GLOBAL PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

4TH ANNUAL RESEARCH & ORIENTATION WORKSHOP & CONFERENCE

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A REPORT

CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP

IN COLLABORATION WITH
ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG

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2019

Contents

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

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Calcutta Research Group's (CRG) twenty year long sustained engagement on the theme of forced migration in South Asia, constituted the foundation for this ongoing three-year project on refugees and forced migration, supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS). CRG's pioneering role in research on forced migration and its world-wide acceptance encouraged further research on different themes of migration.

Refugee and migration "crisis" has come to the forefront of international attention amidst rising imperialist interventions, sectarian nationalisms, religious extremism, civil wars, environmental degradation and neoliberal restructuring of economies in the last three decades. Ceaseless population flows from West Asia, Northern Africa, South and Southeast Asia and some parts of Latin America in these decades have brought the issue of migration to the forefront of international attention. While the churnings in the wake of the regime changes in the Arab world in 2011-12, the prolonged civil war in Syria along with the Rohingya crisis have been the biggest drivers of refugees in recent years, the on-going violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, abuses in Eritrea, as well as poverty in several countries of the sub-Saharan region are all causes of migration and forced migration. The ensuing refugee "crisis" in Europe has led to the fashioning of two Global Compacts for the protection of refugees and migrants by member states of the United Nations but gross inequality in responsibility-sharing among nation states remains persistent. The international regime of protection and welfare embodied by organisations like the UNHCR and the IOM are marked by an imbalance between the power of the global protection regime and the sharing of responsibility among member states.

A similar situation is at work in South Asia. The refugee crisis in the present situation has reached an unprecedented height with the unfolding of state sponsored genocide of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar highlighting other such processes of rendering people stateless. The reality of the protection system worldwide and in South Asia today presents a grim and interlocked situation. For instance, the Mediterranean boat crisis and the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean boat crises show striking similarities in terms of refugee and migrant flows, disasters, off shore internment policies, etc. The following are only few instances of a scenario which prevail in South Asia, the entire Asian continent and all over the world:

- Increased humanitarian caseloads in cities
- Contrast between the gendered nature of forced migration – along with other fault lines, such as race, religion, etc., in the map of forced migration – and a seemingly homogenous global protection policy in the background of increased racialisation of the refugee and the migrant question
- Increasingly protracted nature worldwide of the condition of displacement
- Increasing statelessness
- The stark contrast between the power of the global system of protection and the responsibility at the margin
- Disparity between the corporate strategy of making refugees and immigrants market enabled actors and the reality of refugee and immigrant labour as dirt labour in service of a global capitalist economy
- The situation of mixed and massive flows (acknowledged by the UNHCR) that call for a policy of protection fundamentally different and radical in orientation from the present, now in tatters

These aspects show how the two phenomena of migration and forced migration are becoming enmeshed with each other, presenting before us a complex picture of issues of protection, rights, and justice. CRG's ongoing project on Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees emanated from this background. The key theme for this year's project was protection for refugees and migrants. Under

this broad theme the project aimed to address issues of the faultlines of race, religion and gender in the protection regime, the nature of immigrant economies, statelessness and laws of asylum and protection.

The project was divided into five essential parts:

i) Research undertaken by dedicated researchers
ii) A workshop – for young researchers to exchange their ideas
iii) A plenary conference – further debating and addressing issues raised in the workshop
iv) Public events at collaborating institutions and universities
v) Publications

PLANNING MEETING: GLOBAL PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

PLANNING MEETING ON THE PROJECT
ON
GLOBAL PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

Date: 13 February 2019

Venue: Hotel Akash Deep, Kolkata

The Calcutta Research Group organised a planning meeting for the project on 'Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees' on 13 February 2019 in Kolkata. Experts from all over India participated to discuss the possible trajectories of the project and its key research themes. The welcome address was delivered by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata*. He introduced the project by referring to CRG's workshop and conference on '*The State of the Global Protection System for Refugees and Migrants*' organised in 2018 along with a number of programmes held throughout the year. The following themes of the 'Kolkata Declaration 2018' were pointed out for deliberation:

1. The right to move is a universal human right and any restriction on that right cannot be subject to policies and measures that violate the dignity of human beings;

2. The refugees, migrants, stateless and other displaced persons are central figures in any protection system, legal regime, government and societal institutions;

3. The idea of a global compact must acknowledge the practices of protection at various regional, country, local, customary, city, and other scales. Any global compact aiming at sustainable resolutions must be based on wide-ranging dialogues involving refugees, migrants, stateless persons and groups defending them;

4. Any protection framework- global and local - must combat discrimination based on race, religion, caste, ability, sexuality, gender and class that affect rights and dignity of all human beings;

5. In any redesigning of the global framework of protection, perpetrators of violence and displacement must be held accountable for their actions;

6. Refugees, migrants and stateless persons working as informal labourers are entitled to social and economic rights;

7. Stateless persons should be prioritised for protection. Restoration of their citizenship rights is a global responsibility;

8. In the context of widespread forced migration and statelessness in Asia, a regime of protection along the lines of the African Charter of Human and People's Rights and its regional systems and institutions is imperative. Such a Charter must involve specific provisions of human rights, including labour rights, of migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons to ensure the dignity and rights of all.

Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* provided a brief background of CRG's twenty year long sustained engagement on the theme of forced migration in South Asia, which constituted the foundation for the on-going 3-year project on refugees and forced migration. CRG's pioneering role in research on forced migration and its world-wide acceptance were

highlighted. In relation to forced migration, 'partition' and 'mobility' came up as issues that warranted attention. Paula Banerjee stated that CRG's research has brought forth the notion of externalities that force people to move, placing importance on the vulnerability of certain gender group in forced migration. The need to address issues faced by labour migrants as the specific category of economic migrants was emphasised. Paula Banerjee highlighted that CRG has led pioneering research on the Rohingyas. The Indian experience of refugee crisis is central to South Asia and should be taken up in a holistic manner to understand the plight of refugee and migrant mobility in the region broadly. She summed up that the project would consist of five essential parts:

i)   Research activity on important issues

ii) A workshop – for young researchers to share their ideas

iii) A conference – debating and addressing areas of crises and policies, taking forward the Kolkata Declaration 2018, with focus on dissemination.

iv) Events at collaborating institutions for greater dissemination

v)   Publications

In the discussion that followed, a number of important issues that could be of relevance to this research were addressed by the several experts. Subir Bhaumik, *Eminent Journalist* suggested that the linkage between forced migration, statelessness, national state policy and foreign policy is of vital importance. The reason behind India sheltering refugees despite being a non-signatory to 1951 and 1961 Refugee Conventions should be enquired into. Nasreen Chowdhory, *University of Delhi, New Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* stressed, there is lack of literature in refugee law studies, except for the pioneering work by B.S. Chimni. She added that the historical evolution of measures regarding statelessness and citizenship rights in South Asian countries needs detailed study, along with consideration of 'illegal legality' and judicial influence. Ajay Gudavarthy**,** *Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi* opined that cultural and social dimensions of statelessness and refugee policies need to be combined into a single enquiry. He also stressed on the links between populism and migration. Ranabir Samaddar**,** *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* pointed out that, since the link between migrants and statelessness has a wide purview, it needs a careful approach. Although centred on South Asia, the research could also include cases beyond Asia - South Africa being a classic example. He agreed with Ajay Gudavarthy that the experiences with popular politics may be integrated within the study of migration. He highlighted the importance of the issues of humanitarianism and protection. He discussed the possibility of a module on 'Ethics of Care and Protection' that would examine the modes of organisation of care and protection for migrants. Oishik Sircar, *OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat* deliberated on the role of 'benevolent gate-keeping' for asylum seekers and the nature in which adjudication of law affects refugee movements and patterns of inclusion/exclusion. Arup Kumar Sen, *Serampore College, Serampore* emphasised the importance of land acts which have historically played a significant part in creating footloose population and displacement. Manish Kumar Jha, *Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* highlighted the need to look into the socio-political dimensions of humanitarianism and mentioned the example of humanitarian organisations working in Bangladesh. He stressed that the influence and control of the nation on the functioning of humanitarian groups is an important issues that should be further explored.

It was followed by a discussion on a few research proposals for the project.

Discussion of Research Proposals

The Spectre of Statelessness in India - Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Ranabir Samaddar emphasised the growing importance of statelessness in India and Asia. He highlighted the need to compare the genesis of the Rohingya "crisis" in Myanmar with the current citizenship registration drive in Assam in Northeast India in the wake of preparing a National Register of Citizens (NRC). While the statelessness of the Rohingyas is now known, the possibility of statelessness in the Indian Northeast through disqualification of massive number of people in course of a national citizenship registration drive is recent and little known outside the country. The final draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam was published in July 2018. It was a court sanctioned registration process. The updating process was marred by controversies over what was considered arbitrary verification procedure, with extremely rigorous standards being applied on Bengali speaking population, in particular Bengali-speaking Muslims, many of whom were immigrants from East Pakistan/Bangladesh, settled there for several decades. Disowned by India and without ties to any other country, a significant number of those excluded from the NRC are thus likely to be rendered stateless. Ranabir Samaddar stressed that the NRC process has serious implications in terms of international human rights laws, while India has not signed the two key instruments on statelessness – the 1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Ranabir Samaddar emphasised the need to compare the two contexts in order to see if there is a pattern in the spread of statelessness in postcolonial regions. Such an idea emerges from the contemporary emphasis on citizenship policies in the postcolonial countries. Ethnicity, immigration, shift in emphasis from *jus soli* to *jus sanguinis* along with the growth of a regional informal labour market characterised by immigrant labour economies, and existence of borderland populations historically structured population flows across postcolonial border formations. This was decide by the desire of the rulers to achieve a perfect fit between the "right" kind of population and the "right size" of territory in order to make a nation-state. All these now mark the map of citizenship of many postcolonial countries including India. Possibly the postcolonial world will now witness production of statelessness which will be markedly different from the classical idea of statelessness originating from succession of states (for instance, Yugoslavia). Citizenship and statelessness were never so linked as today. Added to that is the factor of protracted displacement leading to statelessness. Once again, South Asia bears witness to such situations, for instance the protracted displacement of the South Bhutanese Nepali-speaking population now in Nepal, or the Chins in Northeast India.

It was highlighted that the international legal understanding of statelessness even with its discourse of *de facto statelessness* may not be adequate to theorise this growing phenomenon today. The accounts of the Rohingyas or the growing stateless population in the Northeast – bring out from a postcolonial perspective the phenomenon of statelessness. These accounts underline the need to examine statelessness in the mirror of citizenship. Such experiences of statelessness are related to the minor, ignored, subjugated histories of discriminated population groups, borders and informal labour markets across borderlands and the untold origins of post-colonial citizenship. In the mirror of these accounts statelessness appears less as a "positive" definition and more as refraction of a reality known as citizenship. In such a situation, there is a reduction of *de jure statelessness*, but at the same time a rise in *de facto stateless* population around the world. It may also become increasingly difficult to distinguish between a refugee group in protracted displacement and a stateless group.

Ranabir Samaddar referred to the circularity of the logic of keeping population groups out of citizenship and pointed out that in the production of the national space, the division between the citizen and the stateless is of critical importance. The national space emerges always as one of two kinds - either that of an *inside* which is to say a house for citizens or an *outside*, implying an anomalous space for outsiders. This game thus either interiorises or exteriorises the national space. This association of interiority with nation, life, security and development permeates not just classical

theories of citizenship, but political life as a whole. He referred to the work of the philosopher Michel Foucault that calls for thinking of "other spaces" beyond the inside/outside and requires continuous formation through entering into relations with new forces from the outside. To Foucault, the ship was the space of such imagination par excellence. Ranabir Samaddar pointed out that East – Bengal, Bihar and Assam will now be in the forefront of the struggle for practising the imagination of "other spaces" by fighting images of a revanchist space. It is in its trait of creating the image of an anarchic space for all, partly by the populist imagination of an "other space", which will give this part of the nation its symbolic value. Perhaps the eastern and the northeastern parts of India will for quite some years to come, be occupying the liminal space. He emphasised that research on the issue of statelessness is a big task and will require the collective effort of CRG.

The Idea of *Protection*: A Regional Understanding? - Nasreen Chowdhory, *University of Delhi, New Delhi and Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Nasreen Chowdhory's presentation discussed the idea of protection for refugees and migrants in the context of India as well as South Asia, from the practice and the normative assumptions that drive those practices. It also discussed facets of citizenship in relation to the idea of protection. The idea of "protection" in the refugee studies means an act that can have passive and active qualities – that is actively protecting from harm or avoiding an action that leads to harm (Maria O'Sullivan and Dallal Stevens 2017). The South Asian states have passively been protecting refugees through case laws, *non-refoulement* and setting up camps. This can be conceptualised in the case of South Asian states, where there are no conventions or refugee laws but the legal arrangements made by states to protect refugees in the states are significant. When the term protection is used it is overlapped with the idea of asylum, as both ensure giving some rights or security to the refugee population. Broadly arguing, in the case of refugee population not all refugees are given asylum, as some groups are not recognised by the host states while some are not called asylum seekers, but they are still accommodated and provided with some benefits.

Citizenship has evolved to the notions of de-nationalised, post-nationalised, disaggregated, de-territorialised and cosmopolitanised. Nasreen Chowdhory's presentation sought to locate refugees and their rights within the present notion of post colonial citizenship by carving a space theoretically through the ethics of admission and empirically by locating the performativity of the state in the Indian context. Her research brought the debate on citizenship from the vantage point of rights and status accessed by non-citizens and more specifically refugees in India. Her presentation tried to figure out some of the normative questions that shape the refugee policies in the context of South Asia and India. The institution of the state is a medium through which an individual can claim rights. The notion of inalienable rights that any individual possesses by virtue of being a human renders itself obsolete in the absence of a nation state. It is here that Hannah Arendt's differentiation between the right to human rights and the right to have rights gain significance. Seyla Benhabib elaborates on this dyad of rights from two viewpoints. First, inferences of right is a moral claim to membership and a certain form of treatment compatible with a claim to membership, while the second usage of right implies the privilege and prerogative of an individual who belong to an organised political community. Being stateless and then to become refugee, to Arendt is a conjoined repudiation of these inferences of right. To Giorgio Agamben, not the human, but the citizen is ultimately the holder of such rights. The refugee who is outside citizenship is devoid of rights and violates the liaison between man and citizen. This discussion leads to the following question which is normative in nature: why should a state accept refugees? It brings to the fore an argument made by Walzer on a claim for refugees' right to admission. According to Michael Walzer, all decisions made by people, rationalists and political actors are to be based on the principles of minimal morality. There is a difference between two kinds of morality. The kind of moral minimalism which is prevalent in everyone describes thin moralityWhile there is a thick morality that can be only decided after thin morality. Walzer criticises that during war, morality and law are suspended. Does the question of morality hold any force in the context of discussion of a country which is not a signatory to any of the refugee conventions? Mobility is an essential part of the rights of human beings. The pertinent location of this

paper is whether the refugees, who move due to ethnic conflict or state violence, have the right to enjoy certain kind of basic human rights.

This research is focused on the Indian question and explored the performativity of hospitality of the Indian state. While acknowledging that the Indian state does not give status to refugees, its behaviour when it comes to treating refugees is at par with rights given to alien, foreigners and notifies a stand on the refugee groups. Why does the Indian state covertly adopt preferential practices to various groups of refugees while overtly not subscribing to any coherent refugee policy? There is a need to analyse the performativity of the state in producing the figurative practice of extending hospitality to the various groups of people that have sought asylum within its territory. The visible ambivalence of the state towards the refugees is conditioned by the notion of hospitality that habituates humanitarian concerns. Passage across border is an everyday practice that reinforces the concept of hospitality. Even though extension of hospitality might be deeply entrenched in the cultural practices of many nations, the modality of the law involved, regulation made and the restriction imposed creates an inherent diversity in the way it is practiced. Hospitality constantly negotiates the spatial factor whereby being inside is privileged over coming from outside. This pointed to Derrida's conceptualisation where he projects the law of unconditional hospitality that permits complete openness to the guest. If one permits unconditional inclusion, the second creates conditional inclusion. The transgression of borders permitted by hospitality of the state creates zones of coexistence. The law of hospitality to different groups of permitted outsiders manifests in the abstract creation of good outsiders and bad outsiders, where the state yields significant power in differentiating between the good, the bad and the ugly. The notion of performativity is conceptualised by Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* which defines the ontological existence of gender by emphasising that it constitutes a pre-existing self. Developing the idea of performativity as put forward by Austin and then reconceptualised by Derrida, Butler states that within the inherited discourse of metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative, i.e. constituting the identity it is purported to be. Butler's notion of normative representation can be applied in the state behaviour where the state tries to conceive, enact and propagate the pre-existing idea that it tends to represent.

India lacks an institutionalised legal scaffold for regulating the large plethora of asylum seekers and refugees. As a result the refugees experience differential treatments. The difference between the treatment meted out to the Partition refugees, Tibetan refugees and the Sri Lankan refugees may be mentioned here. The post colonial Indian state has failed to devise a uniform legal framework.

Nasreen Chowdhory referred to the proposed Citizenship Amendment Bill, apparently couched as a refugee policy, as the bill refers to refuge, asylum, and certain kind of minorities who were conceived as part of the two nation theory. The government has not officially called it a refugee policy; but the bill refers to groups (minorities) who are citizens of another country who migrate to and will be given citizenship rights in India. She pointed out that here we have a situation with regard to refugees, which may evolve into a policy that would determine who is an alien, who is a citizen, and who is a refugee.

Migration and the Evolution of a 'City of Protection': Kolkata from 1939-1960 - Aditi Mukherjee, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Aditi Mukherjee presented her abstract on migration and the evolution of the idea of a 'City of Protection' in Kolkata from 1939 to 1960. She pointed out that migration has been central to Calcutta's urbanism from its very inception. Calcutta as the capital and the "second city" of the British colonial empire has attracted a wide range of migrants from colonial times. She proposed to look into a period of unprecedented fluidity and movement from the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 till the end of the first decade of Indian independence in 1960. It was proposed that three moments in Calcutta's relation to its migrants and the evolution of a regime of protection would be focused on: the arrival of war and famine and associated displacements, dislocations around the Partition and the initial moments of post-colonial urban governance during the first decade of independence. Through the three moments an understanding could be arrived at, of facets of

migration, claim making and the evolution of an idea of protection and responsibility towards migrants as a function of power. The arrival of war and famine in Calcutta generated myriad streams of population movement. Her research specifically traced two identifiable groups of refugees who came to war-time Calcutta, the refugees from Far East (Burma, Malaya) who migrated with the onset of the Second World War and the famine "destitute" from rural areas and the contestations such presence generated. The next moment of rupture and dislocation came with the increasing communal violence starting with the Calcutta riots in 1946 which reached a high point around the Partition of 1947. Finally it also looked into the initial post independence years when the idea of protection and responsibility towards migrants assumed importance in the context of post colonial governance. Through all three moments this research aimed at tracing how attempt was made to control movement and migrants' access to spaces and resources in different ways and strategies of low key or highly charged up resistance to the official regime of refuge and protection from below. Her research attempted to debunk a widespread western image of a humanitarian city which has gained currency through notions like the "sanctuary city" or "city of refuge" that highlighted the city's commitment to welcoming asylum seekers on humanitarian grounds. The research set out to understand that responsibility to protect as a function of power in relation to a myriad of claims and contestations.

The presentation of the research proposals were followed by comments by discussant Subir Bhaumik and a question and answer session. Subir Bhaumik mentioned the relevance of his article titled 'The East Bengali Muslims in Assam and Rohingyas of Myanmar: Comparative Perspectives of Migration, Exclusion, Statelessness' (published in Refugee Watch Issue No 41) to the ongoing discussion. He harped on two issues with regard to the ongoing discussion on statelessness and refugees. First, why there wasn't a definite refugee policy of the Indian state? He pointed out that the Indian state takes in refugee groups, ethnic groups whose movements it supports, like the Tibetan refugees. The Indian state accepted the Sri Lankan Tamils because its national policy was friendly to the LTTE. The Indian state has also backed the Bangladeshi refugees because they have been exploring the East Bengal option since 1962, when Sheikh Mujib secretly visited Agartala. It was understood that in order to secure India's North East, a friendly Bangladesh was essential. It is important to link the refugee question with state's foreign policy. He emphasised this aspect and said it should be strongly focused on and not merely referred to in the research of the project. Subir Bhaumik pointed out that the second important thing was to link the demographic question to the issue of refugee and statelessness. Tripura was a predominantly tribal state. Within two to three decades of independence the demographic balance in Tripura had changed. He asserted that in the rest of the Northeast the case of Tripura appears to be a sign of danger - being a classic case of complete demographic transformation. The large number of Bengalis in the Northeast, threaten the basis of Assam as a linguistic state, which explained the deep fear of the Assamese elite. The protest against the proposed citizenship bill proved that BJP's idea of Hindutva is not working in Assam. The demographic question and its linkage to the refugee protection regime were cited as important. He suggested to Aditi Mukherjee that it may be useful to extend the timeline of her paper from 1960 to either 1964 or to 1971. The war in 1971 brought in a large number of refugees and there was an ongoing Naxalite movement at the same time; it was a period of great political turmoil. In the discussion of the evolution of a protection regime this broad regional canvas should be factored in. Manish Jha mentioned that when in discussions about the genealogies of Indian citizenship, or performativity of the state, there was a need to take into account the framework of rights and what the state's management of the refugees revealed about their rights. Ajay Gudavarthy reflected that the question of illegality that the state may impose would not necessarily be exceptionally related to the domain of refuge, it could create illegality through many other domains for example, through eminent domains, or through exceptional laws like the AFSPA. It could frame the refugee question, for example the issue of the Rohingyas as a security question. He asked: "do we have enough social science categories, enough where with also within the refugee discourses to study these liminal spaces"? Gudavarthy mentioned how the question of law and human rights figure prominently in discussions on refugees. He referred to Samuel Moyn's book *Last Utopia*, which looks at human rights as the last utopia in light of the relativism introduced by post structuralism. He opined that much of social science is in crisis in the context of post truth. He wondered, whether in case of the question of refugees we are looking for a universal framework of human rights and if so, whether there was a fundamental contradiction in the way the contours of the

refugee crisis were being drawn. Oishik Sircar sought a clarification from Nasreen Chowdhory with regard to the idea of hospitality in relation to India's history of accommodating refugee population. He enquired whether Nasreen Chowdhory's paper explored the speech act that the state performs as a form of governance within the framework of Austinian Speech Act theory, or if her research drew from the idea of performativity from Judith Butler by looking at the state as a body. He also mentioned that very little work has gone into theorising jurisdiction. Jurisdiction generally tends to get understood as a prosaic concept that positive law imposes as sovereign limit. He stressed that it is a far more tactile concept that can be made to do more work. Amit Prakash observed that on the one hand we talk about claims of rights and how they are structured by the socio-political process and on the other hand about the state as if it is an almost unitary entity. It often happens that these two processes talk past each other. He emphasised the importance of creating a ground that can facilitate a correspondence between claim of rights and the process through which the state considers these questions.

In response to the questions and ongoing discussion Ranabir Samaddar clarified that in the traditional international legal literature the issue of statelessness is a question of hospitality and a question of giving shelter. As a function of those in power, there arises a responsibility to the refugees. There cannot be power without responsibility and vice versa. In one of the earliest UN documents on statelessness in 1948, the issue is clearly linked with protracted refugeehood. This came much before the statelessness conventions. On the other hand, the argument in his presentation was that, in the post colonial countries, statelessness is not linked to refugeehood, but more directly to citizenship. It is within the dynamics of citizenship that one has a continuous reproduction of statelessness. The attempt was to present a critique of the way in which the issue of citizenship has been discussed in the past decade in relevant literature in India. He stressed that the process of making citizens ensures the continuous turning of a large group of people, a sub population remaining within the territory of the nation. This large sub groups work as labour which services the Indian economy. This pointed to the second important theme, that workers are de jure citizens. Neoliberalism prefers a worker who would always be ready at hand, but not visible. A large reserve army of labour should exist but must not be politically visible. Ranabir Samaddar also mentioned that Hanna Arendt's way of dealing with rights does not resolve the question of rightlessness. The road of rights is closed in terms of refugee studies or migration studies. He mentioned that he has refrained from using the word "right" in his presentation. If the question is, what is to be done, the answer lies in creating those anomalous cases which will pave the way to legal pluralism. Ranabir Samaddar observed that the route of a legal solution is by and large closed. What is more important in terms of jurisdiction is to prise open a situation which is more open ended legally. He emphasised the need for a pluralistic sense of justice. Nasreen Chowdhory mentioned that it is important to think why a state, like India, which is multicultural, seems to have a very selective approach in the legal spectrum regarding refugees. She reiterated the question of the performativity of the state and how it performs certain actions in a selective manner.

Publications

The other important component of the project including logistical aspects of the workshop and conference and publications, also came up for discussion. The following ideas were deliberated upon:
- It was decided that university professors and colleagues from other institutions would recommend participants for the winter course.
- Notification of workshop and conference would be circulated latest by 31 March 2019.
- Statement of purpose, abstract of research paper and/or audio-visual presentations will be accepted from around 25 participants latest till 15 April 2019. Selection of participants will be completed by mid-May. Registration of the participants will be completed by 15 June 2019. The workshop and conference will be held from 25 November to 29 November 2019 and it will include field visit.
- An evaluation committee will grade the research papers. Participants will be requested to bring along artefacts in the form of photographs, books, pieces of crafts etc. for an exhibition.

- CRG will help out with follow-up on field research or writing further articles or revisions etc. (of few participants selected for follow up facilitation).
- CRG's e-resources on migration and forced migration studies available in the website will be further developed and made accessible.
- Possibilities of publication of a law reader on refugee rights were suggested to be edited by Oishik Sircar of OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat
- It was decided that the six to eight position papers on the Module themes from last year's migration workshop and conference would be considered for publication. The papers could be published in a volume edited by Paula Banerjee.
- Research would be extended on the themes of Kolkata Declaration 2018, in making conceptual advancements with focus on the position of India and South Asia amidst the ongoing refugee crisis. Publications through newspaper articles, reader, journal volumes (Policies and Practices, Refugee Watch and others) and collaborative programmes with institutions were considered. Possibilities of institutional collaborations were discussed with Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research at Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi; OP Jindal Global University, Sonipat; Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai; Sarojini Naidu College for Women, Kolkata; PRIA, New Delhi; NUJS, Kolkata; Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata and Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.
- The themes of "humanitarianism", "protection", "responsibility", "statelessness" and "Rohingyas" were suggested as prominent issues on which CRG would continue to work through the year and beyond. A module on "the Ethics of Care and Protection" was also suggested, along with research on "statelessness" and "borderlands" being taken forward.

