



GLOBAL PROTECTION OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

5th Annual Research & Orientation
Workshop & Conference
16-21 November 2020

A Report

Calcutta Research Group (CRG)
in collaboration with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS), Institute
for Human Sciences, Vienna (IWM) and several other
universities and institutions in India

Migration flows have gained increasing complexity, which indeed is one of the main marks of the contemporary time. Refugees, asylum seekers, labour migrants, ecological refugees, stateless groups—all are rolling into one massive and mixed phenomenon signifying population shifts in global geo-political and geo-economic contexts. In this context, it has become even more important to study labour flows and labour control systems regulated by institutions, infrastructures, processes, and practices. Equally important is to study the new formations of space and time affected by footloose families, transformation of cities, existence of diasporas, global commodity chains including care chains, and migrants' modes of encountering borders, boundaries, immigration control systems, surveillance systems, interception methods, etc. This situation—marked by (a) massive and mixed flows and (b) transformation of migration dynamics—puts the old strategies of protection at odds with the evolving scenario. Categories of protection are found to be of decreasing relevance. The implications cut across legal, national, and administrative lines of protection. It has become worse due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. People all over the world not only lose their lives due to the disease but also due to massive joblessness, lack of public health facilities, and massive financial crisis.

The current challenges to the global protection system for refugees and migrants along with new protection issues concerning the UN initiated two global compacts for the protection of refugees and migrants. The states, along with different global agencies, tried different protection measures to fight the pandemic. But the treatments or protections they have taken for migrants and refugees are questioned from different aspects. Different research organisations and civil society initiatives have pointed out the discrepancies and loopholes in the interventions of global and state-based agencies regarding different protection measures (such as public health, law and order, etc.). The inequalities related to gender, race, caste, and other vulnerabilities have become more prominent and the neo-liberalist agendas of the states get a new dimension during this pandemic crisis. Several discussions have been organised to address these problems. Several books, reports, and policy papers have been published. Calcutta Research Group (CRG) has also published a book (*Borders of an Epidemic*) and a policy brief (*Burdens of an Epidemic*) to address pertinent questions on the global protection regime during the pandemic.

In this background, the Calcutta Research Group, in collaboration with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, organised a research and orientation workshop and international conference on 'Global Protection on Migrants and Refugees' from 16-21 November 2020 in Kolkata. The orientation programme had the larger Asian situation in mind, while the focus remained on South Asia and the neighbouring countries around the region. CRG has the experience of running an annual winter workshop for twelve years on issues of forced migration, racism, and xenophobia. Every year the course had a focal theme (Please see the past programmes section of the CRG website for details: <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/winter.asp>). The key theme for this year's workshop and conference was 'Global Protection on Migrants and Refugees'. It began with a four-day workshop from 16-19 November 2020 (preceded by three months of online interactions between workshop coordinators and participants),

which was followed by two days of plenary conferences on 20-21 November 2020. The workshop engaged with the new realities of migration as well as various approaches to the theoretical, methodological, and legal challenges to grasp the complex phenomenon of migration. The workshop and the conference provided a space for debate and exchange between academia and practice and stimulated discussions between scholars, legal practitioners, media activists, representatives of what is called “civil society”, and personnel belonging to governments and international humanitarian agencies.

The workshop and conference revolved around six research themes:

Module A: Global protection of refugees and migrants with emphasis on protection in the time of a pandemic;

Coordinator: Nasreen Chowdhory, Assistant Professor, University of Delhi.

Module B: Migrants and the epidemic: Gender, race, and other vulnerabilities;

Coordinator: Samata Biswas, Assistant Professor, The Sanskrit College and University.

Module C: Neoliberalism, migrant labour, and the burden of the epidemic;

Coordinators: Arup Kumar Sen, Associate Professor, Serampore College, & Iman Mitra, Assistant Professor, Shiv Nadar University.

Module D: Statelessness with emphasis on de facto statelessness and the rightlessness of sections of population;

Coordinator: K.M. Parivelan, Associate Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

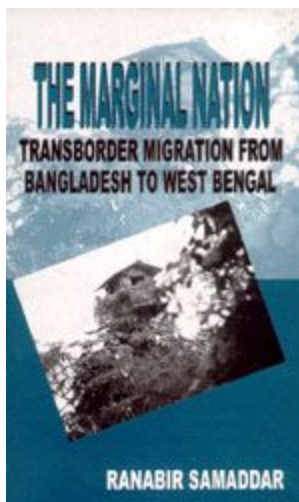
Module E: Legal regimes of protection and the time of the pandemic;

Coordinator: Oishik Sircar, Associate Professor, Jindal Global Law School.

Module F: Ethics of care, public health, and the migrants and refugees

Coordinator: Paula Banerjee, Professor, University of Calcutta.

INAUGURAL SESSION



The inaugural session of Calcutta Research Group's flagship workshop on refugees and migrants was conducted between on 16th November, 2020. The session was chaired by Samir Kumar Das, professor at the University of Calcutta and Honorary director of Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata. The welcome address was presented by Byasdeb Dasgupta, professor at Kalyani University and the President of Calcutta Research Group. This session included an inaugural panel discussion on Twenty Years of The Marginal Nation. This was moderated by Samir Kumar Das. The panellists in this session included Paula Banerjee, professor at Calcutta University and a member of Calcutta Research Group, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chowdhury, professor at Rabindra Bharati University and member of Calcutta Research Group, Samata Biswas, professor at The Sanskrit College and University and treasurer of Calcutta Research Group, and Ranabir Samaddar, author of The Marginal Nation and Chair of Calcutta Research Group. Lastly, Professor Nasreen Chowdhury, University of Delhi and Vice-President of Calcutta Research Group, also attended

the panel discussion virtually, owing to her coming down with COVID-19 just a few days before the sessions began.

At the welcome address, Byasdeb Dasgupta began by recalling how the Calcutta Research Group began eighteen years ago as an informal gathering of a few friends. Knowledge production, dialogue and the insights emerging from that dialogue constitutes the primary source of knowledge; dissemination of knowledge and training; and acquisition of policy relevant knowledge were mentioned as key attributes of CRG. Furthermore, CRG is also concerned with the exploration of pedagogy on Forced Migration, and bringing out comprehensive print and digital publications.

Samata Biswas elaborated on the accomplishments of CRG in the past few years and emphasized the reach of the print journal 'Refugee Watch' and the online version, termed Refugee Watch Online. She pointed out that in the Winter Workshop conducted annually by CRG during the last three years, global protection emerged as the predominant theme. The two publications made during the time of pandemic- Borders and Burdens of an Epidemic, have been instrumental in shaping this year's program. She elaborated on film screenings as a part of each module to develop a nuanced audio-visual understanding on the conceptual issues addressed by each module.

The session then proceeded to the discussion on Ranabir Samaddar's book, The Marginal Nation as a part of the panel discussion- 'Twenty Years of The Marginal Nation'. Samir Kumar Das opened the discussion by ruminating as to whether he would be a devil's advocate in considering if the book, published twenty years ago, is now past its shelf life. He projected three new trajectories for the book, to which he asked the panellists to respond. The first was that, till about the time of the book's publication, forced migrants were looked upon as victims requiring humanitarian assistance. The book discounted this myth by establishing that they have agency as they were surviving, though through struggle. The second trajectory was to consider the paradigmatic shift in the discourse of border studies enabled by the book. It emphasized that borders represent a new segment of political creatures that need to be dealt with separately. The third trajectory was on governance and nation-state. The Nation is not endowed with common attributes, and the state is continuously called upon to create the fiction of a nation such that the state has to

re-fictionalize constantly. He said that all these three established trajectories of the book have now evolved a lot.

Paula Banerjee commented that the book had and continues to inspire her. For her, the book established that it is not so much the citizens who form the nation, but the aliens. The book also brought about a methodological approach where archives were no longer looked upon as stuffy rooms, but points from which narratives of human experiences emerged. The nation is not just transactional or ethical, it is both because ethicality is ultimately transactional.

Nasreen Chowdhury opined that the book is phenomenal at many levels. It asserted that migration creates spaces and they consist of not just citizens, but aliens as well. She addressed the question of whether the nation is still marginal. But the state is not marginal, it has become all-encompassing and powerful. When a state contains and controls its population and their movement, we cannot possibly say that state is marginal any more. When we juxtapose today's scenario with the context of the book, we can say that the state is well situated and entrenched in individuals, such that it has become a supra-powerful body.

Samir Kumar Das opined that panellists are clearly divided. Nation has indeed become strong due to the generous sponsorship of the state. Reflecting on the discussion of earlier participants, he mentions that we need to look beyond the binary of transactional nation or ethical nation, by telling the story of a gynaecologist who was ostracized by his fellow society people for supervising the birth of an illegal Bangladeshi child. So, in this scenario, the doctor chose ethics. He also said that even though border guarding technologies had become very intrusive, economies were refusing to adhere to or to be bound by rules of the nation as economies are constantly on the move. One can say that the book still pushes us to discover the element of agency that is otherwise abject.

Finally, Ranabir Samaddar himself spoke on his 20 years of journey of the Marginal Nation. He said that John Berger's work, 'Ways of Seeing' was instrumental in delineating the structure of his book. He said that how one writes determines what they write. So also, he did not start the book with the concept of a marginal nation, rather the title evolved towards the end of the book. Hence there is no single abstract point from which you can see and evaluate whether the nation is marginal or not. It was not conceived as a structural analysis of migration, yet in looking at the world of migration it becomes a book of the migrants. The sheer act of mobility and movement was the subject of the book. Something as mobile as migrants were captured mainly through the techniques of writing. Over 900 questionnaires collected from the field were read and reread multiple times. He learnt from them and those experiences formed the basis of the book. His main point of contention was- "If I was trying to capture a world, how would I capture it?" To that end, he travelled the length and breadth of Bengal to capture the world of migration in its entirety. He discovered that the nation's history is constructed within the world of labour. What is displaced by one is that goes on to constitute the other. In that sense, there is a mutual displacement of both nations and migrants. But he deliberately engaged in the book on the categorical distinction between Refugee and a migrant, though the theorization was not intended to be particularly post-colonial. He gave a closing remark that 20 years later now, "Marginal nation is like a runaway daughter". This was in response to a question as to whether he would change anything about the book. But when a daughter runs from home, at one point, all you can do is love her and let her go.

Workshop

Module A: Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants with emphasis on Protection in the time of a Pandemic

The politics of human mobility/immobility, access and denial of protection to the migrants, and overall state governance during the pandemic were some of the central themes covered by the module. The module's presentations tried to examine the ways in which the pandemic has conjured a new politics of mobility/immobility impacting migrants and refugees adversely.

“How Protected are the Refugees: A Comparative study of the contemporary states of Germany and India in light of the Geneva Convention, 1951”

The first presenter of this Module was **Kusumika Ghosh**. She began the discussion on refugee protection by making a comparative study of the contemporary India and Germany under the light of the Geneva Conventions, the cornerstone of which is the principle of Non-Refoulement (Art 33) which prohibits states to return individuals to a country where they would be at risk of serious human rights' violations. She unfolds some visible exclusion of the conventions, one being that it does not take note of gendered nuances of the refugee. She moves on further to provide reasons for choosing a comparative study between India and Germany reflecting on their respective partition experiences, the differences of execution of the protection regime- experiences of a country which is signatory to the Geneva Conventions (Germany) and one which is not (India). As a case study she looks into the Syrian refugees in Germany and the Rohingya Refugees in India from 2015-2017, basing on the reports of the UNHCR to describe the experiences of the two groups in their host countries. She makes an argument that even if the ratified convention is not perfect; it is still faring better than an ad-hoc system. India, not being a signatory to the International Refugee Convention, becomes more prone to discriminatory treatment of the Rohingya refugees and lack of adequate protection for them as compared to Germany which is a signatory and hence obliged to grant the right of residence to the politically persecuted. She culminates the discussion by raising an important question- is it better to sign a document which is perhaps lacking in many aspects, or should there be ad-hoc mechanisms that are developed and adhered to as per the demands of the situation?

The module coordinator, Dr. **Nasreen Chowdhory** advised Ghosh to focus more on the 1967 Protocol related to the Status of the Refugees as they contained the provisions which the 1951 Convention lacks. In the context of India, it is the 1967 protocol which is more relevant.

COVID-19 and Mixed Migration in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: “Crisis within a Crisis”

The second presenter of this module was **Sabahat Ambreen**. She discussed the complexities of mixed migration in the Eastern Mediterranean region; i.e., the entry of irregular migrants into Greece, Bulgaria or Cyprus from/through Turkey and reflected on how the pandemic has affected irregular migrants travelling through this route. When serious global and national challenges hit a country, such as an economic recession or the COVID-19 pandemic specifically, displaced people's welfare is not prioritized like the welfare of the proper citizens of that country. Under the light of the EU-Turkey deal, she focused on how the two countries (Greece and Turkey) despite being signatories to the 1951 and 1984 Conventions and the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of the Refugees, are turning a blind eye to these obligations. Instead of putting the migrant issue on the table, the authority is more concerned regarding its own political gimmicks and selfish agendas.

