the migrant workers in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lock down. The work was started immediately. Thus there is now a new section on the website (http://www.mcrg.ac.in/COVID_19_Migrant_Workers.html) containing annotated information, news reports, photos, and videos covering the migrant workers' crisis during the lockdown. The section is regularly updated. The digital resource is taking help from CRG's presence in the social media presence. Besides, CRG and Refugee Watch Online regularly publicize their activities on Facebook and Twitter. In addition, the videos are available on its YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIXiXt6rAEqxBeQ9_Nz198A . This is becoming a new digital resource of CRG to be used for large audiences across colleges and universities, winter workshop participants.



XII. TRANSLATION

- Rajat Roy is editing a translated version 'Borders of an Epidemic' in Bengali. Until June 30, 2020, 10 papers of the total 14 in the book have been translated by two translators (RajatKanti Sur and Prasit Das) who have been contracted for the job. The delay has been caused due to the effects of cyclone Amphan – internet and electricity were interrupted for days after it washed over south Bengal on May 21, 2020.
- A publishing house has been approached for the translated version of Borders of an Epidemic by Prof. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhuri. The discussion is underway and the manuscript will be ready by October 2020.
- The policy brief ('Burdens of an Epidemic') will also be translated.

XIII. MEDIA SEGMENT

Media Workshop

In the Advisory Committee Meet held in January, 2020, it was underscored that:

- The compilation of a handbook for media persons which would provide them with a tool of ready reckoning, supplemented by references to specific and relevant laws and conventions, was necessary. The prominence of social and digital media and web portal should be taken into consideration in addition to the involvement of graduate students and faculty of media study courses and departments at universities and academic institutes.
- It was stressed that conduct of workshops with journalists and media persons, story-telling by migrants and victims of forced migration, and narratives on migration and crime are important. Several themes were listed, for lecture series:
 1. Lecture on the issue of coinage of terms that are used to describe refugees; contribution of refugees to the GDP of the host economy.
 2. Photo exhibition and lecture on life in camps and how photographs and images have perspective-changing impacts
 3. Historical and political significance of discourses and reporting on migrants.
 4. Representation of 'aliens' and 'intruders' in the framing of national policies.
 5. How acceptance and cultural assimilation develops in case of particular communities while xenophobia, racism, denial and fear, create threat for other communities.
 6. Local, national and international press on critical reporting and bias in case of migrant reporting. Media ethics, social media and migration could also be themes for lectures.
 7. Reporting on citizenship act, migration and impact of social media's representation on migration research, and impact of online platforms and social media in helping share experiences and fostering bonds.

Alterations

Since the altered situation due to COVID-19, the following adjustments have been made:

1. A **media committee** was formed with Rajat Roy as the convener. Samata Biswas, Kusumika Ghosh and Utsa Sarmin are also part of the committee. It was tasked with organizing the grant, a media workshop in August and contracting one media person to curate a media handbook on migrant workers which will work as ready reckoned for reporters and editors alike.
2. **The Media workshop** will be organized virtually during the first week of October, 2020. Rajat Roy will draft a concept note by July 10, 2020 and organize a separate meeting to chalk out the details of media workshop. The media fellows who have been contracted will participate in this workshop. Additionally, Rajat Roy, as the convener of committee will organize a public lecture on media and the pandemic.
3. The media handbook will be edited by Bharat Bhushan.



An independent journalist today, he was the editor of *Catch News* and the 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*.