RESEARCH BRIEFS

RESEARCH BRIEFS

Labour in Borderland: Ichhamati River in North 24 Parganas – Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

The Ichhamati – a tidal river is a case example of a trans-boundary river that makes up the international front between India and Bangladesh for about 21 km. An imaginary border in the middle of the river Ichhamati divides the two countries - India and Bangladesh at several stretches of the river course, while the water of Ichhamati glides between the high and low tides dividing the dwellers of the two countries on both sides of its banks. The study area sprawls across the CD Blocks of Basirhat – I and Hasnabad and an area between these 2 blocks housing the two municipal towns of Basirhat and Taki, stretching along a part of the river course - the strand of Ichhamati etching out the international boundary between India and Bangladesh for close to seven km from Hasnabad (near the confluence of Bidyadhari) to Basirhat (near Soladanga) in Basirhat Sub-division of North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal on the Indian side; while bounding part of the Satkhira district under the Khulna division of Bangladesh. Growth of tourism serves as a source of potential income in the area. Alluvium deposit along the river bank enhances the soil quality making it ideal for cropping and also for brick construction; people from Bangladesh often cross onto the western bank of the river on the Indian side through land port or across the river front to find work at the brick fields, in small businesses, sculpting pottery and often engage in trafficking of goods and cattle; some earn a living by fishing the waters of the river - this in turn raises the risks of loss of life, legal actions and vulnerability in a transitional riverine ecosystem for workers. This research endeavours to follow the footprints of migrants in an attempt to understand the role played by river in shaping the development of border settlements and how dependence on a river serving as borderland affects the life and economy of workers. Development of Basirhat and Taki municipal towns dates back to the late nineteenth century. Influences of zamindari rule shaped the settlements situated along a stretch of a trans-boundary river that upholds tales of the lives of migrants from the neighbouring country Bangladesh crossing the international boundary through the land port check posts or the watercourse – a less than ten minute boat ride from one bank to the other, in search of work. Owing to its historical past and the ecological niche of tidal inlets that enmeshes an ecosystem composed by golpata forest known as the mini Sundarban – this region attracts tourists round the year in representing the northern fringe of Sundarban Biosphere Reserve with an uncanny resemblance to the tidal network of the delta down south, through which the Ichhamati river follows its course towards the sea. The prospects of tourism, work opportunities at kiln brick fields, micro-scale industries like pottery, small businesses, work for daily wage labourers and helper of masons together with the options of livelihood for fishermen at the river front, usher in prominent opportunities of work for labour migrants.

Governing Citizens: National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Question of Migration in India – Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

The literature hitherto developed in this regard shuttles between two extremes: at one extreme, it is argued that the Westphalian architecture that has been in existence since the Treaty of 1648 makes it imperative on the part of the nation-states to keep the citizens from all categories of non-citizens such as aliens, foreigners and the stateless etc. The new initiative of updating National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam – latest in an otherwise long series of many such initiatives in the past – is illustrative of this.

At another extreme, migration is considered as a 'natural' phenomenon, albeit an integral part of an equally long history of peasant movement in the Ganga-Meghna-Brahmaputra (GMB) Basin. While the formation of nation-states in the region and the consequent reorganisation of international borders

have rendered such movements across nation-states both difficult and illegal, such movements, by all accounts, continue unabated even after over seven decades of Independence. A section of human rights activists calls for people's 'natural right to migration' as a tribute to this equally 'natural' phenomenon of migration.

Viewed in this light, the debate looks stalemated. While right to free migration across countries is the last thing that any nation-state on earth is likely to concede to, nation-states are unlikely to wither away at least in the near future. The main objective of this paper is to salvage the debate from this stalemate and break new grounds of research.

The existing literature in this regard fails in addressing at least two sets of questions: one, the textbook distinction between citizens and foreigners needs to be rethought, if not complicated in a way that will sensitise us to the presence of a wide variety of other categories and strata that are neither citizens nor foreigners - inhabiting the vast space that in fact lies between them. Fritsch defines such categories as citizens and foreigners as 'infinitely porous'. The question that needs to be addressed therefore is: How does a State like India cope with these intermediate categories of people? How are they governed and with what effects? What in short are the technologies of governance? As Derrida argues: "It is not the other, the completely other who is relegated to absolute outside, savage, barbaric, precultural and prejuridical outside and prior to the family, the community, the city, the nation or the State. The relationship to the foreigner is regulated by law, by the becoming-law of justice". Two, what is the kind of response that these technologies elicit from the intermediate categories of people? What do they do with them? Do they remain mute spectators of history by meekly submitting to these technologies? Or, is there still some scope left for negotiating with these technologies and their effects?

NRC, as we argue in this paper, marks the arrival of a new mode of governance in India. The new citizenship regime that comes into being, thanks to NRC and such other measures, also sets forth the template within which a variety of subtexts of nationalism including intercommunity configurations, Assamese-Bengali relations, tribal-non-tribal balance, the Brahmaputra-Barak Valley divide and so forth are read and played out.

The paper develops the concluding argument that democratic politics today reaches a point in which it is no longer subsumed under the politics of citizenship and seeks to break free from it. Democratic politics seems to exceed the confines of the politics of citizenship. Accordingly, the paper is divided into three parts.

Citizenship as a Technology of Governance: Insofar as the forces and processes of globalisation set the world population in a constant state of flux and threaten to destabilise the nations, nation-states all over the world have been in search of new methods of homogenising their respective populations, freshly lending to them a national identity – in short renationalising them. The experiences in such countries as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan, Mauritania and others provide some of the recent examples.

The final draft NRC list was published on July 30, 2019 in which names of 2.89 crore of the 3.29 crore people were included. The names of 40, 70,707 people did not figure in the final draft. Of these, 37, 59,630 names have been rejected and the remaining 2, 48,077 are still kept on hold. What does the State do with these decitizenised or more aptly the potentially decitizenised people? One alternative is to push them back into the where they have come from. Finger is obviously pointed towards Bangladesh. While Bangladesh describes it as 'India's internal problem', India, according to her, has assured Bangladesh that the decitizenised people would not be sent back to that country after the finalisation of NRC. The other alternative is to send them to the detention centres many of which are now being built in Assam to accommodate them. These will certainly be some of the world's largest Auschwitz-like camps in Assam. Harsh Mander, Special Monitor for Minorities, NHRC, in 2018, warned against the deplorable conditions of some of the detention centres he visited, while in his official capacity and observed "we found that these detention centres lie on the dark side of both

legality and humanitarian principles". According to him, the way these centres are run implies 'extensive flouting of national and international laws'. With the opening of the economy since 1991, there has been greater and more intense exploitation of cheap and unskilled labour particularly in the remote corners of the country. What is the social and ethnic profile of this labour that faces the threat of being decitizenised? Is there any ethnic division of labour implicit in this apparently open economy? According to an estimate, out of the total 40, 70,707 persons whose names do not figure in the final NRC draft, four millions happen to belong to the 'labouring class'. 80 percent of the potentially decitizenised persons happen to be Muslims. According to a list shown on an Assamese news channel *Pratidin Times* (2018), out of the 9 Muslim-majority districts (Dhubri, Barpeta, Darrang, Hailakandi, Goalpara, Karimganj, Nagaon, Morigaon and Bongaigaon) of Assam, only 5 are in the top 16 districts where maximum number of rejections has been made.

Nearly 30 lakhs (1 lakh = 100,000) happen to be 'Bengalis – Hindus and Muslims' taken together. They constitute 12 percent of the total population of Assam. Compared to the national average of 26 percent, Assam has a high percentage (36 percent) of BPL people. A good many of them happen to be the Namashudras – mainly the 'low-caste', cultivating peasants. In Bengal and elsewhere where they are in sizeable numbers they also organise themselves into a sect called Matuas. According to an estimate prepared by the All-India Namashudra Vikash Parishad (or All-India Council for the Development of the Matuas), out of a total of a little over 4 million decitizenised persons, Bengali Hindus constitute about 3.2 million out of which 2.5 million belong to the Namashudras. On 2 August 2018, the members of the All-India Matua Mahasangha blocked railway stations in North 24-Parganas and Nadia in West Bengal. One of their members is reported to have said: "About 40 lakh people have been excluded in the final draft of the National Register of Citizens in Assam. Among them, we have found that 4 lakh people belong to our community. We cannot remain silent while citizenship of our people are (sic) snatched overnight. Today we have resorted to railway blockade to register our protest".

These estimates albeit quick and tentative can hardly be taken as final and complete. If the above figures give us some idea of the ethnic and social background of the names facing the risk of being struck off from NRC, it also tells us how a vast substratum of cheap and inexpensive labour force is sought to be kept in a permanently disenfranchised state without pushing them out of the country while contributing to the expanded reproduction of capital. They will live in a life of penury and what Sanjib Baruah calls 'permanent temporariness' - always facing the threat of deportation without actually being deported from India. Assam's is also a history of these almost deportations particularly in recent decades. It is precisely at this juncture that humanitarian interventions are considered as necessary for alleviating their conditions and ensuring their subsistence so that they are not wiped out, without however conferring on them citizenship and the rights that are associated with it. Sanjib Baruah, for instance, argues: "Perhaps deportation is not what anyone in the authority has in mind... Moving forward, we shall not rule out amnesty. Surely, if we were considering giving citizenship to minorities on communitarian grounds, it is not that much of a leap to consider that we expand our moral horizon and expand the humanitarian umbrella to others as well". Charity, in short, is the necessary price to be paid for the sustenance of cheap and unskilled labour and for the expanded reproduction of capital.

By contrast, citizenship is conferred on those who have the resources (social or symbolic capital and so forth) to 'possess' it whether in terms of landownership, or any one of the 21 documents essential for validating one's citizenship claims or providing the legacy data. The dispossessed are those who do not possess any of them and are therefore disqualified for being called legal-juridical persons.

The Subtext of Assamese Nationalism: The Assam Movement (1979-85), by its own self-definition, was predicated on what may be called an authentic opposition between the citizens and the foreigners. This opposition also faces the threat of being diluted, if not muted, by a number of other albeit adjacent but necessarily distinct pairs of opposition like the Assamese and the non-Assamese, the Hindus and the Muslims, between the *khilonjiyas* and *tholuas* on the one hand and the *bahiragats* on

the other. It is important to find out how each of these pairs was enacted and played out, read and translated into the authentic opposition between the citizens and the foreigners.

Hiren Gohain, who once described Assam movement as a 'cudgel of chauvinism', felt it necessary to revise his assessment in 2018 and looked upon the NRC exercise as a safeguard against the incessant influx that poses a threat to the very survival of a small community like the Assamese community. As he observed: "By 1982 I had revised my views and become aware of suppressed democratic elements in it. A mechanical class analysis cannot do justice to it... What right does anyone have to threaten the very citizenship existence of small native communities by dumping outsiders in such immense numbers by wielding state power? Why should the Assamese and indigenous people pay for the sheer negligence and incompetence of the Indian state which fails to protect the interests of minorities in neighbouring countries and protect the borders of the country? If the state is so ardent to play host to such so-called refugees, first let it settle them in other developed States where they pose no threat to local interests. Humanitarianism must not mean sniffing out local identities with an historic past". Assamese nationalism in this case is framed within the politics of citizenship and asserts itself only through the mediation of Indian citizenship.

It is within the template of the authentic opposition that today's Assamese nationalism is sought to be translated and played out. In Kehrebari in the district of Tinsukia, upper Assam, five Benagli men – Subodh Das, Shyamal Biswas, Abinash Biswas, Ananta Biswas and Dhananjay Namashudra were lined up on the banks of the Brahmaputra and were shot from close range and killed. Interestingly all of them happen to be Namashudras and although all these names figure in the recently published draft NRC, all of them were very active in helping the potentially decitizenised others in filing their claims and objections. The Chief Minister of West Bengal suspected if these were not the fallout of the NRC preparations being held in Assam. Although the killing is attributed to the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) (Independence), the insurgent organisation had categorically denied its involvement in these killings.

Democracy and the Acts of Citizenship: Politics of citizenship today is afflicted by an apparently irresolvable paradox: On the one hand, T. H. Marshall in his famous essay on 'Citizenship and Social Class' seems to have invested citizenship with an inexhaustible potential in the sense that citizenship in history is taken as perpetually expansive always pushing the horizon of rights beyond its given limits. On the other hand, we seem to have reached a point of saturation in which the infinitely emancipatory potential of citizenship seems to have hit its limits with the effect that it has now been undergoing what may be called a process of zionization. Blood becomes the defining principle of citizenship in a rapidly globalising India. As Appadurai in 2006 observed: "…[B]lood and nationalism are in a much fuller and wider embrace in the world as a whole. All nations, under some conditions, demand whole-blood transfusions, usually requiring some part of their blood to be extruded" (Appadurai).

This paper on the other hand seeks to draw an outline of the acts that are addressed to resolve the abovementioned paradox. Peter Rees, while writing what he calls an "alternate history" of citizenship, defines it in terms of 'the struggles for inclusion and resistances to exclusion'. Citizenship, according to him, is an *act* that makes one 'become political', "through which rights claiming subjects constitute themselves as political and enact themselves as citizens". The paper seeks and proposes to conduct ethnographies in order to bring home a few of these acts.

Migration and the Evolution of a 'City of Protection': Kolkata from 1939-1960 - Aditi Mukherjee, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Migration has been central to Calcutta's urbanism from its very inception. Calcutta as the capital and the 'second city' of the British colonial empire has attracted a wide range of migrants from colonial times. My research focuses on a period of unprecedented fluidity and movement, from the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 till the end of the first decade of independence in 1960. I attempt to capture three moments in Calcutta's relation to its migrants and the evolution of a regime of

protection: the arrival of war and famine and associated displacements, dislocations around the partition and the initial moments of post-colonial urban governance during the first decade of independence. Through the three moments, I explore facets of migration, claim making and the evolution of an idea of protection and responsibility towards migrants as a function of power. The arrival of war and famine in Calcutta generated myriad streams of population movement. I specifically trace two identifiable groups of refugees who came to war-time Calcutta, the refugees from Far East (Burma, Malaya) who migrated with the onset of the second world war and the famine 'destitutes' from rural areas and the contestations such presence generated. The next moment of rupture and dislocation came with the increasing communal violence starting with the Calcutta riots in 1946 which reached a high point around the partition of 1947. And finally I am interested in the initial post-independence years when the idea of protection and responsibility towards migrants assumed importance in the context of post-colonial governance. Through all three moments I trace how attempt was made to control movement and migrants' access to spaces and resources in different ways and strategies of low key or highly charged up resistance to the official regime of refuge and protection from below. My research attempts to debunk a widespread western image of a humanitarian city which has gained currency through notions like the 'sanctuary city' or 'city of refuge' that highlights the city's commitment to welcoming asylum seekers on humanitarian grounds. The attempt here is to understand responsibility to protect as a function of power in relation to myriad claims and contestations.

The Idea of *Protection*: A Regional Understanding? - Nasreen Chowdhory, *University of Delhi, New Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

In the context of South Asia, the states have been providing protection to the refugees or asylum seekers entering the borders, in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan from the neighbouring countries sharing ethnic, religious and cultural alliances. This movement of population across borders in the twentieth century is due to the historical and political context of post-colonialism phase and specifically to the partition. The region has witnessed large number of populations becoming refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and stateless. But the host countries have provided refugees protection in terms of giving land for their settlement, aid in terms of food and money etc. either from the government of the states or the UNHCR. Taking the empirics on how host states have aided the refugees entering borders, gives a narrative on protection.

The idea of 'protection' in the refugee studies means an act that can have passive and active qualities – *that is actively protecting from harm or avoiding an action that leads to harm*. The South Asian states have passively been protecting refugees through case laws, non-refoulement and setting up camps. This can be conceptualised in the case of South Asian states, where there are no conventions or refugee laws but the legal arrangements made by states to protect refugees in the states stand significant. When the term protection is used it is overlapped with the idea of asylum, as both ensure giving some rights or security to the refugee population. Broadly arguing, in the case of refugee population not all refugees are given asylum as some groups are not even recognised by the host states or some are not called as asylum seekers, but still they are accommodated and provided with some benefits.

EVENTS AT
COLLABORATING UNIVERSITIES

Public Lecture by Simon Behrman, *Royal Holloway, University of London*

Theme: *The Politics of 'Climate Refugees'?*
Date: 7 August 2019
Venue: Jadavpur University, Kolkata

A public lecture was organised by the Calcutta Research Group in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and the Jadavpur University on 7 August 2019. The lecture was delivered by Simon Behrman, *School of Law, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham*, on the theme of *The Politics of 'Climate Refugees'*? The event was held at Jadavpur University where close to 100 students and researchers participated in it.

Urbi Das, *Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University*, Kolkata, delivered the welcome address. She pointed out how in today's context of global warming, growing crisis due to climate change and associated dislocations, Simon Behrman's lecture was particularly relevant. She invited Om Prakash Mishra, *Jadavpur University, Kolkata* and Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* to deliver brief remarks before the beginning of Simon Behrman's lecture. Ranabir Samaddar observed that CRG hosted a distinguished lecture by Walter Kalin who was then serving as the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. He referred to Walter Kalin's observation that it is very difficult to legally define a climate refugee and the concept remains nebulous.

Simon Behrman begun his lecture by pointing out that a very high number of persons globally are being displaced by factors related to climate change. He probed into why the label of climate refugee is controversial. He referred to Slavoj Zizek's observation that it has become easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. With climate change we are used to idea that human civilisation is nearing termination. But in the present socio-economic system we are unable to provide alternatives. But the rapidly speeding effects of climate change are also posing a challenge to the neoliberal paradigm. For example in the United States a process of restructuring of economy can be noticed. The green ideal popular policy is pushing Keynesian system of the economy to eliminate carbon emission and develop green technology.

In Europe a series of movements over the last few months are raising the necessity of an alternate economic system. The view is that capitalism is concerned with short term profit and cannot address the urgent situation created by climate change. A paradigm shift is called for. In terms of the situation of the refugees, the so called refugee "crisis" in the Mediterranean and the situation of the Rohingyas have created changes in perspective from hostility to migrants to more sympathetic attitude of granting asylum and welcoming people. Yet the discourse of migrant and refugees is still enmeshed in the reactionary framework of national security and economic and ethno-nationalism. It is easier to imagine a return to large scale genocide of the twentieth century than the open borders that preceded them. Simon Behrman argued that the language of climate refugees is an appropriate and necessary means to opening up political space in which not only we visualise concrete solution to the problems faced by people forced to move as a result of climate change and but also change the whole discourse on forced migration.

There are a variety of estimates of the numbers of people displaced as a result of climate change. The lowest available estimate is 50 million displaced. The standard estimate based on scientific calculations puts the number to 200 million displaced people by 2015. These figures put the crisis of

climate induced dislocation in perspective. The International Organisation of Migration estimates that in the past decade about 20 million people per year are being displaced by weather related events. Those who use the term "climate refugees" are accused of participating in post truth politics. Zeman had used the term climate induced displacement, but Zeman has now changed his position and calls it climate refugees. But many still refuse to accept the term "climate refugee". Simon Behrman mentioned that being an international lawyer, he is in minority in using the term "climate refugee". There is a demoralisation of many scholars of forced migration, especially in case of the lawyers. This demoralisation has led to defensiveness about the use of the word "refugee". He questioned, whether there was the need to persevere with the term? The answer comes in two parts: the first is an over arching desire to extend the meaning of the term refugee, to break free from its very narrow legal meaning and second is that the term climate refugee correctly identifies the rights of those who were affected due to the effects of climate change and the responsibilities of those who have created the condition that have or will lead to the displacement of these people. In so doing the phrase opened a political space of argument for a solution to what is likely to be a "defining phenomena" of the twenty-first century.

Simon Behrman drew attention to the criticism that often comes with the use of the term "climate refugee" as a political tool rather than a legally accurate one. He stressed on the requirement of a political focus and probed the relation between law and politics. He observed that the law in itself cannot be a universal good. He further said that there is no reason to believe that legal measures are a natural and neutral means of resolving disputes and protecting human beings from society. Instead for most of human history, ethical considerations have been largely to the fore. The problem with law is that it has a habit of ossifying the values of the ruling group of a particular time and place, which then, to borrow a Marxist phrase, hangs like a nightmare of the dead over the living. The law also has a peculiar form that tends to reduce human relations to that of atomised exchanges over right of one versus right of another.

In essence, the legal form maps onto the capitalist economic relations. As such law has difficulty conceptualising structural forms of oppression and exploitation; he referred to Evgeny Pashukanis' book *The General Theory of Law and Marxism* that discusses it in detail. He mentioned that one should not be bound by existing legal concepts, especially of the refugee. In terms of refugees and asylum, the dominant position historically was based on ethics of care, hospitality and solidarity. It is only with the advent of the international refugee regime over the last 70 years that questions relating to forced displacement and asylum have become restricted by legal definitions and have reduced asylum; this creates problems in the context of climate refugees. India and its neighbours in South Asia have resisted this legal development for good and complex reasons, so that they may not be trapped within the legal terms of the international legal refugee regime.

Simon Behrman pointed out that there are several arguments against using the term "climate refugees". First, climate refugee is a legal misnomer. Second, there is an assumption that political refugees are somehow special and should be categorised separately from all other types of forced migration. Third, by labelling people as climate refugees or other type of refugees we are creating a victim subject and finally it ignores complex multi causal factors of movement when talking about climate change. He laid out the reasons due to which the use of the term climate refugee actually advances the cause of protection of these groups. The argument of Walter Kalin and several others that climate refugee is a legal misnomer is also advocated by most refugee lawyers. There is a legal definition of a refugee in the Article 1A of the Refugee Convention of 1951 that defines a refugee as someone who has a reasonable fear of persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a social group. The key word in this standard definition of a refugee is persecution. In climate change there are often no visible persecutions in this sense. Hence, the argument goes that international refugee laws do not apply to climate refugees and thus, is inaccurate. He emphasised that it is to be noted that climate migration is often man made. Climate is a major factor of displacement and the term refugee is better than displaced because it makes people subject rather than objects. The term migration does not convey the urgency that attach to the experiences of a large number of people dislocated due to climate change.

In his remarks, the chair of the session, Om Prakash Mishra, observed that the refugees face extreme forms of persecution. If it cannot be contained with a term, it cannot be remedied. The 1951 definition is outdated - that definition does not capture people who are internally displaced. But indefinite extension of the term refugee will dilute the term and its power of remedy, because it is a legal status. During the question and answer session, Rajat Roy of *Calcutta Research Group* asked if there is any connection between decline in population in a receiving country and its policy regarding refugees. Simon Behrman responded by noting that there is a direct correlation between refugee policies and decline in populations. It is often the case that countries with declining populations have a more welcoming stance towards refugees.

Simon Behrman speaking on 'climate refugees'

Discussion following the public lecture by Simon Behrman

COLLABORATION WITH JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

Public Lecture by Liza Schuster, *City University, London*

Theme: *Role of Formal and Informal Institutions and Asylum Seeking from Afghanistan*
Date: 26 November 2019
Venue: Jadavpur University, Kolkata

As part of the Calcutta Research Group's project on *Global Protection of Migrants & Refugees*, the CRG organised a Public Lecture, in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and the School of International Relations and Strategic Studies (SIRSS), Jadavpur University. The lecture was delivered by Liza Schuster from *City University of London* on the *Role of Formal and Informal Institutions and Asylum Seeking from Afghanistan* on 26 November, 2019 at the Vivekananda Hall, Jadavpur University. The paper was co-authored by Reza Hussaini from *Kabul University* but he, unfortunately, couldn't be present for the event.

The welcome address was delivered by Shibashis Chatterjee, Director, *SIRSS*. The session was chaired by Sudeshna Banerjee, Professor of History at *Jadavpur University*. The lecture saw a record turnout of over 80 attendees from the undergraduate, postgraduate as well as research scholar cohorts from the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University. The hall witnessed an extremely engaging and enlightening interactive session towards the end of the lecture.

Liza Schuster recalled her first visit to Afghanistan in 2011 when she was so enchanted by the country that she came back in 2012 to research on a project which was looking at Afghan deportees and implications of the same on their family and community. The plight of these deportees and refugees led her to open up a civil society organisation along with two other colleagues. Their goal was to provide updated, accurate and unbiased information to those deportees who were returning to Afghanistan. The motive was not to advise but to inform. Professor Schuster highlighted how risky it was for a deportee to seek asylum and how the UNHCR had complete disregard for the rights of these migrants. The speaker reflected on how these institutions function and what they mean for someone who is frightened and seeking shelter in a nation. The first part of her lecture highlighted the *formal institutions* for a deportee to be registered with and under a process to seek asylum and the second part of her lecture threw light upon the *informal institutions* which sprung up in Afghanistan as a response to the dysfunction of the former. The project on which her team worked was named 'Migration Policy and Decision-making in Afghanistan'. It was divided into three parts- Afghan migration policy and the influence of the European Union, representations of migration in Aghan oral culture and the third part was directed towards asking deportees about their plans, fears and hope for the future. As a result of her engagement with the Ministry in Afghanistan, Professor Schuster got an in-depth understanding of the formal institutions. In terms of international institutions, she talked about the shortcomings of the UNCHR in challenging the role of national institutions in providing protection. She also pointed out the distinctions between the UNHCR and the IOM in their responsibility towards the deportees and internally displaced migrants. Beyond that, she spoke of the embassies and consulates, which have largely been closed down in recent years owing to security issues. Therefore, someone who wants to apply for a visa for Afghanistan would have to first apply for a visa to India or Pakistan, travel to those countries, file for a visa in Afghanistan from those countries and then seek asylum- a time-consuming and an expensive affair for the already vulnerable population.