She raised an important question- whether violence taking place at the borders are isolated incidents, or are they a part of a wider political agenda of the Greek and Turkish authorities? She continued the discussion by reflecting on the existing anger of the locals towards undocumented migrants. Refugees and migrants risk being stigmatized or becoming the targets of violence by the local citizens, especially if COVID-19 pandemic worsens and the economy falls further. She briefly discussed the research paper on “Bio geopolitics of COVID-19: Asylum-Related Migrants at the European Union Borderlands” which sums up the real scenario of how systematically COVID-19 is being used for political gains, and how migrants are promoting new political identity by gaining international attention for their cases and creating solidarity among themselves.

Dr. Chowdhory asked Ambreen for a little more focus on the role of the state in managing complex flows. She also suggested highlighting the experience of South Asian refugees particularly the Rohingyas and finding a point of convergence between their case and the Syrian migrants. She opined that exploring the South Asian context will also allow for broader discussions on the migrant issue.

Film screening - *Refugees at home: Inside India's Migrant Crisis*

In the next part of the session, there was a brief discussion on a 45 minutes documentary by the Quint shown to the participants. It portrayed the grim reality of the plight of migrant labourers in India in the wake of the pandemic and the difficulties they faced due to stringent lockdown. Different sectors of the economy where migrant workers are employed were explored like the fisheries, construction and women in the household sector. Comments made by participants included the politics of mobility where the state is uniformly institutionalizing a curtailment on this mobility during lockdown which is done in a differentiated way. The workers in health sectors, banks were allowed to go for work as their functionality is crucial on a daily basis. The poor migrant labourers however lacked this privilege of earning wages during lockdown which had a severe impact on them as well as their families' overall well-being.

Module B: Migrants and the Epidemic: Gender, Race and Other Vulnerabilities

The panel presentations in Module B consisted of four research papers wherein the participants discussed topics that navigated through the labyrinth of administrative responsibilities and failures, state regulations, exclusionary nature of policies concerning refugees, and pandemic induced social conditions impacting the vulnerable exiled population in various ways. Different deliberations merged seamlessly in a way that highlighted the supremacy of state over its populace, ultimately leading to the marginality of certain vulnerable sections. The discussions were surrounded around the impact of Covid-19 which resulted in a nationwide commotion of such scale that transformed the health emergency into a critical law and order issue. The presentations were followed by screening of Tom Shephard's documentary *Unsettled*, portraying the struggle of four LGBTQ refugees from Syria, Congo and Angola, all seeking asylum in America.

Challenges and Opportunities before Local Governments: Covid-19 and State of Affairs for Migrants

The first presenter, **Ankita Singh**, through her presentation, talked about interlinkages between the expanding urban economy of India and the indispensable role played by migrant workers in the process of urban advancement. To begin with, she underlined the interconnectedness between urbanization and migration, specifically the rural-urban migration and made an attempt to explain about the contributing factors. Further, she traced the challenges that local administration faces vis-à-vis the influx of migrant population and possible solutions for those

challenges, citing examples from real-life experiences. The presentation concluded by inspecting the exclusionary patterns latent in the Indian urban planning processes and how they may be altered to mitigate the plight of migrant workers in urban areas and make the cities actually inclusive.

Gendered Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Migrant Labour and Contesting Citizenship

Somali Bhattacharyya's presentation was a granular examination of the exodus of migrant population during the abrupt imposition of lockdown by the union government. At the outset, she talked about Agamben's Homo Sacer and attempted to draw a parallel between - Agamben's Bios i.e. a legitimate social/political life and Zoe, i.e. the animal life - and the migrants and citizens, who, under the sovereign power, can either remain within the political structure or be left out to die. In this framework, she examined the gendered biases in the popular narrative during the lockdown and the erasure of female migrant workers from the mainstream media coverage, barring a few stories. Adopting the medium of secondary research analysis, Somali brought out a dozen of lost stories of female migrant workers and the hardships suffered due to the lockdown. She pertinently questioned the hetero-normative sense of inclusion and exclusion and the sense of citizenship.

Socio-Economic Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Refugee Women in India

Taking forward the module theme, **Gurmeet Kaur** in her presentation talked about the deteriorating conditions of refugee women during the pandemic. She significantly highlighted the scarcity or near absence of datasets which create obstacles in conducting any meaningful analysis of issues and concerns of refugee women. She emphasized on the triple burden that the refugee women have to endure by being poor, refugees, and women. She examined an interplay of these three distinct identities. By inspecting the socio-economic impact of pandemic, Gurmeet brought forward the structural as well as linguistic barriers that have added to the already miserable conditions of refugee women. In her conclusion, she emphasized on the need for provision of basic amenities to refugee women and a team of front-line workers to stop community transmissions of covid-19.

Enduring Epidemic in Exile: A Study of Tibetan Refugees

Surbhi Mehta, in her presentation, discussed the complex maze of challenges that the Tibetan refugees in India have negotiated and continue to negotiate during the pandemic. By talking about the condition of different refugee groups like Afghans, Sri Lankan Tamils, Rohingyas, Surbhi analysed the distinct positionality of Tibetan Refugees in India. She stressed that the refugee landscape is further complicated by a lack of comprehensive refugee policy in South Asia in general, and in India in particular. Highlighting various themes like socio-economic challenges, xenophobic experiences and identity challenges that the Tibetans have to face, she discussed their experience during the pandemic by stressing on the precariousness of their existence due to lack of property rights. Further, she critically scrutinized the forbearance of Tibetan refugees in these challenging times and suggested that other refugee groups also need similar level playing fields to emerge as important players that bridge the gap left by lack of proactive involvement of the host governments, specifically in the present context of Covid-19.

Wrapping up the first part of the module, Dr Biswas brought out the interrelations between all the presentations made and underlined the significance of divulging the narratives, now more than ever, in context of current challenges that have brought to light the farce promises of inclusivity at different levels and the state's omission in addressing various elements of concerns for migrants and refugees, especially women.

Film Screening - *Unsettled: Seeking Refuge in America*

The documentary is an attempt towards bringing out the fear, trauma and social/state sponsored violence towards the LGBTQ community in parts of Africa (Congo and Angola) and Syria. The documentary captured the struggles and endurance of four refugees seeking asylum in America given the extreme conditions in their homelands where they are exposed to repeated verbal, physical, sexual abuse and death threats. The film revolves around Subhi Nahas, from Syria where ISIS are shown actively kidnapping, torturing and honor killing gay men, Junior who is an HIV+ homosexual from Congo where being gay is such a taboo that he undergoes physical assaults while being in a police station; Cheyenne and Mari who are a lesbian couple from Angola where they are living under potential danger. The violence is covert at times- their dog is killed by their neighbour and overt on occasion, where one of their own mothers tries to kill them by poisoning their food.

The film appears to be a tool of establishing the ultimate hegemony of America as a saviour nation that pulls people out of their misery. With the help from active community members in America, who are refugee advocates, activists and hosts, these four individuals migrate to San Francisco, USA seeking asylum. Subhi comes across as white, fairly good looking male, which allowed him access to some great opportunities and he, at a point, becomes a well-known poster boy for global LGBTQ activism. Similarly, the lesbian couple, who dismantled the hetero-sexual norms, do struggle with initial instability, however eventually manage to get a green signal from the Homeland Securities in USA and get married and settle down in Las Vegas. Yet, Junior with his androgynous looks and a HIV+ profile, suffered harshest obstacles and the entire process of refuge seemed exceedingly difficult for him. Towards the end all the four individuals have been shown to have settled in their new life, far away from the fear and excruciating loneliness with which they survived each day, in their respective homeland.

To conclude, the overall session resonated with the broader theme of the module, casting light on different migrant vulnerabilities that have perhaps worsened due to the pandemic. Pedagogy of Migration and Refugee Studies in Post-Colonial Context

Module C: Neoliberalism, Migrant Worker and the Burden of the Epidemic

In this module the module coordinators **Arup Kumar Sen** and **Iman Mitra** introduced the basic idea of Neo-liberalism with the interconnection that shapes the discourses and practices of migrant labour under the theme. The module also discussed the debates on neoliberalism. The papers under this module focussed on various aspects of the migrant labour community under the neoliberal regime and the crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. The presentations were followed by a documentary *Shramajeevi* by Tarun Bhatiya and a discussion on the summary of the report on abandoned migrant workers in Pune city during lockdown.

Locating the migrant in the Urban during COVID-19 Pandemic: A view from Policy and Practice

The first presenter for this session, **Aravind Unni**, stated that his work would be based on both practice and academics, owing to his being an active urban practitioner who had only started engaging with the migrant question during the lockdown. Through this paper he aims to understand the migrants in the cities via numerous statistical analysis, in relation to their lived realities in the urban spaces and what they had to bear in the times of the pandemic. The presentation began with a quick data analysis of who are migrants, what are the key metanarratives and numbers for this population and how are the nature of their vulneri. This captured the essence of the ten crore strong vulnerable population that might have been the most

impacted in our cities during the lockdown. The presenter shared three stages of lockdown, where migrants were at the receiving end of a state that brutalized and dehumanized them, and further entrenched its powers through labour law dilutions. While it was recognized that civil society played a very critical role in the initial days of the lockdown, the presenter shared practices and standardization that revealed the civil society to be plagued, making its interventions also biased and coloured, thereby failing to address the reality of labour insecurity and migrant lives. Aravind argued that the ideas of denying agency of workers, non-accepting of the migrant movements and flows; criminalizing the informal networks; arbitrary cut-off dates; notion of rural bliss and non-inclusion as a theme in most predominant urban development schemes. Thereby the investigation of the existing urban policies of state welfare before the lockdown laid bare the inbuilt bias against the migrants in the Urban.

The module coordinators' comments were directed towards the slippery slope of how not to view the state and civil society as distinct. Sometimes both are the same, and may exchange their roles and positions.

Effects of Migration in Nautanki performances: the role of media in the Bhojpuri popular stage performances in Bihar

In his presentation, **Rajat Kanti Sur** looked at the evolution of the socio economic and gender relations in Bhojpuri natak due to the new trends in labour migration since 1990. He addressed the challenges faced by the natak performers after the emergence of new electronic media and Bhojpuri cinema in the post 1990s. He reflected on how the emergence of globalisation and free economic policies in India transformed the socio cultural lives of the migrant labours manifested through the nautanki performances. The new open market changed the concept of labour and labour migration. Economic liberalization created more job opportunities in India and abroad and a large number of village youth aspired to these new jobs. The central research questions addressed through his presentation encompassed the impacts of the trends of migration after 1990s on natak in Bihar, evolution of gender relations in the natak and its effects among the audiences and impact of the cultural changes in the workplace of a migrant labour and the role of state censorship policies in natak performances.

The moderators underlined how Sur has attempted to understand the cultural dimensions of migrant workers in a neo liberal framework that can further contribute to the emergence of a particular subaltern migrant public sphere raising questions of how much it would be contested. It also reflected on the emergence of queer consciousness owing to the cultural practices shaping migrant labour.

Philosophical Concerns of Neoliberalism: Interrogating the Role of the State in relation to the vulnerable socio economic groups specifically Migrant labour

In her paper, **Zeba** attempted to analyse the theoretical assumptions of neo liberalism and the dilemmas associated with the same while contextualising it in terms of the socio economic challenges of migrant labour. Her paper underlined that owing to various contradictions within the neo liberal framework, the possibility of securing Justice for the poor and marginalised presents a dismal picture. She raised the question as to the possibility of reconciliation between aspects of neo liberalism with emphasis on economic growth, individual autonomy, and the market logic, and aspects of democracy in creating an egalitarian, sustainable and inclusive public sphere with a welfare role of the state. She explained the fundamental assumptions of neoliberalism in terms of being driven by concerns of self-governance, individual choice, and the overwhelming role of the market in allocating resources and driving economic growth. She also reflected on the

role of the state within the neo liberal framework manifested as an important stakeholder in the maintenance of the market order facilitating privatisation and disinvestment. Further, she reflected on the contradictions that emerge out of the neo liberal regime that has implications for the various societal realms. She underlined the contradictions of neo liberalism delineating the disjunction that it creates between the economic and the social realm where the economic overpowers the social having implications in terms of creating more adhocism, contractual labour, job dismissals and privatisation of public services. Therefore, it works as a political project where democracy and market are seen as competitors and not partners. Contextualising the philosophical concerns of neo liberalism in terms of migrant labour and their social economic challenges, she underlined the role of the state as being a partner of the neo liberal project demonstrated in its handling of the Migrant labour crisis in the wake of a pandemic. She reflected that the neo liberal project proves inadequate in addressing the concerns of social justice for the marginalised migrant labour. The question and exploring the possibility of whether the neo liberal economic and political framework provides scope of ensuring social justice for the marginalised runs throughout her paper while she talks of redefining the relationship between the individual and the state manifested in the politics of responsibility, and promotion of a model of development based on building trust in public institutions, cooperation and harmonious relations amongst various sections of the society.

The coordinators' comments referred to the philosophical concerns of Neo liberal ideology underlining specifically about the nature of social justice pursued under neoliberalism perceiving justice at an individual level and not in terms of building collective solidarities. Therefore, addressing the key question raised in the paper, Arup Kumar Das suggested exploring new socio economic frameworks that can address the substantive collective concerns of justice moving beyond its procedural aspects alone.