4. A media workshop planning meeting was organized on April 3, 2020 with 13 people. **Attendees:**
Prof. Samir Kumar Das

Mr. Rajat Roy
 Mr. Bharat Bhushan
 Mr. Subir Bhowmik
 Ms. Pamela Philipose
 Ms. Swati Bhattacharya
 Mr. Amal Sarkar
 Mr. Shoaib Daniyal
 Mr. Debashish Aich
 Ms. Ria De
 Mr. Samaresh Guchhait
 Ms. Kusumika Ghosh
 Ms. Utsa Sarmin

5. The following decisions were made:

Since, the Calcutta Research Group has been doing frontline research work on the issues of migration, forced migration, refugees, borders and boundaries, and statelessness and citizenship for more than two decades and feels the need to raise awareness among people about these issues particularly in times of crisis like the present one. With that goal in mind, CRG would organize a workshop of media persons and several deliverables were planned as part of the media segment of the overall programme:

1. CRG would offer three short term (two months) fellowships to journalists who would study/cover the issue of migration and finally produce a report (Print/Video/Digital) in some media outlet.
2. A project should be taken up to prepare a handbook on media and migration and forced migration (that will include relevant laws and international accords), the outline of the handbook should be discussed in the workshop and the task of preparing such a handbook be assigned to suitable person/persons.
3. In the age of Digital Media, many small outfits and independent agencies are recording various facets of the life (including the lives of the migrants/refugees/stateless people. We may encourage one or two such outfits/individuals to produce some 3-4-minute documentaries with partial support from CRG.
4. Also, at least two theme lectures could be arranged for each of the two-day of workshop. The lectures would throw light on select critical aspects of the issue of migration and forced migration as well as media practices on the concerned issues..
5. An established photographer may curate an exhibition on the issue of Migration. The exhibition can be made a part of CRG's winter conference (23-28 November).
6. The media workshop will be held in late August 2020 (now shifted to early October) with around 20 media practitioners as participants (six/seven participants from outside and rest from the city where it will be held).

Discussion:

1. The meeting started with CRG director Prof. Samir Kumar Das giving a brief outline of the agenda and the desired outcome of the meeting and a media workshop planned for August 2020. CRG wishes to achieve three main things from the workshop, one, publishing a ready reckoner on migration for journalists to refer to while covering stories of migrants; second, getting more inputs from media personalities on the situation of migrant workers due to the COVID 19 lockdown; third, offering fellowship to few journalists who would study/cover the issue of Migration and finally produce a report (Print/Video/Digital) in some media.
2. Swati Bhattacharya said that CRG has enough material to bring out the handbook/ready reckoner soon. It is important to make the handbook ready because journalists are increasingly covering stories on migrants, refugee, migration and the handbook will be a helpful guide for the journalists.
3. The suggestions by the media personalities on important issues that need coverage and the workshop are as follows:

Bharat Bhushan suggested that the workshop can be done in two parts. First part can be an introductory interaction where the focus of the conversation will be on why journalists need to be trained and sensitized on how to view or report stories regarding migrants so that they do not use the rhetoric or terms like “termites”. The second part will see how migrants are represented in media which can be done through textual analysis and a photography exhibition. Bharat Bhushan suggested bringing a Bangladeshi photographer for the exhibition whose details he will provide us later. He also mentioned other important aspects that the workshop can cover. First, analysing place-specific migration, for example, the migration pattern and coverage of the related issues will be different in different places. Second, understanding state pressure on migration report: Migration discourse in media is often controlled by the state with the result that reports blame the migrants for breaking lockdown. Third: why different migrants are treated differently. Why are Tibetans welcomed while Bangladeshis are not? Racial, religious, linguistic, and cultural politics behind this acceptance and rejection needs to be studied. Why Sikhs from Afghanistan are welcome who have less cultural similarities with Indians but not Bengali Muslims from Bangladesh? These are important questions. Fourth, how local and national media are covering migrant-related stories and what are the differences? For example, an Assamese reporter covering issues related to migration and refugees in Assam will have a different perspective than a non-local reporter. Fifth, social media as a migration research tool can be an important point of the study. For example, in the Rohingya camps, the refugees keep in touch with each other through social media. Studying social media will also give what migrants think of themselves and bring out the emotional cost of migrating. Sixth is the economic contribution of migrants. Due to the current crisis, it has become clearer that without cleaners, caregivers, cooks, workers, society will crumble. Hence the economic contribution of migrants can be a very important topic of study and can be a stand-alone module for the workshop.