Liza Schuster then spoke of the national institutions in place and how often their roles overlap and despite this, they have been apathetic or unclear on their directions towards the deportees. Most importantly, she spoke of a 'Comprehensive Migration Policy' that already existed, but was a

complete failure especially because the first policy itself talked of 'return' and 'reintegration.' As a result of this fractured nature of the formal institutions, the deportees, somewhere, find a safe haven in the informal institutions. Even in this circuit, the information from friends and families are often inaccurate and commodified. This severe dichotomy poses a challenge for those who have no access to rights and feel helpless at the altar of the ignorance of a country which has been torn by war for the past two decades. The session ended with an interesting round of questions which busted myths surrounding Afghan refugees, the role of international organisations and the future of migrants and refugees in a climate of such political instability.

The chair Sudeshna Banerjee, briefly reflected on the institutions providing asylum to refugees in Afghanistan. It was followed by interaction with the audience.

The programme ended with a vote of thanks delivered by Anoushka Roy, *Research Intern, Calcutta Research Group,* where she expressed her sincere gratitude towards Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung and Jadavpur University for facilitating this fantastic event.

Liza Schuster delivering a public lecture on the Afghan refugee 'crisis'

Discussion following the public lecture by Liza Schuster

COLLABORATION WITH RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY

Public Lecture by Ravi Palat, *State University of New York, Binghamton*

Theme: *Rice and Nomads in Asian History*
Date: 27 November 2019
Venue: Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata

As part of the Calcutta Research Group's project on *Global Protection of Migrants & Refugees*, CRG organised a Public Lecture, in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and the Rabindra Bharati University on 27 November 2019. The lecture was delivered by Ravi Palat of the *State University of New York, Binghamton*. The lecture was held at the Rabindra Bharati University. The session was chaired by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Vice Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata*. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury began the session by introducing the distinguished speaker and laying out a background for global migration in a historical context.

Ravi Palat's thirty minutes of lecture on 'Rice and Nomads in Asian History' was a crisp account of a connected history – sweeping across Asia and a comparative analysis of Europe. He began by positing that Christopher Columbus was not looking for India in the 15th Century, because India did not exist then. He borrowed from Maximilian of Transylvania (1523) to say, the natives of unknown countries were commonly called Indians; "India was the dream of the westerners". Here was a land which was extraordinarily wealthy, and as Palat wittily quipped, "India was the American dream of the 15th Century". The size of the empire in terms of territory, subjects and treasure drove Columbus to "find" India, and condemned Native Americans to be known as Indians. After America was "discovered", 2/3 of all the gold and silver that the Europeans looted ended up in Asia – in India and in China. He reasoned this transfer by stating that the Europeans had nothing of their own to offer in exchange for Indian textiles, Chinese porcelain, ivory, spices which they so coveted. And yet, wondered Palat, this positional superiority Asians, particularly Indians and Chinese, enjoyed over Europeans suddenly reversed itself between 1757 (the Battle of Plassey) and 1842 (the Opium Wars) – India and China were subordinated to Europe. This is the time, he said, when Marx argued there is Asiatic mode of production. The listeners were intrigued when he began discussing his take on what distinguished Asia from Europe, also an important pivot in critiquing the global understanding of development that reeks of Eurocentrism. Palat stated: "the comparison looks at Asian history through European eyes. It says Asia was on the path to Capitalism but Europe got there first, because of their conquest of the Americas, but this view fails to critique Capitalism and does not look at the dynamics of Asian history. Europeans have generally tried to argue that there have been a lot of absences in Asian history. However, recent scholarship have contested the validity of these European claims and said that none of these claims could hold Asia back from developing". Here, he used his concluding statement on development to mean progress, and not necessarily towards capitalism. Even comparative studies like those from the California School of History that propose not to look at India as a whole, but at advanced regions like Gujarat and Bengal and compare it to England and the Netherlands, roughly comparable in area and population, fail to account for the narrative of development outside capitalism. Continuing his critique, he made two points:

Firstly, the elements that are said to have led to Capitalism in Europe – free market, private enterprise, free trade, private property and land – these do not *necessarily* lead to Capitalism. Small enterprises in a free market do not change society; those of the size of East India Company do. In the same line of the EIC, current day corporations like Google Inc., Microsoft, Reliance etc are not in perfect competition, but are monopolies. Hence, it is the monopolies which lead to Capitalism. European

princes had to develop monopolies, financiers and businesspeople to lend them money for waging war. The Asian rulers on the other hand were rich with huge lands and a large tax basis. Their treasuries could bear the expenses of war. Thus, the relationship of state and capital were very different in Asia and Europe, and the reason for this was the *enormous productivity of the rice economies*. Rice economies, emphasised Palat, had a very different mode of cultivation. He quoted a surveyor of the East India Company in the early 19th Century, a man named Francis Buchanan to say that the surveyed land in Mysore was already at its best, and "all attempts to render it more productive by succession of crops, or by fallow, will be looked upon as proofs of insanity". Quick to term the Indian agricultural methods backward, the Europeans attributed the allegedly 'backward' agricultural practices to an absence of private property, but they were equally unable to explain how such primitive conditions of production could support such large population densities.

He went on to give interesting statistics and further information on areas under rice cultivation, beginning with "lands under rice cultivation could sustain much higher densities of population because the rice had a seed to yield ratio of roughly between 1:31 to 1:52, in 14th-15th Century. In its contemporary Europe, wheat, barley or rice rarely exceeded the ratio of 1:11. Mostly, it was 1:4 to 1:6. Climatic conditions in Asian areas suitable for rice cultivation made year-long cultivation possible, even in winter when the land was covered in snow. Chinese and Indian historical sources say for over a thousand years, it was possible to get two or three crops annually. At 3500 calories per kilogram, a hectare of rice can produce 7.35 million calories compared to 1.5 million for wheat. Again, the productivity of lands under rice cultivation was extensive and could be increased with greater control over water because rice derives all its nutrients from water. That is why lands under rice cultivation did not need to be left fallow. Better control over water provided an effective alternative to the extension of cultivation, and water supply could be regulated better on small plots of land. Thus, significant productivity could be achieved by decreasing the plot of land. However, continued subdivision would eventually end up being counter-productive". It is at this moment when he critiqued the imposition of European standards, especially that of private property on Asian empires. "Rather than continued subdivision of land, there was a division of claims on the produce of land; rights to the top-soil which yielded the best quality of rice would go to the land owner, rights to the sub-soil would go to the tenant and so on. These could be leased separately. So it was this multiple claims on the property of land which led to the European allegation that there was a lack of private property in land in Asia". Rice cultivation, said Palat, was labour intensive, not capital intensive, which implied there was no economic advantage to accumulate capital in areas of rice cultivation. Land ownership gave social status, even political power but not economic clout. Thus, he argued, there may have been very wealthy individuals, but they did not control the state. He poignantly quoted Fernand Braudel to say Capitalism triumphs only when it identifies with the state, and it could not break ground in Asia because neither did Asian rulers provide incentives to capitalists, nor enable further accumulation of capital through laws.

Palat's second point bridged these rice economies to the nomads in Asian history. Areas under rice cultivation were very unsuitable for breeding horses, which enabled an open and flexible border between nomadic and sedentary societies. Horses and cavalries were indispensible to waging war and the nomadic Mongols, Turks were the ones breeding horses and raiding the sedentary societies. Eventually the empires entered in liaisons with them to accommodate these 'dangerous diseases of the body politic' and keep them from tearing the empire apart. In late 12th and early 13th Century, a mass of Turkic raiders came into the Delhi Sultanate to provide it with the mobile forces and cavalry required to conquer much of the Indian peninsula. This cavalry required huge pasturelands in the newly conquered states, which were absent in the region. This crisis of pastureland in areas under rice cultivation prompted the succession of capitals located on the borders between the dry zones and the agrarian zones – Delhi, Beijing, Vijaynagar, Ahmednagar, and Golkonda – combining access to horses and an agrarian base. Chengiz Khan's successors realized the futility of his desperate attempt to turn northern China into pasture, and the need to combine access to horses with agrarian zones for a sustainable polity. This underlying mutual dependence between nomadic and sedentary societies, the competitive relationship between agricultural and pastoral societies meant that the nomads depended on sedentary societies for what they could not produce.

He elaborated three polities – China, India and the collective of Southeast Asia to demonstrate the different relationships forged between nomadic and sedentary societies. While the Chinese ruling dynasties had an equation of mutual exchange with the nomads, the situation was different in the less regulated Saharasia (the land between African coast of the Atlantic and China) – where geographical extremities provided insularity to the pockets of fertile land that were ruled by the Mughals and the Rajas. Palat informed, the Mongols could attack and easily retreat into dense vegetation until next time, which led the Mughals and other Rajas to accommodate them – and make Mansabdars and Iqdars out of them. Comparing these two to the other belt of rice production in Asia, he said that Southeast Asia did not have nomadic invasions, had much more population density, and much less developed craft of production".

He concluded his information rich speech saying "none of the powerful lot in Asia were Capitalists. The vector of development in much of Asia was the relationship with nomads and rice cultivation". The lecture was followed by a discussion.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Kusumika Ghosh, *Intern, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Glimpses from Ravi Palat's public lecture on Rice and Nomads in Asian History

Audiences of Ravi Palat's public lecture

SPECIAL LECTURE

Public Lecture by Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Theme: *Memories of the Forgotten*
Date: 20 September 2019
Venue: Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata

Calcutta Research Group hosted a lecture by Ranabir Samaddar, *Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies* at the institute, as part of its Friday Lecture Series on 20 September 2019. Shyamalendu Majumdar, *Sivanath Sastri College & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* chaired the lecture titled *Memories of the Forgotten*. The session began with Shyamalendu Majumdar introducing the speaker of the day and invited him to present his thoughts.
Ranabir Samaddar began his lecture stationing 3 books as his points of references:

➢ Wayfarers: Travel Journal by Yordanos Seifu Estifanos
➢ 'Illegal' Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders by Shahram Khosravi and
➢ The Emigrants by W.G. Sebald

He clarified that while the books would be the centre of this discussion, the session would not be a book review in itself. Instead, he began by explaining the eclectic title of the lecture. In "Memories of the Forgotten" – who are the forgotten?

The migrants are forgotten soon, sometimes even before their death. The migrant personhood gets assimilated in the normal. What remain as objects of/in their memory are the artefacts of their mundane lives; souvenirs made out of a pair of worn out shoes, a much used piece of clothing that the migrant had carried with themselves now kept in a museum to recreate the "memories of the forgotten". This objectification of migrant memory is part of the bourgeoisie culture that ends up making the migrant an outsider.

The three books connect memories of migration, all from different perspectives. Seifu's book talks about migrant labour in Jordan. Memories for these people take one through time, making one forget their identity as a traveller or an immigrant. After a time, memory becomes "pure" – all are recounted as episodes of a world that are beyond the narrators now. The immigrant is the mediator and the memory is the art. The past is always a passage for the migrant, never a destination which can host arrivals. Memory is the home where the migrant arrives eventually. But, commodification of memories results in the museum being the migrant's home; one that ends up alienating the individual further.

Borrowing from W.G. Sebald, Samaddar went on to remark that mobility is the opposite of law. The bourgeois narrative of illegality is controlled by mobility and the border of legality. One cannot be legally mobile for too long; hence, in order to be on the move for longer what is acceptable in the current world order is for the migrant to become invisible to law. Human smugglers appear as mobile keepers in a displaced world, surreal both in Seifu and Khosravi's books, perched on the line separating the inside and outside of one's memories. The migrant lives in *two times* simultaneously – the real time of living and the "trans-modified" time, enmeshed with flashbacks of the past.

Memory is the most enduring ethnography of the border. When migrants cross the sea, their desperate search not producing results, it is only the journey that remains with them. Once again, then, memory is the home where the migrant finally reaches. Khosravi tells stories of ways of escape, the flesh market of Karachi, workhouses of migrant labour in Iran and people waiting at home for news of their

safe arrival. He describes his survival of a murder attempt and on the other hand, his co-travellers by guising the attempt to take his life as an accident. Thus melancholia stays and triggers memory, making the memory of passage not an individual's possession, but produced and reproduced through multiple interactions. In both Seifu and Khosravi's narratives of displacement, politics plays a substantial role.

Does it then mean that there is no difference between migrant and immigrant? Samaddar chose this point to highlight that judgement of the migrant cannot be based on sentimental accounts of identity and affinity. It cannot be used to justify any amnesia of reality – especially the reality of thought. Moses, Muhammad, Jesus were all refugees, whose reality of migration – of moving through the passage of hills, plains and oceans – is now celebrated in popular culture with the likes of American Thanksgiving. The boundaries of memory thus bring together the real and the virtual.

In conclusion, Samaddar lauded the "migrant's way" of writing these three books – where the writers are a small part of the world that they hold up to their readers. The memories described are mostly of others. He ended his lecture saying "these autobiographies are exceptional in the way they talk about others without talking about themselves".

The attendees, having clarified their unfamiliarity with the details of the books in discussion, posed some interesting questions to the lecturer. Rajat Roy raised a query about the process of forging the memories of second or third generation migrant children, who have not experienced the journeys themselves, but derive their identity from the stories of the previous generations. Along with Roy, Samata Biswas also poised her argument against too harsh a criticism of memorialising migrant experiences in museums and put museums as important sites of remembrance and recognition. "How else will they tell their stories to the world?" Similar concerns were raised by Samir Kumar Das and Sujata Dutta Hazarika, who raised questions about the nature of objectification and also the self-effacing way of narrating migrant memories that is done in the three books. Ranabir Samaddar was asked his opinion on whether it in fact, made the job easier for writers, since they chose to write about others and not themselves?

Ranabir Samaddar took the queries in sequence and took them up individually. He elaborated his appreciation of the style of writing in the three books, especially the techniques adopted in writing. "The way in which the books are narrated is never an account of the migrant", but is a reflection of the social relations around the self. However, he mentioned that in Sebald's work, there was no clear definition of who is the self. "These autobiographies are sensational for talking about others more than the self". The people writing these three books have written like "non-migrants", with nothing setting their writing apart except for the description of the passage. Thus, for the migrant, the journey itself is of much more value than arriving at a destination.
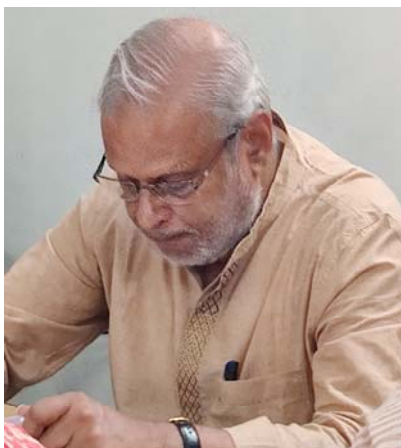
Ranabir Samaddar delivering a Lecture on 'Memories of the Forgotten' at Calcutta Research Group

Audiences of Ranabir Samaddar's public lecture

FOURTH ANNUAL RESEARCH & ORIENTATION WORKSHOP & CONFERENCE

CONCEPT NOTE

Displacement has come to the foreground of international attention amidst rising imperialist interventions, sectarian nationalisms, religious extremism, civil wars, environmental degradation, and neoliberal restructuring of economies in the last three decades. Ceaseless population flows from West Asia, Northern Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and some parts of Latin America in these decades have brought the issue of migration to the forefront of international attention. The Asian region is now possibly one of the most volatile in terms of population flows. The long drawn war in Afghanistan followed by wars in Iraq and Syria, and now the massive exodus of Rohingyas from Myanmar have produced in the last two decades thousands of asylum seekers. We have to add to this the preceding flows in South Asia following decolonisation and partition of the Indian sub-continent, Bangladesh War, Tibetan refugee flows, population flow resulting from the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, Vietnamese boat refugees, forced migration due to conflicts around enclaves in Central Asia and the Caucasus region, Palestinian displacement following the creation of Israel and the subsequent annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, and finally massive flows in the last two decades into Jordan and Turkey. There is no regional convention on refugee protection (unlike Africa), no Asia-wide understanding, with many states not acceding to the 1951 Convention. Rise of religio-ethnic politics in the states of South Asia has de-legitimised the residency of several thousands of inhabitants. Such a process has generated in turn migration of stateless people. The reality of the protection system worldwide and in South Asia today presents a grim and interlocked situation.

In this background, the Calcutta Research Group in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung organised a research and orientation workshop and international conference on 'Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants' from 25-29 November 2019 in Kolkata. The orientation programme had the larger Asian situation in mind, while the focus was on South Asia and the neighbouring countries around the region. CRG has the experience of running for twelve years an annual winter workshop on issues of forced migration, racism, and xenophobia. Every year the course had a focal theme (Please see the past programmes section of CRG website for details - http://www.mcrg.ac.in/winter.asp). The key theme for this year's workshop and conference was protection of refugees and migrants. The event begun with a four day workshop from 25 November 2019 to 28 November 2019 (preceded by three months' online interaction between workshop coordinators and participants). It was followed by a one day plenary conference on the final day on 29 November 2019.

The workshop and conference revolved around six research themes, under whichr six working groups of the workshop were organised. Each research module was coordinated by a module coordinator:

A. ***Global Protection Regime for Refugees & Migrants***
   Co-ordinator: Nasreen Chowdhory, *University of Delhi, New Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

B. ***Gender, Race, Religion & other Fault Lines in the Protection Regime***
   Co-ordinator: Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

C. ***Neo-liberalism, Immigrant Economies and Labour***
   Co-ordinator: Ranabir Samaddar, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata

D. ***Borderlands and Migrant Labour***
   Co-ordinator: Byasdeb Dasgupta, *University of Kalyani & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

E. Statelessness

Co-ordinator: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

F. Laws of Asylum and Protection

Co-ordinator: Simon Behrman, *Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham*

The conference had panels on themes ranging from the nature of the global regime of protection, increasing statelessness, South Asian scenario of forced migration, global capitalism, refugee economy and migrant labour, issues of race, gender, and resources in the map of protection, and borderlands. Many invited international speakers of global renown addressed key contemporary concerns on migration at the conference. Further information about the event is available at www.mcrg.ac.in

Preparations at the CRG office for the workshop and conference

PROGRAMME

25 -29 November 2019, Kolkata

Day 1: 25 November 2019
Venue: Hotel Sojourn, Kolkata

05:00 pm- 05:30 pm: Registration & Tea

05:30 pm- 08:00 pm: **Inaugural Session**

Chair: Byasdeb Dasgupta, *University of Kalyani, Kalyani & President, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

05:30 pm- 05:40 pm: Welcome Remarks: Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta & Honorary Director, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

05:40 pm- 06:10 pm: Outline of the Structure of the Workshop: Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* & Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

06:10 pm- 06:25 pm: **Reflections on the Kolkata Declaration 2018**: Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

06:25 pm- 07:25 pm: Inaugural Panel: **In the Eye of the Migrant Storm: Greece 2015**

- Olga Lafazani, *University of Thessaly, Volos*

07:25 pm - 07:30 pm: Vote of Thanks

Day 2: 26 November 2019
Venue: Hotel Monotel, Kolkata

09:30 am - 10:30 am: Theme Lecture for Module A: *Global Protection Regime for Refugees and Migrants*

Chair: Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Theme Lecture by Nasreen Chowdhory, *University of Delhi, New Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

10:30 am- 11:00 am: Discussion

11:00 am – 11:30 am: Tea

11:30 am – 12:30 pm: Theme Lecture for Module B: Gender, Race, Religion and other Fault Lines in the Protection Regime

Chair: Lydia Potts, *University of Oldenburg, Oldenburg*

Theme Lecture by Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

12:30 pm- 01:00 pm: Discussion

01:00-02:00 pm: Lunch

ROOM 1: Module A

02:00 pm- 03:30 pm: Presentation of Research Papers by Participants of Module A

Chair: Nasreen Chowdhory, *University of Delhi, New Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Alkistis Prepi, *National Technical University of Athens, Athens* & Konstantinos Gousis, *University of Roehampton, London*
  Migration, Vulnerability, Resilience: A Series of Unfortunate Events
- Ambar Ghosh, *Jadavpur University & Observer Research Foundation, Kolkata*
  The Questions of Contested Territoriality and Identity Under a Liberal Constitutional Framework: A Case Study of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) Drafting Procedure in Assam
- Divita Shandilya, *ActionAid India, New Delhi*
  Regional Responses to the Global Compact and Learnings for South Asia
- Mastoureh Fathi, *University College Cork, Cork*
  Home, Art and Memory: Refugee Women's Narratives of Displacement in Turkey
- Aditi Mukherjee**,** *Calcutta Research Group & Leiden University, Kolkata*
  Public Discourses on Citizenship in West Bengal: Insights from the Propaganda of Dalit Refugee Organisations

ROOM 2: Module B

02:00 pm- 03:30 pm: Presentation of Research Papers by Participants of Module B

Chair: Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Ekata Baksi, *Centre for Women's Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi*
  Rethinking refugee women: A study of Partition induced forced migration through the intersecting lenses of caste, labour, generation and region
- Kusumika Ghosh, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
  The Displaced Woman: Narratives from Survivors of the Partition of Bengal in 1947
- **Preeshita Biswas,** *Presidency University, Kolkata*
  A Dialogue at the Threshold: Analysing Marginal Existence in Bury Me My Love, Kuroshitsuji and The Alienist
- Sarah Nandi, *Sanksrit College &University, Kolkata*
  Surviving Gender: An Investigation of Gender Based Violence Rehabilitation Programs in 1971 Urban Bengali Refugee Communities
- Shubhra Seth*, Indraprastha College for Women, New Delhi*
  Responsibility to Rehabilitate: Gendered Travails of Internally Displaced Persons in India

03:30 pm - 04:00 pm: Tea

04:00 pm- 05:00 pm: Theme Lecture for Module E: *Statelessness*

Chair: Shahram Khosravi, *Stockholm University, Stockholm*

Theme Lecture by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

05:00 pm – 05:30 pm: Discussion

03:00 pm- 04:30 pm: Public Lecture
Venue: School of International Relations & Strategic Studies, Jadavpur University

Liza Schuster, *City, University of London, London* and Reza Hussaini, *Kabul University, Kabul & Graduate School for Social Research, Warsaw*

The Role of Formal and Informal Institutions and Asylum Seeking from Afghanistan

Day 3: 27 November 2019
Venue: Hotel Monotel

09:30 am - 10:30 am: Theme Lecture for Module C: *Neoliberalism, Immigrant Economies and Labour*

Chair: Ravi Palat, *State University of New York, Binghamton*

Theme Lecture by Ranabir Samaddar*, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

10:30 am – 11:00 am: Discussion

11:00 am – 11:30 am: Tea

11:30 am – 01:00 pm: Theme Lecture for Module D: *Borderlands and Migrant Labour*

Chair: Subir Bhaumik, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Theme lecture by Byasdeb Dasgupta, *University of Kalyani, Kalyani & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

12:30 pm – 01:00 pm: Discussion

01:00-02:00 pm: Lunch

ROOM 1: Module C

02:00 pm- 03:30 pm: Presentation of Research Papers by Participants of Module C

Chair: Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Amrita Hari, *Carleton University, Ottawa*
  The Political Process of Citizenship: Deconstructing the Privileged Category of Highly Skilled Immigration to Canada
- Anindita Chakrabarty, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai*
  The Constructed Bangladeshis in Assam- the Political Economy of the Narrative of Illegal Migration

- Anoushka Roy, *National Law School of India University, Bangalore*
  The In-Betweens: An Enquiry into the Quality of Life of Self-employed North-Easterns in Kolkata, India
- Sugandha Nagpal, *O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat*
  Negotiating Im(mobility): Left-Behind Migrant Wives
- Yordanos Seifu *Independent Researcher, Addis Ababa*
  Irregular Migration in a Neoliberal Order: Ethiopian Migrants to South Africa (jointly authored by Yordanos Seifu, Lydia Potts and Tanya Zack)

ROOM 2: Module D

02:00 pm- 03:30 pm: Presentation of Research Papers by Participants of Module D

Chair: Byasdeb Dasgupta, *University of Kalyani, Kalyani & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Marvi Slathia, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi*
  Life of West Pakistan Refugees at Jammu Borders
- Mohamed Shafeeq Karinkurayil, *Manipal Centre for Humanities, Manipal*
  Novel as a Genre of Migration: Reading Temporary People
- Sanika Banerjee, *Vidyasagar University, Midnapore*
  Violence against Women in West Bengal-Bangladesh Borderland
- Shatabdi Das, *University of Calcutta &Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
  Labour in Borderland: Ichhamati River in North 24 Parganas

03:30 pm - 04:00 pm: Tea

04:00 pm – 05:30 pm: Panel Discussion on Migration, Displacement and Resilience

Chair: Liza Schuster, *City, University of London, London*

- Som Niroula, *Alliance for Social Dialogue, Kathmandu*
  Protracted Internal Displacement in Post-Earthquake Response
- Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
  A Social Mapping of Displacement in India

03:00 pm – 04:30 pm: Public Lecture

Venue: Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata

Ravi Palat, *State University of New York, Binghamton*

Rice and Nomads in Asian History

Day 4: 28 November, 2019
Venue: Hotel Monotel, Kolkata

09:30 am - 10:30 am: Theme Lecture for Module F: *Laws of Asylum and Protection*

Chair: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Simon Behrman, *Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham &* Oishik Sircar, *O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat*
10:30 am – 11:00 am: Discussion

ROOM 1: Module E

11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Presentation of Research Papers by Participants of Module E

11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Chair: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Biswajit Mohanty, *Deshbandhu College, New Delhi*
  Media Portrayal of Rohingya Refugees in India
- Neetu Pokharel, *Alliance for Social Dialogue (ASD), Kathmandu*
  Statelessness and the Plight of Women in Nepal
- Sreetapa Chakrabarty, *Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata*
  Gendering Refugee Crisis in South Asia – The Case of Rohingya Refugee Women
- Suchismita Majumder, *University of Kalyani, Kalyani*
  Difficulty and Uncertainty: A Focus on Young Rohingyas in Children's Homes of West Bengal

ROOM 2: Module F

11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Presentation of Research Papers by Participants of Module F

Chair: Oishik Sircar, *Jindal Global Law School, O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat* & Simon Behrman, *Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham*