Film screening - *ShramJeevi*

The documentary captures the daily lives of migrants in Kapashera village abutting the industrial township of Udhog Vihar in Haryana, bordering the capital Delhi. The centre of focus is the 'new' working class of these peripheral worksites of neo-liberal Indian cities that thrive on the work of the migrant labourers and yet exploit them to hilt. Through the documentary the director presents the dismal situations of the working class in the urban spaces and the rise of capitalist development in the contemporary phase of neoliberalism. It reflects on the dichotomy between the capitalist nature of Rising New India and the deteriorating condition of the working class. There is focus on the nature of industrial development in the contemporary times illustrating it through the personal narratives of the working class where the profits are privatised and accumulated by the capitalist owners whereas the losses are socialised and the responsibility is transferred to the working migrant population. The vicious cycle of capitalist production is further reinforced through the creation of a false consciousness among the working class to produce more, work more, increase productivity and add value to the market without a substantial value added in their human lives. It also demonstrated the nature of the market which remains uncertain and precarious, with long and unsafe working hours, owing to which the workers are fragmented and their daily ordeals at the workplace in terms of their interactions with their work managers does not allow them to build collective solidarities and develop bargaining power. It referred to the story of Vikas which is accompanied by more production, decline of the agricultural sector, growth of rental properties while compromising on the dignity of human labour without bringing any substantive socio economic change for the poor. It was interesting to note the extensive use of the setting of Kapashera village that has transformed into migrant settlement, with the local landlords exploiting and benefitting from the migrant workers. The workers are stuck in a vicious

oppressive cycle with no escape from the society at large that benefited from their exploitation and hence wanted to maintain the status quo. However, though the documentary presents a dystopian view of the future with respect to concerns of migrant labour, yet there is hope for a better future and the consciousness of confronting the nature of exploitation enforced by the neo liberal capitalist framework amongst the working class. Thus, Sharmjeevi ends on a sombre note, but with hope of new worker consciousness amongst workers like Vikas.

This was followed by an enriched discussion on the key issues and observations made during the course of the documentary screening. Various propositions at exploring answers to the working class challenges were sought in terms of having a kind of pedagogical engagement with the working class which recognises substance in the form of labour and conceptualises their resistances and solidarities at various micro and macro levels. It also deliberated on the nature of labour relations in the urban workspace and how their mass consciousness can be transformed into a philosophical consciousness. Questions pertaining to how the collective consciousness of the working class would be raised in the contemporary context of populist politics with fascist tendencies were also deliberated.

Module D: Statelessness with emphasis on de facto statelessness and the rightlessness of sections of population

The discussion commenced with **K. M Parivelan**, the module coordinator, introducing the concept of statelessness in the global order, smoothly setting the thematic tone while inviting active engagements from the audience. Outlining statelessness as a condition in which nationality has been denied legally, he reflected and emphasized upon the fluidity and the overlapping possibilities that the terminology naturally ensues. He contended that even though discourses on refugees and their plight are reining the academic and political debates, the phenomenon of statelessness has somehow eluded the imagination of the nation-state, its policy implementations and actions. Given the fact that monumental population groups are displaced and most of them rendered stateless, the failure of the UNHCR Conventions to take momentum to address the stateless concerns seems quite ironic. Talking about the plight of West-Pakistan refugees in J&K, the victims of Partition, Dr. Parivelan underlined their stateless condition as they are not recognized by the state laws and hence denied their rights. Citing more instances of statelessness, its topical complexities, its causes and consequences and how different administrative regimes across the globe address these issues, the panellists were invited to further deliberate on the issue of statelessness through their respective presentations.

Social Contract and Colonial Settler's Contract goes beyond Slavery: A Study of Citizenship and Statelessness of Uphill country Tamils

Chandra Prakash in his article introduced the Theory of Social Contract and subsequently traced how this has changed shape over time through the example of Hill country Tamils. He foregrounded that denying people citizenship is a complete exclusion from the social contract. Hence slavery, citizenship, and statelessness are considered as exclusion whereas granting citizenship is an inclusion in the social contract. Critically investigating the case of Uphill Country Tamils, he highlighted how they grappled with slavery, statelessness, and issues of citizenship in Sri Lanka and India. These individuals had migrated during the colonial period as indentured labourers to work on the plantation fields in and around Colombo. This colonial labour recruitment policy was originally termed as Settler's Contract, however, in reality settler's contract goes beyond the contract of slavery. Justice is delayed from one generation to another in the case of Uphill Country Tamil labour, who were forced into slavery. Moreover, they also

encountered xenophobia, multiple displacements, and physical abuse, economic and sexual exploitations. Pivoting on Hobbesian theoretical understanding of social contract and Jacob Levy's conceptualization of citizenship, he argues that the Uphill Country Tamil's experiences of slavery cannot be considered a Settler's Contract, rather it is a contract of slavery. The empirical evidence and theoretical understanding would help to identify the refugee condition and statelessness in this context.

Constructing the Stateless in Myanmar

Shamna Thacham Poyil in her study attempted to introspect the patterns of discrimination, exclusion, and denaturalization of ethnoreligious minorities like the Rohingyas. Her discourse pivots around the chief question- how the process of homogenous nation-building in post-colonial Myanmar vehemently untethered Rohingyas from the nation-state, thereby rendering them stateless? Citizens are tethered to the state through their membership and allegiance to the sovereign authority which in turn is reciprocated by the provision of rights and privileges granted through citizenship status. However, in the case of Myanmar state membership is highly exclusive in nature. The postcolonial nation-building process in Myanmar has actually ensued a stateless condition for the Rohingyas. First of all, by delineating ethnoreligious identity as the criterion for state membership, Myanmar has been practically excluding Rohingyas from nation-state narratives, deploying constitutional provisions and amendments. Secondly, their statelessness is not limited to their expulsion from the territory but also refuting them a basic set of rights that could categorically instil in them a sense of belonging. Relying on a notion of belonging determined by a primordial identity, Myanmar has tarnished the Rohingyas as the enemy of the nation-state. This sort of exclusionary and discriminatory measures adopted by a nation to target a certain population group considered 'less than equal' instead of protecting the minority interests essentially underscores the fact that citizenship could also be used to demarcate a population as the 'other'.

Rethinking Diaspora: Refugee as Subaltern Migrant

Srinita Bhattacharjee articulated how neoliberal nation-states and diasporic metanarratives have celebrated the Indian diaspora's shimmering successes in the United States while eluding the plights of its subaltern counterparts. Citing the instance of individuals of Indian origin trying to sneak inside the US territory through its southern borders seeking refuge, she highlighted the parallel presence of a population group apart from the elite economic migrants of same ethnic origin. Deploying the subaltern framework, the article identified the journeys that do often culminate successfully, rather are broken in nature. Locating their invisibility in the larger diasporic matrix, she underlined how democracies like the United States employ a totalitarian nationalist rhetoric to ostracize the disenfranchised individuals. Instead of addressing the humanitarian crisis embroiling at the nation-state borders, the administration induced regimens to protect the American state interests. Initiating a critique of the universally accepted conceptualization of the 'Diaspora', the author suggested that in order to formulate a politically acute sense of the subaltern migrant, the key objective of policy development should prioritize a regime of strategic protection of their vulnerabilities.

Spatializing Identity and Citizenship: Critical geopolitics of borders in post-colonial South Asia

Sampurna Bhaumik in her article explored how the dynamic conceptualization of social space impacts the responses of the nation-state to the questions of identity and citizenship in border regions, particularly in postcolonial South Asia. Using the qualitative method of narrative inquiry, she contended that state responses to identity and citizenship in the border regions of South Asia

are primarily motivated by the concerns of territorial integrity and portrayal of its sovereign character, in turn leaving out the social markers that shape identity discourses and ideas of belonging. Her analysis foregrounded that popular culture and perceptions of a homogenous community within a given territorial unit that is the modern states, play a significant role in this process because it reflects the concerns and aspirations of the elite core which shape the discourse and in turn the nation-state responses as well. There has been an essential conceptual shift in the idea of social space which has, in turn, affected the concepts of identity and citizenship especially when such notions are looked at through the filter of borderland studies, a discipline concerning itself with studying social spaces between rigid national boundaries. Briefly introducing the emergence and evolution of borders, Ms. Bhaumik emphasized that the concepts of borders, territoriality, and sovereignty are quite intricately linked and inevitably influence the formation of social identity. Nation-state borders, motivated by security concerns especially since the catastrophe 9/11, reinforce the binaries of self vs. The Other when it comes to governance. Studying the case of Indo-Bangladesh borderland through the lens of Critical Border Studies, Ms. Bhaumik argued that the fluidity and porous nature of border regions have gone completely overlooked in the boundary making processes, affecting not only the constructs of identity, belonging and homeland but also failing to address the issues that arise out of diverse cultural and ethnic identities within a supposedly homogenous entity that is the State, relegating the peripheral communities to a permanent life of social exclusion.

Understanding the perils of Statelessness through an analysis of the newspaper coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic in India

Ritambhara Malaviya in her study attempted an analysis of the issues faced by the Rohingyas who remained invisible during the lockdown in the mainstream news media, essentially underlining their extreme vulnerability during the pandemic. Even though the internally displaced migrant workers had an option to return home, the Rohingyas had no place to return or call 'home'. Analysing the articles published during the months following the lockdown in *The Indian Express*, a leading daily in India, the author probed the issues of homelessness, belonging, vulnerability, rights and dignity of the stateless population group. Both the IDPs in the Indian subcontinent and the Rohingyas were trapped in extreme marginalization, yet, the former, by dint of sheer numbers on roads that could not be ignored, found some space in the newspaper, whereas the stateless remained invisible. Their invisibility on the international page of the newspaper was due to the fact that newspapers gave priority to news from the global North, relegating the concerns of the countries of the global South to the margins. The fundamental question arising from her presentation was- Who is considered worthy of visibility in the media representations and under what circumstances? Hence an investigation of the discourses contrived in the mainstream media is necessary especially to reflect upon how the stateless populations are further rendered invisible and hence doubly marginalized. The paper highlighted how the mainstream newspapers favour the statist concerns thereby ignoring the concerns of the stateless people in their debate.

The session concluded with commentaries, suggestions, and interrogative remarks from the audience which generated a humanitarian response to the vulnerabilities of the stateless individuals and the urgent need to ensure their safety and protection of their rights in order to preserve the desired humanitarian space we operate in.

Module E: Legal Regimes of protection and the time of the pandemic

Piya Srinivasan, Moitrayee Sengupta and Farhana Latief presented research papers on legal regimes of protection for migrants and refugees, particularly in the context of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, as part of Module E.

The module coordinator, **Oishik Sircar** joined the panellists virtually for the session. The three researchers looked at the need for legal protection for migrants, refugees and displaced persons. Over the course of the months leading up to the course, the panellists had discussed their research assignments among themselves and participated in studying and discussing a series of module lectures, readings, and notes which had been shared by Dr Sircar to develop the key themes of the module.

In particular, there was discussion and debate on the role of international law and municipal law - historically, philosophically, and politically- in protecting the rights of refugees and forced migrants. We also tried to understand whether emergency or emergency-like situations (such as the current pandemic) change or have changed the ways in which legal regimes of rights and protection behave differently towards refugees and forced migrants.

Migrant Workers and the Pandemic: A socio-legal enquiry into the Interstate Migrant Workmen Act, 1979

In her paper, 'Migrant Workers and the Pandemic: a socio-legal enquiry into the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979', **Piya Srinivasan** undertook a socio-legal analysis of The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 (ISMWA), which was instituted following the abuses of and malpractices in existing labour laws in India, as a central legislation for the protection and welfare of migrant labour. Despite being constituted of clauses aiming at protecting migrant labour working in the informal sector of the economy, it failed to protect an undocumented number of them, probably running into hundreds and thousands, from having to undertake a perilous 'long march home' when a national lockdown was imposed in March this year during the coronavirus crisis. In this context, she analysed the recent jurisprudence on the ISMWA, such as high court judgments and government affidavits, which were undertaken during the lockdown to critically evaluate the response of the courts and the state to the migrant crisis. She tried to map the changing policy recommendations towards the implementation of the ISMWA, including the most recent Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, and its potential to address the challenges faced by migrant workers in India. Upendra Baxi has recently called the mass exodus of migrant labour as a form of 'exodus constitutionalism', and she took forward this idea by locating their 'long march home' as a political act that rises against the bio-political state and the false consolation of an apparently benevolent and caring judiciary. Using an image by photojournalist Kevin Carter in 1993 where a vulture is seen waiting for a malnourished child to collapse on her way to a food relief camp in Sudan, to describe the apathy of the state apparatus in declining to alleviate the plight of the returning migrants.

Environmental migration: Understanding the need for an international legal regime of protection

In her paper, **Moitrayee Sengupta** discussed the need for a new international legal standpoint for creating a rights-based protection framework for environmental migrants. Environmental migration has no locus standi in international treaty law at present, and she explained how this is

primarily because research on this subject has been hard-pressed to devise a conceptual consensus on who an environmental migrant is. Terminology is not merely a semantic function but is loaded with political and legal consequences of facilitating migration where it can adapt to climate change and preventing migration where it fails to adapt to it. She discussed how the key difficulty of moving towards an international agreement is in identifying who a forced environmental migrant is, from more voluntary forms of environmental migration. She also analysed the nature of cooperation required by the international legal community to institute rights for environmental migrants, by looking at obstacles faced in climate change negotiation processes of the Kyoto Protocol and the Cancun Adaptation Framework.

