

JANUARY-JUNE 2021

BI-ANNUAL REPORT

**EUROPE-ASIA RESEARCH PLATFORM
ON FORCED MIGRATION**

CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP – INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN SCIENCES, VIENNA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Covid19 continued to rage through the country in 2021, CRG had to fast cope up with the exigencies of the situation and adapt itself to the new modalities of work under conditions of renewed shutdowns and restricted mobility. The office had to be closed in early April and the staff started working from home. However, lessons from last year helped the institution to collaborate effectively and devise ways of carrying its agenda. New staff researchers and contract researchers were recruited. Sub-committees for different sectional activities and programmes were formed. The planning and preparations of the Winter Workshop and Conference, research work, field visits, webinars and other activities are on track. In fact, the scope and the scale of collaboration between researchers from different institutions and universities have been expanded in the last six months.

This year, CRG is launching yet another ambitious programme related to its research and advocacy work on migration and forced migration: the (online) orientation course in migration and refugee studies for college and university teachers. In this first-of-a-kind course in South Asia, more than 15 expert faculties from all over the world will teach fundamentals of migration and refugee studies with an inter-disciplinary framework. It is hoped that this course, and the following teachers' workshop in coming December, will contribute extensively to CRG's pedagogic commitments to sensitizing the wider public about the massive and mixed flows of migration across South Asia, and strengthen the Europe-Asia link programme.

From January to June 2021, CRG has been able to continue with its research collaboration and make significant headways. This semester, CRG has been able to achieve the following objectives:

- CRG's critical investigation into the impact of epidemics and public health crises on the migrants has been extended to include new questions and areas of research. As an overarching theme and a meta-narrative, the 'Long 2020' informs this year's research agenda and plans to produce 12 research papers on the theme. This collaborative research finds inspiration from Ranabir Samaddar's recently published book on the subject, *A Pandemic and the Politics of Life* (Women Unlimited, 2021), which has raised novel theoretical issues and provoked much discussion in the academia, media, and among activists and policymakers.
- The discourses on the 'rights' of the migrants, refugees, stateless people is another focus area where CRG has been able to make some significant contributions. The Winter Workshop, the teachers' online course, the study on 'Migrants in the Electoral Time' and the Long 2020 research segment – all these programmes aim to bring the question of 'rightlessness' and precariousness of migrants and refugees. A constructive dialogue straddling different worlds of the subjects of research, academics, activists and policymakers has been successfully initiated.
- The Europe-Asia collaboration on migration and forced migration researches have made significant progresses as scholars and activists from different European and Asian countries have been roped in for various programmes at CRG. In addition to the Winter Workshop in November, the teachers' online course will provide a creative platform to carry on with this alliance building.

TIMELINE 2021

Programme/Event	Month	Date(s)
Six-day Annual Winter Workshop		
Distance Segment	July-October	Third week of July to end of October
5 days residential workshop and 1 day conference	November	15 th (Monday)-20 th (Saturday)
Research agenda		
Long 2020 (12 research papers by staff and contract researchers)	March-September	

and an additional essay on methodological questions)		
Long 2020 Planning Meeting at Kolkata	March	26 th (Friday)
Election Study (3 publishable reports of case studies of Assam, Bihar and West Bengal state assembly elections on the theme 'Migrants in Electoral Times') Field Visits+Report Preparation	February-July	
(a) Online discussion on the reports of Election Study and (b) completion of a consolidated report	(a) June (b) July	30 th (Wednesday) 31 st (Saturday)
2 individual research projects on specific themes of the Assam migrant question and Bangladesh War of Liberation in 1971 (2 articles of 7,000 words each)	February-October	
Staff researchers' Workshop on Zoom Web Platform	May	20 th (Thursday)
4 Visiting Fellowships (pending from last year)	November	10 th -30 th
Public Lectures in Universities (at least 2)	July-December	
Preparatory and follow-up meetings and investigative visits		
Field Visits related to Election Study	February-April	
1 dialogue on Migration and Conflict (Bihar-West Bengal Dialogue)	September	Note yet finalized
One advisory committee meeting (held in hybrid mode from Kolkata)	January	26 th (Tuesday) & 26 th (Wednesday)
One planning plus evaluation meeting	To be planned	
Refugee Watch (2 issues)	April / December (The April issue has been published)	
Teachers' Online Course & Workshop		
Online Orientation Course for college and university teachers	July-August	17.07.2021 (Saturday)- 29.08.2021 (Sunday)
Workshop	December	Yet to be finalized
Media segment		
5 short-term media grants	February-October	Deliverables to be submitted by 15 October
1 day workshop	December	Tentatively 4 th /5 th
Translation work	June-December	Some material has been located and earmarked for translation and dissemination
Library, archives, website and	January-December	The "Living Archive" is being

digital repository building		enriched with new material; better classification of the material will begin; book acquisition will commence now as the lockdown has been by and large lifted; subscription to online depositories renewed; website is being improved upon – for all these sub-committees are functioning.
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I. WINTER WORKSHOP & CONFERENCE

SIXTH ANNUAL RESEARCH & ORIENTATION WORKSHOP & CONFERENCE 2021

The Winter Workshop has been the flagship event of CRG’s research programme in migration and forced migration studies for years. Planning and preparations of the Sixth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop & Conference on *Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants*, to be held on 15-20 November in Kolkata, have begun early this year. Like last year, a Task Force has been formed to lead the organization of the 4-day workshop followed by a two-day conference.