- Anusha Ravishankar, *Junior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), New Delhi*
  The Long Haul of a Lone Ranger
- Md. Niamot Ali, *Daffodil International University, Dhaka*
  Sociological Understanding of Asylum and Protection Policies of India: Where do Rohingyas Stand?
- Mujib Ahmad Azizi, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul*
  Afghan Refugees and Issues of Protection, Rights, and Justice
- Rachel Irene D'Silva, *Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar*
  The Forced Migration of Rohingya to India and Challenges for Refugee Protection
- Yuvraj Rathore, *Migration and Asylum Project (MAP), New Delhi*

12:30-01:30 pm: Lunch

Field Trip: Kolkata: A Migrant City

Field Trip 1: Visit to Migrant Settlements in Metiabruz, Coordinated by Mr Sabir Ahmed

Field Trip 2: Visit to Priya Manna Bustee in Howrah, Coordinated by Mr V Ramaswamy

Conference on
Conference
on
Global Protection of Migrants & Refugees
Venue: Hotel Monotel, Kolkata

29 November 2019, Kolkata

09:15 am – 09:30 am: Inaugural Session

Chair: Shyamalendu Majumdar, *Sivanath Sastri College & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Welcome Remarks: Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta & Honorary Director, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

09:30 am- 11:00 am: ROOM 1

Chair: Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Presentation of the Report of Research Workshop Modules A, B, C

09:30 am- 11:00 am: ROOM 2

Chair: Rajat Ray, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Presentation of the Report of Research Workshop Modules D, E, F

11:00 am -11:30 am: Tea

11:30 am – 01:00 pm: ROOM 1, Panel 1

Auto Ethnography as Research Method

Chair: Anne McCall, *Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans*

Discussant: Prasanta Ray, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Samata Biswas, *Sanskrit College and University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
  Re-membering Migration(s): The Culture and Politics of Memoirs and Archives
- Shahram Khosravi, *Stockholm University, Stockholm*
  Autoethnography and Decoloniality
- Yordanos S Estifanos, *Independent Researcher, Addis Ababa*
  Auto-ethnography as a Research Method: Lessons from Field Research In South Africa's Informal Economy

11:30 am – 01:00 pm: ROOM 2, Panel 2

Migration Crisis in the Global South: Issues of Protection and Rehabilitation

Chair: Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta and Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Discussant: Sheila Meintjes, *University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg*

- Liza Schuster, *Department of Sociology, City, University of London, London* & Reza Hussaini, *Kabul University, Kabul& Graduate School for Social Research, Warsaw*

The Development of Afghanistan's Comprehensive Migration Policy: A Critical Analysis

- Lucy Nusseibeh, *Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND) & Nonviolent Peaceforce, East Jerusalem*
  Identity, Community and Coping
- Orzala Nemat, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul* & Wali Mohammad Kandiwal, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Kabul*
  Afghanistan: The Rhetoric of Peace Talks and the Future of Migration 'Crisis'

01:00 pm – 02:00 pm: Lunch

02:00 pm – 03:30 pm: ROOM 1, Panel 3

Laws and Asylum Policies in the Global South

Chair: Hari Sharma, *Social Science Baha, Kathmandu*

Discussant: Nasreen Chowdhory, *University of Delhi, New Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Simon Behrman, *School of Law, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham*
  When India was a Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention: A Counterfactual History
- Sumaiya Islam, *Open Society Justice Initiative, New York*
  In Search of Refuge in South Asia: An Overview of the Legal and Policy Framework for Protection Seekers in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India

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02:00 pm – 03:30 pm: ROOM 2, Panel 4

Conflict and the Future of Global Protection Mechanism

Chair: Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Discussant: Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- Bina D'Costa, *Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra*
  From Muddy Boots to Business Class: To the Emergency Frontlines and Back
- Jeevan Thiagarajah, *Center for Humanitarian Affairs (Gte), Colombo*
  Protection as Responsibility: Fixing a Malfunctioning System
- Meghna Guhathakurta, *Research Initiatives Bangladesh, Dhaka*
  Protection of Women in Armed Conflict in Bangladesh: The Making of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

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03:30 pm – 05:00pm: Panel 5 [Plenary session] ROOM 1

Migration, Citizenship and Neoliberalism

Chair: Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Discussant: Anjan Chakrabarti, *University of Calcutta, Kolkata*

- Lydia Potts, *University of Oldenburg, Oldenburg*

- Ravi Palat, *State University of New York, Binghamton*
  Neo-liberalism, Migration, and the Rise of Populism in the Contemporary World
- Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta and Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
  Citizens, Governance and Democratic Politics

05:00 pm - 06:30 pm: **Concluding Session**

- **05:00 pm - 05:10 pm: Welcome Remarks by Chair:** Shyamalendu Majumdar, *Sivanath Sastri College & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
- **05:10 pm - 05:20 pm: Summing Up:** Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta and Honorary Director, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
- **05:20 pm - 05:30 pm: Distribution of Certificates to Workshop Participants by** Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata
- **05:30 pm - 06:15 pm: Book Discussion on**
  The Arc of Protection: Toward a New International Refugee Regime by T. Alexander Aleinikoff & Leah Zamore

  Moderator:
  Hari Sharma, *Social Science Baha, Kathmandu*

  Discussants:
  - Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
  - Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
  - Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

- **06:15 pm - 06:25 pm: Remarks by Workshop Participants**
- **06:25 pm - 06:30 pm: Vote of Thanks**: Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Workshop Proceedings

Inaugural Session

The inaugural session of the workshop continued at 06:00 pm to 08:00 pm on 25 November 2019. The session was chaired by Byasdeb Dasgupta, *President, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*. The speakers in the inaugural panel were Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*, Samir Kumar Das, *Calcutta Research Group & University of Calcutta, Kolkata*, Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group*, *Kolkata,* Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* and Olga Lafazani, *University of Thessaly, Volos*.

The welcome address was delivered by Samir Kumar Das. He elaborated on how this workshop's main objectives are to disseminate policy-relevant knowledge by facilitating new areas of research and advocacy. CRG finds it crucial to induct participants from regions across the world and thus, has welcomed participants from 14 countries in 2019. The key principle followed by the workshop organizers is to do away with the distinction between participants and resource persons by way of making pedagogical experience dialogical, if not multilateral. This implies that the pattern followed in the workshop would be more interactive than conventional lecture-type sessions. Another major objective of this workshop was to contribute to the critical network of socially sensitive people who could further serve as agents of social transformation. He highlighted that the male-female ratio of workshop participants is heavily favourable to the latter with 21 females as opposed to 8 male participants. He ensured that CRG is committed to transforming migration policies.

Following the welcome address and introductions, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury presented an outline of the workshop. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury gave a detailed account of the six working modules that the workshop was divided into, apart from the special lectures and conference panels. Paula Banerjee highlighted that this year, the key theme of the workshop and conference was "protection", flagging it as an essential topic under migration because none of the current solutions, including the Global Compacts are durable. She talked about how migration, today, has become common parlance among academic elites, with the actual sufferers getting lost in the process of "talk". The core reasons for the vulnerability of the migrant population are a global phenomenon and have obviously become a part of the current global crises.

Ranabir Samaddar highlighted the importance of the Kolkata Declaration 2018 which was adopted in CRG's migration workshop and conference in 2018. He discussed how in the process of talking about "global", the regional and the local is lost. Ranabir Samaddar pointed to a contradiction in terms of how, while providing protection, unfair categorisation and discrimination become inevitable. Herein lies the dichotomy of a complex issue such as 'protection'. The Kolkata Declaration, he said, recognised the differential conditions of migration and stressed the need for a regional protection system in South Asia. Whereas the Global Compacts highlight responsibility, the Kolkata Declaration highlights justice as the cardinal principle. It begins with the idea that Right to Move is a fundamental human right. The Declaration takes up, in both its declaratory and operative part, the idea of discrimination in the protection regime.

Olga Lafazani delivered the inaugural address '*In the eye of the migrant storm: Greece, 2015.'* She talked about a project which housed migrants in a famous hotel called the *City Plaza* in Athens. This hotel eventually became a safe haven for several shelterless migrants in an environment of peak racial profiling, xenophobia, political instability and economic distress in Greece. In spite of resistance from locals and officials against the 'squatters', the City Plaza became a symbol of human rights, activism and community engagement. She highlighted that there are different ways of approaching common

action, participation and decision-making. Those who were deprived of social security, in a way, could get access to such rights grounds up through City Plaza. The City Plaza, in a way, became a broader struggle against capitalism and racism. She also mentioned that this project compels one to stop over-romanticising common action for migrant protection which should be avoided.

The session concluded with the vote of thanks delivered by Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata.*

Olga Lafazani, Ranabir Samaddar, Byasdeb Dasgupta, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Paula Banerjee and Samir Kumar Das (left to right) in the inaugural panel

The Inaugural Session of the Fourth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop on Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees on 25 December 2019

Theme lectures by Paula Banerjee, Ranabir Samaddar and Byasdeb Dasgupta (from top left to right)

Module A – Global Protection Regime for Refugees and Migrants

Nasreen Chowdhory critically looked into the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and its departure from the 1951 Convention, towards a new framework that neither fills the existing gaps in the original convention such as sharing responsibility, protecting the rights of refugees in host countries but also divides the global north and south even further by privatising care and responsibility of survival and placing them on the shoulder of refugees and migrants themselves. The very existence of refugees challenges the established notion of belonging anchored on citizenship in a state. In the post-colonial shaped countries of South Asia, "state formation process" facilitated the creations of "boundaries of belonging" by providing rights to its citizens and simultaneously excluded others. "Belonging" is then conceptualised with respect to their affinity and linkage with "home" that in turn caused the configuration/ re-configuration of the refugee identity during exile. Sustainable and durable repatriation of the refugee is dependent on the "change in circumstances in the country of origin" and their "ties with home/homeland". Porous borders of individual countries of subcontinent that increases proximity between country of origin and exile, their shared post-colonial legacy, overlapping cultural affinity across the borders- all of these tend to conjure a notion of "belonging that is different for the refugees of global south.

It was pointed out that, when GCR proposes to "support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity" without emphasising on any substantial "change in circumstances" that caused these refugees to undertake forced migration on the first place, it dilutes the very essence of "voluntary repatriation". "The success of repatriation and possible reconstruction is contingent on the 'successful' accommodation of returnee population in countries of origin". Without taking into consideration the conditions that inculcate an ambiguous "belonging" in country of exile and requirement for "changed circumstances" in country of origin that is a pre-requisite for successful repatriation, GCR only mirrors the concerns of global north to keep the refugees from crossing and entering their borders. GCR thus lives up to its name- it is only a global compact *on* refugees for paranoid host countries of global north, without taking any substantial effort to be a global compact *for* refugees.

Module B – Gender, Race, Religion and other Fault Lines in the Protection Regime

Paula Banerjee begun by mentioning the triad that forms the basis of both citizenship and forced migration, that of race, religion and resources. Paula Banerjee opined that in general, gender is left out to keep the triad intact. When gender is factored in the history of human migration and it is viewed through the prism of race, it disrupts the theory that human migration speaks the language of "crisis" only recently. She highlighted the role of Calcutta Research Group in starting the conversation around forced migration studies in the region, especially in the context of it being replete with stories of displacement. In a powerful take on social relations, she asserted the hierarchy in all of them. Amidst all the "whiteness" and "maleness", women are only left with the power of subversion. In her critique of the nation-state, she stated its greatest fear as mobility of people – especially women, who can disturb the "pristine core of the population" with their sexuality. Thus, the panel began by her invitation to disrupt the status quo with gendered stories of migration and displacement.

Module C – Neoliberalism, Immigrant Economies and Labour

Ranabir Samaddar began by providing a historical overview of the larger economic forces that induce migration. He pointed to migration of Chinese labourers to the United States, arrival of child labourers in the cities and towns of Canada and immigrant labour in Australia. He traced the history of indentured labour migration and pointed to the role of gender in such migration. He mentioned the change in dynamics of labour and capital in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century with the

abolition of slavery. He pointed to the historical role of colonial labour relations in European industrialisation. Ranabir Samaddar situated today's globalisation through a historical view. Crucial to the globalisation of labour was the introduction of railways, such as in Kenya and India, followed by the establishment of the telegraph lines, termed as the "imperial infrastructure". Such infrastructural or logistical arrangements facilitated globalising labour as well as creating footloose labour. The lecture traced the transition of approach from facilitating mobility to restricting it. The introduction of passports and the implications it had for the capitalist economy and the evolution of modern governance was illustrated. He also traced how later the introduction of visas had been motivated by the need for global management of populations.

Ranabir Samaddar then moved to conditions of labour under neoliberal globalisation. He pointed to the persistence of deeper insecurities around race and gender which has been ushered in by the bourgeoisie imperialism and infrastructural turn of the economy, especially the emergence of a digital infrastructure. He stressed on the need to understand labour mobility by understanding the infrastructural turn of the economy and geopolitical studies. The specificity of the neoliberal times lay on the infrastructural turn of the economy that came to locate immigrant enclaves in global supply chains. Eventually, the neo-liberal shift transforms refugees from the subject of protection to the subject of development, where every individual is compelled to be productive.

Module D – Borderlands and Migrant Labour

Byasdeb Dasgupta in the theme lecture of the module, laid out that the objective of the module was two-fold: (i) to analyse the political economy associated with migration in the borderland and (ii) to see how this migration fits into or is otherwise to the existing theories of migration.

It was elaborated that when one talked of borderland and migrant labour, different political economic contexts existing in the borderlands needed to be considered; no single theory could explain all of it. It was stated that the prevailing canonical theories when studied in the context of border economy and refugee economy may have different features, varying from place to place - the issue of statelessness however being common and the question of "rights" becoming inevitable in each case, especially taking the shape of a pertinant question when migration is involuntary in nature.

The next question about migrants and global labour is about the nature of refugee economy, as to whether it is different from informal economy. Dasgupta elucidated the refugee economy sharing certain features with informal economy such as the flexibility of labour, lack of social security and others; the differences also turning out political or cultural at times.

Neoliberalism talks about development of refugees; however, for neoliberalism, development is about making the migrant/refugee accessible for the market. It treats human beings as *homoeconomicus*. The growth process around the world suggests, as noted by Thomas Piketty, that growth is associated with inequality of income and wealth. To sustain private competitive capitalism, one needs labouring masses whose value is as less as possible. Thus issues pertaining to refugees cannot be delinked from global capitalism. A refugee economy is very much a part of global capitalist economy today. Going by the understanding that productive labour is the production of surplus, a refugee contributes to national economy with the demand that a refugee should have rights and entitlements to global market security.

On a closing note, Byasdeb Dasgupta stressed the need to factor in the gender and class dimensions in discussing migrant and refugee labour. As a postscript, Subir Bhaumik added that several governments have recognised the potentially positive contribution of migrant labour and have undertaken measures to legalise migrant labour and streamline remittances.

Module E – Statelessness

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury reflected on statelessness in post-colonial states of South Asia and cited two instances - that of the Chakma refugees and the Rohingyas refugees. He emphasised that both categorisation of migrants and the number of refugees were not to be the starting point of discussion, rather, the legal invisibility associated with statelessness was more important to understand the phenomenon. For him, the situation of statelessness in post-colonial state characterised by involuntary migration and long-standing divisions between the majority and the minorities was more important because it was a reminder of the powerful implications of the administrative redrawing of boundaries by the colonial state and conflict and violence associated with it.

Among the probable causes of statelessness, the following causes according to him were of special importance: administrative oversight, conflict of law and procedural problems, automatic alteration of citizenship arising from marriage or divorce, failure of registration of child at birth, renunciation of citizenship in favour of the other and so on. That the notion of human rights necessarily involves justice, dignity, identity, peace and security and statelessness acts as the root cause of human right violations was stressed upon. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury pointed out that political rights like the right to participate in election, right to vote are denied to stateless people. Further, the lack of nationality having detrimental impact on stateless population, for instance, the right to legal employment being denied to stateless people was brought to light. He asserted that stateless people who were unable to claim their status falling under the 1951 and the 1969 Conventions cannot access international protection today. Even the UNHCR has included provisions for protecting the stateless people but the reality is that they are not even given citizenship rights often due to lack of legal proofs like birth certificates and other documents considered necessary by the state to prove one's citizenship.

The lecture emphasised that statelessness is a direct violation of nationality rights leading to social exclusion, vulnerability to trafficking, harassment and violence, apart from direct political and economic implications. He referred to the rights as provided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which despite being provided to citizens as well as non-citizens are denied to stateless people.

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury highlighted the conflict between the UDHR providing rights to nationality, to every individual, on the one hand, and the right of every post-Westphalian nation-state to determine who would be its citizens and who would not be, on the other. In the present scenario, no law exists for the stateless people within nation-states. By quoting Hannah Arendt, he emphasised that the stateless are persons who have the "right to have rights". However, the stateless individuals in the present scenario do not really have any "right to have rights". Statelessness as pointed out by Basu Ray Chaudhury included the dual mechanisms of stripping the individual of the political status as a citizen as well as excluding them from the status enjoyed in the international political community. He discussed about the pros and cons of the 1951 Convention which discussed about rights and i) provided only for those individuals who resided lawfully in any state, ii) did not have any comprehensive provision on non-discrimination, iii) most importantly, laid down two categories of people – the de jure and the de facto with the stateless coming under the purview of the de facto category, further aggravating the discrimination that had pervaded the international refugee regime. He pointed out that since the most important prerequisites were equality and non-discrimination, the right to non-discrimination would require a state to respond to the specific needs of stateless people regardless to whether a state was a party to the 1954 Convention or not. He talked about the notion of expulsion and social exclusion resulting from the combination of global trends and neo-liberal adjustment policies since the past few decades. In this context, the lecture concluded with the mention of existing international mechanisms not serving as satisfactory for the protection of refugees and migrants. However, it was affirmed that there is need to look beyond international refugee regime in order to address the issue of statelessness, with protection being provided within the existing international framework.

Module F – Laws of Asylum and Protection

Simon Behrman began with the development of International Refugee Law and International Refugee Law for India and South Asia in protection. He highlighted on how despite not having signed the 1951 Convention or its protocol, it would be inadequate to point out that South Asia does not have protection. South Asia has been the region of the world where refugees sharing cultural, ethnic similarities have been welcomed and given protection with a hospitable mindset as opposed to that of some European states. The next important question raised was whether international refugee law guaranteed protection. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have been founded on largest displacements in human history. Simon Behrman questioned the prevalence of states bound by law hosting far less refugees than the ones that were not and attempted to outline the ways in which South Asia was different and stood apart from countries bound by refugee asylum laws. He elaborated on the Foreigners Act of 1946 in India being a post-colonial irony that controls entry of non-citizens. The refugee is considered a political question in South Asia and is coloured by prejudices and political pressures as opposed to refugee law abiding countries where they go through a process. Here, laws maintain refugees as an atomised group, disadvantaged and placed under a particular identity/ label which in itself acts as a tool of discrimination. Behrman went on to discuss how the nature of refugee law as such has developed over the course of the twentieth century, the 1951 Convention – principles and concerns that drove its development and creation of modern nation states. The concept of governmentality, creation of nation-states and populations took the centre stage in the discussion.

Moving further, asylum as a legal question was talked about, mentioning that it was up to states to manage the burden of refugees. UDHR stating that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum, the missing link then becomes the state discretion – here, state wields the choice of whether or not to give it. Drawing from James Hathaway's saying on refugees being defined in juridical terms to remedy the international legal system, Simon Behrman upheld that law defines who is a refugee and who isn't one.

The lecture addressed the common debate on should refugee question be one of politics or law and the need of acknowledging asylum as a burden for states. It also referred to James Mcdonald's argument on the reasons of refugee creation being neglected. Political complications, control and stabilisation of the movement of refugees and plethora of border controls have taken importance instead of mitigating the reasons for the creation of refugees. Refugee regime in South Asia historically has witnessed the following:

1. State building - People moving in tune to the formation of nations.
2. Hospitality and solidarity
3. Sanctuary

Simon Behrman ended his lecture with a caveat, by stating historic reasons as to how creation of asylum laws may in fact prove to be more detrimental than helpful in the context of South Asia. This was followed by a pertinent critique by Nasreen Chowdhory who remarked that perhaps the creation of laws should be considered in terms of "refuge" or "sanctuary" rather than asylum in the south Asian context.

Module A

Global Protection Regime for Refugees & Migrants

This module in general is critical towards the Global Compact on Refugees and Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration. The papers presented in this module approach the issues around refugee protection and state responsibility from different perspectives. The research discussed the lack of an appropriate response towards a systematic framework and development of the rights of refugees in host countries from the 1951 Convention to the GCR in 2018.

Public Discourses on Citizenship in West Bengal: Insights from the Propaganda of Dalit Refugee Organisations

Aditi Mukherjee in her paper, with regard to the proposed amendment to citizenship act, explored the transformations in the laws of Indian citizenship and the shift of the discourse from the principle of jus soli (citizenship by birth) to prioritising the principle of jus sanguine (citizenship by decent). Focusing on the Dalit refugees from East Pakistan/Bangladesh she reflected on the changes in citizenship laws over the years – from the citizenship Amendment Act of 2003 to the Amendment Bill of 2016 and the NPR (National Population Register) – and how the creation of different hierarchies and degrees of citizenship (Nagarik, Sharanarthi, Anuprabeshkari) affected the Dalit refugees. The effects of these transformations were examined not only from the law perspective and the resulting exclusions but also through the shifts in the discourse of Dalit refugee organisations themselves and their Hinduisation and anti-Muslim and anti-anuprabeshkari campaigns. Aditi concluded her argument with some broader questions about the implications of the above changes in citizenship laws and discourses for lower and caste migrants in India more widely.

Migration, Vulnerability, Resilience: A Series of Unfortunate Events

Alkistis Prepi and Konstastinos Gousis touched on similar issues by focusing on the so called "refugee crisis" in Europe and particularly in Greece. They discussed that resilience had been used as a crisis management tool in the "managed migration" approach. In this approach, they located such readings within neoliberal system that established a new global mechanism for the survival, reproduction and development of the capitalist system. They schematised this mechanism regarding migration, as the transition from human rights obligations to flexible vulnerability and from vulnerability to resilient neoliberal subjects and that resilience works as a means of subjectification creating the figure of the migrant/refugee both as a "threat" and as "agent of development".

The Questions of Contested Territoriality and Identity Under a Liberal Constitutional Framework: A Case Study of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) Drafting Procedure in Assam

Ambar Ghosh quite interestingly looked into the case of partition in 1947 and the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. He posed questions around the interaction of territoriality and identity with the Indian constitutional and legal framework in Assam. He particularly looked into how the questions of dealing with the issues of forced eviction and human agony transpired over the years under the Indian constitutional framework. The case study Ambar proposed in relation to Assam drew attention to the understanding of whether a liberal constitutional framework under democratic condition was capable of acting as a part of the protection regime for the casualties emanating from such contested identities in the South Asian context. In conclusion the research pointed out how the promises of inclusive citizenship (who is a citizen and who is not) lays bare the dichotomy between constitutional state and political state.

Regional Responses to the Global Compact and Learnings for South Asia

Divita Shandilya in her paper followed a similar theme, a critique of the GCR's: "whole society approach", its non-binding nature, lack of responsibility in terms of targets, placing obligations on states (negligence towards the issue of border shifting, no provisions for forcibly displaced people, no changes to the rights of refugees since 1951 Convention, lack of clarity about the protection of refugees such as legal protection in host countries and finally sticking to the same definition of refugee as was stated in 1951 Convention). Divita looked in more detail at the cases of Uganda and South Asia, where she clearly showed that nation states were incapable within the current framework to work together and commit to what they agreed in terms of protecting the rights of refugees in both contexts.

Home, Art and Memory: Refugee Women's Narratives of Displacement in Turkey

Mastoureh Fathi's research took a micro approach to revealing the everyday experiences of refugee women living in Turkey. She looked into the role of gender in displacement experiences (how do the experiences of men and women differ in their displacement processes) and how such experiences interact with their attempts to make home in Turkey. Using art and Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), Mastoureh looked into the role of memory and displacement. The research entailed memories of home in the context of forced migration act as double edged swords that bind people together (particularly in the absence) of support for refugees in the current state of Turkish society (memories of Syria bring Syrian people together) and at the same time, remembering the trauma they had gone through have had implications on mental health. The paper argued that there were three elements in the intersection of memory and gendered experiences of home making in Turkey: One, memory was reconstructed in light of past events. Two, memory was used to live through the everyday life in Turkey as a means of survival. Finally, memory was reshaped in the form of hope for a better life. The paper proposed the therapeutic nature of art methods in projects with refugees need to be considered seriously due to their fluidity that allows refugees narrate their experiences and share their life stories that otherwise can be too traumatizing to discuss. These stories are important to be heard to remind policy makers of the agency and subjectivity of refugees as human beings.

Presentation of research papers by workshop participants of Module A: Global Protection Regime for Refugees & Migrants and Module B: Gender, Race, Religion & other Fault Lines in the Protection Regime

Module B
Gender, Race, Religion & other Fault Lines in the Protection Regime

Participants delivered papers on a variety of topics such as a long durée approach of partition, a recounting of the memories of women who sought refuge during and after 1947, the role of the migrant child body in animé and IDPs in Gujarat. The unifying arguments concluded that the experiences of women who live in a forced migration situation are often complex, being neither all pain nor all empowerment. The different papers shed light on the need for intersectional approaches that show the ways in which women advocate for themselves or benefit from displacement, as well as the need for resources for the realities of trauma that exist and touched upon the prevalence of violence against migrants, either in popular media or in the lived experiences of women.

Rethinking refugee women: A study of Partition induced forced migration through the intersecting lenses of caste, labour, generation and region

Ekata Bakshi used ethnographic insights in order to locate the long durée of partition-induced forced migration in an industrial city of West Bengal - Asansol, where rural lower caste migrants from government camps were rehabilitated to support industrial development with the provision of cheap labour. To illustrate this point, Bakshi drew from the incidents that followed in a migrant woman's life, whose husband had fled arrest after attempting to make a meagre living through illegal means. This left her in a state of extreme hardship and she had to sell the limited property that remained in her hands while she was the principle earner of her family. Through a series of further misfortunes, combined with societal stigmatisation, she was left with no other option but to begin work from home, selling paper bags at 20 rupees a kilo. This is one example of many women with whom Bakshi had interacted and she asserted that from a trans-generational perspective, migrant women and their children are often kept in a cycle of impoverishment through home-based work, social factors and a lack of opportunities. She made this point to mark out the long durée impact of partition on the daily lives of migrant women and their families in the future.