Subir Bhaumik said that it is important to see the link between national politics and refugee issues. For example, the change in the political discourses in India affected the coverage of migration and the way migrants are seen. Regionalism should be factored into while talking about migrants, for example, the Assamese media see themselves as the force multiplier of the anti-migrant or anti-foreigner movement. He also suggested everyone take a look at the Sage handbook on media and migration. The thrust of the research according to him should be on the link between media, regionalism and national politics. Bharat Bhushan added that while studying regionalism, one also should focus on the political economy and localization of the journalists, for example, a journalist from Jammu and Kashmir will report keeping in mind the local sentiment of the population. Regarding the workshop, Subir Bhowmik said that there should a roundtable dialogue on sensitizing journalists, then it can go on specific studies and one of the most important outcomes should be the ready reckoning.

Shoaib Daniyal suggested a more in-depth reading of the interstate migrants which is increasing in recent years. With inter-state borders being closed due to COVID 19, an unprecedented crisis is unfolding in front of us. One reason to study inter-state migration is to also study the nativistic politics of all the stakeholders. Another topic for study suggested by him is the Bengali Muslim migration, especially from states like Maldah and Murshidabad. Migration from these districts in West Bengal has increased exponentially and given the NRC context, the Bengali migrants, especially settled in Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon areas are scared. The third project which can be undertaken according to Shoaib Daniyal is to look at the current pattern of migration from Bangladesh. Indians have very little knowledge about the migration pattern from Bangladesh and the right-wing people are using this as an issue. Hence, the more nuanced conversation around this is needed.

Pamela Philipose suggested to do a distinction between transnational migration and local migration and to understand the dynamics of both the processes. Bringing Bharat Bhushan’s point about social media, she said it is important to see how social media tools have been used for intra-network community building but also used to target migrants. She said that migration will be an important issue for BJP and will continue to be politicized. It

began with the Vajpayee government and will continue to be a critical issue. Hence, along with abovementioned suggestions, she said that it is important to talk about dimension of cross-border development. It is also important to talk about the rush to go home. Why home is so important for the migrants? A rigorous study of what is happening now is of utmost importance and due to the current global and national scenario with coronavirus and a right-wing government in power, the chance to do such study has presented itself. She also suggested providing scholarships or funds to local journalists. Sometimes they do want to cover stories but do not have the editorial support. CRG can bridge that gap.

Swati Bhattacharjee said the studied should focus on the gender aspect in migration. The rate of women's migration has increased and not only due to marriage. Many migrated women are working as tailors and other forms of labour which often keeps them at home while the men in their families go out for work. Their piecemeal price is decreasing and often their labour and migration do not come out in the media. Labour has stopped being a beat for some time now and it is important to focus on migratory labour. Also in many cases in Maldah and Murshidabad, a large section of women are left behind when their husbands migrate to different states and cities in search for work which results in a shift in the family structure which can also be an important point of the study. Regarding the workshop, she suggested two different modules for the workshop, one for desk people and another for correspondents. The desk/editorial part of the workshop can have mid to senior-level participants.

Amal Sarkar said that the workshop should have local correspondents as participants. Local journalists are in close contact with the people in the ground. So their contribution and sensitization become very important as they can talk about the ground reality. For example, a person from Berhampur, working in Berhampur will be better situated to talk about the situation in the city. Even a correspondent from Berhampur working in Kolkata will be better when it comes to cover local news but the vice versa will not be as effective. CRG can select some serious local correspondents who will be given assignments for 2-3 months so they can cover from districts. There are local journalists who seriously want to work but do not have the funds and CRG can help regarding that. He also suggested involving students of journalism and mass communication in some way in the workshop to prepare them for the future.

Debashish Aich pointed out that, hardly any district administration has complete data of migrants. How many migrated to which states, which company they are working for, their labour contractors- these are all important record which administrations should have. Amal Sarkar said that there are government agencies to register that data but that is never done and media also never raises the question which is much needed.