The Task Force:

This year’s Winter Workshop Task Force is constituted of Arup Sen (Professor at Serampore College and Member, CRG), Manish K. Jha (Professor at TISS, Mumbai), Mouleshri Vyas (Professor at TISS, Mumbai), Nasreen Chowdhory (Associate Professor at University of Delhi and Vice-president of CRG), Parivelan K. M. (Associate Professor at TISS, Mumbai & CRG), Ranabir Samaddar (Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, CRG), Samir Kumar Das (Professor at University of Calcutta and Member, CRG) with Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhry (Honorary Director, CRG and Vice-chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University) as its Convenor and Priyanka Dey (Co-convenor) and Shatabdi Das from the Desk. The Website Committee of CRG is working closely with the Task Force in publicizing the programme and in building a secured web portal dedicated exclusively to the workshop and conference. So far, the Task Force had four meetings where the details of the six modules, the design and format of the workshop, modes of participation and other logistic details were discussed and planned. For the concept note and the list of six modules of Sixth Annual Research & Orientation Workshop, visit:

<http://www.mcrg.ac.in/wc.asp>.

The module abstracts/concept notes, along with a preliminary list of references will be prepared and publicized very soon.

Invitation of application and subsequent extension of deadline:

The notification of the Sixth Annual Research & Orientation Workshop came out in the first week of March. It was posted on our website, and published on *Economic and Political Weekly*, *The Statesman* and circulated by the Forced Migration Desk through our social media handles (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), and emails. The original deadline for application was 10 May 2021. However, with the outbreak of the third wave of Covid19 pandemic in India and the subsequent return of the restrictions and shutdowns, deadline was extended to 31 May 2021.

Selection of participants:

CRG received a diverse pool of applications from the Global South as well as Europe. A Selection Committee was formed with Paula Banerjee (Professor at University of Calcutta and Member, CRG) and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury as the two internal members of the committee, while Maidul Islam (Associate Professor at Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta) and Rajesh Kharat (Dean of Humanities, University of Mumbai) were invited as the external experts and on 21 June a first list and a waiting list of selected candidates were finalized. In all 32 candidates are on the first list. The selected participants have been intimated and the registration process has begun which will be over by the second week of July.

Distance segment of the Workshop:

Although the residential part of the workshop will be held on 15-20 November in Kolkata, a distance (online) segment will start from the third week of July. An inaugural orientation session via zoom meeting will be organized between the participants and the resource persons. In the month of August, we have planned one introductory meeting per module where the participants will meet their respective module tutors and discuss the theme and the research scope of that module. A collection of selected reference materials from the CRG resources will be prepared for each module and distributed among its participants for them to read during the months of August to October.

November Workshop & Conference:

The planning and preparations for the November workshop & conference is underway. The venue has been booked and accommodations for participants and resource persons have been arranged.

II. ANNUAL RESEARCH AGENDA

A. Long 2020

'Long 2020', the main focus of CRG's research agenda, is based on the vulnerabilities and experiences of COVID-19 pandemic. The 'long' in the 'Long 2020' helps us to think of our present as a long unfolding of historical trends and experiences of epidemiological management, a combination of several crises in the form of a pandemic, public health policies, and practices, migration realities in the wake of an epidemic, and issues of life and death raising their heads through the time of an epidemic. This research module brings together academics and researchers from CRG and other institutions and universities of India and will produce 12 research papers (Priyanka Dey from the desk researcher and the rest from the contracted researchers) addressing various issues of governance, neoliberal economy, literary representation of epidemics, disease management, infrastructure of care and care workers, the questions of time against the horizon of the overarching theme of 'Long 2020'.

For details visit:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Migration_Research_2021.asp.

Status Report:

A Research Planning Workshop was held on 26 March 2021, at Swabhumi (Kolkata) where the researchers and the discussants engaged in discussions and deliberations on the specific research themes and proposals. The research papers will be submitted by the end of August and a follow-up workshop will be held in September.