Damned by Development: Hydropower projects and the human and environmental costs in Jammu Kashmir

In her paper, **Farhana Latief** studied the human and environmental costs of the Kishanganga and Bursar hydropower projects located in Gurez Valley of Kashmir division and Chenab Valley of Jammu division. She discussed how hydropower projects in Jammu and Kashmir have led to dispossession of land, loss of livelihood, and displacement of people from their ancestral homes to an obscure and unknown future. Despite the existence of laws, such as the Environment Impact Assessment Act and the Land Acquisition Act, that ought to have safeguarded the interests of the people, she looked at how hydropower projects have been prioritised and justified by the Indian state through principles of utilitarianism. She analysed how the region, with its unique ecology and political importance for the state, makes for a more than an ordinary case in the discourse on pitfalls of unsustainable development. In a conflict zone, where symbolism and representation are essential parts of everyday politics of assertion, she looked at how these hydropower projects symbolise the control of the Indian state over the region through means of technological prowess. Her paper also used concepts such as 'high modernism' from James Scott and 'instrument effects' from James Ferguson to explain how hydropower projects represent sites of performance of power and control over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

After the presentations, the attendees interacted with the participants on how legal intervention, at both domestic and international levels, has either been missing or absent where most required. The discussion centred on the lack of legal intervention from the apex court in facilitating the safe return of or providing alternative livelihood opportunities for returning migrants in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic; the complicity of land acquisition laws in the Indian state's project of suppressing dissent and overlooking dispossession and displacement of indigenous people from Jammu and Kashmir; and the absence of a global rights-based protection framework to alleviate the intense suffering of people migrating due to climatic stress. Dr Sircar observed how the papers, though dealing with diverse concerns, were actually speaking to each other through an alliteration of a 'triple F'. All three papers centred around broken 'faith' in legal processes, 'frustration' with their inefficiency, insensitivity or surreptitious complicity in projects of political suppression and violence, and 'fracture' in societies and communities as a result of legal inadequacy and partisanship.

Film Screening and Paper discussion - *Rabbit Proof Fence* and *Buried Alive*

In the second half of the session, the module participants discussed Irene Watson's essay, 'Buried Alive' and watched portions of 'Rabbit Proof Fence', a film by Australian filmmaker Philip Noyce. The film followed the lives of three aboriginal girls, born as 'half-castes' to one white and one aboriginal parent in colonial Australia. The essay by Irene Watson looked at the lives of the indigenous people of Australia, the Nungas and their relationship of oneness and unity with their land, ruwi. Describing colonial systems of law and statecraft as based on division and adversity, or

friendship and enmity, she shared the stories of her old people and their resistance to colonial subjugation. Watson, herself born as a 'half-caste' child and a lawyer by profession is drawn by competing inheritances of belongingness, attachment and detachment. She describes how the most powerful form of anti-colonial resistance for the Nungas has been to decline to absorb the strategies of the oppressor in their fight against them, by staying true to their self-identity with the world, their land, and each other. She also explores the relationship between language, law and rights by describing how for the Nungas, law is diverse and of the people, and never an instrument of statecraft or operationalisation of subjugation, ownership and control as in colonial systems of law.

Module F: Ethics of Care, Public Health, and the Migrants and Refugees

Paula Banerjee introduced this module and its contemporary relevance in a pandemic context in which migrants have become a spectacle. Both the ethics of care and public health across the globe were thoroughly discussed.

Migration for healthcare: exploring access to healthcare as a factor for internal migration in India

In her presentation, **Deeksha** reflected on internal migration for healthcare, and emphasised on the challenges faced by poor migrants in accessing medical care in the Indian City. The paper detailed out the post- independence trajectory of healthcare in India and the neoliberal turn following which the country's medical landscape is significantly altered. To explore the phenomenon of migration for healthcare she followed an urban ethnographic approach, focussing specifically on the everyday life of the cancer patients migrating to Mumbai, Maharashtra for accessing proper healthcare, and their families and the caregivers. The experiences of health-seeking migrants in Mumbai provided insights into the ideas of ethics in 'normal' times vis-à-vis in situations of forced migration or the pandemic. She concluded her paper lamenting that the neoliberal character of the healthcare system asks the patient for some monetary security, instead of providing basic care and protection required of the State.

The Crisis of Public Health among East Bengali Refugees in 1971

Utsa Sarmin shared her research on the health situation of the East Bengali Refugees in 1971. Almost ten million refugees had migrated during the liberation war. There were numerous health and ailments with regards to the refugees. She presented a brief history of the liberation struggle covering the antecedents in the lead up to the struggle. The Bengal sub nationalism sentiment grew against the dominance of West Pakistan. During the liberation war, the population exodus resulted in the numerous refugee camps strewn across states in the east and north eastern region of India. The camps were seen as a widespread public health crisis. The conditions of the camps were terrible. Only a few camps / refugee sites had basic facilities. The Cholera epidemic also played havoc in the camps and estimated 30% of refugees were impacted by cholera. The data and records of deaths and those impacted varied from one source to another, subject to the need to hide the number of deaths to continue receiving food and resources. Cholera was eventually controlled by state intervention.

The multifarious development agencies started working on the camps and managed to lead some interesting/ innovative measures to address water and sanitation issues. Like the super latrine – the model was recognized and redeployed it across many different refugee locations. Agencies like Oxfam led the intervention with refugees with help from the 'local' population, and that proved to be a success as it lended a more flexible approach to interventions. Also, many refugees wanted to

actively contribute to the war effort. The above points did raise various questions for us to explore as to whether refugee camps and sites may be considered sites for development of public health, though camps were also sites of innovation and yet were limited by the politics of the native vis-à-vis refugees.

The presenters received very insightful suggestions and questions from Priya Singh and Debojyoti Chanda along with other participants who raised questions along the ideas of ethics and public health in contexts of forced migration as well as internal migration.

Film screening - *Hotel Rwanda*

The second session of the module dwelled upon the questions of ethics in forced migration research and also discussed the 2004 film *Hotel Rwanda* with respect to concerns of ethics in documenting and presenting genocide. The panel discussion, titled *Ethical Research with Special Focus on Forced Migration* began with Prof Sheila Meintjes, who spoke about essential pointers like informed consent and thinking in terms of doing good when formulating the ethical dimensions of any forced migration research. She articulated the need to do research with a fairly good understanding of the context as well suggested the need for researchers to have clarity about the purpose of the research.

The second panellist, Prof Purna Banerjee, highlighted ethical imperatives while doing research with refugees like the participants' privacy, confidentiality as well informing the participants of the social, political and economic ramifications of their participation. Prof Banerjee suggested the need to keep oneself open to ethical revision and be flexible to change.

The third panellist, Utsa Sarmin spoke from her experience of being a journalist in Ecuador and the coverage of migrant issues. She highlighted the kind of hierarchies between migrants as journalistic subjects vis-a-vis migrants as research participants.

The moderator, Prof Paula Banerjee reiterated the need to understand the importance of the researcher and that the idea of ethics is also very personal.

Moving to the discussion on the film *Hotel Rwanda*, Utsa raised the question of the lead character bribing to gain access to spaces and people he knew and the ethical questions for researchers that the movie poses. The rest of the session panned out as a discussion of personal dilemmas of ethics as faced by researchers engaged in forced migration studies. The panel shared in detail their experiences as researchers as well as answered questions from participants, many of whom are new in their journeys of ethics and research.

Calcutta: A Migrant City

Part I and Part II

Calcutta: A Migrant City is a 2019 documentary feature made by Saibal Mitra. The film is based on the City since its inception during the colonial era and a historical documentation of people migrating to this city from all over the world as well as from all over the British India. The film depicts the violent colonialist history of Bengal and the birth of a new City. With the advent of people from various corners, the City grew to be a conglomeration of cultures and architectures. The film spoke of the Armenian community, who were the first trading community. The power of trade gradually shifted into the hands of the Marwari community who came down to Calcutta from Rajasthan. Along with romanticising the glorious moneyed migrant class the film also speaks about the blue collar migrants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, who started pouring into the City from the early 18th Century, and the Chinese migrants, who formed the infamous ChinaTown and the Tannery. The film then discusses the 1942 Bengal famine which witnessed a massive influx of people from all over rural Bengal into the City demanding food, followed by the independence and Bengal partition, which witnessed the mixed and massive flow of people from the Eastern part of Bengal into West Bengal. Women made up to 40% migrants, who engaged into various kinds of jobs, from domestic work to prostitution. The documentary also conducted interviews in the present day Jadavpur Migrant Labour Market, with people daily travelling from distant parts of Bengal into the City for different kinds of jobs. The film also talked about cosmopolitanism within the City. Yet, it was not hospitable to every migrant in the similar manner. The film ended with the question: Who is a true citizen and who must be denied a place within the City?

The post – film session opened up a lot of questions and observations. It was pointed out that the film did not cover the people coming from different districts of Bengal. Another observation that was made was the total erasure of caste practices among the migrant community in the City and the portrayal of gender that followed the 1950s era than the contemporary understandings. The film intentionally or unintentionally focused on a larger than life imagery of the City than the everyday mundane experiences of the migrants. The final question that was raised was: Can the history of migration in Calcutta be written from below; the everyday life of the street vendors, the workers of blue collar jobs from outside the vicinity, about how they negotiate with the power, in their own narrated version?

Part II

The second movie by Anwesha Bhattacharya was still under production. This film focused on the post partition Bengal and the construction of refugee colonies in West Bengal. It also focused on a first person account of the post - partition migrant women from East Bengal, regarding their memories of the migration.

The final part of the movie focused on the changing demography of post partition Calcutta when the areas once dominated by the Muslim majority people slowly changed into places infused with Hindu refugees from East Bengal, creating its own identity. The film ended with a song which says about moving on despite hardships.

This post – film session for the 2nd film brings out observations like how these refugee colonies became the hub for the rise of left politics for independent India and the gradual shift to neoliberalism in the City post 1990s.

Conference

Welcome address | “Migrants, Refugees and Public Health in the Time of an Epidemic”

Manish Jha, Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, delivered the opening address of the day, by noting how the current precarious conditions have brought a shift in focus, from cross-border migrants/refugees to internal migrants such as labourers and internally displaced people. On that note, Prof. Ranabir Samaddar was invited to start off the day’s session.

Professor Ranabir Samaddar gave the introduction of the paper presenters in detail to the participants. He stated the importance of reflexive thinking and creative discussion in the study of migration and refugees.

Ishita Dey was the first presenter. There was emphasis on how there is an ever-increasing spill over of zoonosis in the human habitat, and with that the human vs. non-human divide has deepened. Professor Dey, taking up the case of frontline health workers, pointed out how despite similar duties, doctors have been getting attention as well as recognition while the nurses and sanitation staff are deprived of even basic prevention gears such as fresh PPE kits. Several groups of health workers hailing from north eastern states and working in Kolkata had to return to their home states – not only due to government negligence and apathy, but also due to rising levels of apathy or even worse, racial slurs from sections of the same society that they had been working to serve during the pandemic. Other community health activist groups such as the ASHA workers, anganwadi staff and others have been facing even worse, despite their phenomenal and crucial work of raising awareness in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, not to mention their role in helping the process of contact tracing. While the medical professionals and activists in India have been going above and beyond the call of duty, their contribution in this unprecedented crisis remains largely unappreciated, both in terms of financial remuneration as well as government recognition, particularly the frontline workers that work on the basis of incentives. In this context, the paper analysed a network of health workers in a resettlement colony in Delhi - that of the pharmacist, jholachhapdaktar / Bengalidaktar and Asha workers.

Iman Mitra, in his paper, spoke of his aim to investigate the history and trajectory of earlier pandemics and their implications for public health policy and practices. In this context, Professor Mitra’s paper took up a case study of migrant workers in Mumbai. He presented the paper with two different perspectives of the migrant workers’ life risk during the pandemic. While the First section focused on covering the new political life during the COVID19 pandemic, the second shed light on the importance of 2017 public health policy shift during the pandemic. His overall study analysed the crisis by studying intersecting historical trajectories and the histories of privatisation of the health sector in India and the absence of the migrant worker in the public health discourses against the backdrop of a global crisis of capital. Particularly, he analysed the Bio-Capital and political impact on the migrant workers during the pandemic. There were a few intriguing remarks from the audience in response to this paper that ought to be mentioned: 1. How GST has turned health care into a business; 2. whether or not there needs to be a distinction between the livelihoods of migrant workers, as opposed to their lives of being migrant workers – such a distinction being drawn on the basis of their everyday experiences.

Manish K Jha & Mouleshri Vyas presented a paper titled "Migrant Workers in the COVID19 Pandemic: The Crisis of Work and Life." In the contemporary context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the paper analysed and investigated the history and trajectory of earlier pandemics and their implication & preventive measures for public health policies and practices vis-a-vis contractual sanitation workers in the city of Mumbai. Despite Mumbai being one of the worst Covid-hit Indian cities, the frontline workers continue to be at the receiving end of government apathy or even negligence- with no minimum wage, lack of safety gear and lack implementation of preventive measures that they are entitled to as Indian citizens, and no job assurance from the authorities. Prof. Vyas noted how historically Mumbai has been an epicentre of contagious diseases, from colonial times to present independent India – and how the relationship between state and its poor subjects seems to have remained the same. In 2020, much of that apathy seems to linger in authority attitudes – and they are reflected in their treatment of sanitation workers who are forced to live in informal settlements outside the city, work in unsafe conditions without appropriate compensation, and are denied of their human rights to a life of safe health and dignity – all while risking their own lives. The paper, with empirical data collected over several months via news agencies, highlighted the everyday experiences of the frontline health workers and how they face alienation from both the state and the society – resulting in crippling anxiety and uncertainty regarding their livelihood.