The Displaced Woman: Narratives from Survivors of the Partition of Bengal in 1947

Kusumika Ghosh through her presentation articulated the trans-generational effect that partition has had on the lives of the women who survived it. To begin, she introduced her seven participants who were women who had experienced partition, either as children or as young women. She delivered several compelling anecdotes from which many lessons could be learnt such as the need to visibilise women's experiences in conflict as well as the complex reality of what resulted from displacement as being both a boon and a trauma. She discussed how her participants carried the traumas of partition with them throughout their lives, suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and reshaping their daily routines to avoid re-encountering past pain. However, in outlining her discussion on how partition "cut both ways" Ghosh relayed one interesting account that showed how some women benefited from partition. She summarised the accounts of the women and highlighted the words of one participant who had said, "I lost my father to partition, and my father (...) was a very patriarchal man, who would never let us go to school, we would be married off by the time we were twelve years old. But, because he died and because we had to move here, we went to school. All my sisters got educated". Thus, Ghosh's narratives pointed to the complexities surrounding women's experiences during and after partition.

A Dialogue at the Threshold: Analysing Marginal Existence in Bury Me My Love, Kuroshitsuji and the Alienist

Preeshita Biswas delved into a cultural studies approach to understanding the relationship between the bodies of young, often transsexual, migrants and mortifying sexualised violence. To do so, she analysed two sources that use a Victorian time - *Bury Me My Love*, *Kuroshitsuji* and *the Alienist*. In each piece, serial killers and lorded pedophiles seek out the vulnerable bodies of child migrants in order to mutilate and punish them. Biswas used these sources to conclude that the bodies of child

migrants are the space through which sexual and legal deviance was punished. Her argument was predicated upon the notion that Victorian society and popular conceptions of Victorian society, attempted to present itself as morally pure with no visible sexual deviance. Thus, "the society's fear of the sexually profane and morally depraved migrant other" led to the creation of spaces where obscene violence could be directly carried out on these bodies. She went on to give an example in her analysis of *Kuroshitsuji* wherein one character murders migrant women and cuts out their wombs. This focus on the womb was another example of how hegemonic society felt that the pure core must be protected from being soiled by the migrant outsider. She reasoned that Kuroshitsuji and the Alienist played on tropes of Victorian society to graphically represent the Victorian anxiety of defilement, corruption and degeneration of the migrant other.

Surviving Gender: An Investigation of Gender Based Violence Rehabilitation Programmes in 1971 Urban Bengali Refugee Communities

Sarah Nandi presented the theoretical framework for her larger ongoing research and provided an analysis of a policy brief to highlight areas where questions surrounding identification and forced migration came to the fore. Her argument noted that the existing humanitarian and refugee governance regime has deeply struggled to address those who are both migrants and women as much of the framing and policy relies on conceptions of male and able bodies to deliver relief, provide asylum and rehabilitate and second, that the image of the refugee woman, as it stands, must be complicated or done away with, replaced with conceptions of an individual who bears a multifaceted and deeply intersectional identity. Her analysis of a policy brief following 1971 displacement in West Bengal noted the ongoing focus surrounding allotments of land as a form of rehabilitation for men or for families, failing to recognise or even mention the single or widowed women who came to West Bengal during that time. Her research specified that neither legal systems nor policymakers have learned how to adequately address gender within the category of refugee.

Responsibility to Rehabilitate: Gendered Travails of Internally Displaced Persons in India

Shubhra Seth focused on Muslim IDPs who had been displaced due to the riots in Gujarat, drawing upon four years of fieldwork spent conducting interviews of those living as survivors. In her research, five major themes stood out: (1) house, (2) basic communities, (3) livelihood struggles, (4) documents and compensation and (5) education. In her focus on houses, she demonstrated how IDPs were forced to put up with living near a massive garbage dump, wading through heaps of trash and the carcasses of dead animals to get to their homes. In the houses, she showed how houses are limited to being described in terms of numbers instead of family names because the inmates could be evacuated or evicted any time. She stated that the one-roomed houses could not be referred to as homes because people expressed their disappointment at being "perpetually homeless in their own homes". This was a striking example of the ongoing societal separation and precarity within which displaced communities lived, even after surviving intensive violence. She also highlighted the prevalence of these women's own resilience. Shubhra Seth gave the example of how these women found useful or profitable skills and attempted to create their own small businesses or groups, either in stitching, shop keeping or other useful trades, their struggles and the self-empowerment that these communities had cultivated.

The discussion questioned the relationship between rehabilitation and reconciliation, the role of male survivors, collective memories and surrounding accessibility. Overall, the session strongly attempted to begin to deconstruct the complex experiences, remedies and struggles that refugee and migrant women and children face in displacement situations.

Module C
Neoliberalism, Immigrant Economies and Labour

The papers presented by the participants of Module C attempted to question and deconstruct normative narratives of labour migrants and the processes of labour migration.

The Political Process of Citizenship: Deconstructing the Privileged Category of Highly Skilled Immigration to Canada

Amrita Hari's presentation although focused on the Canadian context, drew on several of the conference themes and concerns. In particular, she discussed the dangers of easy categorisations and generalisations of migrants. Her focus was on the false homogenisation of skilled migrants as a widely privileged group. Using the examples of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skilled professionals and international students, she discussed their differential pathways to permanent resident status. She elaborated upon the recent changes to Canada's skilled immigration policy and cautioned against categorising without critical exploration, all highly skilled immigrants to Canada as equally privileged.

The Constructed Bangladeshis in Assam - the Political Economy of the Narrative of Illegal Migration

Anindita Chakrabarty through her research located discourses used to construct individuals as citizen outsider in Assam at the intersection of language, appearance and religion. She traced the judicial proceedings carried out that had produced the perpetual citizen outsider and in so doing grappled with the interconnectedness with nationalism, electoral interests and political economy. She brought out the logic of accommodation of the identified aliens, serving at the whims of the "care-givers", the care givers implying those who are in the safe zone of the indigenous-alien dichotomy according to the statist understanding of a sanitised notion of citizenship.

The In-Betweens: An Enquiry into the Quality of Life of Self-employed North-Easterns in Kolkata, India

Anoushka Roy essentially talked about how the distinction between formal and informal in the neoliberal age becomes redundant, as had been highlighted by Ranabir Samaddar in his lecture. Anoushka, therefore, titled her sample "The In-Betweens" and indicated that self-employed migrants could not be categorised and must therefore be placed in abstraction. Her paper highlighted the questions on the quality of life of self-employed North-Eastern population who opened up eateries in the city of Kolkata. She talked about how the state refuses to provide social security to such workers because as self-employed people they are capitalists. Therefore, she opined, that the state presumes that the market is their regulator/protector, which again becomes problematic in the "quality of life" context. She argued that these workers had to be stopped being looked at as only economic beings and social citizenship for them must be an arena of social negotiation where they start claiming their space in the society. As self-employment in itself is multi-layered, their differentiated needs must be recognised. Anoushka visited Bikramgarh – a neighbourhood in south Kolkata which recently saw an intense mushrooming of North-Eastern migrants and her observations were as follows:

- They had precarious accommodation and dismal working conditions
- Their intergenerational mobility was very low
- Their migration patterns were quite erratic
- A fundamental contradiction was highlighted in terms of globalisation vs. localisation politics
- Their profits were insufficient to be send back as remittances
- There were wide variations of scale in their business models
- Employees were often kin of owners
- They often lied about how long they had been residing in the city owing to the fear of cut-off of access to public services
- The colony had been snowballed into a social enclave from what began as an economic enclave

During the discussion, Meghna Guhathakurta highlighted that there could be a distinction that Anoushka might have wanted to make between migrant capital versus migrant labour versus migrant

workers. Divita Shandilya made a valuable comment on how these workers, who were often in a kinship based employment, may be subjected to both social protection and social exploitation. As her key takeaways, Anoushka highlighted that (a) informality fed into informality and (b) it was time academia stopped trying to formalise the informal because that turned out to be an expensive affair in several cases.

Dreams of Flight: Educational Mobility among Young Dalit Women in Punjab

Sugandha Nagpal attempted to gender and nuance the discussion on labour migration by looking at the experiences of the left-behind wives of labour migrants in a predominantly Dalit village in Punjab. Her paper attempted to interrogate the experience of middle-class migrant wives by drawing on a processual view of agency, which engaged with women's everyday navigations with mobility. Focus on everyday forms of agency revealed that while migrant wives reproduced normative gender and class norms in their public behaviour their private narratives demonstrated strong aspirations to subvert these ideas and claimed mobility.

Irregular Migration in a Neoliberal Order: Ethiopian Migrants to South Africa (jointly authored by Yordanos S. Estifanos, Lydia Potts and Tanya Zack)

Yordanos S. Estifanos talked about irregular migration and it being a response to - growing socio-economic inequalities within and between different regions of the world, which has left many people in developing countries in states of absolute and relative deprivations. This prompted desperate and restless migrants to dwell on their transnational networks, depend on the services of human smugglers and succumb to the requirements of the latter. Findings from his study indicated that smugglers are just one strand of multidimensional and omnipresent actors within a complex web of transnational smuggling networks, which spread across source, transit and destination countries. Taking Ethiopian irregular migrants heading to South Africa, as a case, the paper debated that instead of reducing irregular migration and breaking down smuggling networks, border control and migration management measures, the prevailing neoliberal order was rather manufacturing emigrants and smugglers, increasing smuggling fees, intensifying migration risk and reinforcing exploitations.

Presentation of research papers by workshop participants of
Module C: Neoliberalism, Immigrant Economies and Labour

Module D
Borderlands and Migrant Labour

The panel presentations of Module D consisted of four papers.

Life of West Pakistan Refugees at Jammu Borders

Marvi Slathia while presenting her research paper spoke of her fieldwork in Suchetgarh village and surrounding area of the Suchetgarh border post in Jammu on the Indian side of the border with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. She narrated through the accounts of her field experiences how the zone was frequented by ceasefire violations. Marvi Slathia spoke of the precarity of life and labour in this borderland. The ceasefire violations affected the livelihood of the local population who are agriculturalists. Most of the fields had come under fencing or mining. She outlined the difficulties and ways of life for the labourers in this borderland, regulated by security concerns of international labour migration.

Novel as a Genre of Migration: Reading Temporary People

Mohamed Shafeeq Karinkurayil in his presentation analysed a chapter from the novel *Temporary People* by Deepak Unnikrishnan (2017). He stressed the need to look at border as an affective process rather than a physical space. Border becomes the zone of precarity which the state as a whimsical performance produced within the network of labour relations. The fragmentary nature of migrant labour has remained a sample of the pervasive bordering or zoning at present which also operated through networks of rumours and inside knowledge.

Karinkurayil was asked if this meant there were no differences between margin and centre, which he answered by stating that population had been indeed fragmented to intimate publics in which cases the effects invoked could not be assumed to be of the same nature. He mentioned that even if a migrant moved or changed his/her place and shifted away from the fringe areas, the border tended to move with them. He added that a wall is meant to keep out as much as it is to keep in.

Violence against Women in West Bengal-Bangladesh Borderland

Sanika Banerjee while speaking on violence against women in borderland, pointed out that, women at the borders faced violence, trafficking and were often used as carriers for smuggling. The presenter was asked if the situation at the borders was any different from the interiors, to which she pointed out the accentuated precarity in the case of movement of illegal migrant labourers and the problems faced being more acute for women living in borderland.

Labour in Borderland: Ichhamati River in North 24 Parganas

Shatabdi Das in her research focused on the riverside areas of municipal towns of Basirhat and Taki as well as localities of Hasnabad CD Block located close to the bank of river Ichhamati and neighbourhoods of Basirhat-I CD block located close to Bangladesh border in the North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The paper highlighted the trend of migration and demographic attributes in the study area through the analysis of Census data and also drew from field study. Fieldwork brought out that migration occurs across the river for the job prospects offered by brickfields, fishing, small businesses like pottery, jaggery production, masonry and also the opportunities to work as casual labourers, helpers of carpenters and masons etc. She enumerated the patterns of life and movement affected by the river Ichhamati and economic practices shaped by the riverine ecosystem that affected labour on both sides of the border.

Module E
Statelessness

Media Portrayal of Rohingya Refugees in India

Biswajit Mohanty's paper first dealt with the reasons for taking up the study - firstly, exploring the level of trust that people repose on English media; the role of media in the public sphere in the backdrop of the plight of stateless people; the construction of the other through visual media and testing the ethics and morality of reporting about refugees. He used the example of the republic TV to portray that the visual media is practising the elite communalism and creating stereotypical image of the refugees. It is trying to homogenise the population by creating the Hindu majoritarianism. The speaker cited that the well established media ethics of reporting about the refugees and their voices had been completely ignored. Finally, he concluded on the note that media had placed its efforts on bringing about the CNN effect to the whole question of Rohingya issue. The question to his presentation was that why had the Republic TV been chosen as his case study and the suggestion to this paper was to include the perspective regarding Hindu Rohingya refugees in India.

Statelessness and the plight of women in Nepal

Neetu Pokhrel in her paper talked about how women in Nepal had been rendered stateless as a direct consequence of the discriminatory laws and practices within the state and administrative apparatus, gender discriminatory national laws in Nepal, the impact of citizenship crisis on the socio-economic rights of women in Nepal and lack of citizenship certificates for 23.65 percent of the Nepalese population. According to her the question was not only about the laws but also about equality, autonomy, dignity and independence. She also refereed to migrant Dalit community of women, the lack of marriage certificates for women resulting in statelessness and forced migration. The Nepalese Constitution guarantees the right to equality and nationality which itself is contradicted by Article 11 of the Nepalese Constitution. The Constitution is gender discriminatory in the way that - if a Nepali man married a foreign woman, he could apply for Nepalese naturalised citizenship but if a Nepali woman did the same she could not even apply for citizenship. Her focus had been two-fold: firstly, how discriminatory laws had created and augmented statelessness and even if the right to equality was there it was not really equal so her question was whether laws were enough to protect the rights of women, their dignity and respect. Further, she pointed out to the difference between national and international laws and how statelessness had been forcing women to migrate to other countries.

Difficulty and Uncertainty: A Focus on Young Rohingyas in Children's Homes of West Bengal

Suchismita Majumdar in her research attempted to highlight the young Rohingyas who are confined in different children's homes of West Bengal. She shed light on children's home as another dimension of confinement other than prison. She elaborated how young ones between 6 and 17 years of age who could not be kept in prison were sent to the children's homes. The primary data of her study was gathered from Vidyasagar Balika Bhawan (Medinipur), Silayan Home (Berhampore) and Sanlaap (Kolkata) while 10 girls incorporated from these three homes belonged to the age group of 12-18 years. In addition to primary data, she also collected secondary data from several organisations. In the background of Rohingya family members getting separated by the two dimensional confinement, the study attempted to capture the fragmented life of Rohingyas in course of migration. The paper informed the process of becoming confined in these places, the way out of the confinements and the difficulties while living in these homes.

Gendering Refugee Crisis in South Asia: the case of Rohingya refugee Women

Sreetapa Chakrabarty reflected on the need to look into refugee women's experiences and underlined the fallacies of international refugee law particularly the 1951 Convention in protecting the rights of Refugee women. Citing the UDHR and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Guidelines on gender related persecution, she pointed out that despite the presence of international humanitarian mechanisms refugee women have continued to face exclusion, discrimination and violence. She gave a detailed account of the narratives of violence faced by the Rohingya refugee women. She ended her presentation by putting forward four questions pertaining to the following issues: i) the means of strengthening international mechanisms so as to protect the rights of refugees in general and refugee women and children in particular, ii) the mechanisms for including refugee women in the mainstream refugee regime, iii) the process of looking into the issues of different categories of refugee women since they do not constitute a homogenous category and iv) whether it was possible to envisage a separate refugee convention for South Asia or not which would encompass the diverse categories of religion, caste, race, nationality, gender, sexuality and so on. The suggestions to this paper entailed the inclusion of the associated concepts of otherness, body politics and the role of state as the preserver of the body as well as the perpetrator of violence especially in the light of gender-based violence faced by Rohingya women refugees.
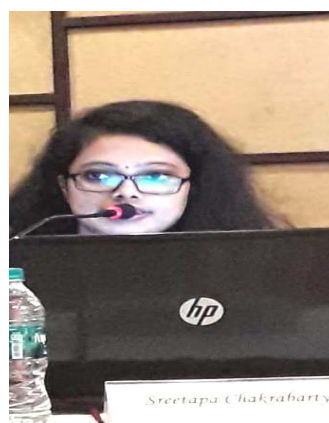
Presentation of research papers by workshop participants of Module E: Statelessness

Module F
Laws of Asylum and Protection

The Long Haul of a Lone Ranger

Anusha Ravishankar presented her work based on direct interviews with Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in protracted refugee situation and research on Rohingya refugees. The research drew from secondary material, a view of legal hurdles that refugees face from a rights based framework. She brought out how the legal void in terms of absence of a domestic law and not signing the International Refugee Convention coupled with political void had led to discriminatory treatment of the refugees or lack of adequate protection. Some of the issues pertaining to Rohingya in settlements were highlighted such as having to live in "jhuggis" or huts, lack of drinking water, inadequate sanitation for refugees in their settlements, difficulties of accessing education and the impact these conditions have on refugee lives were brought out. Rohingyas also have high degree of home births in settlements of Hyderabad. She discussed how the home births made it difficult for refugees to acquire birth certificates for their children and the extensive implications that led to statelessness. She mentioned that India's Look East to Act East Policy led to a strategic shift along with an economic shift which had an impact on protection of Rohingya refugees. There had been ad-hoc decisions to which the refugees became subject, due to their tenuous legal status as well as the absence of a political stand taken to protect them. With regard to Sri Lankan Tamil refugees she enlisted complexities such as restrictions on movements, securitisation from governments, difficulty in accessing jobs, the difficult conditions in the camps and legal hurdles with reference to registering births for children of women refugees. She discussed how the refugees were unable to go back to lay claims to their home country citizenship for fear of changing regimes, loss of opportunities and bleak future and rights back home. She concluded that a legal void put the two groups in constant marginalisation loop. Besides, the absence of legislation puts them at the receiving end of right wing forces. Hence drafting a law on Refugees would help to address the challenges that refugees face.

Sociological Understanding of Asylum and Protection Policies of India: Where do Rohingyas Stand?

Md. Niamot Ali provided a sociological understanding of asylum with reference to Rohingya crisis. He brought out the historical understanding of Rohingya migration in Bangladesh-Burma region. He brought out aspects of asylum such as the local agitation in Jammu state calling for deportation of Rohingya refugees. He analysed how Rohingya crisis was being viewed by India as a cultural issue and bi-lateral issue instead of a global issue. He concluded that this stance would have a disastrous effect on the states in South Asia. In this context, the point mentioned by Simon Behrman in his theme lecture was relevant. He highlighted Nehru's speech in Parliament in 1959, when he addressed the view of refugees as follows:

A) Refugees are welcome
B) The issue of refugees is one of a bi-lateral issue
C) The refugees ought to return to their homeland once the threat of persecution has ended/ or when a bi-lateral agreement is reached.

Afghan Refugees and Issues of Protection, Rights, and Justice

Mujib Ahmad Azizi set the context by talking about diverse people and ethnicities of Afghanistan. The problem of returning refugees to Aghanistan who have to face questions regarding their decisions and identities from the bureaucracy was highlighted. The waves of Afghan refugee migration starting from Soviet Afghan war which lent many with the status of refugee in 1979-89, followed by Afghan civil war between 1992 and 1996 and escalation of the Taliban to power from 1996 to 2001. Some of the causes of refugee flows from Afghanistan were civil war, conflict and insecurity as forced factors for migration and displacement, natural disasters (flood, earthquake, snow, avalanche etc.), socio-economic reasons, pressure of extremism. He affirmed that the Ministry of Refugees was in need of reform. The role of NGOs working to serve the refugees as well as the role of academics speaking

from across nations in South Asia on common platforms would be instrumental in shaping the protection for refugees in the context of Afghanistan.

The Forced Migration of Rohingya to India and Challenges for Refugee Protection

Rachel D'Silva brought out the aspects of politics of protection with respect to Rohingya refugees while looking at the challenges that the refugees face. Some of the issues that were discussed were non recognition of Rohingya refugees in India and its impact on their spatial and living conditions. The paper also discussed the manner in which the Rohingya try to negotiate work and the challenges they face in finding work. The third aspect was the numerous human security challenges they faced in their settlements such as susceptibility to gender based violence, exploitation, vulnerability of children. These aspects were contextualised within the framework of rise of identity politics and ethno religious nationalism in South Asian states. She concluded that adherence to International Refugee Law would help to address the contemporary protection challenges faced by refugees.

Importance of Legal Representation during the Asylum Process

Yuvraj Rathore's video presentation brought out issues of vulnerability that refugees face during refugee status determination procedures and how this could have an impact on getting documents for their protection. The criteria as per standards of UNHCR status determination make it challenging for refugees to prove their status. Processes are long drawn for refugees. Objectivity of information given by the persons could be questioned. He concluded that legal representation was necessary to go through the asylum process and gave practical insights through a video representation.

Presentation of research papers by workshop participants of Module F: Laws of Asylum and Protection

Protracted Internal Displacement in Post-Earthquake Response - Som Niroula, *Alliance for Social Dialogue, Kathmandu*

In his presentation Som Niroula highlighted the issues of internal displacement due to the earthquake in Nepal in 2015. He mentioned that the internal displacement due to the disasters (flood, landslides, earthquakes etc) is in the increasing trend. The largest displacement caused due to the earthquake in 2015 which triggered or displaced about 2.6 million people of the 14 districts of Nepal and destroyed more than half a million houses both private and public. Over the last four years, there were large numbers of people resettled and also those who returned back home. There are about 2619 households that need to be relocated and resettled in the earthquake affected districts. Most of the people left out of resettlement and rehabilitation schemes were single women, people with disabilities, Dalits and other poor people. The government response was not comprehensive in terms of providing support to those affected by the earthquake. In the initial phase, there were discussions on creating comprehensive packages providing reconstruction, psychosocial support and educating people about prevention methods. However, the ultimate support of the government was only reconstruction of the houses. There number of challenges and issues related to reconstruction such as legal complexities, increasing number of cases of women and children being lured for trafficking, the houses not being comfortable for the inmates, making reconstruction accessible for people with disabilities and administrative hurdles in providing the legal identity documents (citizenship and vital registration) and no ownership and engagement of the local government in the process of social rebuilding. The people displaced by natural disasters are faced with a number of challenges in the process of development.

A Social Mapping of Displacement in India - Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

The presentation of the report began with the introduction of the concept of displacement and a brief discussion on the previous research done on internal displacement in India. The objective of the study was to identify the drivers of displacement and vulnerability at the hot-spots of displacement in India and it elaborated upon the typology of displacement. The first section of the report discussed the major causes of displacement and marked out the states of India most affected by incidence of displacement. The later section of the report enlisted the policies and legal interventions both at national-level and at global scale. The report attempted to bring out the trend of occurrence of displacements in terms of number of people affected since the era of liberalisation-privatisation-globalisation in India upto recent years with focus on regionalisation of the trend and population composition being implicated by the ensuing consequences.

Presentation by Som Niroula and Shatabdi Das on a Panel Discussion
'Migration, Displacement and Resilience'

Panel I
Auto-Ethnography as Research Method

Anne Mc Call, chair for the session began by introducing the panel and its theme and spoke about the significance of auto-ethnography in negotiating with triple damages of migration that had been discussed earlier in the day; silence, forced narration and crisis conversation.

Auto-ethnography as a Research Method: Lessons from Field Research in South Africa's Informal Economy - *Yordanos S. Estifanos*

Yordanos S. Estifanos' presentation was based on his field research in South Africa, undertaken in the years 2014 and 2018 in the informal economy of South Africa, where immigrants from across the world converge to engage in their business. He presented the case of Ethiopian irregular migrants and categorised his presentation according to a number of issues:

-Researching in sensitive places
-Ethnography of the settlement of informal migrants
-Ethical dilemmas of researchers
-Introduction of research site
-Building trust with research subjects and informants
-Risks and dangers encountered by informal migrants in the informal townships of Johannesburg, South
 Africa
-The relationship between dangers faced by informal migrants and the state

Estifanos' research mainly focused on the irregularity of Ethiopian migrants and the informal nature of their economy. The first part of his presentation touched upon how borders are created, defined and regulated and how irregular migrants encounter, challenge and violate borders. The second part dealt with the experiences of irregular migrants in the informal economy of South Africa and how they face and challenge interventions from the host country's labour and immigration policies. He located himself within the socio-economic, cultural and political contexts under which these immigrants operate to highlight some of the ethical dilemmas in research, which he encountered while trying to bring together theory and practice. In so doing, Estifanos drew attention to the risks that immigrants encounter in their daily routines while simultaneously highlighting some of the innovative ways of socialising and building trust with informants as well as some mechanisms to deal with risks and dangers in conducting field research in dangerous places like the city of Johannesburg.

Estifanos spoke about the various limitations faced during his ethnography that he classified as qualitative as well as quantitative. The qualitative limitations primarily entailed the difficulty of building trust with the subjects, who viewed the researcher with suspicion and mistrust, given especially that they formed a diasporic community with their own nationalist, political inclinations. The quantitative aspect of the limitations entailed that budgetary scarcity prevented the researcher firstly from extensive research across broader geographical spaces. For instance, the dispersed nature of the Ethiopian diasporic community in Europe would require the researcher to spend more money to travel further. However, a limited budget meant restricting the research to Africa. He also talked about the lack of equivalence in the interest of the researcher and subject and how that would present difficulty. While the researcher may be focused on gathering as much data as possible, the subjects have bigger, daily issues that they need to deal with and those may exceed the concerns of the research itself.

Estifanos went on to describe his research site, the socio-economic location of his subjects and the ways in which he attempted to integrate and negotiate with the daily life of his migrant subjects, including encountering mobsters during his field work. He talked about the importance of remaining invisible among the subjects and not interfering in their pre-existing inter-personal issues etc. He spoke about the importance of being honest and truthful with his subjects. He added that his experience of speaking with the migrants and listening to their narratives often left him "emotional, drained and defensive" and the importance of staying calm in the face of hostile or reticent subjects. He also spoke about the significance of setting aside personal habits, practices and prejudices during the process of socialising. Field research also contains possibility of various risks and dangers, especially while interacting with the locals. Estifanos placed emphasis on "respect" and "love" towards the locals and the ability to speak their language was significant in endearing the researcher towards them. Effective socialising also meant that one made the effort to maintain connection with one's subjects.