B. The Migrant in Electoral Time

A study into migration and forced migration, the rights and protection of migrants and refugees, can never be complete without considering the political dimensions of them. Hence, CRG considered it critical to plan and execute a collaborative study on how the migrant and the refugee figure in the assembly elections of Bihar (October-November 2020), Bengal (March-April 2021) and Assam (March-April 2021). As elections in India provide snapshots of the political reality, such a study was thought to be crucial in developing a critical understanding of the political discourse around migration in the country. Anamika Priyadarshini and Gopal Krishna (Bihar segment), Ankur Tamuli Phukan (Assam), Priyanka Dey and Rajat Kanti Sur (West Bengal) segment are the researchers for the project. The concept note of this study, details of the researchers can be accessed on: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Migration_Research_2021.asp.

C. Individual Research Projects:

1. The Politics of the Local: The Contingencies of Citizenry in Assam: A Case Study (Researcher: Ankur Tamuli Phukan)

In this paper the researcher will try to locate the basic structure of the operation process of identification, determination and the deportation of individual as foreigners, in order to understand the shifts and changes in disciplinary politics of a nation-state and how in a particular historical-cultural context of Assam the cartographic anxiety of the nation-state would align itself with other sub-national(s), bureaucratic anxieties of a particular local.

Status Report:

Ankur has done the first leg of field study in Assam in the month of March. He is currently reading and arranging the materials gathered from his field visits against the grain of the secondary literature on related subjects. He will submit the first draft of his paper by end of October.

2. The Refugees of West Bengal in 1971 (Researcher: Rituparna Datta)

This project tries to locate the new praxis of viewing refuge as a temporal category in nation making rather than nation seeking and repatriation as a logical outcome of the process. The research is on the Bangladeshi refugees in West Bengal in 1971

Status Report:

Rituparna is now consulting the materials already collected by her as well as the resources available online and secondary literature of camps, refugee crises and the War of Liberation in Bangladesh. She will submit a full draft of her research paper by the end of October.

3. Public Health in Refugee Camps and Colonies of West Bengal during 1947-1958: Policies, Practices and Politics (Researcher: Priyanka Dey)

This project, which will constitute a part of the Long 2020 collective research, seeks to study the discourses and practices of public health in the East Bengali refugee camps and colonies in West Bengal during 1947 to 1958. The study attempts to investigate what constituted the 'crisis' of health of the refugees in the government as well as popular discourses and what practices were adopted by

various governmental as well as non-governmental agencies to manage them. By analysing different forms of collective actions around the question of public health of the refugees, it also seeks to understand the 'politics of health' in the period under study.

Status Report:

Priyankar has started consulting primary materials available in the Kolkata Corporation Archives and in other digital repositories, along with the relevant secondary readings on the subject. He will submit a full draft of the paper by the end of August.

Full abstracts of the individual research projects can be accessed on:

http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Migration_Research_2021.asp

D. Publication of *A Pandemic and the Politics of Life* by Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, CRG and Presentations of Research Findings

In March, Ranabir Samaddar's new book on the recent pandemic experiences and their political-theoretical implications, *A Pandemic and the Politics of Life* came out from Women Unlimited (an associate of Kali for Women). The book was formally launched in a session at the end of the Long 2020 Planning Workshop at Swabhumi, Kolkata on 26 March 2021, followed by a discussion by Prasanta Ray (Emeritus Professor, Presidency University & Member, CRG). The book has been successful in inaugurating new discussions and debates around the question of life and biopolitics in different academic and rights activist circles. The *Scroll.in* on 24 March 2021 carried an excerpt from the book with the title 'Bio-politics in the time of Covid-19: Can the old economic order really return? Should it?'. The article can be accessed here: <https://scroll.in/article/988535/bio-politics-in-the-time-of-covid-19-can-the-old-economic-order-really-return-should-it>.

E. Publication of the book from *The Borders of an Epidemic: Covid19 and Migrant Workers and the Burden of an Epidemic: A Policy Perspective on Covid-19 and Migrant Labour* (Forthcoming)

The two CRG publications from last year will soon be published as a book from Social Science Press (Indian edition) and Routledge (international edition). Paula Banerjee, Ranabir Samaddar and Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (IISER, Mohali) are the co-editors. A Bengali as well as a Hindi version of the book will also come out from other publishing houses.

F. Ranabir Samaddar's lectures/talks/interviews/articles

Ranabir Samaddar's talk at a panel on 'Refugees and Border Securitization' in EU-India People's Summit, 3 May 2021

Ranabir Samaddar joined Ravi Nair (Executive Director of the New Delhi-based South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre), Catherine Wihtol de Wenden (senior researcher at the Institute for International Political Studies), Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky (Professor in anthropology at Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales), and Anubandh Kate (Founder, The Liberal Indians, France) at a panel discussion on 'Refugees and Border Securitization' on 3 May 2021 in EU-India People's Summit. The panel discussion can be watched on: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCEL33B5stQ>.