New Perspectives of Protection of Refugees and Migrants in Southeast Asia

The session on new perspectives of protection of refugees in South Asia was an endeavour to understand and discuss the various approaches to work with refugees and protected persons in the countries of South Asia. The discussion began with the first speaker, **Naiyana Thanawatoo** from Asylum access, Thailand.

Naiyana has an illustrious career in humanitarian work with a focus on child protection. Asylum Access Thailand provides legal counsel and representation to refugees seeking asylum in refugee status determination proceedings conducted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangkok. They are committed to work with refugees from over 40 different nationalities. While the majority are from Pakistan and Somalia, many are from Sri Lanka, China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq etc. To address the critical need for legal aid in dozens of languages, they also train refugees as legal interpreters. Speaking from years of experience, Naiyana highlighted the work of her organization, Asylum Access, in the field of refugee protection in Thailand, which receives many asylum seekers and persecuted persons from the South Asia region. The first task that asylum access approaches as essential is to distinguish between economic refugees and asylum seekers. Secondly, the organization protects refugees and people seeking asylum from detention. The organization is also engaged in care work for asylum seekers. Sharing the work of her organization, Naiyana highlighted the need for legal protection for refugees and their representation on advocacy platforms like the Global Refugee Forum.

The second speaker for the session was **Malini Ramalo**, joining the discussion from Malaysia. Malini is the director of DHARA, Malaysia- an NGO working on Statelessness in Malaysia. Malini shared her organisation's work with Malaysian Indian undocumented workers living as Stateless in Malaysia crippled by language barriers in their access to a life of dignity and justice. The organisation has developed a Case Management Database, an android-based app to record and document the Stateless persons reaching out to them, and work along with them to give the Stateless persons the platform to speak for themselves. They also engage in stakeholder engagement, bringing together refugee and stateless voices to build local solidarities. The third

speaker, Ritzka, a human rights activist from Indonesia highlighted her work with Rohingya refugees, their struggle for survival and the support extended by various civil society.

The closing statement on the panel was forwarded by Sara Hussain, a renowned Barrister, specializing in Family Law and women's rights and with years of work against issues like Fatwa and Forced veiling. She raised some important concerns pertaining to refugees in South Asia like the lack of legal status for many of the refugee population rendering them Stateless and without the rightful protection and dignity. She also highlighted the active discrimination against refugees, denying them basic rights adding to their vulnerable and persecuted states.

The session concluded with a round of discussions and questions from the audience. The session was moderated by Paula Banerjee.

Film Screening: *Sudani from Nigeria*

In the movie *Sudani from Nigeria*, we have a Nigerian footballer by the name of Samuel Abiola Robinson. He is recruited by a club in Malappuram, Kerala. While Africans are not uncommon in this domain of sports, native knowledge of the Continent and the social customs of its people are severely limited. This becomes apparent when Samuel is given various titles- Nigerian, Ugandan and Sudanese/Sudani.

The film follows Samuel's journey, and we see him getting injured in an accident. Following this, his club manager Majid Rahman, who is already facing financial struggles, has to ask his own mother to nurse Samuel back to health in his own home.

While resting and recuperating, his friendly attitude makes him a curiosity and he becomes popular among the locals. While Kerala's passion with the sport of football is what precipitates the origins of the relationship between Samuel and Majid, as time goes, everyone becomes concerned about his health and well being, including the locals.

Majid shares a difficult relationship with his family. He hates that his mother has married a second time, although out of necessity. Samuel is shown to have lost both his parents in the civil war, and to have lived as a refugee in a camp with his grandmother and two sisters.

Trouble comes knocking when a local newspaper publishes an article with a picture of Samuel, Majid, and his friends, and this attracts the attention of the police who come asking for Samuel's passport. Eventually, he learns of his grandmother's passing and wishes to return home immediately. Chaos ensues when his passport is discovered missing. When Majid tries to procure a duplicate one, Samuel speaks of his refugee status and that his passport is a fake one. Majid manages to buy Samuel a ticket, the passport is eventually found, and after bidding an emotional goodbye, Samuel leaves for his home.

In the wake of his friend leaving, Majid decides to mend his relationship with his family, and goes to bring his step father to live with them.

The transition from a relationship born out of purely business reasons to one of genuine human concern and decency is a delight to behold.

Migrants, Refugees and Statelessness in Europe- I

Two panels were dedicated to discussions around the issues of migration, state of the refugees and the stateless populations in Europe. In the first panel, three researchers from the IWM, Vienna shared their extensive research findings on the theme.

Forced displacement and access to the labour market: The case of Gaziantep

In her presentation, **Dogus Simsek** spoke of Gaziantep, bordering with Syria, which is an economic centre for the South Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey, and thus is ideally located to become a local industrial and commercial centre. It plays an important role in the Turkish economy with its industrial and commercial infrastructure; the city acts as a bridge between important regions due to its geographical location in a commercial centre. The city has to some extent recently developed an infrastructure around Syrian refugees with the arrival of forcibly displaced Syrians, and economic relations between Aleppo and Gaziantep have increased more. Gaziantep is the second city after Istanbul and in the Southeast of Turkey that has the highest number of Syrian refugees in Turkey. One of the main reasons why Gaziantep has a good number of Kurdish and Syrian refugee populations is related to their aspiration of remaining close to Syria and carrying on the cross-border trade relationship.

The presence of forcibly displaced Syrians has not only contributed to the economic growth of Turkey, they have also filled labour needs of the sector. The Syrian workforce has been in high demand in sectors facing labour shortages and the number of informally employed forcibly displaced people has increased. Prior to the refugee flow, approximately half of the labour force in Gaziantep had been already employed informally. Forcibly displaced people in Gaziantep, especially Syrians, are heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, generation, social class, etc. There are Kurdish, Turkmen, Arab, Shi, Dom, Abdal, Armenian, Yazidis, Assyrian Syrian nationals; Palestinian and Iranian refugees coming from Syria; working-, middle- and upper-class Syrians and Iraqis; and Syrians from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christians and Muslim Alawites and Sunnis, settled in various cities of Turkey. This of course necessitates a scrutiny of the location of the displaced and particularly forcibly displaced people's labour in interaction with class dynamics as well as the variegated legal regimes (carried out with actors of various scale) that shape this interaction. The fragmented legal geography of rights and the local and international institutional actors draw into the picture are crucial for understanding this interplay.

The literature on forcibly displaced people's access to labour market is mostly studied in relation to the national framework and focused on the labour market integration of migrants and refugees as well as the impact of the refugees on the host economy. For instance, focusing on the impact of the refugees on the host economy Betts *et al.* (2017) introduces the concept of refugee economies which highlights the fact that refugees are a part of distinct sub-economy of the receiving countries, but do not mention refugee labour. Ranabir Samaddar (2020: 62), rightfully, highlights the fact that refugee is seen as an economic actor, an informal trader, an entrepreneur, but not as labour and asks, 'why economies are unable to function without the so-called refugee economies, which supply informal labour for the host economy.' In order to understand how labour moves and the increase in casualization, there is a need to focus on the relation between migration and capitalism. Adopting a 'multiscalar global perspective', Simsek aims to examine how the power relations within multiple actors of various scale like the EU, INGOs and NGOs in the processes of building 'a resilient city for all in a time of crisis' influence forcibly displaced people's access to the labour market. In doing so, she places emphasis on the experiences of forcibly displaced people in accessing the labour market to delve into the role of multiple actors in reconstructing the

neoliberal model that reshapes class and power dynamics between forcibly displaced people. Drawing on in-depth interviews with forcibly displaced Kurds and Syrians, she argues that a neoliberal approach of Gaziantep to forcibly displaced people's access to the labour market reshapes class and power dynamics between forcibly displaced people. The empirical data also shows that Turkey's refugee integration policy favours those skilled contributors to the economy and those refugees with access to financial capital which reshapes class and power dynamics between forcibly displaced people. This settlement process excludes refugees who are unskilled and have limited economic resources for investment in the receiving country. The Gaziantep Migration Model is a good example of a neoliberal approach to forcibly displaced people's access to the labour market in cooperation with international and national organisations, especially with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Eastern European temporary migrants: fault lines of differential inclusion in the EU labour and mobility regimes during a global pandemic

Neda Deneva stated that the global pandemic of COVID-19 has highlighted the interconnections between the mobility of capital and labour and existing modes of exclusion and exploitation. Transnational labour supply chains play a major role in the global spread of the virus and its effects on social and economic life. Drawing on the case of Eastern European temporary migrants within the European Union, Deneva traces the fault lines and contradictions in their positions as workers and citizens, that became even more apparent in the current crisis. Through the lens of effects of the pandemic and the different degrees of restrictions and necessities, she looks at the contradictions and multitudes of structural conditions that define the workings lives and the social reproduction of migrant workers with various types of temporary or informal work arrangements.

Temporary migrants play a double role in the COVID-19 global pandemic. On one hand, migrants in low-skilled and lower paid jobs are more exposed and vulnerable to the effects of the virus and by being mobile during the pandemic, they themselves might contribute to the wider spread of the virus. At the same time, labour migrants proved to be essential in certain sectors. Special exceptions were made for short-term migration of low-skilled workers in critical sectors – primarily agriculture, slaughterhouses, and care work. The temporary migrants are thus placed in a paradoxical position in which they are potentially both affected by the impact of COVID-19 and are part of the response. On one hand they are held accountable by both sending and receiving countries for the wider spread of the coronavirus. While at the same time they are also actively encouraged, through the lifting of restrictive mobility measures, to be more mobile in order to enable the functioning of certain vital industries and for the social reproduction of Western states.

Starting from the different COVID-19 related measures taken towards temporary migrants from the European Union in several EU countries, Deneva traces the roots and the structural conditions that enable this duality of the temporary migrant in Europe. The focus is primarily on Eastern European migrants from the newest and also the poorest member states – Bulgaria and Romania – who joined the European Union in 2007 and have provided ever since a wide pool of freely available, cheap, and highly exploitable labour force. They are differently positioned than the so called Third country nationals – migrants from outside of the European Union – whose experience differs in some ways due to their different status in the EU labour and mobility regimes.

Neda argues that the pandemic emergency measures made visible long-existing inequalities, and the uneven and heterogeneous nature of the EU space in a drastic way. This heterogeneity, along with the complex processes of differential inclusion and various restrictions to full rights, has been

unfolding over the last decade to a new extent with the accession of the newest and poorest member states. The work-citizenship nexus is more clearly identifiable now, when we see how those who do not fit in the narrow requirement for a worker-citizen, are practically excluded from social and health protection. Bulgaria and Romania entered the Union in 2007 and have ever since provided a cheap and exploitable pool of freely and legally mobile labour force.

Migration Industries and Transnational Governance of Queer Migration in Turkey

In his presentation, **Mert Kocak** looks at queer refugees in Turkey. Their claims for asylum are based on membership of a particular social group. A well-founded fear of persecution as a result of their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). Queer refugees in Turkey mostly come from the Middle Eastern, North African and Sub-Saharan regions including Syria, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, Ghana, and Zimbabwe. In Turkey, there is no national law or social policy text that mentions SOGI as a ground for seeking asylum, and there is no general legal protection for people with different SOGI. How can queer asylum seekers apply for asylum based on SOGI in Turkey?

UNHCR considers SOGI as a ground for seeking asylum since 1995. The mandate UNHCR had in Turkey allowed it to actualize its view about SOGI, and partnered with local NGOs to manage registration and protection activities for non-European refugees. Although Turkish authorities could and did cause various problems for queer refugees during their registration, they usually did not challenge UNHCR's decision to grant refugee status. Since there are no legal protection mechanisms for queer asylum seekers and refugees, Turkish authorities refuse to register queer asylum seekers to the city preventing them from accessing rights and financial support (without resulting in deportation); thereby delegating queer refugees to a vulnerable group without access to medical, legal, psycho-social and financial assistance even in the cases they need immediate medical, legal and financial assistance.

Transnational and international funding organizations send funds to Turkey in order to contain the refugee population, thereby creating a 9-year-old migration industry in Turkey. The EU-Turkey statement and action plan promised 6 billion euros to be used for refugees in Turkey and have been distributed to the local NGOs and other actors in the form of projects. UNFPA's expenditure in Turkey drastically increased from 3 million dollars in 2014 to 26 million dollars in 2019. The UNHCR budget in Turkey quadrupled merely two years after 2011. Main actors are local NGOs since they are the main point of entry for funds into Turkey. Funds are "nationalized" as soon as they enter into the country, going into construction of infrastructure (offices), wages, and expenses to maintain the offices and a variety of activities, such as social events, conferences, "all-staff meetings" (very similar to "corporate retreats"). The requirements of the projects make sure funds circulated under the funding organizations' condition of economically benefiting NGOs and national economy. Almost none of funding can reach to refugees in the form of cash-assistance. Cash-assistance to refugees are extremely limited and small (varying between 120 to 750 TRY). Projects mediate access to already existing rights.