Ria De emphasized the importance of social media and how the migrants are using social media. There has been a shift where migrants' their culture, their communication are all documented on social media. She also suggested more rural centric journalism.

4. Apart from the above suggestions, Samir Das highlighted the previous work of CRG in this field. For example, a media reader on North East is already available which needs to be publicized; likewise, a book was published a decade back by CRG called "Eroded Lives" on migration, flood, and the families of Murshidabad.
5. It was decided that the minute of the meeting will be circulated among the participants and then another meeting will be held to come up with a proper plan for the workshop.

Media Grants

In keeping with the points listed above, CRG has chosen 4 journalists to work on a short-term grant. The advertisement was circulated widely and the details of the grants are as the following:

Advertisement

Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (Calcutta Research Group) is offering short term media grants to reporters, journalists, and media practitioners for investigative studies on migrant workers in the backdrop of COVID 19. Applicants may submit their proposals on various related themes, such as: existing central or state policies on migrant labour; the economy of migrant labour; gender, caste, minority status, and other fault lines in the protection of migrants, the phenomenon of return of the migrants back home after the declaration of the countrywide lockdown, migrants as carriers of a disease, visibility and invisibility of the migrants, data inadequacy on migrant labour, and finally, migrants and public health. Each grant will carry a total amount of Rs. 30,000/- (Rupees thirty thousand) only. Four selected candidates will be given grants. The selected candidates will be paid on submission of their reports/articles/media analysis. Candidates are expected to have experience in reporting, writing, or editing for print and/or digital media. Reports in the form of photo-essays will be also accepted. Candidates with relevant experience and demonstrable interest in covering migrant-related stories will be preferred. The investigative or analysis pieces will be of around 4-5000 words. The grant period will be for three months. Selected candidates will have to submit their reports/writings to the Calcutta Research Group by 31 August, which will have the right to publish these reports. Selected candidates will also be encouraged to publish short reports or analysis pieces on the basis of their work in any reputable journal, magazine, newspaper, or web-portal.

Detailed application, a statement of purpose of 500-750 words explaining the selected theme or story for investigation along with one previously published investigative or analysis piece may be sent by email by 23 May 2020 to forcedmigrationdesk@mcrg.ac.in and subhashree@mcrg.ac.in. Applicants should send their resume, cover letter, statement of purpose, and example of work in one file (PDF). The text of the sample piece along with the link has to be attached with the application. Applicants are requested to consult the Calcutta Research Group website www.mcrg.ac.in for information on the institution. Any enquiry on this will be welcome.



MEDIA GRANTS

REPORTING THE MIGRANTS IN THE TIME OF AN EPIDEMIC

Calcutta Research Group

Application deadline: 23
May 2020



@MahanirbanCalcuttaResearchGroup



forcedmigrationdesk@gmail.
com



@MCRG_CRG



www.mcrg.ac.in

Selection of candidates

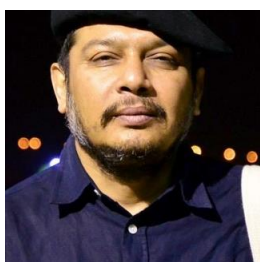
14 people applied for the media grant. Due to the tropical cyclone Amphan that swept through West Bengal and Odisha on May 21 and its subsequent internet connectivity issues, the selection process was delayed.