Keynote address given by Ranabir Samaddar at the Young South Asia Scholar's Meet 2021, organized by the Graduate Institute, Geneva, 3 June 2021

The Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy, the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology and International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute, Geneva organized an online Young South Asia Scholars' Meet on 3 June 2021, where Ranabir Samaddar was invited to present a keynote

address. The title of his lecture was 'The Everyday State'. The abstract of the lecture as well as a full video recording of it can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTmtJUhZ000>.

Ranabir Samaddar's address at the Kerala Council of Historical Research on 'A Pandemic and the Politics of Life', 14 June 2021

Ranabir Samaddar gave an online public lecture at the Kerala Council of Historical Research (KCHR) on 14 June 2021 on 'A Pandemic and the Politics of Life', which is also the theme and the title of his recent book. The lecture was a part of KCHR's recent series of talks titled 'Interventions Series: Scholarly Reflections on Contemporary Issues'. Arunima G. presided over the session. The video lecture can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kXVjo8Xg3o>.

Interviews, podcasts, articles and dialogues with Ranabir Samaddar on elections and the questions of migrants and citizens

Ranabir Samaddar has given a number of interviews in different newspapers and channels on the occasion of 2021 West Bengal State Assembly Elections and has talked about the issues of migrants and citizenship in the electoral discourse. They can be accessed on the following links:

'Time for Left to re-imagine class, populism', Subhoranjan Dasgupta in conversation with Ranabir Samaddar, *The Telegraph Online*, 4 January 2021, <https://www.telegraphindia.com/west-bengal/time-for-left-to-re-imagine-class-populism/cid/1802541>

Ranabir Samaddar, 'Fifty years ago: How pro-poor politics became an integral part of Indian democracy', *Scroll.in*, 12 February 2021, <https://scroll.in/article/985058/fifty-years-ago-how-pro-poor-politics-became-an-integral-part-of-indian-democracy>.

'A Cultural Battle Is Being Fought in Every Village in West Bengal', *The Wire*, 20 April 2021, <https://thewire.in/politics/podcast-west-bengal-elections-ranabir-samaddar>.

III. VISITING FELLOWSHIPS

In 2020, four researchers Mujib Ahmad Azizi from Afghanistan, Nadarajah Sooriyarajah, Sri Lanka, Neetu Pokharel from Nepal, Dr.Niloy R. Biswas from Bangladesh were selected to work with CRG on Visiting Fellowships. However, the prolonged shutdowns and the ban on international travel forced us to postpone their scheduled visits. This year, these four Visiting Fellows have been freshly invited to visit CRG for two weeks in between 10 and 30 November 2021 and all four of them have accepted the invitation. They will also participate in the Sixth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference along with other participants. At present, their Registration for the Winter Workshop is being processed.

For the details of the fellows, their research topics and abstracts, visit:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration/IWM_Migration_Researchers.asp#R4

IV. PUBLIC LECTURES

Webinar 1: Borders and Mobility (5 April 2021).

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

Moderator: Nasreen Chowdhory (Associate Professor, University of Delhi and Vice-president, CRG)

For the full video recording:

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d521zQJyDms&t=682s>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/MahanirbanCalcuttaResearchGroup/videos/773447756615579>

For a full report of the lecture:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/Report_on_Public_Lecture_5April2021%20borders%20and%20mobility.pdf

Webinar 2: Pandemic and Civil Space (19 April 2021), organized by Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) and Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), in collaboration with CRG.

Speakers: Gamini Keerawella (Emeritus Professor & Executive Director of RCSS, Sri Lanka); Tania Amir (Barrister-at-law, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh); Rajesh Tandon (Founder of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia); Hari Sharma (Executive Director at Alliance for Social Dialogue, Nepal)

Moderator: Paula Banerjee (University of Calcutta & CRG)

Webinar 3: Fleeing and Staying: A Nuanced View of Bangladesh Refugee Crisis of 1971 (4 June 2021), organized in collaboration with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

Speaker: Meghna Guhathakurata (Executive Director, Research Initiatives, Bangladesh)

Moderator: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury (Rabindra Bharati University & CRG)

For a full recording of the lecture, visit: <https://fb.watch/v/xPxrY6A/>

Seminar Series on Forced Migration: The Intersections of Syrian Refugees' Dilemma: Settlement, Onward Movement and Return (16 June), organized by IWM-CRG Europe Asia Research Platform on Forced Migration and hosted by University of Vienna.

Speaker: Ahmet Icduygu (Director, Migration Research Center at Koc, Koc University)

Moderator: Ayse Caglar (IWM, Vienna)

For a full recording of the lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEV5F-DzdGw>

V. PREPARATORY AND FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMMES/MEETINGS and INVESTIGATIVE FIELD VISITS

CRG held a number of preparatory meetings to discuss and plan various segments of its year-long research programme in migration and forced migration studies. As the Covid19 restriction continued, most of these were held in hybrid modes to ensure the safety of the researchers and the resource persons attending these meets.