Re-membering Migration(s): The Culture and Politics of Memoirs and Archives - *Samata Biswas*

Samata Biswas' presentation focused on the importance of auto-ethnography as an opportunity to communicate, link and share experiences. By doing so, the individual, immediate and isolated experiences could be linked to the collective, accumulated, historical experiences. Bringing the individual and isolated experiences together and making them historicised, entails a resistance against the recurrent construction of the categories of refugees, migrants or asylum seekers. She spoke about how the accumulated and linked experiences of an auto-ethnography can shift the focus from such categories, as ethnographic objects, to the border practices and the conditions these practices impose on migrants. She reasoned that this method and genre can create an epistemological space for practices, experiences and performances to resist the colonising whiteness within migration and race studies and she further talked about the ways in which it can be used as a radical form of embodied knowledge claims that resist the normative knowledge production as a colonial tool. Biswas looked at a series of archives and memoirs and attempted to understand if they could be understood as auto-ethnographic practices. She went on to talk about the ways in which auto ethnographies bear the traces of the larger picture, although it is often said that auto-ethnographies in centering "micro narratives" often erases relevant contexts. Biswas cited the Citizens' Archives of Pakistan and the Citizens' Archive of India, the 1947 Partition Archive, all recording oral histories of partition which aim to archive the formative moments of the respective nations and in tangential ways the central issue of migration. She talked about how the three archives take the moment of partition and weave together individual memories, collective memories and historical memories. What are the memories made of? What marks memories in the case of migrants? The construction and interaction of collective, historical and individual memory were questioned. "Which memories get memorialised" and "who or what enables them" were some of the questions Biswas raised. She took into consideration the linkage between auto-ethnography and memoir and the research practice that had been termed as evocative auto-ethnography. She went onto talk about the ways in which auto-ethnography was more communicative and engaging. She then cited and analysed a few migration memoirs such as *Chhinamuler Diary* etc. Biswas primarily centred the experiences of migrant women.

Anne McCall concluded the session by talking about the possibility of thinking about the future. Prasanta Ray, the discussant for the session, raised a number of issues about the two presentations. He talked about the need to foreground methodology since the panel theme was primarily on the question of auto-ethnography and what it entails. He asserted that in addition to being an epistemological position, auto-ethnography is also an ontological position. Prasanta Ray talked about the varied ways in which the prefix "auto" embedded the researcher in the process of ethnography, by compelling her to analyse and question her own position. He pointed out the diverse kinds of convergence that the two papers had conceptually dealt with. In the case of Samata for instance, she had dealt with the convergence of migration through space and migration through time. He commented that both the

speakers were able to integrate individual narratives with their broader contexts and also stressed how their personal experiences interjected with that of their irregular migrants. He appreciated the ways in which all the papers, although diverse had points of convergence, which were clearly unintended. He identified through Biswas' paper that auto-ethnography gives the space for self-analysis within specific social and cultural contexts.

In the discussion section, the issues of disaster induced migration and research related to the same were brought up. Meghna Guhathakurta raised the issue of validation and positivism in the auto-ethnographic method. Samir Kumar Das maintained that the debate was not between auto-ethnography and positivist form of validation and one needed to wonder whether there were other forms of validation. He pointed out that there was a need to take into account the different ways of connecting between the self and the culture. These connections could be read, interpreted and made sense of in diverse ways and this diversity allows one to see the co-presence of interpretations. One should therefore be careful of the trap of positivism and positivist validation.

In the question and answer session, Samata Biswas responded to Richa that documenting disaster induced migration will need to be well-triangulated with various modes of enquiries in addition to auto-ethnography and positive research methodologies. Yordanos Estifanos responded that concepts and frameworks had not always been available to him during the time of research and often these helped in modifying his writing/research later on.

A panel discussion on 'Auto-Ethnography as Research Method'

Participant interaction in the question and answer session of the panel

Panel II
Migration Crisis in the Global South: Issues of Protection and Rehabilitation

Identity, Community and Coping – *Lucy Nusseibeh*

This paper looked at the Palestinian refugee situation – classified as internal refugees. According to Nusseibeh, Palestinians are refugee society. Recurrent periods of displacement have been witnessed by them – 1948 and 1967 being among the well-known ones; no end appears to be, however, in sight for the refugee problem. Nusseibeh makes a crucial point that the situation is one of occupation – the terminology of conflict would be inappropriate. A militarised security environment and perpetual structural violence ensures that relations get affected and trauma gets transmitted across generations.

Going into the nuances of the situation Nusseibeh reported that Palestinians in Jerusalem are stateless while those in West Bank and Gaza only have passports. Public institutions in Israel relevant to the Palestinian society have been occupied and demolished or despaired. A continuous tension simmers between individual and group identity – trauma often acts as the collective conscience where Palestinians are settled but not integrated. Happiness is a rare phenomenon in these camps where several issues like drug problems exist. Houses are closely placed, thereby, removing the space for privacy. One major aspect of camp life is the omnipresence of checkpoints which prove to be real barriers in the free movement of people. Interestingly, defying liberal feminist notions of beauty, women are given training in beauty courses, which aid them in developing an identity, in a scenario which hardly allows them one.

The ambition of almost every member of these camps is to change the current situation and ensure that every individual is allowed to flourish as they desired. Nusseibeh reported to have used participatory methods of videography where participants could choose what aspect of their lives they wished to turn the lens on. This ensured that the photographic gaze is deflected and people are allowed a part in deciding what is to be represented.

The Development of Afghanistan's Comprehensive Migration Policy: A critical analysis – *Liza Schuster and Reza Hussaini*

Liza Schuster provided an account of policy-making in the field of migration in Afghanistan and recounted the complexities involved in the process. Migration policy-making in Afghanistan is a business, donor-driven, moulded by the greater interests of donor states, with interests of stakeholders conspicuous by their absence from the discourse. The conditionality of cooperation is crucial. Post the withdrawal of international forces from the country, massive influence has been exerted on the security situation. Several committees have been formed, but hardly any fruits have been produced.

Schuster presented a brief glimpse of the different frameworks for understanding migration. The rational policy-making framework advocates identifying a problem and devising a solution to it; the political gaming perspective looks at the entire issue as one of conflict of interests and institutional discourses highlight the role of institutions in shaping policies and planning models figure themselves out in their own ways in the context of Afghanistan. With respect to the first, bounded rationality operated as language acted as a major barrier and there were hardly any attempts to translate the situation into an understandable one. Further, everything was channelled through the President, disallowing decentralisation of power. The second perspective rather ended up being a situation of jockeying for power, with asymmetrical power relations where interests of the people were hardly the concern. There was imposition of a Western lexicon on Afghan interests, thereby, failing to adequately reflect the real nature of issues at hand.

It was mentioned that there was influence of the European Union on the entire process of firming up the legal mechanism. The evident, neo-liberal and managerial outlook furthered by drafting under market conditions led to templates and deadlines hardly relevant to the ground. The gaze of the expert foregrounded a security rather than a development agendum, coloured by European interests. Hence,

policies fail since they are badly made, yet, are difficult to resist don account of the aid industry being operated by powerful donors.

Afghanistan: The Rhetoric of Peace Talks and the Future of Migration 'crisis' – *Orzala Nemat and Wali Mohammad Kandiwal*

Orzala Nemat began with the observation that two discourses dominate the Afghan world – migration troubles and peace. They start with the claim that the approaching understanding with the Talibans has little in the way of offering Afghans – what is needed is an issues-based approach rather than power distribution. The paper was structured into sections like the political dynamics and the rhetoric of the peace process, migration governance, the legal and policy framework for migration and migration issues in the context of the peace process. Displacement in Afghanistan is an enormous problem with Afghans accounting for a large migrant population and recipient of returnees, though returnees are hardly able to return to their places of origin.

Internal political dynamics are reflected in the patron-client relations that come into operation during the distribution of resources. Elites in this case are defined by their monopoly and control over the military and security as well as violence regimes. Nemat also talked of the typology of migrants – economic migrants, environmental refugees, IDPs, deportees. Thus, de-politicisation of the migration issue is called for, in response to the incidences of donor-funded terrorist sanctuaries being harboured at refugee camps.

Sheila Meintjes as discussant of the session remarked that Lucy Nusseibeh's presentation resonated with South African apartheid; that people despite finding themselves amidst gloomy conditions put in efforts towards leading decent life. She pointed out that, the term "camp" would not be very appropriate as the settlements were almost complete cities. The point worth engaging in, was, the kind of organisations that emerge to deal with authority. Her observations in reference to Liza Schuster's presentation encapsulated the interesting way in which democracy and development emerged only to be capsized and patrimonial interests intersecting with policy frameworks and deliberate strategies that were central to Afghan political elites. Meintjes stressed on the way that Orzala Nemat's presentation exhibited the importance attached to the Ministry of Migration simply due to Western concerns.

Paula Banerjee while chairing the session observed that policies were somehow considered vital and compulsory as one-stop solutions through the presentations of the speakers that highlighted how well-framed policies went haywire. Further points were raised by Divita Shandilya, Simon Behrman and Nasreen Chowdhory on the roles of Pakistan and Iran in the process of framing of policy mechanism in Afghanistan, the implications of the Taliban peace process on migration, the role of the Arab opposition in the Israeli legal system, the issue of legitimising occupied territories by amendments and the exact location of theories and the opportunity, if at all, for bottom-up democracy.

Panel III
Laws and Asylum Policies in the Global South

Hari Sharma opened the discussion by pointing out that the global south is a recipient in terms of knowledge, rather than generator of knowledge in the field of migration studies. In the absence of regional mechanism there is no convention in South Asia. This makes the asylum situation in the subcontinent fluid.

When India was a Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention: A Counterfactual History - *Simon Behrman*

Simon Behrman began his presentation by pointing out that as is well known, India, along with other South Asian states, has never acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol.

Arguments continue today as to whether or not India should sign and ratify this treaty. There are differences of opinion regarding the necessity of a national refugee law that would incorporate many of its key elements. What is at stake is a perceived trade-off between, on the one hand, the relative flexibility and generosity of asylum policy concerning entry to India against the rigidity and narrowness of international refugee law. This is the question of the poor level of support to refugees once they arrive in India compared with the access to a high level of legal rights, employment, education etc. in states that follow the refugee law regime.

Behrman pointed out that he has used a counterfactual methodology in his paper by attempting to consider how refugee arrivals in the past might have been treated had India been a party to international refugee law. As with looking to the future, this exercise cannot but be speculative. However, it does offer one possible way of evaluating to what extent the traditions of asylum in India would have been corrupted or enhanced through the adoption of refugee law. Thus, this method offers a guide as to how it would impact future asylum policy. If India had been a signatory of the 1951 Convention, the Chakmas would not have been granted refugee status, since in the experience of the Chakmas the sense of persecution is not obvious. If India had signed the convention, these people would not get refugee status. From 1970 there is a much clear sense of persecution in the refugee flows. The experience of states that have a refugee law for the past 70 years shows that the notion of deserving and undeserving migration has been conditioned by the legal framing of the refugee; in India this question has remained a lot more fluid.

Massive people from East Pakistan migrated to India during the war of independence in 1971. All sorts of labels were attached to these people such as refugee, forced migrants, evacuees. These labels were used interchangeably in the media of the time and in government communication. Government tried to de-legitimise them in the hope of stopping the flow. But there was fluidity and trans-Bengal solidarity which helped these refugees. The 1951 Convention is grounded in individual status determination. In 1971, there was no way that individual status determination could happen in such a situation. Just as the EU with regard to the Syrian crisis, India could have chosen from two options to deal with it, either to use the refugee status determination as a system to excuse for controlling the population flow, with all the violence that would come with the process. Alternatively the process of refugee status determination could simply have been suspended. In short, in 1971, India's adherence to the 1951 Convention would have created a basis for further violence.

In case of the Rohingya refugees it would have been beneficial to have adhered to the 1951 Convention. There are about 40,000 Rohingyas in India. Their maltreatment is obvious. They have been treated as a security threat and there has been deportation. The Rohingyas are a persecuted minority. In Europe, before World War Two, refugee reception was primarily a political question and there are instances of cordial reception. In contrast, after 1951, for the countries who signed the convention it became a legal question. There are instances when states have tried to use the process of refugee status determination as an excuse, to try to control population flow. In the US and UK also there has been ultra nationalistic administration, such as Trump and Obama regime, which have pursued very discriminatory anti refugee policies in 1951 Convention requires a state to assess an asylum application only when someone has actually arrived in the country. The enforcement of the US Mexico border is an example of pre-empting such possibility. The same is the case with Australia. The Australian government patrols the sea to return boats coming to its shore.

In Search of Refuge in South Asia: An Overview of the Legal and Policy Framework for Protection Seekers in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India - *Sumaiya Islam*

Sumaiya Islam began her presentation by pointing out that South Asia is home to over 2.6 million protection seekers, with Bangladesh alone offering shelter to over 1 million Rohingya refugees. Communities seeking refuge across the region face multiple and overlapping protection challenges, including lack of documentation, detention, lack of access to justice, sexual violence, lack of access to basic services such as education and affordable healthcare, risk of trafficking and exploitative work, tensions with host communities and lack of access to information. The situation is compounded by

politics and inter-agency dynamics, as well as resistance by States to take effective responsibility for their human and refugee rights obligations, or even recognising particular groups as stateless and as refugees.

Open Society Justice Initiative, a law programme, in collaboration with Refugee Solidarity Network, another international refugee rights organisation undertook a research project in 2018, to estimate the legal and policy framework in Bangladesh. The main objective was to understand how legal protection was grounded in national law and international law. Sumaiya Islam presented a comparative analysis of the protection frameworks in three South Asian countries and presented an overview of the legal and policy frameworks in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan to better understand current approaches towards protection seekers. She pointed out that her paper offers insights into protection schemes not rooted in the 1951 Refugee Convention. Islam noted that the aim of her study is to contribute to ongoing dialogues and development of protection policy frameworks. Her paper aimed to provide legal strategies to address the protection gap for vulnerable communities seeking refuge in "host" countries in the region with a particular focus on Bangladesh.

There are multiple legislations that govern the treatment of foreigners in India, but none explicitly protects those fleeing from persecution. India's treatment of protection seekers have varied over years, often driven by political influences and enabled by ad hoc measures. The foundation of treating foreigners is set by the 1946 Foreigners Act, the only legislation that decides who constitutes a foreigner and operationalises a regime for their interaction within the Indian territory. The law does not make any provision for protection seekers, economic migrants and inadvertent border crossers. Contrary to India's evidence act of 1872, the foreigner's act places the burden of proof on the foreigner and not on the government.

Despite not signing the 1951 Convention, India has considered the adoption of a national refugee law at various moments in history. India has established a mechanism to grant protection to foreign nationals who fled persecution, with long term visa policy. People having long term visa can open bank accounts and send their children to school. Pakistan has been among the top five countries to host refugees for several decades, playing host to millions of Afghan refugees. A substantial number of Rohingya refugees are also known to be present in Pakistan. Pakistan has not formally enacted any specific legislation to govern protection seekers in the country, although there are many policies and international laws. Another element of Pakistan's refugee policy worth highlighting is that the government has recognised benefits of providing education to refugee children. Official policy allows Afghan refugees to open bank accounts by using state issued ID cards. Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol. The Rohingyas in Bangladesh occupy the most uncertain legal space. Their stay in Bangladesh is through ad hoc administrative decision in the absence of any domestic protective regime for refugees. There are internal inconsistencies regarding the treatment meted out to the Rohingyas. The Rohingya camp setting in Bangladesh is important. The largest refugee camps are now located in Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh mentions that there are over 25 camps. It is reported and observed that the Rohingya community members are not allowed to leave the camp area and check points have been set up in nearby areas. Different rights are denied to the Rohingyas. Ad hoc policies are not only affecting the Rohingyas but also the host population in places like Cox's bazaar.

The discussant of the panel Nasreen Chowdhory pointed out that a counterfactual history of India's asylum policy is a very interesting way of posing the question of India's non-accession to the 1951 convention. If the 1951 Convention indeed included the post colonial societies, than the 1951 convention would not have been the way it is. If the experiences of the post colonial societies had been given due consideration, a more fluid definition of refugees would have been included in the 1951 convention. The post colonial experience needs different definitions. While these South Asian countries do not have refugee laws, they fall back on the constitution and case laws to adjudicate matters related to refugees. It is a paradox that despite not being part of the 1951 Convention, India has been following some of its rules in ad hoc and intermittent ways.

In the question and answer session, Sreetapa Chakrabarty posed the question that India and Bangladesh are not parties to the 1951 Convention, but India is a major signatory to the UDHR and CEDAW. What could be next in India's asylum policy? She further asked if it is possible to bring about an entirely separate refugee convention for South Asia which would encompass the diversity of migrants in terms of caste, gender, sexuality and class. Sumaiya Islam responded by saying that there is probably no need for a convention in South Asia, but what is required is a regional approach. Due to climate displacement a lot of people will move and this will affect Bangladesh. There needs to be a regional conversation on the legal status of these displaced people. Simon Behrman observed that a regional convention in South Asia may be a possibility.

Simon Behrman and Nasreen Chowdhory in a panel 'Laws and Asylum Policies in the Global South'

Panel IV
Conflict and Future of Protection Mechanism in South Asia

From Muddy Boots to Business Class: To the Emergency Frontlines and Back - *Bina D'Costa*

Bina D'Costa drew from her experience of working with UNICEF to discuss its perspective of children in the phenomenon of forced migration. At the outset, she distinguished UNICEF from UNHCR, acknowledging the latter's propensity to critique state policies which is far greater than that of UNICEF. Critiquing the emerging language that normalises "emergency" and "crisis" in regular vocabulary, the speaker elaborated the three ways normalisation happens in political and social spaces: through (a) imposition (b) restoring society to its previous version and (c) acceptance. This way of talking about emergencies, said D'Costa, is problematic, as is the tendency of all UN bodies to work by categorising emergencies; deciding on what deserve attention and funding versus what do not make the cut. The Global North tunnels into the Global South through its interventions in emergencies. Her insights on the inadequacy of international bodies like those of the UN in dealing with children, sometimes as young as 4 years old, forced to leave their homeland and sometimes without an accompanying adult articulated the critical and contradictory concerns of innocence and vulnerability and contradictory state practices.

Protection as Responsibility: Fixing a Malfunctioning System - *Jeevan Thiagarajah*

Jeevan Thiagarajah picked up from the same area of concern and localised the language of emergencies to Sri Lanka. As he put it in not so many words, "in Sri Lanka, for a poor person, a living day is an emergency in itself". He critiqued the reducing willingness of states to offer refuge and blamed populist politics for this trend. In an ideal world, refugees are supposed to be economically active, but, he contended, refugees in today's world are not welcomed to compete in national markets. The highlight of Thiagarajah's speech was the challenges that he saw refugees encountering in his long career of working with refuge and rehabilitation; and he stated them as:

- Long period of detention
- Nation-states trying to further their national interests while intervening in affairs of another state in crisis
- The burden of conflict management on the UN Security Council and
- The non-binding nature of the Global Compact on Refugees.

He made extensive references to the Kolkata Declaration, 2018 and urged everyone to turn to it for finding solutions to a malfunctioning regime.

Protection of Women in Armed Conflict in Bangladesh: The Making of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security - *Meghna Guhathakurta*

Meghna Guhathakurta like Jeevan Thiagarajah used her extensive experience of working with the administration in Bangladesh and negotiating with it as a civil society activist to talk about the protection of women in armed conflicts in Bangladesh. She clarified that justice for war crimes is a movement and an ongoing process in Bangladesh, which happens to be one of the top ranking countries for disaster preparedness in the world. Her presentation discussed in detail the development of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in Bangladesh and the debates in its process. She highlighted two main debates in the process of drafting the NAP – first of which is regarding the ministerial departments in charge of implementing the NAP and the second regarding the inclusion/exclusion of the Chittagong Hill Tracts ministry. Guhathakurta enabled her listeners to ponder upon the contradictions present in Bangladesh's political discourse that are applicable across the globe:

- Diversity and inclusivity of faith versus majoritarianism
- Security actors versus civil society

- And finally, the roots of patriarchal belief embedded in both the state and the society.

She ended her presentation with a short movie clip on the Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, laden with meaning.

In conclusion, discussant Paula Banerjee reflected on the main arguments presented by the panellists and offered her inputs. She particularly appreciated Bina D'Costa's critique of language, saying "terminologies are the harbingers of power". Banerjee contextualised the way we perceive "mobility" as a disorder and "stability" as the norm, which reeks of stateism. She asked Jeevan Thiagarajah about his take on how to choose the tools to make an impact on the state and implored Meghna Guhathakurta to tackle the question of race in the NAP. The chair of the session, Samir Kumar Das concluded the session by making a case for decolonising research protocols, drawing from Liza Schuster's anecdote – a risk assessment measure made her travel in a bullet proof car and with personal body guards for two months on a research field – thereby having serious implications on her research. He called for sensitisation and local contextualisation of protocols to prevent such impediments.

Meghna Guhathakurta, Paula Banerjee, Jeevan Thiagarajah, Bina D'Costa and Samir Kumar Das (from left to right) in a panel on 'Conflict and the Future of Global Protection Mechanism'

Panel on 'Conflict and the Future of Global Protection Mechanism', 29 November 2019

Panel V
Migration, Citizenship and Neoliberalism

Lydia Potts began the discussion by pointing to the contradictions of capitalism in the age of neolibralism. In the national economy of the capitalist centre in the nineteenth century, the welfare state emerged and it there were health care institutions, schools, universities, pension schemes to take care of the sick. But in the colonies, the labour system continued as forms of original accumulation. They feed on pre capitalist modes of production to produce and reproduce the labour force. Spatial segregation and migration have been the key instruments of sustaining capitalism. It is through migration system that in colonial plantation original accumulation is guaranteed. This is a necessity to perpetuate the capitalist system. The core argument is that the capitalist mode of production cannot reproduce itself without constant exploitation of regular influx of labour generated in pre capitalist modes of production.

In Germany in the second half of the twentieth century immigration provided the country with readymade labour. They procured labour from south Europe, Turkey and North Africa. In the twenty-first century parlance this would be called safe and orderly migration. In the late 1980s ethnic Germans came in large number. Based on the principle of *jus sanguinis*, they were granted citizenship. In Germany the birth rate had been low for decades. It is obvious that without immigration, labour situation would have saturated.

At the end of 2018 there were 1.7 million protection seeking persons living in Germany. This includes those surviving in 2015 and before and after; 1.2 millions recognised as refugees and granted at least temporary stay. Currently protection seeking group of people constitutes 2 percent of the German population, but they are 15 percent of all welfare recipients. Only 1 in 3 refugees is integrated in the labour market. In patriarchal neoliberal structures, the young men are still considered to be the core of traditional labour supply. There are selection tools to make sure those who comply with these rules remain in the country. The immigration of young children is welcome to the demographic trends in the country. Similar to two earlier migration processes, where the refugees had contributed considerably to the reproduction of the labour force, the new inflow is also contributing to the economy. Thus they provide a partial solution to the foundational problem of capitalism including its neoliberal version.

As election results in the Federal state of Germany show in the aftermath of the migration in 2015 the traditional dominating political parties lost some support and have been unable to form government without additional support. The political right got involved in the migration question. With regard to migrants and refugees, the 2015 "welcome culture" was the first in German history. The solidarity expressed publicly remained for years after. The politicians are aware that Germany needs immigration to keep the labour market working. Reproduction of the labour force does not follow the logic of the capitalist mode of production. In Germany or elsewhere, neoliberal capitalism cannot function without migration.

Neoliberalism, Migration, and the Rise of Populism in the Contemporary World – *Ravi Palat*

Ravi Palat began the discussion by pointing out a contrasting scenario in migration in the United States. In 1984, campaigning for re-election, President Regan claimed that Latinos are Republicans, they just don't know it yet. Most of the Latino immigrants are Roman Catholics and therefore they subscribe to the conservative values of family, tradition and religion which are in tune with Republican values. Democrats were ambivalent to immigration at that time and viewed it as a threat. Nine years later, the situation has changed. Donald Trump successfully launched his presidential campaign in the US by claiming that Mexicans are undesirable. How did the transformation happen? How did the Republicans retreat to a technocratic approach to immigration detaining migrants, building walls, separating children from parents and why did the Democratic Party give up its long standing reservation about migration?

Today's globalisation is accompanied by labour's loss of bargaining power in rich countries and stagnation of wages for less skilled workers. The rich countries have control over advanced technology. And these are not shared with developing countries like China. There has emerged a huge middle class in the emerging market economies of China, India, Thailand and Mexico. There is a paradox in the sense there has been a decrease in global inequality and many people in these areas have moved from poverty into the middle class and in this sense the global inequality has shrunk. But inequality in every country including India and China has increased dramatically. Decrease in global inequality and increase in inequality in each country. The biggest losers in this have been the working classes and the middle classes in North America and high income Europe. This forms the context for the rise of right wing populism. In the low and middle income countries, free trade has devastated agriculture, as low income companies cannot compete with the subsidised farms from North America and Western Europe. Mexican migration to the US has spiked after North American free trade agreement was enacted in 1994. Wallmart drove out small and medium size businesses. Hotel chains occupied beaches and drove out fishing communities and undocumented migration from Mexico to US rose. In Central America, after Central American free trade agreement the same thing happened.