A selection committee was formed for this comprising of Mainak De, Rajat Roy, Ranabir Samaddar and Samir Kumar Das. It met on 7th June, 2020 and the deliberations unfolded in the following manner:

1. All 14 candidates were evaluated on the basis of their applications, which included:
 - Proposal and objectives of work
 - Academic qualifications
 - Experience, and
 - Geographical location.
2. CRG maintained its stance on extending opportunities to those with less exposure but with deserved merit.
3. Two lists were made after thorough discussion and evaluation on the criteria mentioned above: 3 candidates were chosen to be kept in the waiting list should anyone from the first list have to decline CRG's offer.
4. Based on the committee's evaluation, the 4 selected candidates are:
 - Sidhharth Yadav (Madhya Pradesh)
 - Geetika Mishra (Maharashtra)
 - Amit Sengupta (Delhi)
 - Swati Bhattacharjee and Abhijnan Sarkar (Kolkata)
5. Those put on the waitlist, in the order of merit are:
 1. Debashish Aich (Malda)
 2. Ratna (Delhi)
 3. Ria De (Kolkata)

The four chosen candidates were contracted in the end of June. Siddharth Yadav, citing personal reasons could not accept CRG's offer, and hence the final list stands at:

1. Amit Sengupta



He is the Executive Editor, *Hardnews*, south Asian partner of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Paris. Hnfp.in. A journalist and columnist, Amit has written/and writing for several media organizations including Outlook, Tribune, DailyO, Hindu Businessline, National Herald, DW, Samyantar (Hindi) The Hindu Businessline, Newsrupt (Malayalam portal in Kochi, earlier Southlive), Hardnews, The Diplomat, Washington, Tortoisemedia, London, The Polis Project, New York, LokMarg, among others. TV commentator with Swaraj Express. Recently edited a book on education in contemporary India with essays and testimonies by eminent academics, citizens and students: *Indian Campuses Under Siege – Knowledge, Resistance, Liberation*.

Story Idea:

FORCED MIGRATION AND DALITS: A CASE STUDY OF DELHI, NOIDA AND WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH

As a journalist I have been on the ground covering the forced migrations of tens of thousands of unorganized migrant workers from Delhi, especially to the Hindi heartland. The infinite injustice which they have suffered needs more intensive, graphic and meticulous documentation. Therefore, this project will focus on their daily struggle, occupational hazards, the political economy and sociology of their everyday life, the idea of 'free labour', working

class and trade union rights, and their identity and social existence in a neo-liberal democracy.

Since almost 93 per cent of the work force in India is in the informal sector with virtually no rights, and almost half of them are Dalits and women, this study will focus on Dalits, especially in the metropolis of Delhi, the special economic zone of elite and industrial Noida, and certain flourishing towns and rural areas in western UP in the vicinity of Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur and Meerut.

Delhi: Almost 60 per cent of the working population in the capital of India comprise workers, mostly from UP and Bihar. They also constitute the vote bank of the Aam Aadmi Party, since significant work has been done in the educational and health sector by the AAP government in Delhi for the poor. The study will focus on the demographic and sociological shifts in two areas: Northeast Delhi which witnessed organized killings of mostly Muslims in recent times, and Trilokpuri in East Delhi, which had witnessed the massacre of Sikhs in 1984.

I have reported on both these riots as a journalist, and have also worked in the relief camps. The study will also focus on the fabric of social harmony, the cultural paradigms of migration, and the bitter fissures which have been created after the killings.

Noida: Hidden within super expressways and residential areas of the rich, there is a small ghetto called the Harijan Basti (Ambedkar Vihar) in Noida. As a chief minister, Mayawati had created this enclave for the Dalits. Currently, the 'basti' is a typical urban village, with a mix of people from the cow belt, and significantly, a huge population of Bengalis who work as domestic servants, pull rickshaws, sell vegetables, fish and chicken, and also have 'exclusive' shops selling Bengali delicacies, including 'mishti doi', Jharna ghee and Bengali sweets. Most of the Bengalis have arrived from Malda and have community relationships. Others are Indian citizens with roots in Bangladesh, or part of their family reside in that country. Interestingly, most of the Bengalis are from the Scheduled Castes. One of the biggest festivals they celebrate is a three day collective celebration of the cult of Chaitanya, with dance and musical troupes from Bengal performing till the wee hours of the morning.