Funds given and spent especially for queer refugee governance, non-LGBTI+ organizations, Refugee Support Centre (starting from 2017, PRM funded project for queer refugees in two cities; aim again to mediate access to already existing protection mechanisms), LGBTI+ organizations, Kaos GL (UNHCR funded project for queer refugees since 2007), Red Umbrella, SPOD and Positive Life (UNFPA funded project for queer refugees since 2018), Hevi LGBT and Muamma LGBT (CSBR funded project for queer refugees since 2020).

Migrants, Refugees and New Issues and Perspectives on Protection

The first session of the last day of the conference was on “Migrants, Refugees & New Issues and Perspectives on Protection”. It was moderated by Dr. Sumona Dasgupta. She remarked that the matter of protection is the central theme of both the workshop and the conference. This particular session addresses issues of the dilemmas of migrants in Assam in the backdrop of NRC, biometric registration and gender relations in refugee camps and the issue of deaths of international migrants in their destination country.

Dealing with Illegal Immigrants in Assam: Understanding the Jurisprudence in past present and future

The first speaker **Anjuman Ara Begum** spoke about the impact of the ways in which illegal immigration in Assam was being dealt with. She opined that illegal immigration has become a socio-political issue in the region leading to a wide array of legislations, executive policies, detention orders and deportation of ‘irregular immigrants’. She postulated that exclusively in Assam, the colonial legacy of Foreigners Act of 1946 and Passport Act had caused the irregular immigrants to be hyphenated with foreigners. She considers categories like illegal/irregular immigrants to be emerging from the errors of documentation. The process of determining the so-called illegal immigrants did not adhere to a uniformity in legal principles or norms of natural justice. Rather the Indian state had disproportionately discriminated, imprisoned and deported people. Quasi- judicial institutions like Foreigner’s tribunal dealt with irregular migrants based on suspicion rather than anything else. Checking the judgements produced by Tribunals showed that in most of the cases except for a few, individuals were declared as illegal. These tribunals did not have appellate authority and if declared foreigner, the individual had to file a Using the narratives of individuals like Naresh, Ajbahar, Roshia Begum, Naresh Koch and Nazrul, the speaker explained and elaborated on the trauma and agony that was subjected on them by the Foreigner’s Tribunal, judiciary and state administration.

The second speaker, **Shamna Thacham Poyil** spoke on the impact of biometric registration in Rohingya refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar specifically on the structure of camp governance and the gender relations of inmates. The datafication of bodies crossing the borders using biometrics would assist the asylum countries to enforce strict policing of territories and ensure targeted delivery of aid resources, but correspondingly it also leads us to re-problematize the nature of liminal governance instituted in the administration of camps. UNHCR introduced *Project Profile* for establishing registration database for refugees that later became the more advanced *proGresplatform*. The collected biometric data of refugees is provided to the Biometric Identification and Management System (BIMS) and in turn linked to Global Distribution Tool (GDT) that ensures the targeted ration provision in camps. She opined that the biometric registration of the Rohingya refugees in the Cox’s Bazaar camps does not provide them with an identity on par with citizenship, it merely enlists them as a documented refugee- a digital identity that affirms his/her refugee status. In its concerted effort to make the invisible stateless asylum seekers and refugees visible through provision of a biometric *quasi identity*, it gives these powerless, vulnerable refugees a false hope for potential membership to the political community. Using empirical data, she argued that women who are structurally in a disadvantaged position due to the social system of patriarchy and the political situation of conflict at ‘home’ could be empowered in ‘exile’ by bringing an alteration in their hierarchical gender relations. But she remarked that for a refugee woman who lives a liminal existence in the camp, biometric registration is not a voluntary choice in its normative sense. Rather her condition of liminality

coerces her to impart with her bodily data that would guarantee her aid -her only conduit to survival. It does not impart her complete agency in her relative empowerment, rather the protection accorded through biometric registration only effectively perpetuates her status as a refugee. The empowerment they achieve becomes ambiguous in that it is fortified by a 'quasi-identity' that only prolongs their condition of being subject to domination in the camp.

The third participant **Francis Adaikalam** presented his paper "Invisibility of deceased International Labour Migrants: Politics of Recognition". The primary argument that his paper made was that the death of international labour migrants in 'dirty, dangerous and demeaning' (3D) work is accounted only for the purpose of enumeration. He opined that these individuals remained invisible both in their country of origin and country to which they migrated for livelihood. Even in their death, the politics of recognition is absent or rather abysmal. Even though falling from heights have been one of the primary reasons for the death of the migrant labour engaged in construction workers in the Middle East, state governments like UAE enumerate the deaths including suicides and accidents together. Lack of clear statistics on the death, on how many families receive the mortal remains of the deceased etc leaves a lot of speculation on how these deaths are counted. The ways in which this impact the families of deceased migrant workers necessitate a need for bringing in a 'politics of recognition' to these deaths. This is crucial in understanding the ways with which families cope with the death especially with regards to compensation packages, the state response and corporate accountability for the death of the labour. Much of this is also dependent on the nature of bilateral agreements between the country of origin and host country, insignificant positioning of international agreements and the role played by various diaspora organizations. Only due recognition can bring about the visibility of both their labour and death, and can ensure the social justice they deserve.

On the completion of presentation of three papers, the moderator commented that all the three papers presented three sets of diverse narratives along three lines of theoretical constructs on the larger framework of protection. Anjuman's paper gave the narrative of collective trauma brought about by the impact of detention and deportation of suspected illegal migrants on themselves and families based on the legal theoretical framework. She highlighted the role of judiciary that emerged as authoritarian and the nature of power wielded by the quasi-judicial body in the process. In doing so, she emphasized that such trauma is never individual, as through him/her it impacts the family and immediate community. Shamna on the other hand highlighted the narrative of how men and women renegotiate their gender relations in camp, using the theoretical framework of 'governmentality' implicit in the camp structure and administration. She pointed out that the nature of empowerment or disempowerment that the refugee women undergo is often a grey zone that cuts across the established binaries. Francis used the theoretical construct of politics of recognition to emphasize the narrative of invisibility associated with their deaths. The manner in which the deaths are counted and accounted also highlights the nature in which we overlook their contributions to the economy through remittances. The moderator re-emphasized the need to bring about an organic relationship between the narratives and theoretical constructs used in all the three papers.

Migrants, Refugees and, New Issues and Perspectives on Protection

Rajesh Kharat opened the first presentation of the last day of the Research and Orientation Programme in Migration and Forced Migration Studies.

The first presenter was **Jyothi Krishnan**. She examined the mechanism of marginalized populations to cope with livelihood uncertainties in post-flood Kerala. After giving a background of massive flood experienced by Kerala in 2018, she located the geographical and anthropogenic factors like intensified quarrying and mining of the highlands, degradation of forests in the highlands, expansion of construction activities and real estate boom, faulty dam management and urbanization & increase in the built environment. She also emphasized on the recurrence of landslides in northern districts and localized floods in Kerala for three consecutive years since 2018. She moved on to the operational definition of natural disaster and revealed that distinction has been made between natural disaster and natural hazard. Natural hazards are considered as having meteorological/geological/biological origin. On the other hand, Natural disasters are the result of the natural hazard acting on existing vulnerabilities. The vulnerabilities caused due to natural disasters are the social precarity found on the ground when the hazard arrives. After this, she focused on public discourse on the impact of floods. While the presenter agreed that floods impacted all regardless of social class, those at the top of the hierarchy recovered fast in comparison to those who are at the bottom. Further, she explored the intersectionality of social and ecological vulnerabilities in low lying areas. According to Dr Jyothi Krishnan, such natural disasters tend to put a mask on such systematic features and represent it as if it is beyond human control, thereby, dissolving agencies from responsibility and accountability. Besides, it reduces the likelihood of any meaningful discourse around power, class, inequality and marginalization. Lastly, she presented a post-flood narrative of the state, non-governmental organization and voluntary humanitarian support. Her analysis showed that there was a greater focus on estimating/physical/infrastructural losses in both the public and private sphere and on rebuilding the houses. On the contrary, the primary data collected by her from September to November 2018 showed that the poor were struggling to get their basic needs fulfilled due to slow response. To assess the damage like housing, loss of cattle and other livestock, crop losses caused by flood, GIS based system was used. In all of this, livelihood was blind spot because it was not captured in the language of damages and losses. In other words, Livelihood recovery received much less attention. To assess the livelihood loss, she conducted telephone interviews which unveiled that soil erosion, supplementary livelihoods impacted marginal paddy farmers. So, to cover the losses they took up cattle raising. State response to their loss was limited. Non-paddy farmers on the other hand faced landslide debris, destruction of small scale irrigation infrastructure and changes in the land, soil and yields. The lockdown to prevent COVID-19 has further worsened situations for wage labourers due to unpredictable nature of wages as well as flood induced disruptions and farmers facing low prices for their harvest. Landless wage labourers having zero asset base were exploited by large estate owners and had to cross borders in search of work. Unfortunately, NREGA has not been able to provide them with enough support and the public distribution system was the sole source of support. Concluding the presentation, she said the migration workers are viewed as the second citizen in some locations of Kerala. Therefore, there is a need to push for rights rather than welfare.

Next, **Biswajit Mohanty** spoke on the refugee crisis and protection and focused on the two fundamental questions in refugee studies. First, how does one understand Refugee? And second, how does one understand the protection? According to him, mainstream political scientists and historians have not investigated the idea of protection rigorously so far because of lack of methodological vigour to understand the historical movements of refugees. In addition, the notion

of methodological nationalism has been used to analyse the national and international problems in relations amongst state and institutions. The political theory has not analysed the issue of justice from the refugee perspective or displaced person. Centring the argument on John Rawl's theory of justice, Mohanty raised a question as to who are the contracting parties trying to get justice. Responding to this question, he stated, the contracting parties are the citizens of liberal democracy. Similarly, he claims that issues of refugees are not addressed in a multicultural society. According to him, the western democracies had not settled the tension created by hetero-cultural diversity. Nevertheless, Multiculturalism delivers a common platform to accommodate diverse demands for two reasons. First, it goes beyond the common civil and political liberties which are shielded by liberal democracy. Second, they are adjusted to recognize & accommodate the distinctive identities and needs of ethno-cultural groups. Lamentably, multiculturalism theorists are not inclusive of refugees though they are inclusive of other groups like immigrants. The second part of his presentation contemplated the primary and imperative reasons to study and understand the principle concept of Refugees. According to him, refugeehood and statehood are the two sides of the same coin. Concluding his presentation, he pressed that Rights are imperative to protect refugees. Further, he highlights the responsibility of the state that shapes how the protection to a refugee is given. Lastly, he suggested remoulding the state-centric approach to an inclusive whole society approach to ensure the smooth functioning between the host community and refugee communities.

Sohini Sengupta talked about COVID-19, Droughts and Migrants and their accounts from Maharashtra using viral Twitter trends and print media (Marathi, Hindi and English) for the period of March-July. By using Framing of the attribution concept, she tried articulating how the ongoing pandemic crisis was framed by perceptions and actions around it and how two major interlinked concerns arise due to the same. First being the question of who is responsible for the crisis? And secondly, who would emerge as saviour to ensure adequate measures are taken to address the crisis. The discussion emerging from these two questions therefore, acquires critical importance in the context of migrants' dislocation from the COVID-19 lockdown. Her analysis on Twitter specifically took up the May 8th story of Migrants being run-over by a goods train in Aurangabad. This story invoked three distinct kinds of responses. The first one seemed to assume that with passage of the migrant worker the issues were buried as well; the second response raised the questions of accountability towards the government that gave such a short notice for the lockdown; while the third one emphasized on the irresponsibility of the migrant workers themselves to have slept at an inappropriate place. According to her finding by March and April two contrasting trends emerged, wherein the state governments were held accountable for not making transportation available for the migrants and at the same time migrants too were blamed for crowding and spreading the infection. In vernacular press, her research found instances of the village community's initiative of putting barricades and penalties for the trespassers emerged as the declaration of lockdown was linked with the feeling that the communities were on their own to securitize themselves. Through her work She found that two distinct kinds of news emerged from social media and print media, wherein the former generated a new version of US and THEM story around the crisis while the latter's coverage was more grounded in local developments and issues of the migrants for long. Her observations reflected the fact in this interconnected world, the twitter users exert more influence over public policy as compared to the print media. In her work she also highlighted the increasing disconnect between the drought and the agrarian issues and rural livelihoods, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the issue of drought itself was reduced as a crisis of significance.

In his closing remarks, Rajesh Kharat talked about the model used by Kerala to address the pandemic crisis and the floods in the state. Adding to this, he stressed on the need to introduce Refugee Studies Programs in academia.

Migrants, Refugees and Issues of Statelessness in Europe-II

The second session on issues of statelessness in Europe was moderated by Iman Mitra with four panellists from York University and IWM. The panel discussion covered a range of topics related to the theme viz. protection as a definitional trap for statelessness, differentiation of the refugee protection in Aegean Sea, forced migration and public health and migrants in the satellite cities.

Mind the Gap? Protection as a Definitional Trap for Statelessness in Europe.