A. Investigative Field Visits

The state assembly elections were held in Bihar (October 2020), West Bengal, and Assam (both in March-May 2021) in recent months. From 15 to 18 March 2021, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Ranabir Samaddar visited Darjeeling and Siliguri in North Bengal to study the election milieu and the question of the migrants in electoral times (hereafter called the election study). Another intention of this visit was to investigate the debates around the question of citizenship in the Darjeeling Hills. This visit complimented the investigations of the CRG's desk researchers and contracted researchers who undertook extensive field visits in these three states as part of the Assam, Bihar and West Bengal for the Election Study. From late February to end of April, a total number of five researchers and many more collaborators visited many constituencies of Assam, Bihar and West Bengal, attended political meetings and campaign rallies, held interviews and group discussions with returnee migrants, political leaders, and other concerned citizens as part of their study. Overcoming the constraints on mobility ensuing from the pandemic, the researchers collected a minefield of primary data which would help to build on our understanding of the lifeworlds of the migrants and the refugees. The outcome of these visits will be in the form of three substantive regional reports, which the researchers are currently in the stage of revising and turning into publishable articles.

B. Dialogue on Migration and Conflict

Calcutta Research Group has decided to hold a Bihar-West Bengal inter-regional dialogue in

September. For this, preliminary planning and preparations have been done by the Desk and CRG's collaborators from Bihar. The institution is currently at the stage of finalizing collaborating institution at Bihar, exact dates and venue, format of the dialogue, potential resource persons and participants etc. A final budget will soon be drafted. The concept note of the dialogue can be accessed on:

http://www.mcrq.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/Draft%20Proposal%20for%20Bengal_Bihar%20Dialogue.pdf.

VI. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEET

Annual Planning Meeting on CRG's Research and Orientation Programme in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, 26-27 January 2021, Raas-Manch, Swabhumi (Kolkata)

On 26-27 January 2021, CRG organized an advisory committee meeting in Kolkata. The meeting was held in a hybrid mode so that participants could join from distant places. Besides the representatives from the two main collaborating institutions the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna and the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung - academics and activists from different universities and institutions from different parts of the world participated in the meeting to discuss and plan CRG's research programme for the year of 2021.

A brief report on the discussions:

Among other things, the meeting presented, discussed and passed resolutions on six proposed module themes for the *Sixth Winter Workshop and Conference*. It was further agreed upon that, given the exigencies of the world in these times of pandemic, earlier theoretical formulations need to be questioned and revisited. After much deliberation on this issue, it was decided that 'The Long 2020' will be treated as the overarching theme of the research in 2021. The 10 research agendas which were pre-circulated among the participants and ratified in this meeting are:

- i) Precarious Conditions and the legality/illegality and visibility/invisibility divide of migrants and refugees with special reference to refugee and migrant labour;
- ii) Unequal Care, unequal protection, and unequal rights;
- iii) Lawless oceans and seas: fishermen, migrants, and boat peoples;
- iv) Care during the pandemic: cooperation, solidarity, and justice;
- v) Pandemic, economic restructuring, and migrant labour;
- vi) Public health, education, and migrants and refugees;
- vii) Cities, migrants, citizens, and aliens; sanctuary cities;
- viii) Covid-19 jurisprudence;
- ix) Bangladesh refugee crisis in 1971;
- x) Long 2020.

The other sessions in the meeting discussed and passed resolutions on the teachers' course and workshop in migration and forced migration studies, media programme, translation work, production of audio-visual materials for instructional purposes, and other creative-informative projects for the project year of 2021. The participants also deliberated on the need and possible means of strengthening collaborations with CRG's partners and making new partnerships. For a complete list of the participants and the full report of the meeting, visit:

http://www.mcrq.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Migration_Events_2021.asp.

VII. PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

Calcutta Research Group is one of the sponsors for the IASFM18 Conference *Disrupting Theory, Unsettling Practice: Towards transformative Forced Migration Scholarship and Policy*. The event is

planned to be held on a hybrid mode in collaboration with University of Ghana from 26-30 July 2021. Two panels will be chaired by Prof. Ranabir Samaddar:

1. Forced Migration and Inequality

Date: 28 July 2021, 12pm-1:30pm (Ghana Time)

Speakers: Romola Sanyal, Nasreen Chowdhory, Shamna Thacham Poyil.

2. A Postcolonial Engagement with the Issue of Protection: The Kolkata Declaration of 2018

Date: 29 July 2021, 2:30pm-4:30pm (Accra Time)

Speakers: Giorgia Dona, Nergis Canefe, Paula Banerjee, Jennifer Hyndman, Laurence Juma.