Western UP: This prosperous green revolution belt has always been a secular and pluralist terrain, with the population of the dominant agricultural communities among the Jats and Muslims, along with landless Dalits, living in harmony. Before the 2014 elections, riots were social engineered here, in a political zone where the BJP never had any electoral presence, this being a belt ruled by the Charan Singh phenomena. However, the BJP won heavily after it succeeded in isolating the Muslims amidst killings and communal polarization, including the fake propaganda of 'love jihad'. The state of Dalits, post the 2014 election and the communal fissures, will be the key area of study, and their economic and social relations with the other communities in a changed political scenario. This is also the area of a rising Bhim Army and Dalit assertion, especially in the area of education. I have reported on this area since many years, and this is also the area where I spent my childhood.

In conclusion, the study will take three different points of geographical reference to understand the phenomena of migration with Dalits in perspective, focusing also on women and the aspiring young, who are not ready to be oppressed any more by the dominant castes, or the upper caste bureaucracy and police. This will therefore also enter the political unconscious of aspirations of the subaltern castes.

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2. Swati Bhattacharjee and Abhijnan Sarkar



Swati Bhattacharjee is the Senior Assistant Editor, Edit Pages, Ananda Bazar Patrika. She was Fulbright Fellow 2010-2011 at ALJ Poverty Action Lab, MIT.



Abhijnan Sarkar is an independent documentary maker.

Story Idea:

WHERE DO MIGRANT LABOUR LIVE? A SURVEY IN KOLKATA

The Problem: The norm of “social distancing” following Covid-19 has brought to focus the poor housing conditions of migrant labour. It soon became apparent that migrant workers living in crowded, unhygienic slums, or on pavements, had little hope of saving themselves from the coronavirus. Studies have shown that slum populations have a significant effect on influenza transmission in urban areas. Improper specification of slums in large urban regions results in underestimation of infections in the entire population and hence may lead to misguided interventions by policy planners. (1) Hence we see widespread anxiety, even resistance, to migrant workers returning home.

The Background: Policy makers are well aware of the poor housing options of the migrant labour. A report by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (2) has noted the lack of affordable rental accommodation for migrant labour, which pushed labour to live in slums, illegal settlements, godowns, under flyovers, on the sides of railways, and so on. They have little or no access to safe drinking water and toilets. The government has announced several plans to alleviate the problem, such as construction of affordable rental houses for migrant workers under the PM Awas Yojana. (3) However, as the recent exodus of migrant labour for their homes even in the middle of a lockdown has shown, an overwhelming majority of workers are forced to live in subhuman conditions.

Kolkata gets 2.2 lakh migrant workers, from other states and from Bengal’s districts. Our previous field work showed that migrant loaders, carriers, and waste disposal workers who have worked in for instance Kolkata’s Burrabazar area for decades continue to live on pavements. Migrant workers are possibly a significant part of Kolkata’s pavement dwellers. In the clothes industry of Metiaburj, we found seven to eight workers crammed in 8 ft by 10 ft rooms, with a single bulb and a fan running on a “hooked” wire.

The Research Proposal: This study proposes to examine the dwelling conditions of migrant labour in Kolkata. It will take certain sections of industry which typically use migrant labour, such as clothing and tailoring industry, construction, food processing, small manufacturing and so on, which typically survive on seasonal or round-the-year supply of migrant labour. It will then see what arrangements are being made for the living quarters by employers, municipalities and by workers themselves.

We will look at the policy documents by Union government, state government, municipalities and international aid organisations like DFID, USAID and so on to see what was visualised for meeting housing needs, and the reality on ground. We will look into existing research on accommodations for migrant labour.

Research Questions:

What are the predominant types of dwelling accommodations for migrant workers living in Kolkata?

What kind of access do migrant workers have to basic amenities like drinking water, toilet and sanitation?

What kind of rent do migrant workers pay, and to whom?

What kind of plans has been proposed in the recent past for proper accommodation of migrant workers in Kolkata?