Citizens, Governance and Democratic Politics - *Samir Kumar Das*

Samir Kumar Das began the discussion by pointing out how the National Register of Citizens in Assam which struck off the names of 1.9 millions of people, was updated and the legalities of the process. According to the rules of NRC in order to prove citizenship, one must be born before 24 March 1971, the date when the genocide in East Pakistan began, or if one is not born before the mentioned date and cannot give the papers specified by government, then one must prove that one is linked with someone born before 24 March 1971. Hence it required two kinds of data, the legacy data and linkage data. The debate in India on the NRC and citizenship shuttles between two complementary trajectories. One trajectory raises such questions as how citizenship increasingly closes in on itself, how there has been a man hunt for more citizens and how citizenship has become a new technology of governance and how it produces a vast army of disenfranchised labour which is cheap and unskilled. The other concern is that what will the state do with this 1.9 million people. They can be thrown out to Bangladesh, or sent to detention camps or have a fresh count. His presentation was concerned with what people do when they are de-citizenised in the process or rendered stateless. The paper described it as acts of citizenship, acts by which one tries to become citizens drawing from a series of ethnographies during the last couple of years. Samir Kumar Das highlighted the importance of the spirit of law becoming law which is always in the process of becoming. In what way does one become citizen by way of requisitioning becoming law. The spirit of law takes precedence over the literality of law.

In Assam there has been thieving of legacy data, the names of persons whose names figure in the voting list but are long dead or do not have descendents, are sold for money. Then there are groups of people who prepare the linking documents to those persons whose names figure in the voting list but who are no longer alive. This is one way of getting a person's name through legacy theft, one way of becoming a citizen but at great cost. Another act mentioned in the presentation is act of citizenship by death: families of dead people who were declared D voters or not in NRC, refused to take the bodies unless they were declared citizens. They were posthumously declared citizens. Samir Kumar Das highlighted the importance of the concept of necrology of death whereby even after death a person has a political statement to make. When people are afraid of directly voicing their claims to citizenship they resort to indirect means such as poetry. This is abject fear of articulating political claims in a way which will be intelligible to the political authority. In Assam the Miyah poets, tended a series of public apologies. The presentation ended by highlighting how democratic politics exceeds the politics of citizenship.

Discussant Anjan Chakrabarty raised some questions regarding the presentations during his comments. He observed that capitalism needs an outside to reproduce itself and the colony has served as the outside. He raised the question of how the present trends of migration, should qualify as a case of primitive accumulation for the German labour force. He raised the point that with regard to India in

1991, inequality was not an issue, the central problem was poverty. There has been a reduction in poverty. He raised the question, is it right to any longer call it neoliberalism since two of the cornerstones of neoliberalism has been in terms of governance, free trade and conservative monetary policy and after the economic crash of 2008 with new infusion of money there is a tension within neoliberalism.

In the question and answer session Bhargabi Das observed that Miyah poetry is not really an act of dissent, but it is in some way conforming to the entire Assamese chauvinistic narrative, because mostly these people are saying that, they have a problem with being called Bangladeshi but they do not have a problem with the way the popular imagination of a Bangladeshi is woven in Assam. Thus Miya poetry is actually contributing to Assamese chauvinism and not really acting as poetry of dissent. Samir Das responded by saying that his paper reads dissent not only in what the Miya poets literally assert, but in the interaction between these works of poetry and the response elicited from the mainstream Assamese elite where it has generated a great reaction.

Samir Kumar Das, Lydia Potts, Subhas Chakraborty, Ravi Palat and Anjan Chakrabarty (top left to right) in a panel on 'Migration, Citizenship and Neoliberalism'; Hari Sharma in the question and answer session (bottom)

Concluding Session

The welcome remarks for the concluding session were given by Shyamalendu Majumdar**,** *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*. Samir Kumar Das**,** briefly summed up the major themes of the workshop and conference. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury distributed certificates to the workshop participants. It was followed by a discussion on the book '*The Arc of Protection: Toward a New International Refugee Regime*' written by T. Alexander Aleinikoff & Leah Zamore.

Hari Sharma, chair of the session, opened the discussion by introducing the five chapters of the book that threw light on the refugee conventions and their role over the years in protection. He summarised the major theme of the book. The principles of protection, responsibility to solve the problems were enlisted by the speaker. Comparisons were drawn between the interesting way in which the book captured and reflected upon some of the issues discussed in the workshop and conference. The work takes stock of post-war framing of the international regime and international laws on refugee and migration.

Paula Banerjee mentioned that the book is simple in its way of dealing with the 1951 Refugee Convention, where authors put forward why passport was important at that time. The book describes the evolution of the 1951 Convention into what it has become today and whether it can lead the way forward. She emphasised that Alexander Aleinikoff starts with Hannah Arendt's portrayal of once one loses home one becomes homeless, once one loses the state one becomes stateless and then one becomes a refugee. The book then goes on to question the basic tenets of refugee law and the Convention of 1951 and 1967 Protocol in intrinsic ways. Aleinikoff in an interesting manner urges the

readers to rethink the concept of margin as a point of convergence or divergence. The book is remarkable in its critique of the principal of non-refoulement. Paula Banerjee pointed out, how author Aleinikoff articulates people's opinion on laws and conventions and although most people talk of non-refoulement as the kernel of refugee rights, it is actually not; because it is only there in Article 32 which is way after Articles 1, 2 that are about persecution. The author of the book thus contends that non-refoulement cannot be taken as the basic tenet of refugee protection. The book interestingly highlights 1951 refugee scenario and the way in which refugees within the state boundaries have the potential of being pushed out. The book thereby follows refugee research undertaken in decolonised world and the vulnerabilities associated with refugee status.

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury outlined the appeal of the book to the readers by way of its take on the international refugee protection regime. The authors have rightly pointed out that in situations of vulnerability, rights and principles coming from the 1951 Convention are no match for muscular assertion of state sovereignty. The hosting states can exclude from within and other states can from their exteriors expel out. This is a precarious situation and very often refugees are taken as foreigners or migrants or strangers on whom the state exercises power and often functions according to their national interests. The authors have rightly pointed out that over the years refugees have always been considered in as a burden. This kind of outlook of refugees as burden is what the book draws attention to. The book towards the end correctly mentions that in expanding the arc of protection there should be greater involvement of development agencies and actors beyond the humanitarian sphere in responding to and resolving displacement.

Samir Kumar Das began by saying that the question that delineates the discussion is 'what does one do with a refugee?' He pointed out that the book takes into account as a refugee as one who has been forced to leave the country of his origin and the numerous conventions, laws and protocols to deal with them. The book does not address the protracted refugee situation in any detail. The book points out that the individual should have a right to move across borders - the right to movement; but also says that rights entail responsibilities; it harps on the reciprocity between rights on the one hand and responsibility of the state on the other. By way of introducing some mechanism of enforcement, one should ensure that the state executes its responsibility. The book brings in the role of international community regarding refugee protection. The speaker stressed that, one of the highlights of the book was that the international community is not simply a combination of nation-states but probably something more than that – such as the coming together of states which have the resources to fund the refugee protection regime.

The international refugee regime consists of a collection of hostile states which create borders and would even open it in exchange of cash, with the international community probably turning a blind eye – an unacceptable scenario in itself. The international community has to have some mechanism to enforce the reciprocity of responsibilities and rights, so that rights can be protected. There are some states which are both refugee producing and refugee receiving in the global south. The book as a colonial text introduces a gradation of responsibilities – some states are responsible whereas some states are blatantly irresponsible. Samir Kumar Das pointed out that there is a need to decolonise the protection regime.

Remarks by Workshop Participants

The workshop participants mentioned that the presentations at the event have helped them in reflecting upon the themes that have emerged from their fieldwork. It has clarified concepts pertaining to their research. The opportunity of meeting and having discussions with scholars from around the world was appreciated. Some suggestions came up regarding the design of the workshop and conference which was complimented, as impressive and inclusive of diversity of content, ideas, issues and aspects of refugee crisis. A few participants stressed on the fact that the sessions running parallel could not be attended by all. Presentation of the rapporteurs' reports should have been made plenary. Since refugee crisis appears as a global situation not specific to a single country, the programme has enabled the exchange of dialogue from around the world through the representatives who attended the

event. Research methodology, research ethics related to field investigation together with the context of security issues of researchers in field were important issues highlighted by senior researchers. The appreciated the oraganisation of the field trips which introduced the participants to the history of the city of Kolkata. Participants spoke about their academic and scholarly experiences during the activities of the programme that exposed them to the world of social consciousness. Collaboration between not only North and South but also South-South should be encouraged – such as collaboration between India and African states which could help broaden the horizon of understanding migration. It was stressed that time allotment for paper presentations should be more equitable among all workshop and conference sessions.

The workshop and conference drew to a close with a vote of thanks given by Shatabdi Das.

Aurel Eschmann, Shyamalendu Majumdar, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Samir Kumar Das
(from left to right) in the concluding session of the conference

Remarks by workshop participants   *Certificate distribution ceremony*

Feedback by Workshop and Conference Participants

Professors of various institutes, researchers, project officers and research scholars alike, were of the opinion that the event aided by adding to their work and writing. In addition to specifying that the programme was informative and pertinent for policy-framing most of the participants engaged in the interactive sessions of the field trip and found the visits relevant and enjoyable. It was mentioned by participants that the learning from the lectures and presentations would help their fieldwork and interview methods (with caution on ethical issues, especially when one focuses on the marginalised sections of society). Senior researchers and professors opined that new research ideas came to the forefront expedited by interdisciplinary and detailed discussions.

Utility of the Programme and Major Takeaways

Some of the participants found that the discussions were inclined towards the formulation of policy alternatives however lacking in conclusive policies, but all of them were hopeful that the dialogues that were initiated would help address and open up paths for further exploration in case of several issues of conflict, laws and policies for refugees and protection in global north and global south. Rational voices came up with policy advocacies that looked beyond political ideologies. The takeaways for the participants can be highlighted as follows:

- There was diversity of participants and excellent opportunity of expanding networks through interface with resource persons. Many were of the view that the education they obtained from the event would help them improve and support their field work better. New outlook of looking at asylum as refuge and sanctuary materialised, particularly for young lawyers, environmentalists and activists striving for saner protection mechanisms and attainment of sustainable development goals.

- Informative presentations and enlightening comments by module coordinators and faculty and resource persons from various institutions, productive presentations and introduction to new concepts would cultivate analytical insights in case of young researchers and PhD scholars at the start of their academic careers.

- Participants were optimistic that the lectures and papers on migration, citizenship, labour in neoliberal economy and the situation of environmental refugees that a number of papers brought forth, would open doors for new research. Participants expressed their view on being more careful with acknowledgement and expression of due credit to the sources as an essence of field survey because research ethics was an important point projected by some of the speakers.

- The field trips were not only immensely interactive and explorative but also presented opportunities of learning and sharing knowledge.

Limitations and Suggestions

Some of the limitations indicated were - time allotment to each session and panel, which for most participants should have been equitable and possibly a smaller group could have helped. It was mentioned by many participants that the structure of the programme was overloaded with too many themes and the parallel sessions and public lectures (at collaborating universities) being held

simultaneously rendered most with no choice but to attend only one panel at a time. The suggestions that came up for incorporation in future events were:

- Discussion on ethical responsibilities, duties and research ethics with focus on displaced population and research target groups as well as deliberations on the protection issues and security of field investigators. Climate induced migration and climate refugees could be thought of as an individual theme for future research and/or event. South Asia-centric research should be facilitated by merging political philosophy with practical difficulties. Literature and themes of art could also be included as separate themes of discussion.

- Compilation of recent happenings (chronologically) in the form of a slide show on news coverage (video clips), newspaper cut-outs, viral images projecting an overview of recent developments on forced migration, displacement, asylum, refugee crisis and protection laws relevant to the broad theme of the workshop and conference.

- Although workshop participants were entrusted with several duties in order to integrate them as part of the core programme organising and management team (such as conducting interviews, preparing and presenting rapporteur's report, helping with registration and preparation of venue rooms, speaking on their experiences during the event), there were suggestions on integrating more activities and tasks within the programme other than presentations and lectures.

- Young academics looked forward to suggestion of readings during and after sessions. Informal interactions beyond the workshop and conference timings would be welcome. Shorter sessions of panels or lesser number of presentations and greater focus on workshop module themes.

- There are expectations that CRG as a research and advocacy platform would incorporate the research inputs of young scholars and suggestions and advice of resource persons and experts. Realisation of ground reality while working on policy advocacy and alternatives would be necessary.

Participants unanimously reflected that the event was overall well-designed and logistics and information-sharing by the forced migration desk went on without any glitches. Most of them were unable to visit CRG office and library during the course of the five-day workshop and conference; while some who had visited before or after, found the CRG library well-managed and enormously resourceful. Though there were a few shortcomings that can be worked out and improved, these were not brought to the notice of the desk or organising committee immediately upon occurrence, except the need of more efficient technical management along with arrangements for internet connectivity at the event venue. While CRG follows the policy of zero-tolerance towards discrimination and harassment in any form, the Director was thanked for having addressed one such issue with promptness as soon as it was brought to his attention. For more environment-friendly interaction, plastic bottles could have been replaced with glasses or water points. Participants expressed their satisfaction on being exposed to an enriching event.

The expertise of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group

The Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG), often popularly called as the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) organized the Fourth Annual Research Orientation Workshop and Conference on *Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees* in the last week of November 2019. The precise dates of the workshop and conference were 25-29 November 2019. The workshop organiser has an expertise in the field of migration studies in general and is internationally well known for their contribution in the domain of forced migration in particular. The MCRG has been running a winter workshop on forced migration, racism and xenophobia from 2003 onwards. The significant aspect of these workshops and conferences run by the MCRG is that it has an autonomous mode of working with both academics and peace activists. The MCRG operates through very limited and often with no funding from the state or central governments in India. Therefore, it solely depends on grants from international funding agencies and non-state institutions apart from donations from private citizens. This is a remarkable achievement of the MCRG that it has been able to carry forward several research projects along with regularly organising conferences and workshops without compromising the quality of those events. In the context of global politics being reshaped by new articulatory practices and political rhetoric of rightwing populism on the one hand and the particular policies that affect immigrants and refugees, on the other hand, it is also a timely workshop/conference.

Strength of the Conference

The Fourth Annual Workshop in November 2019 was a successful one. It was able to attract several international participants, along with various participants from several Indian states. The local participants from the city of Kolkata had been the backbone of the conference. The primary strength of the conference was the maintenance of a fine balance between the participation of existing faculty members, retired teachers and graduate students of universities, research institutes and policy initiatives from across the world. The academic quality of the conference was excellent.

The workshop and the conference were anchored around six key themes: 1) Global Protection Regime for Refugees and Migrants 2) Gender, Race, Religion and other Fault Lines in the Protection Regime 3) Neoliberalism, Immigrant Economies and Labour 4) Borderlands and Migrant Labour 5) Statelessness and 6) Laws of Asylum and Protection. The research themes were accordingly placed within six modules. A thematic lecture by an expert preceded each module. Two thematic lectures were held each day from 26-28 November. Lecture 1 was delivered by Nasreen Chowdhory followed by Paula Banerjee, Ranabir Samaddar, Byasdeb Dasgupta, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Simon Behrman. The format of the conference with thematic lectures followed by parallel module sessions was excellent. Moreover, the parallel sessions of six modules with 28 paper presenters, four panels with 12 speakers on the final day of the conference and six themed lectures along with the inaugural, plenary and concluding sessions were superbly organised.

The conference had an enormous scope of mentoring in which senior academics and established professional experts in the field of migration studies could interact with graduate students from which the latter could benefit. Moreover, the engaging discussions after each session made the conference fruitful where mutual learning among the conference participants had been a significant feature. The animated discussions both within the formal structure of the conference panels and during the informal exchanges among conference participants throughout four days of the workshop have certainly created possible conditions for fantastic camaraderie and future conversations among the conference participants. Food and accommodation at the conference venue were delicious. The other logistical support for the conference participants had been satisfactory. The conference rapporteurs must be congratulated for their patience, careful approach and efficiency.

Suggestions for future events

The opening day of the workshop was held in a different venue than the rest of the workshop. It is possible that such an arrangement was made purely because of some logistical reasons. However, for a smoother and more efficient mode of organising the conference, it would be better to concentrate on one venue. Many conference participants and speakers did not upload their full papers on the conference website. Mere abstracts are not enough for discussants of the papers and evaluators. Uploading full papers on the conference website has been the main modus operandi of several international conferences. It certainly gives some time for the discussants and evaluators to read and assess the academic quality of the paper presentations. Otherwise, it becomes difficult for the paper discussants to give an extempore mode of comments, suggestions and criticisms by instantly listening to the paper presenter. Thus, it is suggested that for future conferences and workshops, the MRCG could seriously look at this matter. There are professional academic bodies, which maintain a norm that if a paper presenter is unable to submit a full paper within a stipulated time, then that particular presenter is not invited for the next event. Keeping the deadline of submitting full papers for the conference must be the norm as it is not fair to anyone who had submitted the full paper on time.

The conference participants and themes covered a wide range of regions except for the relative absence of Latin American and East Asian participants and themes when compared to European, British, North American, South Asian, Greater Middle-Eastern and African themes and participants.

The day field trip component of the workshop was a great idea. There were two field trips in the post-lunch session on the fourth day of the workshop, one that looked at the migrant settlements in Metiabruz coordinated by Sabir Ahmed while another was a visit to Priya Manna slum in Howrah coordinated by V. Ramaswamy. Such a venture could be continued in future events. Moreover, documentary films and popular cinema on migration and refugees could be shown during the evening or after dinner on any day of the conference in future.

The local media inadequately covered the workshop and the conference as a whole in Kolkata. Given MCRG's stature and experience in the field of academic research on migration studies in the context of topical and popular debates on National Register of Citizens and the Citizenship Amendment Bill in India, publicity in the print and electronic media would not have been a bad idea. Several researchers associated with the MCRG regularly contribute in the print and television media of Kolkata. They could have taken an initiative to showcase the valuable contribution of MCRG concerning these debates in the form of serious academic research of international standard.

The conference brochure had elaborately featured the abstracts and biographical details of the conference participants. However, the MCRG is suggested to put the contact details of the conference participants, which could be useful for future conversations and collaborations among the conference participants.

The MCRG had recently organised a conference on populism and populist politics in South Asia on 31 August and 1 September 2019. Although the two conferences were held separately, in the contemporary context of the global rise of rightwing populism and xenophobia, the MCRG could think about organising a big event connecting two different themes of populism and migration instead of two separate conference themes as it was done in 2019. Moreover, the MCRG could probably explore the idea of looking at the possible future theme of social media, xenophobic campaigns and the refugee crisis. Today, at the realm of social media propaganda of the rightwing populists, the cause for the global protection of migrants and refugees are often lost. The television and print media have started following the trends of social media vilifications of minorities cutting across religion, race, and gender. In this respect, social media as a medium to disseminate xenophobic politics must be scientifically studied at a time when the world is in the transition from the pre-digital to the digital mode. Without such an approach, a viable secular-democratic and leftwing alternative to rightwing populism cannot be formulated. Given the academic and ideological orientation of MCRG and its past

conferences and events, such an approach would be a net value addition to the newly emerging and cutting edge field of digital humanities and social sciences.

The chairs of panels and modules were often lenient in managing time which affected the next session to start on time. In future events, the chairs and speakers must give due respect to time management and in effect, give due respect to other participants who might be waiting for their turn to present their papers.

There was a clash between the Public Lecture of Prof Ravi Palat that was held at Rabindra Bharati University (RBU) on 27 November which was part of the official conference programme with a panel discussion on the Migration, Displacement and Resilience at the conference venue. Given the fact that the distance between two venues are far away from each other and there could be an audience that would have liked to attend both sessions including conference participants, such a clash of events could have been avoided.

The volume of quality work that the MCRG produces each year in the form of working papers, conference reports and the *Refugee Watch* journal are testimonies of academic credibility and the clarity of thought in the MCRG for disseminating the values of sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic order along with the vision to deliver social and economic justice that the current funding agency, the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) shares. Therefore, in an overall assessment, the evaluator is convinced that the MCRG must be generously funded for future events and research projects of topical value and in the domain of MCRG's core expertise.

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N. B. *The erstwhile two-week programme has now been compressed into a five-day programme that also includes the conference. Since the public lectures were hosted by respective Universities, we had to take care of their convenience as well. Besides, the public lectures were meant for reaching a wider university community/Forced Migration Desk.*

FIELD VISITS:
KOLKATA – A MIGRANT CITY

1. Field Visit to Metiabruz, Kolkata: A Report

28 November 2019

Participants of the workshop and conference gathered in front of the Metiabruz Children's Park and were led down an alley along the premises of Bengal Town Maidan in the Graden Reach area of Kolkata by Sabir Ahmed of Pratichi Trust and the Calcutta Research Group along with members of the organisation *Know Your Neighbour*. The path led to the Suriname Ghat which was the first stop of the field trip.

Suriname Ghat locally known as Balu Ghat in Garden Reach area in Kolkata

The *Suriname Ghat*, locally known as 'Balu Ghat' has a historic past because it was from this dockyard stretch that labour migrants first boarded ships sailing to Caribbean islands, north-eastern coast of South America, Africa, Fiji islands to work at sugarcane plantations. Suriname Ghat was beautified in 2015 and a plaque was raised – with an exact replica of the statues of a woman and a man dressed as workers to commemorate the first indentured labour who had reached Suriname coast from British India. The statues of 'babba' and 'mai' (father and mother) mirror the monument in the capital city of Paramaribo of Suriname. It was from this ghat (*ghat* - translating to a flight of stairs leading to the river) that over a million Indian workers moved overseas after being recruited from West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and the former Madras presidency in the nineteenth century. In 1863 the plantations under Dutch control in Suriname were in need of plantation workers. In 1870 Great Britain ceded the Dutch colony on the Guyana coast in return of granting the right to recruit workers from British India to Suriname. The British colonies of Mauritius, Guyana, Suriname had depots in Kolkata where those recruited as indentured labour used to wait for their ships to arrive and sail overseas. The jetties were known after the name of the destination to which the ships sailed. From the jetty of Suriname Ghat workers were taken by small boats to ocean-going ships. The jetties fell out of use and faded into oblivion with indentured sailings coming to an end in the early part of twentieth century.

A ten minute walk along a trail of 1 km took the group inside the premises of *Shahi Masjid* (meaning Royal Mosque) built in 1867, ten years after Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's exile to then Calcutta from Awadh (present day Lucknow and its neighbouring region in Uttar Pradesh), where the participants were introduced to the name Metiabruz which is a corruption of 'Matiya Burj' or mound of earth relating to the fort that used to stand at the site. The mosque is one of the many structures with royal history and architecture typical to the time of the Nawab's rule that populate the narrow alleys of Metiabruz on the eastern bank of river Hugli. It was pointed out that the mosque back in the late nineteenth century had direct access to river water that was used for cleaning before prayers (the pipelines still visible) - the space now crowded by shops and buildings.

Plaque and statue commemorating the sail of indentured labour from British India 1873 onward

Workshop and Conference participants inside the Shahi Masjid premises in Metiabruz, Kolkata

The third stop was *Bichali Ghat* on the bank of river Hugli that offers morning to evening ferry service from the east bank to the west bank of the river connecting the neighbourhood of Metiabruz in the western part of the city of Kolkata to Howrah. The jetty is renowned for the transhipment of bamboos that come floating to the bank from different Indian states. There is an idol immersion and bathing ghat alongside the ferry service gate that has carcasses of immersed idols standing. The lane that led away from the jetty towards Garden Reach Road was lined by kite-making shops, textile and clothing shops, and shops selling steel and aluminium utensils and household accessories – professions that dominate the local market practised mostly by many Muslim families who had migrated to the area during Indian independence.

Bichali Ghat in Garden Reach area

Market on Bichali Ghat Road

The last stop was *Sibtainabad Imambara* (meaning residence of the imam) - the ornate building not only serves as the home of the imam (one who conducts prayer service at mosque) but is also a mausoleum housing the tombs of Wajid Ali Shah and Nawab Qadr dating back to 1856 and 1858 respectively. The workshop and conference participants engaged in an interesting discussion with the members of the Sibtainabad Imambara Trust and young activists, students and individuals involved with the maintenance of the Imambara Trust hailing from migrant families in the locality.

The group at Sibtainabad Imambara in Garden Reach

The interaction brought to light the changing socio-economic and demographic composition of local population. Residents of the neighbourhood while conversing with the participants at the Imambara highlighted the co-existence of all religious faith and workers in the organised and unorganised sectors surviving in peace and harmony. The Metiabruz-Garden Reach neighbourhood is crowded by upper caste Muslims who had settled in the area in large number during Indian independence along with rows of houses of upper and middle-class Hindus – this created pockets of neighbourhood founded on social and religious attributes that are typical to the urban sprawl and architecture in the area.

Participants interacting with students and activists from the locality

Workshop and conference participants with members of Know Your Neighbour, the Sibtainabad Imambara Trust and local residents

2. Field Visit to Priya Manna Bustee, Howrah: A Report

28 November 2019

As part of the research workshop and conference on *Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees*, a field visit to a slum called the Priya Manna Bustee took place in the afternoon of 28 November 2019. The settlement is located in Howrah in the western bank of river Hugli. The field visit was coordinated by Mr. V Ramaswamy of the Calcutta Research Group. Ramaswamy is an activist and urban planner turned business executive, with a long history of involvement in slum renewal projects in Kolkata.

Priya Manna Bustee is a century-old jute workers' slum in Howrah spread over 5.06 hectares. From the early twentieth century landless agricultural workers from Bihar and eastern parts of Uttar Pradesh migrated to Bengal to work in the jute mills in Howrah. These workers settled in slums nearby. The Priya Manna bustee is one such slum created around the time of the First World War. Today close to 60,000 inhabitants live in the slum. They are primarily Urdu-speaking Muslim households.

After the partition of 1947, the jute producing areas of Bengal which supplied raw jute for the industry became part of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). A majority of the jute mills were located in West Bengal. As supply of raw jute dried up, many jute mills in the western half of Bengal faced a shut down. Eventually over the span of the next few decades the Howrah jute mills were closed down and the areas with the industrial units were bought up for real estate development. After the factories were closed, many of the descendants of the Howrah jute mill workers have found work in the informal sector. Their slum remained and over the years the ownership of the slum land was vested in the state. The Priya Manna Bustee is now a registered slum. But building activity inside the slum has continued informally without following municipal regulations. Amenities, infrastructure and environmental condition in the slum are poor, with extreme overcrowding, inadequate drinking water and very poor sanitation, drainage and waste disposal.