For details of the Conference Panel Abstracts:

<http://iasfm.org/iasfm18/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2021/06/IASFM18-Panels-Draft-June-29-2021.pdf>

For details of the Conference:

<http://iasfm.org/iasfm18/>

VIII. REFUGEE WATCH & REFUGEE WATCH ONLINE

Anand Upendran and Rituparna Datta from CRG Forced Migration Desk have joined Paula Banerjee, the Editor of *Refugee Watch*, as editorial assistants for the year 2021. The editorial team brought out the latest issue (No. 57) of the journal, which is a special issue on Migrants and Public Health. The issue carries a total number of 7 original articles, a report on a Panel Discussion on Itinerant Situations in Art and Literature, and a book review. 5 of the research papers published in the issue were either outcomes of CRG's last year's research on public health and epidemics or the 2020 Winter Workshop. The digital version of the issue can be downloaded from our website (<http://www.mcrfg.ac.in/rw%20files/RW57/RW57.pdf>). Presently, the editorial team is working on the next issue of the journal, which will be a special joint issue with IWM on a central thematic of migration, satellite cities and seas.

The Refugee Watch Online has published 3 reports, 3 short articles and one book review in the first semester of 2021. Please visit - <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/>

IX. TEACHERS' (ONLINE) ORIENTATION COURSE & WORKSHOP

Building on the outcomes of last year's workshop on 'Research Methodology and Syllabus Making in Migration and Forced migration', CRG is organizing a two months online orientation (July-August 2021) course in migration and refugee studies for college and university teachers and migration studies. The course, titled *Reading Refugees, Reading Migration: An (Online) Orientation Course for College and University Teachers*, is designed to elucidate the basic concepts and concerns of this interdisciplinary field of study, showcase new research, and address questions of methods. It was also decided that the course will be taught by prominent scholars and practitioners of the discipline. It aspires to maintain a global outlook and provide holistic guidance in the intricacies of teaching this complex and vital subject. An internal sub-committee (Samata Biswas as Convenor, Anand Upendran, Ankur Tamuli Phukan, Shatabdi Das from the Desk) was formed to plan and organize the course and the workshop in December. CRG also thought about ensuring a representational diversity of the course applicants from the very beginning. The call for applications was announced on as many platforms as possible including social media and other non-conventional local networks that have a reach to peripheral areas of the region. The notification came out in early June 2021 and immediately attracted overwhelming response from a variety of applicants including high school, college and university teachers, civil servants, academics and activists. The total number of applicants was 120 of whom 35 candidates were selected with due emphasis on representational diversity in terms of gender, region, culture, language, and disciplinary trainings.

The full notification, concept note, and other details of the course can be found on:

http://www.mcrfg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Migration_Events_2021.asp

Status report:

The classes will be held online from 17 July to 29 August 2021 during Saturdays and Sundays, from 6.30 P.M to 8 P.M. IST. Ayse Caglar, (IWM, Vienna), Amena Mohsin (Dhaka University, Bangladesh), Darshana Mini (University of Wisconsin, USA), Hari Sharma (Social Science Baha, Nepal), Paula Banerjee (University of Calcutta, India & CRG), Ranu Basu (York University, Toronto), Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty (Retd. Professor, Presidency University, Kolkata & CRG), and Lydia Potts (Oldenburg University, Germany) are some of the members of the faculty.

Subsequently some of the participants in the course will be invited along with other academics, researchers, and teachers to a teachers' workshop to be held in early December. The exact dates and the details of the format of the workshop will be finalized soon.

X. AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES

In the first semester of 2021, CRG has been able to follow up on its agenda of producing audio-visual materials for instructional purposes in migration and forced migration studies. To that end, it has undertaken two different projects, which it believes, would produce valuable resources for academic courses not only in migration and forced migration studies, but also in urban studies, population studies, area studies, partition studies as well as modern history of India and South Asia.

A. Video Lecture Series titled *A CRG Series in the Corona Time: Six Lectures on Migrants and Refugees*

CRG is currently in the process of editing the six video lectures given by the module tutors on the occasion of the Fifth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop (2020) on Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees and making a Video Lecture Series titled *A CRG Series in the Corona Times: Six Lectures on Migrants and Refugees* with them. The series, once made, will be publicly circulated as resource materials for the students and researchers working in the related fields.

The general abstract of the Series, and the titles and abstracts of the individual lectures can be found on: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Migration_Audio_2021.asp.