What were the major hurdles in the implementation of these plans? What conditions will have to be fulfilled for providing affordable rental homes to migrant workers?

Our study will be limited to the geographical area of greater Kolkata. We will use the methods of interview and focus groups. We will gather data from migrant workers, employers, councillors, municipality and urban development officers. We will also talk to organisations working with migrant labour.

3. Geetika Mishra



Geetika Mishra is the Project lead at 101Reporters. She is a young professional with a demonstrated history of working in the social impact sector and the news and media industry. Areas of interest include Political Science, Public Policy, International Relations, Women Affairs and Volunteering with Nonprofits. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Political Science degree from Delhi University.

Story Idea:

An extended lockdown (in its 60th day on May 23) to contain the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak has resulted in a catastrophic situation for migrant labourers in India. Excessive reportage and analysis so far reflects upon the central government's insufficient contingency plan that has failed to protect the migrant labourers.

The central government as well as the state governments have announced various measures to support these workers. The measures announced stand on numerous faultlines restricting the availability of relief packages to a limited number. My report will focus on the implementation and implications of the same in addition to labour compliance rules and the major acts included

in the labour law compliance rules. For eg, the Building and Other Construction Worker (BOCW) Act of 1996 aims to levy a cess on the cost of construction incurred by the employers and use that money for the welfare of construction workers who are registered under the Act. As of April 2020, the reported data suggested that a majority of the construction workers hailing from north and central Indian states were not registered under the Act, hence, unable to avail any benefits from the centre-declared Rs.32,000 crore BOCW fund.

The following key points will be covered in the report:

1. Relaxation of Labour Laws in States & its implications -

The governments of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Haryana have issued notifications maximising the weekly working hours from 48 hours to 72 hours for certain factories. On the other hand, the Madhya Pradesh government has put into effect an 'ordinance' that exempts establishments with less than 100 workers from not obliging to the Madhya Pradesh Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1961.

This act is crucial for the regulation of the conditions of the workers. The ordinance further allows the state government to let off other institutions from the Madhya Pradesh Shram Kalyan Nidhi Adhiniyam, 1982. Shram Kalyan Nidhi Adhiniyam provides a constitution pertaining to the welfare funds of the labour force.

The UP government's ordinance has also struck out labour laws related to social security, industrial dispute resolution, trade unions and strikes, which severely undermine the condition of labourers at present.

While the provisions of labour laws relating to women and children continue to remain in force, the absence of a

holistic and effective social security system exposes them to excessive vulnerability. The provisions of Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 under the pandemic situation have not been addressed by any of the state authorities.

2. Payment of Wages Act, 1936 / Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 /

Minimum Wages Act 1948 / Factories Act 1948 -

The Payment of Wages Act, 1936 and the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 provide that the contractor or employer is liable to pay a minimum wage to 'all persons employed by him' though migrant workers stranded across the country state otherwise. Gram Vaani has captured audio interviews on the plight of the migrant workers who were refused any payment of their dues since the lockdown and are surviving without any ostensible source of income or savings.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Sunday, 17 May 2020, revoked its previous direction to authorities of States/UTs to ensure the payment of due wages to workers. 'Workers' in this regard refers to regular, casual and contractual employees who form the unorganised workforce.

The governments of Gujarat, UP and Madhya Pradesh have not specified the provision of overtime payment; it violates the rights of workers under the Factories Act and the Minimum Wages Act.

The report will further investigate the state of accessibility of migrant workers to the public health system in the wake of the pandemic. It will conclude with a brief analysis.

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4. Debashis Aich



Debashis Aich has been working for more than three decades in various media outlets. Currently, he is working as an independent journalist and member of the Editorial Team of an online bi-lingual news portal *GroundXero* (www.groundxero.in). He has 19 years of experience as a journalist in mainstream television and print media (1995 to 2014).