Nergis Canefe talked about the growing numbers of stateless population arriving in Europe, especially since the Syrian exodus of 2011. She was critical of the failure of member states of European Union and other candidate states who have not been able to devise a common framework for the recognition of stateless people or the protection of their basic rights. Highlighting the irony in the fact that all the member nations are signatories of the 1964 Convention on Statelessness, she addressed the official and social denial of the stateless population. She rightly pointed out the issue in repatriation, which is out of question for these people as they don't have any nationality. In light of the above, Dr Canefe held that there perhaps exists no distinction between the global north and global south among the stateless; rather, statelessness should be viewed as a global problem. She also stressed that what is seen as statelessness is actually a citizenship issue for which the refugees must be resettled and absorbed in the mainstream community and therefore, there can be a push for universal working-class rights or a general set of rights that could be accrued regardless of one's citizenship status could be the way forward.

Territorial Differentiation of the Refugee Protection in Aegean Sea

Muge Dalkiran discussed the migration movements from Turkey to Greece in 2015 and how it has brought the Aegean Sea under spotlight. She underlined the legal obscurity of forced migration in the region, impacting the asylum regime in the maritime border zone between Turkey and Greece which, in turn has negatively impacted the rights and livelihood of asylum-seeking refugees in the region. The adoption of fast-track border procedures with the 'hotspot' approach that were geographically disparate led to fragmentation in legal procedures. Thus, Muge concluded, the creation of such legal loopholes and/or flexible legal measures and ad-hoc solutions are used as a tool of governmentality that further restricts the rights of refugee asylum seekers and leaves them in extreme vulnerability.

Forced Migrants and Public Health

Taking the theme forward, **Gonca Savas Dogan** analysed forced migrants' access to health care services in Turkey, keeping in view the social, political and economic developments at local, regional and global levels. She specifically discussed the Syrian crisis and growing Syrian population seeking protection in Turkey that forced the Turkish government to design legal instruments for migrants which has resulted in different migrant groups being entitled to different statuses with varying forms of access to services. Gonca argued that all of this has resulted in an uneven and complicated landscape for refugees and asylum seekers that is largely being promoted by global international and European institutions and their political concerns. In continuation to this, she highlights how the EU entered Turkey to provide parallel systems of provisions that were not alternate but complementary, especially for Syria which has promoted unevenness in Turkey

and has affected the life of migrants in various ways. Before the international intervention, there was international protection for refugees, asylum seekers, illegal workers but, now that social tension is increasing, economic problems are leading to inflation, unemployment is increasing, resettlement is limited and employment opportunities are restricted. These issues are being used by political parties and social groups to end refugee sentiments by holding the Syrian migrants responsible. This has resulted in inequalities, hostilities and unjust treatments of refugees, not just between the host and refugee communities but, also within migrant groups, i.e. between Iraqi migrants and Syrian migrants. In conclusion, she brings out the failure of Turkish government where there is no provision enacted for a comprehensive or legislative framework for migration management that has ultimately led to global actors feeding on the issues and perhaps being benefited from it.

Forced Migration, Gender, and Race in Satellite City

In the final presentation, **Meric Caglar**, deliberates upon the satellite city of Eskisehir and how it has impacted the overall opportunity structures, institutional and discursive resources available for refugees coming from various countries. In this framework, she talks about migration/refugee governance policies and categories which simultaneously produce legal dispossession and illegality in Turkey. Gender and racial discrimination on the lines of body politics, along with physical, spatial and cultural exclusion shape the refugee relations amongst themselves and with host communities. Lack of job opportunities due to gender and racial discrimination, in addition to fear of sexual harassment, results in refugee women seeking for livelihood opportunities elsewhere, especially in the bigger cities of Turkey, such as, Istanbul. Although, in bigger cities, they are prone to fall for temporal illegality because jurisprudential protection only covers them in their satellite city, they prefer to take the risk, given the aforementioned discrimination at various levels. Also, when they move to bigger cities they lose their rights to health care, education, social services which is actually very crucial. So, while the satellite city regime depends on self-sustainability of refugees, neither the system nor the lives of refugees are sustainable. She concluded with an emphasis on the gender bias in terms of politics of care which is supposed to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves.

The panel came to conclusion with comments from the moderator on different presentations and he brought out the interlinkages between all the research papers presented that aptly justified the broader theme of the panel. The presentations started with discussions around decolonisation of statelessness and intersectionality of vulnerabilities- whether political, social, economic- that could be seen in every front of statelessness, all around, which ultimately makes statelessness a global phenomenon.

Migrants, Refugees and Statelessness in South Asia - A discussion with the Migrant Solidarity Forum

The Migrant Solidarity Forum was moderated by Professor Manish Jha. The panellists for this session were Anamika Priyadarshini, Gopala Krishna, Nasiruddin Haider Khan and Shreya Ghosh. Professor Manish Jha began the discussion by noting how the migrant labour problem was made visible through the pandemic. This session was an extraordinary one as all of the panellists had engaged directly with the question of migrants, before, during and after the pandemic that impacted the migrants.

The first panellist, **Anamika Priyadarshini**, noted that the country was already in a miserable state, in a crisis of unemployment and hunger. The outbreak of COVID in early 2020 further jeopardized the problem. Situations worsened, the migrants were forced to return to villages from the cities. The unlocking phase led to most of the migrants returning. The villages and the rural economy was not able to absorb their work and livelihood needs. The family and rural community was equally unwelcoming. The migrants were viewed as privileged family members, but the return due to COVID has led to tussle and angst in the families. Migrants, in numerous qualitative studies, have clearly mentioned that society and family has let them down. The informal worker recruiting networks were quite active in the initial days of unlocking, and some of them were even flown out of Bihar to work in the major metros.

The major challenges come from their informal places of stay, unsafe and insecure livelihoods that they worked in and also how their presence in cities was not welcomed by public and law enforcement agencies. Despite this their return to cities signifies that migration is an inevitability and we need to work towards that.

The second panellist, **Gopal Krishna**, recalled how the Prime Minister had invoked Mahabharata to rally support for the war against corona will be won by 21 day lockdown. The Mahabharata does not end with the war, but ends with the images of destruction and killing of humans. The lockdown also served as a smokescreen to allow more than 700 policy guidelines and notifications. The pandemic act and the disaster management act were already invoked and the centre was working against the principle of federalism.

The ISM act 1979, has been now replaced by the codes. The codes are a prime example of how law has been twisted to remove the positive aspects of previous legislations. The migrant workers are defined as those migrants earning less than Rupees 18,000 and the journey allowances in the ISM Act 1979 have been done away with in the new labour codes. The mandatory AADHAAR number provision also further strengthens this threat. The codes also do not mention much on the helplines Or give any strong measures for implementation of the law. The code therefore seems to be giving a mere lip service to the protection of workers and there is nothing in the code that demonstrates any seriousness in dealing with the issue. There were 150 or more 'recorded' protests and the state still did not see the need to address the pressing issues of workers.

The third panellist, **Nasiruddin Haider Khan**, shared his experience of working with migrants, stating a complete change of perspective while working with migrants during the pandemic.

He invoked Tagore to elucidate the importance of migrant workers. 'The workers are the real heroes, and real movers of the society and civilization'. For the first time, because of the pandemic, we saw the migrant workers, not just as numbers and figures in the census. He speaks of his friend Kundan summarizing the situation in a term 'Jaa Rahe hain hum' - 'we are leaving', which shows the how the workers felt and thought as they moved out of the cities that they had built themselves. He used pictures to narrate his story, stating that these images still reside in his heart. Multiple images show the violence and dehumanizing actions that the police carried out. The mehanatkash - workers were overnight turned into beggars and hurt their self-respect and

dignity. The numerous images that were presented to remind and shake our conscience. This included the migrants who died, who suffered and who had broken down in the migration forced by the lockdown. The stories tell us the way the society and state abandoned the migrant workers. The presentation ended on the note that we should not and cannot forget the images, and should not resort to just academic sessions and studies.

The final presenter, Shreya Ghosh, shared the origins of the solidarity network. The first point of trigger was that portrayal of migrant workers in the media and public. She argued how it was felt that migrants were being shown as relief and charity seeking people, and no one was taking note of how they are the rightful makers of our country and nation, and needed to be viewed from a rights based perspective. This is the beginning of MSWN, where it was attempted to showcase the other perspective of how migrant workers were to be viewed beyond these distress calls and from a rights based perspective. They collated about 160 such protests with more than 1, 00,000 workers participating in such resistances. The media portrayed these protests as chaos and skirmishes. This was the common manner in which the media and state created the discourse for garibkalyaan as opposed to adhikaars. This was further compounded with a badly managed lockdown and relief system. The discourse of 'war' on COVID led to the suspension of democracy and led to the suspension of rights of workers. The media played a critical role in the reproduction of the image. She invoked the epidemic act of 1897 that talks about protecting officers and state and their action that is done in "good faith", but not the assertion and rights of migrant workers. This is also amply visible in the new labour laws and codes that have come forth.

Refugees and Migrants in the Post Covid-19 world

The closing session was chaired by Prof. Ranabir Samaddar, distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies. He began the session by a detailed description and introduction of the work and position of each of the three panelists. The session was conducted on a virtual platform.

Geographical Imaginations of Borders related to the Pandemic

Luiza Bialasiewicz is a political geographer and professor of European Governance at the University of Amsterdam. She began her discussion by expressing an anxiety as a political geographer of how to make sense of COVID-19 geographically in terms of locating it across the globe. It is a cartographic vertigo which has gripped both political pundits and virologists. The question for instance, that why the virus was making its appearance in certain small towns in Lombardy, Italy was explained by the fact that these were hyper connected trade and production nodes and thus hyper exposed to global flows. Such fantasies of protection offered by nation states laid bare in many ways the existing inequalities of the modern border imagination, a sorting of the right to protection and the mechanism of selectivity that was operated by border agents; deliberating who is most vulnerable both at level of states as well as cities and localities. She referred to certain anecdotal examples to argue her case. In Amsterdam as the infections skyrocketed, the Dutch health minister publicly singled out specific neighbourhoods- the Turkish and Moroccan community as the main culprits for the spread. She highlighted the central right-wing government's bias towards the migrant population and gave examples for the same. The virus while appearing to be democratic in its spread, has actually affected specific sections of the population more than others, like the undocumented migrants and the elderly. She tells us about the research on data justice, and what it has been doing over the past months is examining the different responses of states in helping to provide care for those requiring it including irregular migrants. Coming to the last part, she concludes that what we have been seeing is a profoundly

unequal geography of the denial of protection where sacrificability and scapegoating went hand in hand.

Refugee Regime from an Anthropological perspective

Alessandro Monsutti is a professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the Graduate Institute in Geneva. He begins the discussion by defining refugees and commenting on the three solutions to the refugee regime namely- repatriation in the country of origin, integration in the country of first asylum and resettlement in the third country. According to him the ontology of sedentariness is very clear in these solutions because mobility is seen as a problem and solutions are found when people stop moving. He provides valid examples to support his statement. He poses a question as to which kind of comprehensive approach can we propose to accommodate migration and mobility? Migration is a political act from its structural impact, even when it is not explicitly conceived by the migrant himself. Mobility is acceptable only if it is for leisure, like the case of tourists. There are differences in perceptions for instance, the public is outraged if a tourist is killed but not when thousands of migrants die at the borders. It is hence important to protect the refugee regime to not further jeopardise the protection to refugees. With regard to the question of what COVID-19 is telling us about the global unequal space, he says that it has to be understood in continuity and in its exacerbating and pre-existing inequalities at national and global levels. He talks about the research on the border between Yugoslavia and Italy. In spring the first reaction of Slovenia was to close the border to prevent contagion from Italy which was the hub of the virus. Recently again Slovenia has closed both internal as well as external borders as it is facing a serious situation. He refers to the work of Jean Francois, his colleague in Geneva where he says that globalization is actually the combination of three processes- the generalization of nation states, selective circulation of commodities and money and thirdly the localized identities. These three phenomena have to be understood together and they form the process of globalization. He concludes by asserting the fact that COVID-19 was only the continuity to what was happening before, and it is only bringing in further some previous logic where mobility was seen as a threat by institutional actors, but they can also be conversely be seen as a form of subversion of some forms of control and territorialisation.

The third speaker, **Alex Aleinkoff**, said that he would try to address the questions raised by Professor Samaddar on geographical imaginations of belonging and the impact of pandemic on the sovereignty of states. First is the strengthening of the collective spirit of people in terms of multilateral institutions or efforts of global organizations like WHO , the second being increased securitization manifested as heightened border control that would create pandemic displaced people. The human rights question has been largely muted by the states in the wake of the public health mandate that emerged during the pandemic. Covid ban has had more impact in U.S than any other xenophobic bans that target a particular community with no regards to civil rights, human rights or whatsoever. Movement of citizens against the Covid related ban and lock downs – which possibly could be a repercussion of reduced social life of people emerging due to the ‘Covid fatigue’ also needs to be mentioned. But the impact of Covid ban utilized to meet the state’s vested interests with respect to curtailing the entry of non-citizens did not receive a similar attention. The third scenario is that of differentiated sorting and selective sorting based on mutual bilateral understanding between countries. Asylum seekers are pushed back, but the individuals indispensable to various industries are allowed entry to the U.S. This third scenario is the predominant trend that emerged in the wake of pandemic. Hence the state sovereignty only re-emerges as more powerful than before, and in the process re-emphasizes the global

inequalities that come from such hard notions of sovereignty. Hence bio-politics from below strengthened by a global ethics of care as suggested by Professor Samaddar is unlikely. The political economy of labour will be dominated ever more than before by surveillance and technologies of control. Hence rather than new notions of sovereignty one will see the predominance of surveillance strategies that will make even the border insignificant. It is not the normalization of any state of exception. There are no iron rules of history that certain kinds of disruptions will produce good or bad results in the sense of democracy or despotism as these are political questions.