B. Third documentary film in the CRG series, *Calcutta a Migrant City*

CRG has planned to continue with the production of its documentary series on *Calcutta a Migrant City* and produce a third film (provisional title: *City of Transit*) in the sequel. In a preliminary planning meeting it was decided that the film will be a short documentary on the riverine and overland transit networks which facilitated different types of migration in colonial as well as post-partition Calcutta. A team of experts consisting of Anwesha Sengupta (Assistant Professor at Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata), Debarati Bagchi (Senior Research Associate and Deputy Head at Max Weber Stiftung, India Branch) and Kaustubh Mani Sengupta (Assistant Professor at Bankura University) was formed, which, under the leadership of Samata Biswas (The Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata & Treasurer, CRG) and with the help of Priyankar Dey from the Desk, will plan the content of the film and supervise its making. A professional film crew will soon be engaged to shoot, edit and produce the documentary by September end. For the concept note of the film:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/Concept%20Note%20City%20of%20Transit.pdf

XI. WEBSITE & DIGITAL RESOURCES

CRG's website is being regularly updated with news of its forthcoming events and other relevant links and resources. The website plays a central role in the distance segments of CRG's various orientation programmes and serves as a conduit to connect with the participants from different

countries. Like previous years, there will be separate secured portals for the Teachers' Online Course and the Sixth Annual Research & Orientation Workshop & Conference, where the details of the courses, participants, resource persons, reading materials and other information will be hosted.

The institution's subscriptions to *JSTOR*, *Project Muse*, and *Economic and Political Weekly* have been renewed. These subscriptions have been a great help to the Desk researchers who can consult a huge variety of materials for their own research work.

The *Living Archive* section of the website and the Distinguished Chair's page have been regularly updated with links to reports, interviews, videos, and other information about the migrant labourers' precariousness during the pandemic, migration, Rohingya and other refugee crises, citizenship and other issues related to CRG's research and advocacy. At present, there are around 200 news items, audio-video resources and reports on the Living Archive. Recently, CRG has offered a short-term fellowship to Ronak Chhabra (Journalist, *Newsclick*) to prepare an analytical report on the precarious livelihoods of the migrant workers based on the resources from the Living Archive.

CRG has regularly publicized its events and programmes on its Facebook and Twitter pages. Recently an official Instagram page (<https://www.instagram.com/calcuttaresearchgroup/>) of the institution was opened to expand its social media reach. New resources have been added to the YouTube channel of CRG (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiXiT6rAEqxBcQ9_Nz198A) and its blog, Refugee Watch Online (<https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/>).

External help of a professional web developer:

In order to make the website more user-friendly and easily navigable, CRG has decided to enlist from July 2021 the professional help of a web developer to restructure the website and rearrange its contents.

XII. TRANSLATION

The process of translating two of CRG's reports brought out last year, namely, *Borders of an Epidemic* and *Burdens of an Epidemic*, in Hindi and Bengali are currently underway. At present, both of these are in the final proof-correction stage. The Bengali book will be published from the Progressive Publishers, and the Hindi book by the Aakaar books. This year's fresh Covid19 restrictions and shutdowns have caused much delay, but both the publications are expected to come out in a couple of months.

Plans for the next semester:

In the following semester, CRG has decided to undertake at least three translation works related to its overall research agenda of 2021. One of them is *Labour Train* by Manjira Saha, which is a compilation of newspaper articles and journal entries by the author reflecting on the returnee migrant workers, the circularity of their precariousness, ethnographic accounts of young migrant workers from *chars* and borderlands. The Bengali book will be translated into English by Purna Banerjee (Professor, Presidency University). At the time of writing this report, we are in the stage of signing the contracts with the author and the translator.

Apart from this, CRG is discussing the possibility of bringing out a collection of essays - related to issues of migration, conflict, and citizenship - in Assamese translated from English. The Desk has started the process of identifying potential texts for this translation work and they will be finalized very soon.

CRG will also translate the Kolkata Declaration into a number of vernacular as well as European languages. A decision has been taken in this regard and the process will soon begin. This will be relevant to the CRG's panels in the IASFM conference in end-July.

XIII. MEDIA SEGMENT

The media programme forms a critical part of CRG's annual research agenda on migration and forced migration studies. The objective of the media segment is to bridge the gap between scholarly research and public dissemination of knowledge about migration and contemporary refugee crises across the world, to sensitize the public about the rights and protection of the migrants and the refugees. CRG's media programme in 2020 produced three significant outcomes: four short-term media fellowships, a media workshop, and the publication of a media reader.

This year, as the Covid situation continues to be critical, CRG planned to revisit the issue of the precarity of migrant workers by widening the scope of the study. Besides that, it was decided that issues such as contemporary refugee crises and climate induced displacements in South Asia would be brought into the ambit of the media programme. For the details of the focus areas of this year's media programme, see:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Media_Researchs_2021.asp

The Media Sub-Committee:

Calcutta Research Group has created a sub-committee to coordinate its year-long media programmes which include the short-term media grants and the one-day media workshop to be held in December. The committee has well-known journalists and experts in the field of media studies and social sciences like Rajat Roy (Senior Journalist and Chairperson of the Committee), Jayanta Roy Chowdhury (Senior Journalist, PTI), Pranay Sharma (Senior Journalist), Shubhojyoti Ghosh (BBC, Bengali), Shoaib Daniel (Journalist, *Scroll.in*), Atig Ghosh (Assistant Professor, Visva Bharati University and Member, CRG), Samata Biswas (Assistant Professor, The Sanskrit College and University and Member, CRG), along with Ankur Tamuli Phukan (Research and Programme Associate, CRG) and Rajat Kanti Sur (Research and Programme Associate, CRG and Convenor of the Committee) from the Desk. In the months from February to June, the Media Sub-committee held several meetings to plan and prepare for the short-term media grants and the workshop of this year.