Story Idea:

It has been now more than a month and a half since India is under a lockdown. Across the country, restrictions on mobility and suspension of work, to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, have distressed countless people. Amongst them, the plight of the migrant labourers has caught our attention in significant ways. Disturbing images of thousands of stranded migrant labourers trying to escape to their native homes from cities like Mumbai, Surat, Chennai, Gurgaon etc have forced us to take notice of this 'invisible' multitude.

In towns and cities across the country, the migrants live in cramped, congested and unventilated dwellings, which often lack basic sanitation facilities or running water. This negates any possibility of social distancing or preventive measures like regular hand washing. Predominantly residing in rented accommodations, the migrant workers and their families are at the mercy of the landlords who threaten eviction when they were unable to pay rent. The migrant workers seldom possess sufficient savings to withstand weeks or months, without paid work. Their precarious condition in alien lands is further exacerbated by the meagerness of relief measures undertaken by the state governments and the companies they were employed with. Linking relief with the possession of ration cards has only intensified the difficulties in accessing the near negligible relief.

Consequently, the migrant working masses in the towns and cities, without income and food, trapped in unhygienic and unhealthy dwellings, have been rendered only more susceptible to an infection of COVID-19.

Taking such factors together, it would not be a stretch to deem the lockdown as not only unsuitable to the migrant workers, but also particularly dangerous for them, from a material perspective as well as in terms of health. Consequently, it made them desperate to escape to their native states, at times even risking their lives.

Migration from West Bengal has increased manifold during the past one decade. According to 2011 Census, there

were about 454 million migrant labourers in India. This had risen by 139 million from 315 million in 2001 and by 220 million in 1991. In other words, the numbers have doubled between 1991 and 2011. Data from the NSS sample survey (NSS) in 2007-08 reveals, about 28.3% of workers in India are migrants. There is no statewise figure of migrant labourers available. There is also no data available on migrants from Bengal in public domain.

We rarely engage in public debates or discussions related to migrant labour in our social and political discussions. Recently, they have caught our imagination precisely because they came to represent the face of a catastrophe. They become important to political parties, once in every five years, at the time of a general or Panchayat election.

In media, migrants attract headlines only during drop in percentage of male voters in some rural constituency; dearth of agricultural labourers in rice-bowl districts of the state; or natural disasters like Aila in Sundarban or floods in host state, like the one in Kerala in 2019; witch hunting in the name of illegal Bangladeshis in the slums of Bengaluru, Pune or Delhi. One can keep on adding to these instances. Through such news, we come to know about their existence and become aware that Bengali speaking migrant labourers are spread all over the country, from Kashmir to Kerala.

The mass exodus of migrant workers triggered by Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown brought their existence to our notice. Ramjeet, a migrant labourer, rightly said, during his journey on foot to Gorakhpur from Delhi, "May be when Modi ji decided to do this [lockdown] nobody told him about us. May be he doesn't know about us."

Against this background, I want to focus on the phenomenon of migrant workers leaving the cities and returning back to their places of origin, focusing on migrants workers from two districts of West Bengal – Bankura and Malda. The attempt will be to try to understand what made them migrate in the first place and what factors and circumstances compelled them to come back. Is this reverse migration just a temporary phenomena or there is something more to it.

Resource persons/organisations to be interviewed

1. Bangla Sanskriti Manch.
2. Migrant Labour Solidarity Network.
3. wbtrackmigrants.
4. Gana-Tadaraki Udyog.
5. Social scientists, Labour leaders and concerned government officers.
6. Individual volunteers working with above-mentioned organizations

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XIV. LIBRARY & ARCHIVE BUILDING

A new librarian, Nandini Dasgupta has been selected for the CRG library. She was supposed to join on April 1, 2020, but due to the lockdown, her joining date had to be postponed.

After due sanitation of premises, CRG library is preparing to reopen and Ms. Dasgupta will join from July 6, 2020. She will also assist the website committee and monitor relevant web-based activities. She will update the process of cataloguing, digital archiving, finishing the acquisition of new books, and streamlining journal holdings.