A glimpse of the slum from the school window

The team of workshop participants reached the area and was taken inside a school building inside the slum called the Talimi Haq School. Here a detailed interaction with the community members was arranged. The Talimi Haq school was established in 1998. It was born out of the Howrah Pilot project. Mr Ramaswamy is one of the key architects of the Howrah Pilot project which aims at slum improvement. Under the project, young people who had some education, begun a contact programme in the area and set up the Talimi Haq School. Other than this, they have also established a women's

group, a women's micro credit bank and a health programme. Toilets and drains etc have been built in the Priya Manna Bustee under the project. Two volunteers, Amina and Binod, joined the pilot project in 1998 and emerged as the ones carrying forward the work. They have been leading the work for the last 15 years. A sewing school for women was started and they have also started a spice making enterprise for women.

The Talimi Haq school caters to children from poor households who cannot afford formal education for their children and children who work and miss out on the opportunity to attend school. It follows non formal learning and usually does not provide certificates to the students. Once they complete studying in this school, they are assisted in getting admission to usually a government school for formal education. But even after that, the students continue to come here for guidance. The school has morning shifts for small children of pre-school age and an afternoon shift for young students. In the evening vocational classes are provided to girls. The school also has a night shift for boys who could not continue their education. In the last 21 years, several thousand young boys and girl have gone through the Talimi Huq School. The school does not receive any government funding and runs on meagre resources donated by friends and well wishers. The teachers are educated and come here as volunteers working for a small stipend. Amina one of the teachers, reflected that often there is no prospect of employment after completing education. This has created disdain among the youth in the area.

Mr Ramaswamy narrating the history of the creation of the Priya Manna Bustee, Howrah

Amina discussed at length the problems faced by their community in the slum and their experience of running the school. Attitudes among the uneducated regarding female education and women's activities outside home are conservative. Family sizes are large. Amina is an educated and unmarried woman who has been working in this field. She reflected how in Muslim society it is difficult for an unmarried woman to continue in this manner and how it also creates problems for her family. Amina along with a team of female volunteers has extensively worked on family planning and maternity health in the slum. She reflected that women in the slums lack access to adequate medical facilities. Muslim women are afraid to go to government hospitals. Many of them do not speak Bengali and it creates a barrier. In government hospitals, they face maximum harassment in the labour room. Amina shared her experience of visiting a government hospital, when she chanced upon a visit to a labour room. She narrated her experience thus

> A woman was screaming with pain, the doctor slit her with a blade to remove the child… the doctor said, how can you feel pain? You are familiar with this by now, you come here every year to give birth… the woman kept screaming in pain…
> A workshop participant: without an injection (for anesthesia)?
> Amina: no injection… the situation is terrible…

Amina has tried to take such malpractice to the media, but not to much avail. Private hospitals are prohibitively expensive and women prefer child birth at home. The slum has some local doctors who do not possess a medical degree or license to practice. They are quacks. Recently many women in the area are facing problems after delivery. The doctors have been implanting IUD (Intrauterine Device) without informing the patients. Following this the women face various problems leading to infection and lack access to medical aid.

The community members also discussed issues of intercommunity relations. While the Priya Manna bustee is a Muslim settlement, there are Hindu settlements just next to it. There are multi storied apartments owned by Hindus and also a Hindu working class settlement close by. Earlier members of both communities had shared cordial relations. It was customary for them to participate in each other's festivities. For the past few years there have been some tensions.

Workshop participants and community members in Talimi Haq School, Howrah

Earlier people in the Priya Manna bustee used to participate in Holi (a Hindu festival of colour) and Diwali with their Hindu neighbours. Now visits from their Hindu neighbours have become less frequent and segregation has increased. Hindus have stopped buying candle and firecrackers from Muslim vendors during Diwali. People are living in uncertainty due to the prospect of listing of a National Register of Citizens in West Bengal. There is a frenzy to secure documents that might be required. Many of the inhabitants are trying to get school leaving certificates from the local school. The authorities of the school are cooperating with them. One of the workshop participants enquired whether any attempts have been made to build cross community solidarity. Amina replied that theirs is one such initiative to build communal solidarity. Kids from Hindu community also come to their school.

LIFE, MOBILITY & REGION MAKING IN A NEOLIBERAL WORLD: A SYMPOSIUM

Life, Mobility and Region Making in a Neoliberal World: A Symposium

23 December 2019
Venue: Hotel Pearl, Kolkata

04:30 pm – 05:00 pm: **Registration and Tea**
05:00 pm – 05:15 pm: **Inauguration**
 Chair: Samir Kumar Das, *Calcutta Research Group & University of Calcutta, Kolkata*
05:00 pm - 05:05 pm: **Welcome Address by the Chair**
05:05 pm - 05:15 pm: **Brief Reflections on CRG's Project on Global Protection of Migrants and**

Refugees: Subir Bhaumik, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

05:15 pm – 06:15 pm: **Book Launch and Discussion:**
Global Governance and India's North-East: Logistics, Infrastructure and Society, **edited by Professor Ranabir Samaddar and Dr Anita Sengupta**
Moderator: Samir Kumar Das, *Calcutta Research Group & University of Calcutta, Kolkata*
Introducing the book: Anita Sengupta, *Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata*
Discussion on the book by Bhupen Sarmah, *Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati*
Brief Remarks by Contributors:
Iman Mitra, *Shiv Nadar University, New Delhi*
Priya Singh, *Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata*
Samir K Purkayastha, *Senior Journalist, Kolkata*
Snehashish Mitra, *National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru*
Soma Ghosal, *Sri Ramkrishna Sarada Vidyamahapith, Hooghly*

06:15 pm – 06:30 pm: **Tea**

06:30 pm – 07:30 pm: **Special Lecture**
 Chair: Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*
06:30 pm – 07:15 pm: Lecture by Shalini Randeria, *Rector, Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna & Graduate Institute, Geneva*
Demographic Panics, Ethno-nationalism and the Violence of Soft Authoritarianism

07:15 pm- 07:30 pm: Remarks by Chair and Discussion

07:30 pm – 07:55 pm: **Screening of Documentary**
Calcutta: A Migrants' City

07:55 pm – 08:00 pm: **Vote of Thanks**: Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

23 December 2019

Venue: Hotel Pearl, Kolkata

Session I: Inauguration: 05:00 pm – 05:15 pm

The inaugural session was chaired by Samir Kumar Das, *Honorary Director, Calcutta Research Group & University of Calcutta, Kolkata*. Samir Kumar Das addressed this programme as the culmination of CRG's project on the Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees. He pointed out that the project consists of four segments. The first component is the field research under which CRG worked on an ethnographic study of the border area between India and Bangladesh and on issues of citizenship. The second component consists of public lectures. Four major public lectures were delivered as a part of the project. The first public lecture was delivered by Simon Behrman, *School of Law, Royal Holloway, University of London* on the theme of 'the Politics of Climate Refugees', delivered at the Jadavpur University. The second public lecture was delivered by Ravi Palat, *State University of New York, Binghamton* on the 'Rice and Nomads in Asian History' held at the Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. The third public lecture was delivered by Liza Schuster, *City University of London, London* on the theme of 'The role of formal and informal institutions and asylum seeking from Afghanistan' at the Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Other than this, a public lecture was also delivered by Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* on 'The Memories of the Forgotten' held at the Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata. The third segment of the project was a workshop and conference held between 25-29 November 2019 where major themes of the project were revisited and scholars from all over the world presented their research. The final segment of the project is the publications which included CRG's research paper series, *Policies and Practices 109-111* and *Refugee Watch: A South Asian Journal on Forced Migration*, Issue 54.

Subir Bhaumik, *Eminent Journalist*, highlighted the importance of the role of media for understanding popular opinions on various policies on the National Register of Citizens. He pointed out that for a broader understanding of ongoing churnings around citizenship, it should be analysed in the global context by placing India into the debate. Subir Bhaumik emphasised on the importance of Glo-local as a phenomenon combining both Global and Local as mutually constitutive and relevant.

Session II: Book Launch and Discussion: 05:15 pm – 06:15 pm

The inaugural session was followed by an official launch of CRG's new book titled 'Global Governance and India's Northeast: Logistics, Infrastructure, and Society' edited by Ranabir Samaddar, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* and Anita Sengupta, *Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata*. The book was released by Bhupen Sarmah of *Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati*. It was followed by a discussion on the book moderated by Samir Kumar Das. Anita Sengupta gave a brief overview of the project and the book that had begun as a collaborative project of CRG and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung under the title 'Social and Political Mapping of Popular Movements, Logistics Vision and Infrastructure of India.' She explained that the book is on governance and connectivity focusing on India's Northeast.

Bhupen Sarmah led the discussion on the book. He argued that in the introduction of the book Samaddar and Sengupta have raised crucial questions in the context of Asia, of reimagination and reconfiguration of space. The various ways through which the people of the reconstituted borders and frontiers negotiate with territorial changes and the new forms of governance they entail is a question to be considered. It primarily engages with the projected transition of the northeast region as a consequence of India's look east policy. The volume questions the idea of infrastructural governance that can be operated separately of social governance, stressing on the importance of social governance. It reflects on India's emerging concerns for southeast and south Asia.

The discussion on the book was followed by brief remarks by the contributors to the book. Iman Mitra, *Shiv Nadar University, New Delhi* elaborated on the infrastructural projects that had been carried out in the northeast and the funders behind these projects. He remarked that as a researcher he had tried to correlate these infrastructural projects as a futuristic idea and the changes it is undergoing due to the financialisation of capital. He emphasised the increasing role of private investments in these projects. He observed that in the case of countries like India and China, the state has a greater hold over the banking and finance sectors, thus the state could be defined as a strong state that can channelize these private investments.

Priya Singh, *Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata* discussed her chapter on Cartographies of connectivity in Asia and the Indian response focusing on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). She emphasised on the growing irrelevance of territories in defining nations. She put stress on the importance of digital connectivity and the connectivity in spaces as the relevant areas of connectivity.

Snehashish Mitra, *National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru* elaborated on India's act east policy and logistical and infrastructural development programs that had been carried out in the region. He emphasised on the shifts in the policies and programs after the change in government at the centre in 2014. Snehasis Mitra explained the qualitative change that could be seen among the people of the region towards the central government as the people were appreciative of the policies of this government. Looking specifically at the case of Assam, Mitra also pointed on the insecurities of the linguistic and religious minorities. He stressed on the issue of NRC by explaining the different effects of the policy for different religious groups by drawing on examples from his field study. Soma Ghosal, *Sri Ramkrishna Sarada Vidyamahapith, Hooghly* talked about her study on Moreh Tamu the frontier town of India and Myanmar. She argued that the social fabric of the area is absolutely unique and there are a lot of contestations and politics of identity. These differences and uniqueness of the frontier town do not get reflected in statistics.

Session III: Special Lecture: 06:30 pm – 07:30 pm

A special lecture was delivered by Shalini Randeria, *Rector, Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna and Graduate Institute of International and Developmental Studies, Geneva*. The lecture was titled, "Demographic Panics, Ethno-nationalism and the Violence of Soft Authoritarianism." Paula Banerjee, *University of Calcutta, Kolkata* chaired the lecture. Banerjee introduced the speaker as a brilliant administrator and a formidable academic. Hailing her as a social scientist par excellence, Banerjee described how Randeria could seamlessly travel from one the methods of history to anthropology.

At the outset of the lecture, Shalini Randeria clarified that she would not be speaking on the theme of the lecture from an Indian perspective, for instance, about the population boom in India with respect to historical mass sterilization, and electoral rules in Haryana or Rajasthan which are based on the number of children of the candidates. Instead, her lecture would focus on the situation of population, demographics and initiatives of the government associated with population.

Randeria opined that differential fertility was a major component of ethnonationalism, be it in the form of white supremacy in the United States, or the issue of nations dying out in Eastern Europe. According to her, the whole question of temporality is interesting whilst talking about the future of a nation. Central and Eastern European nations in particular voice their fear by stating that "we are dying out." She asked the audience the implication of the word "we," and what it stood for. She stated that there has been a change in the nature of thinking about territoriality. Where the old view of demographics focused on border and territory, now attention has shifted to concerns about the nature of a country's population.

The speaker confirmed that the governance of population has now become the norm of reproductive governance. Soft authoritarian regimes which either define themselves as liberal or former

autocracies, use soft authoritarianism to govern reproduction. In Europe, there is a trend of pro natalist discourses, combined with anti-immigration policies, which have given rise to a situation where governments of nation-states want to maintain the homogenous nature of their populations, as well as encourage families to have more and more children.

Next, Randeria spoke about the implications of the term "race." In western Europe, the dialogue on race has given way to a discussion on the incommensurability of cultures, where the intermixture of races is discouraged. Here she gave an example of how Swiss nationals look at Sri Lankan migrants favourable since they marry within their community, but harbour feelings of antipathy towards Yugoslavic migrants, who try to marry Swiss women. The lecturer expressed that even the soft policies of family planning revolve around population management, which irrespective of what it is labelled as, has always been about planning someone else's family. These policies selectively target the fertility of different people.

Subsequently, the discussion shifted to abortion rights. Randeria spoke about the recent developments in Poland, Turkey, Macedonia, US, Ireland, amongst others where the law is pitted against the practice of abortion. She also narrated the newest anti-abortion tendencies of doctors in these countries who cite conscientious objections as a reason to refuse abortions. This effectively juxtaposes a doctor's right of religious freedom with women's rights over their bodies in an adversarial manner. The speaker discussed Poland's "selfish non-reproduction" ideology to legitimise banning of abortions. In this light, Poland's initiative to provide child support with an increasing number of children, irrespective of the parents' income, can be termed as an anti-abortionist agenda. Moreover, in an unavoidable influence of religion on abortion policies, the Vatican has started talking about procreative rights, marriage rights, family rights and women's right to motherhood, in order to clarify its anti-abortionist stance. She also gave examples of a number of policies from different European countries which clearly draw from pro natalism, such as Denmark's "Do It For Denmark" video which focuses on Danish nationals reproducing more to populate the country. Here, sex education classes focuses more on procreation rather than contraception. Moreover, the lengths traversed to for an increase in population includes special holiday packages for Danish couples since a study suggested that Dane's have more sex while on holiday. In this context, another such policy was the one-hour break for sex during office hours.

Delving into the history of demographic s in Europe, Randeria spoke about the atrophy in population in France in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth century. At this time, keeping in mind the Italian influx in France, judicious mixing of the two races was practiced in France. The aim of this very dynamic construct was to sustain and regenerate the population of France with Italian and Polish blood. The same situation has transpired in Italy and Germany a hundred years later, with numerous empty cradles. Here, the speaker referred to the flow of Indian population into Germany. She also spoke about the Hungarian problem of out-migration and brain-drain. At this juncture, the government's strategy for demographic developments has been the inclusion of Hungarians residing in Romania in the populace of Hungary, by means of schooling and healthcare benefits. What this has done is left the borders unchanged but included Hungarians in Romania in the government's vote bank. In Hungary's case, there is a large demand for training and education of the population to combat the brain-drain. The Hungarian government has gone to lengths such as demand compensation from western European countries for this out-migration.

Rounding up the discussion, the speaker suggested that since demographic security has become a strong issue all over Central Asia and Europe, pro natalist politics enacted by presidential decrees have become rampant. She spoke about the alarming mortality rates in Russia and also Turkey's initiative to ensure demographic security, where it has declared birth control to be treason, and invested in campaigns for a minimum of four children.

Paula Banerjee summed up the discussion by pointing out that this global situation resonates with India in the present. According to Banerjee, demography and questions of natalism have existed forever, skewing the nature of justice. She said that migration was closely related to eugenics, with

fear psychosis as a result of it and vice versa. Banerjee ended on a pertinent note by declaring that the most important silent issue affecting migration was the question "who are we and who are they."

During the discussion Iman Mitra, asked that in relation to issues of underpopulation and overpopulation, how the European experience played out for India's population heavy context. To this Shalini Randeria responded by saying that the issue was never about overpopulation, but more about differential fertility rates and class based stratified reproduction. Overpopulation leaves out the crucial question of usage of resources, like how even though the population of sub-Saharan Africa is much more than that of New York City, the former would consume lesser electricity in a year, than the latter would in a day. Mr. Mitra also inquired about the relationship between law and demographic control. He expressed the opinion that the "family" has disappeared from law. Randeria stated that she was not sure when family actually "disappeared" from law. She gave her contrary opinion that in certain cases in Europe, the family does not disappear at all, instead the idea of family is doubly enforced. She gave examples of laws on child support, family law, custody and inheritance where the family was the sole basis of legislations. However, she clarified that the definition of "family" has definitely undergone changes with the passage of time.

Session IV: Screening of Documentary, Calcutta: A Migrants' City: 07:30 pm – 07:55 pm

Finally a documentary entitled "Calcutta: A Migrant's City," developed as part of CRG-RLS project on migration, 2019 was screened. The film was introduced by Rajat Roy, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*.
The film depicts different types of migration to Calcutta from the nineteenth century till now. It touches upon the earliest settlers like the Armenian and the Jews who came to Calcutta in connection with trade and commerce. Eventually the film zooms in on more recent migration of traders and labourers from the rural areas of Bengal and neighbouring states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh or Rajasthan. Through this the film brings forth a larger point that the city of Kolkata is fashioned and in turn claimed by its migrants.
The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications

Refugee Watch*: *A South Asian Journal on Forced Migration, Issue 54

- Meghna Guhathakurta, *The Imagined Terrain: Return, Citizenship and Justice in the Eyes of Rohingya Refugee Women*
- Nasreen Chowdhory, *Global Compact of Refugees and (dis)regard for Global South*
- Simon Behrman, *Asylum in South Asia: The Indian Experience in a South Asian Context: Laws of Asylum and Protection*
- Yordanos S. Estifanos, *Irregular Migration in a Neoliberal Order: Ethiopian Migrants to South Africa*
- Shatabdi Das, *Labour in Borderland: Icchamati River in North 24 Parganas*
- *Reflections on Auto-ethnography*
  Ranabir Samaddar, 'Memories of the Forgotten'

Policies and Practices, Issues 109-111

- Samir Kumar Das "Citizens, Governance and Democratic Politics," *Interrogating Citizenship: Perspectives from India's East and North East, Policies and Practices 109*
- Aditi Mukherjee "Migration and the Evolution of a 'City of Protection': Kolkata from 1939-1960," *Interrogating Citizenship: Perspectives from India's East and North East, Policies and Practices 109*
- *Yordanos S. Estifanos "Auto Ethnography as a Research Method: Lessons from Field Research in South Africa's Informal Economy," Policies and Practices 110*
- *Byasdeb Dasgupta "Borderland and Migrant Workers," Borderlands, Migration and Labour, Policies and Practices 111*
- *Anoushka Roy "The In-Betweens: An Enquiry into the Quality of Life of Self-Employed North Easterns in Kolkata, India," Borderlands, Migration and Labour, Policies and Practices 111*

An article on the Fourth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference on Global Protection of Migrants and Refugees was published in *Kolkata Korcha, Anandabazar Patrika* on 25 November 2019.

An article was published in *Anandabazar Patrika Digital* on 19 December 2019, titled '*Sharanarthider Pashe Daranor Anyo Galpo Suniye Gelen Olga*' on City Plaza movement.
Read full article at: https://www.anandabazar.com/calcutta/olga-lafazani-visits-kolkata-with-the-message-to-support-refugees-dgtl-1.1084823

AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES

The Limits of Protection: An Interview Series

A series of video interviews were conducted with international experts on migration who participated in the workshop and conference on the *Global Protection of Migrants & Refugees,* 25-29 November 2019. In the discussion the idea of protection was problematised from different angles.

1. **Politics of Aid and Protection in Afghanistan: An Interview with Orzala Nemat,** *Director, Afghanistan Research & Evaluation Unit, Kabul*.

    The discussion centred on how various international actors and aid workers in Afghanistan often serve their own strategic interests in the name of providing protection to war victims. Interview conducted by Madhurilata Basu, *Sarojini Naidu College for Women, Kolkata*

2. **Refugee Squat in City Plaza, Athens: An Interview with Olga Lafazani,** *University of Thessaly, Volos*

    Olga Lafazani, one of the main coordinators of the refugee squat in City Plaza, Athens discussed how they planned a large-scale housing squat for refugees in City Plaza in Athens and how it became a focal point for refugee solidarity movement in the region. Interview conducted by Rajat Ray, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*.

3. **Labour Migration in South Africa: An Interview with Yordanos Estifanos,** *Independent Researcher, Addis Ababa*

    Yordanos Estifanos discussed his research on labour migration in South Africa and the vagaries of the informal labour market. Interview conducted by Sarah Nandi a Fulbright scholar affiliated to the *Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata*.

4. **Protection of Women in Armed Conflict in Bangladesh: The Making of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: A talk by Meghna Guhathakurta,** *Research Initiatives Bangladesh, Dhaka.*

    Meghna Guhathakurta deliberated on the refugee protection regime in Bangladesh and stressed the need for gender sensitive protection mechanisms.

A Documentary Film - "Calcutta: A Migrants' City"

Samata Biswas

A documentary on theme of 'Calcutta, A Migrant City' has been filmed. Like any other major megacity, Calcutta, with more than three hundred years of recorded history, is a city of the migrants. It is a city of migrants in a sense that people who came and settled here for centuries had gradually built the city bit by bit. Even if some of the migrant communities have now dwindled to a trickle, they left behind their imprint by lending to the city their culture, architecture, cuisine and many more things. While it is generally argued that British trader Job Charnock first came to Calcutta in 1693 and later on established the eastern headquarters of the British East India Company in the three villages of Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata and many attribute to him the credit for founding the city. Sutanuti was already the centre of a flourishing textile trade, controlled by the Seths and the Basaks of Gobindapur, who had themselves migrated there after the decline of the ancient Bengali trading post, Saptagram or Satgaon. Were the British then the first ones to migrate from relatively far away? The Armenians would disagree, and in fact, the Church of Holy Nazareth (set up in 1724) on Armenian Street, bears a tomb marked 1630, which, if indeed true, posits the Armenians as the first settlers in Calcutta, way before Charnock and his men.

The migrant history of Calcutta needs to be different, drawing on the influences of people who came and lived here, not always people we know about. Migration, in Calcutta as elsewhere, has always been linked to labour. In Calcutta, more specifically, the labour literally required to build a city, to plan its sanitation and conservation, to supply workers to the jute mills and the wholesalers at Burraabazar. In 1921, 41.6 percent people of the Calcutta Urban Agglomeration were found to be migrants, where did they all come from and what were they doing in the city?

Tracing back the history of the city, the film, while mentioning the various communities, belonging to various races of diverse regions and countries, that came and settled in the city in passing, attempts to give a brief history of them through photos, visuals and archival documents sourcing from British period to the present. In his *An Anglo Indian Domestic Sketch* published in 1849, J. Colesworthy Grant describes Chitpore and Burrabazarr as follows:

...the Burrabazar, a mart tailed on to the north end of the China bazar and occupied and visited by merchants from all parts...articles too numerous to mention are either sold or bought by natives from the countries where they are obtained, who together with visitors, travellers and beggars form a diversified group of Persians, Arabs, Jews, Marwarees, Armenians, Madrasees, Sikhs, Turks, Parsees, Chinese, Burmese and Bengalee.

This list, although not exhaustive, in as much as the 'native' Bengalis are listed last and no mention is made of Colesworthy Grants's fellow British, points at a cosmopolitan Calcutta, a city of migrants. The film tried to capture and narrate the lives of these migrants and also their contribution in making Calcutta what it is today. Special mention was made of the Armenians, Chinese, Jews and the Parsees. Circular migration and the permanence of poverty provide one of the iconic Calcutta images: the hand-pulled rickshaw. The *tana*-rickshaw today is almost entirely manned by migrant workers. Old and middle aged men, who rent their rickshaws from the owners - the rickshaw puller from Bihar, Jharkhand or Odisha is almost inevitably trapped in a cycle of poverty, pulling a rickshaw at Calcutta to send money to their native villages, sleeping in crowded rooms or on the rickshaws themselves, and acting as everything from emergency ambulance to flood relief service every time North Calcutta is in

crisis. His counterparts may be met nearby, working in Posta, drawing the ubiquitous *thela* - a vehicle named after the action of pushing, the bamboo structure carrying everything from sacks of cement to garlic to pulses to iron rods - the cheap and sustainable transportation that probably keeps Calcutta affordable for people like me. They come from villages that have seen a lack of rain, or floods, or from such impoverished regions that the backbreaking labour of Calcutta seems lucrative in comparison. Almost always they are also workers who would have been forced into caste specific occupations back in their villages, but an escape to Calcutta doesn't change that facet more often than not. Take the case of conservancy workers employed by the Calcutta Municipal Corporation - the setting up of the colonial city also needed a dedicated workforce that would clean its sewers, dispose of its dead and sweep its streets. Often these migrant workers are those who have been coming and working in Calcutta for generations - at Darbhanga Colony, grandfather, father and grandson live in the same room, earning money to take back home—the only contact with home being modern smart phones and seasonal trips to home, often to help out in the harvest. In a 2016 interview, Chavasa Thurza, a conservancy employee, associated with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation commented, "This city is built on the labour of people from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Odisha…all these conservancy employees you see, all these people in these hovels, sweepers, cleaners, scavengers, electricians, mechanics, crane operators - these people from the Chhotanagpur plateau have been building the city since the time of their great grandfathers".

The tannery business originally run by the Chinese and now taken over by other migrant capital, could flourish because of the leather workers who were brought in from villages to carry out this profession - giving birth unfortunately to swear words in Bengali where the name of the caste itself becomes casting an aspersion. Gandhi is credited to have written to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation for housing to be provided for sanitation workers--but in a cruel irony that testifies the caste ridden nature of Bengali society, the lane housing sweepers became soon identified by the profession and avoided by the *bhadralok* samaj. There are several Harijan bastis in Calcutta that also testify to the origins of sanitation work here and its links to migration.

Places also get marked by the long history of migration and its association with labour - case in point being Suriname Ghat, which was a point of departure for India's indentured labour migrants (from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Bengal) to Suriname during late nineteenth and early twentieth century to work as labourers in sugarcane plantations. A 1966 report claims that non-Bengali migrant labour made up 71percent of the workforce in Jute mills, 58 in textile and 73 percent in iron and steel. The Film 'Calcutta A Migrant City' is all about the fact that the city is not built and maintained by the local people alone. Rather, contrary to such claims, it asserts that it is the migrants who through their labour have been building and maintaining the city.

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THE RESEARCH COLLECTIVE

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