Short-term Media Grants 2021

Keeping this year's research agenda and the overarching theme of 'Long 2020' in mind, CRG in March announced five short-term media grants (Rs. 40,000 each for a period of three months) to promote creative and critical reporting on the unique situations of the migrants and the refugees during the pandemic. The theme of this year's short-term media grants was *What Happened to the Refugees and Migrants in the Covid Year of 2020*.

A Selection Committee, consisting of CRG's members and external experts, assembled on 27 April 2021 and unanimously chose five media fellows - Aman (Siddhant) Gupta (Freelance journalist), Devika Singh Shekhawat (PhD Scholar, Ambedkar University, Delhi), Nivedita Manpoong (Nellie) (Journalist, *Arunachal Times*), Sukanta Sarkar (Journalist, *EiSamay*), and Shuvankur Ghosh (Freelance Photojournalist) – from the pool of applicants. At the end of the fellowship, the selected candidates will have to deliver a report/photo essay/documentary/creative presentation on their proposed topics. The photo-journalist among the selected fellows will hold a visual exhibition based on his fellowship work, in addition to a report/photo essay to be produced. The fellows will be closely mentored by a group of eminent journalists and photographers of India.

The full resumes and the study proposals of these media fellows can be accessed on:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2021/IWM_Media_Researchs_2021.asp

Media Workshop 2021:

Besides this, a one-day Media Workshop will be held on 4/5 December in Kolkata, in which the

Media Fellows of 2021 and other reporters, journalists, media practitioners, activists and academics will be invited to participate. The theme of the workshop and exact format of the workshop are yet to be finalized.

Publication of the Media Reader:

CRG signed a book-contract with the Routledge to bring out the *Media on Migrants in the Time of an Epidemic: A Reader* as an outcome of last year's media programme. The book is edited by Bharat Bhushan. The manuscript recently received the green signal from the peer evaluators.

XIV. LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES BUILDING

CRG has added to its collection of books and primary resources on migration and forced migration, development, logistics and infrastructure, urban studies, political economy, public health and many other subjects. The new entries are yet to be catalogued as the post of the librarian was lying vacant for some time. A new librarian-cum-archivist, Binayak Mallick, has just been appointed, who will take charge of the CRG library and repository from 1 July 2021. Like the previous librarian, he will also work closely with the Website Committee to facilitate web-based activities of CRG as well as provide assistance in maintaining the Living Archive and other online holdings. He will also update the catalogues, the digital archive and its index, streamline journal holdings and organize acquisition of new books.

Archive building:

As an outcome of this year's Election Study, CRG is building a repository with the print, visual and digital materials related to election campaigns such as manifestos, newspaper clippings, screenshots of social media posts, photographs, videos, recorded interviews of migrant labourers, political leaders or their transcripts etc. The Desk is in the process of sorting, classifying and indexing them. The Living Archive section on CRG's website is constantly being updated with new links to resources about the migrant workers during the time of Covid19.

Workshop on Living Archive:

Hopefully, an in-person workshop will be held in September 2021. Expert archivists and researchers will be invited to deliberate on the potential of a unique digital repository like the *Living Archive* and plan its future development. The format of the workshop will be decided after consulting the new librarian-cum-archivist.

XV. Tasks ahead

- (a) To successfully hold the sixth research and orientation workshop in November;**
- (b) To hold the two workshops – for media practitioners and for teachers engaged in syllabus making exercise;**
- (c) A winter (originally planned as a summer camp) camp for young scholars-activists as part of the Asia and Europe link programme;**
- (d) Holding a Social Dialogue;**
- (e) Completing the translations;**
- (f) Completing the team research work on Long 2020**
- (g) Collaborative participation in the conferences/workshops led by the IWM/IASFM/OSF Justice Initiative-Centre for Peace and Justice (BRAC University);**
- (h) Bringing out the November issue of REFUGEE WATCH and expanding the base of**

REFUGEEWATCHONLINE;

- (i) Finalising the Pending publications;
- (j) And through all these adding strength to the Europe-Asia link programme.

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Winter Workshop Call for Application Poster with Extended Deadline



Researchers at Election Study field visit, March 2021



Poster for Teachers' (Online) Orientation Course