The concluding comments were given by Prof. Samaddar after the three speakers and questions. He said that more than the human rights question, there will be a new social contract based on care and protection. The legitimacy of the state will not be based on how much it can guarantee the rights of the people, but rather how much care it can provide those who need it- not philanthropically but in socially acceptable terms. The current fault lines in the notion of protection will remain and new might appear. Monsutti opined that social contract will not be so much against the authorities or the legitimacy of the state, but will be equally based on our economic ties-the way we produce, exchange and consume. But on an optimistic note, Prof. Louisa suggested that there is a re-emergence of understanding on what social solidarity means in the context of the pandemic.

Closing Session

The closing session, chaired by Professor **Ranabir Samaddar**, featured a speech presented to the funder RLS and IWM by some of the participants of the Winter Workshop. This included Sabahat Ambreen, Surbhi Mehta, Aravind Unni, Deeksha, and Zeba. Each of them spoke of their takeaways from the workshop, the different themes covered and the relevance that it has to the current situations the world finds itself in it today, and how these situations have in turn shaped the refugee crisis that is looming the world over.

Participants reflected that the sessions were well constructed and handled, particularly given the delicateness of the time.

Professor **Ayse Calgar**, representing the Institute of Human Sciences, Vienna; and Mr. **Jakob Littman**, representing Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, gave their comments at this session. A huge takeaway was the contribution that the workshop had in enriching the research areas and interests of the participants. Placed in the context of a worldwide pandemic that shows no signs of slowing down, the work done by members of the Calcutta Research Group in making an isolated event of such magnitude will be something that will go down in history as one of the most memorable years of CRG.

Special Panel Discussions

Pedagogy of Migration and Refugee Studies in Post Colonial Context

The Calcutta Research Group's 5th Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference was held amidst the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, in hybrid mode, i.e., it included both online as well as offline sessions. The first online session on the 17th of November was on the Pedagogy of Migration and Refugee Studies in the Post Colonial Context. It was moderated by Professor Shalini Randeria and included panellists - Professors Paula Banerjee, Nasreen Chowdhory and Samata Biswas.

Professor Banerjee started the session by explaining the dictionary meaning of the word 'pedagogy' in the context of migration studies - how to teach people about conducting research. Her talk thereafter emphasised on her perspective that we cannot put the field of forced migration into a structure. She discussed the reasons behind this unstructured system - the constant updates and changes in the field in today's fast-paced world. After explaining the importance of being disloyal to civilisation and our non-compliance to past establishments in this field, she went on to describe the archives that researchers of Refugee Studies can always fall back to whenever they need information. It is also essential for researchers to understand the importance of consent and the subjective nature of their research. Professor Banerjee beautifully concluded her talk by explaining that we cannot be tourists but rather wanderers in the community where we conduct research.

Professor Nasreen Chowdhory started her talk by explaining why the study of Forced Migration is an interdisciplinary subject. She posed an important question to the audience and the panel - how far can we push the boundaries of the research field and those of our relationship with the subject? It is extremely important to empathise with the interviewees, go to the heart of the matter and involve ourselves. However, it is equally important to construe and present these stories of trauma without getting overly involved. It is important to understand and respect the fine line between the subject's narratives and our views on the matter. There is an informal boundary that must not be transgressed. Professor Chowdhory concluded by saying that the whole process of traversing in search of answers to research concerns must be a continuous journey.

Our third panellist, Professor Samata Biswas focussed her talk on the role of media and cultural texts on research related to Migration. She started with the example of a documentary movie based on the lives of LGBTQ refugees in the US, the causes behind their large scale migration and their demands from the state. She moved on to elaborate upon the problems she faced as a literature teacher with the texts about Partition and the Liberation War included in the syllabus. She found it extremely difficult to justify the fictional stories that dealt with the trauma and loss of the Partition. She emphasised. The stories that her students read in the class led to them questioning the true meaning of homelessness, stories of loss and violence and the collective silencing of women who faced violence among many others. She also spoke about the many lost tales of resistance from the migrants in our cultural texts. She concluded by saying that stories can never be put in a structure or limited.

Once all the three panellists were done with their respective talks, the members of the audience put forth several interesting and pertinent questions that further gave the panellists a chance to weigh upon the facts they previously presented. Professor Banerjee spoke about the inability of a preset syllabus to bind the field of research. The reason behind this is that by the time we approximate the truth in this field, chances are that it changes and becomes false. Hence, it is important to sensitize students instead of just teaching them. Professor Chowdhory shared her

perspective by stating that the field is actually where the refugee is. It exists in abundance between the interviewer and the subject.

Another important question raised by the audience was about the ethics, responsibilities and accountability of the interviewer within the field. Professor Biswas answered this question by talking about a documentary movie that followed the life of a Rohingya refugee who fell in love with a Bangladeshi woman. She stated that digital records of such experiences of these refugees give researchers unprecedented access to their lives. Ethical responsibility is directly proportional to the increase in digital access. Professor Chowdhury further added that the question and motive of empowerment must be central to the theme of our research. The reason is that we listen to several stories but we choose the ones that are most relevant to our study. The decision of making that judgement call should be based on the aforementioned theme.

Professor Banerjee concluded the module by saying that we freeze a moment of truth during research. We must not seek validation from others as our only job here is to popularize a critical and empowering voice and maybe change some lives.

Pedagogy of Migration and Refugee Studies in the European Context

The special virtual public session on the Pedagogy of Migration and Refugee Studies in the European Context started with an address from **Samir Kumar Das**, Professor at the University of Calcutta and Honorary director of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group. The panellists taking part in this session were Ayse Caglar, associated with Vienna University & Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna; Laura Hammond from SOAS London and London International Development Centre Migration Leadership Team, and last but not the least, Charles Heller, a Forensic Architect from Goldsmiths, University of London. Dr. Das presented the panel with three broad themes that were to be reflected on–

The various ethical and methodological issues in the template of Forced Migration Research.

The critical gap/lack of connect between the object of research and the researchers, leaving scope for introspection and self-reflection where the focus needs to be on the teachers, and not just the object of study – especially in the context where the classroom is possibly no longer the comfort zone it used to be.

Ideological imperatives implicit in shaping classroom practices.

These three themes eventually formed the larger theme of erosion of democracy in, but not limited to, Europe, given the inescapable relationship between democracy and pedagogy.

On that note, Dr. Das requested the panellists to address at least two of the following questions in their remarks–

What goes wrong is the existing pedagogical forms, and the academic establishments of Europe?

Given the increasingly complicated interactions between European democracies and immigrants/foreigners, refugees and minorities in general – how can one experiment with existing pedagogical forms to address such a crisis?

What could be the possible strategies for opening up a dialogue with the academic establishments of Europe, and with what implications for our democratic prospects?

Does this call for mutual learning from each other's experiences, in contexts of Europe and South Asia?

Ayse Caglar began the discussion by emphasizing the need for the researcher to develop a perspective that not only addresses the migrants'/refugee' agency beyond their victimhood, but also as political subjects – subjects that are capable of redefining the boundaries of what we consider to be 'public', which in turn is further linked to the idea of democracy. She emphasized that one of the main challenges of researchers in Forced Migration is not only to see the objects of research, the migrants/immigrants/refugees, separately from their obvious victimhood but also "to situate & represent migrant refugee agency in relation to a dynamic field within which their agencies are produced and reproduced and the voices, subjectivities, and activism of refugees and migrants are made and unmade." Within such a field, the boundaries between different actors, domains and agendas are increasingly getting blurred – becoming a pedagogical challenge, for example, digital activism.

Professor **Laura Hammond** shared her insights for developing a strategy for migration research. Hammond emphasized that such a strategy has to begin by aiming to address the divisions between migration/forced migration, geographies, social sciences/other disciplines, policies and

practices and so on – it has to be a shared strategy where researchers have to think of experimenting in co-production of knowledge from the very beginning, as well think reflexively about the inequalities already existing in the field of research – the focus must be on developing interdisciplinarity. Apart from methodological challenges, Hammond also pointed out how a decolonisation of research practices also has to start from being reflexive in our approach – be it in terms of funding, partnerships, resource distribution or agenda setting. She noted that apart from focusing on the need for meaningful engagements of/with migrant communities, we also need to ensure that there is a fair allocation of both resources and recognition between the arts and the social sciences, for example, grants and projects.

The final panellist, **Charles Heller**, began by noting that his perspective is one that focuses on the autonomy of migration, which starts from the movements, constraints and struggles of migrants, instead of the starting point being borders and bordering practices making us ‘see like a migrant’. As a trained artist & filmmaker, Charles also noted that the aesthetic dimension of both research and practices. Heller’s remarks reflected on how forensic architecture is forging a form of research that would allow the researcher to think, to experiment and to think reflectively upon the forensic turn that is emerging human rights practices. Forensic architecture takes classical state-centric forensic sciences and challenges the limited understanding of violence. It seeks to investigate expansive forms and modalities of violence that often fail to find an adequate translation in legal terms, portrays a spatial focus in terms of registering and modelling such traces, operating within but also beyond courts of law, seeking to push beyond the limits and ambivalences of legal politics. In conclusion, Heller argued, in context of the exceptionalising of migration and refugees as well as the disconnection in the field of research, there is an “urgency to de-border migration and refugee studies”, and develop methodologies that interlink the existing separate practices in the discipline.

Overall, the panellists were all in agreement that the need of hour is reflexivity, re-conceptualisation of the way we look at the act of migration and migrants/refugees themselves, and a move away from disciplinary exclusivity.

A Special Virtual and Public Session in South Asia: on Migrant Labour, and the State

Professor **Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury** opened the session with remarks on the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, specifically migrant labour, the role of the post-colonial social policies in terms of protecting this vulnerable group in neoliberal times and mitigating dislocation, discrimination and destitution.

The first speaker, **Meghna Guhathakurta**, centred the first half of her presentation around the phenomena of rural-urban linkage in Bangladesh taking an example of three migrant categories- International Migrant Labour, Readymade Garment Workers and Agricultural Wage Labour. Being a country with nearly seventy percent of the youth under thirty years of age, the pandemic is adding on to the existing challenges faced by Bangladesh. The readymade garment factory being the second largest forex exchange earner, comprises mostly the female labourers from the rural areas. Most of them send remittances back home to educate young siblings, buy farm lands etc. In the second half, she discussed another upcoming phenomena, which is the existence of decentralized export processing zones where mostly women work. Such phenomena are breaking traditional gender stereotypes. The struggles of the workers are not addressed by any legal channels. She blamed accumulation of the capital as one of the key components in increasing the rural-urban divide in the present health crisis.

Covid-19 in Afghanistan: Perspectives on Migrant Labour, Society, and the State

Reza Hossaini initiated his presentation by giving an overview of the situational analysis of Afghanistan. As a consequence of the war, there is an increasing number of internally displaced people. The lack of reliable infrastructure to detect COVID-19 also complicates data sets on positive patients. Migrant workers working in Iran had to face victim-blaming for bringing COVID-19 to Afghanistan when they came back. In other words, it is not only a health crisis but a livelihood crisis as well. Finally, he focused on the shortcoming of the State in response to the crisis.

Jeevan Thiagrajah discussed the commonalities of the phenomenon of migrant labour in the South Asian Subcontinent specifically highlighting the challenges of migrant labour in Sri Lanka. He explicated that the Virus has opened the existing fragilities among people particularly displaced and vulnerable. In Sri Lanka, he elucidated how 1.7 million workforce engaged as daily wage earners have been pushed to new levels of poverty and hunger especially owing to the loss of remittances which had an impact outside the urban setting of Sri Lanka. Reflecting on the condition of the workers, he stated that they are primarily seen as suspects even when they return to their own countries. The role of the state can be seen in terms of the statutory authorities taking care of migrant labour overseas with an insurance fund that should be utilized. Besides, internally, the role of the state has acquired primacy in the delivery of essential services. Lastly, he emphasised as to how the health crisis created by Covid 19 should be contained with a minimum loss to the labour market (particularly the informal and unprotected workforce) and population mobility. It should primarily focus on prevention of stigmatisation and look into the data for addressing the socio economic concerns of the workers.

The next presentation was made by **Hari Sharma** on the condition of Migrant workers located in Nepal. He stated that migrant workers are largely seen as the ones going to the Gulf and Middle East, Malaysia, Japan, and Korea. However, a bulk of them going to India are also migrant workers in nature. He reflected on the dilemmas of the migrant workers in Nepal and how the crisis has been dealt and managed because of the seasonal nature of the migration and the open nature of borders. He reflected on how the Covid crisis had contributed to the visibility of their migrant

labour on the borders of Nepal. Stating the sense of otherness created at the borders, he underlined how the ethics of care and responsibility were defined at the borders in terms of who is a citizen and a non citizen of the country. This led to the migrants facing challenges related to their health and safety. The role of the state as a custodian of rights and caring for its citizens was seen as false at the borders of Nepal. He also emphasised on the question of the duty of care by the state for migrant labour in terms of health security . During the crisis, the instances of wage theft and precarious contract systems became more visible. He raised the question of what kind of social dialogue and contract do we need in order to deal with this situation in future. He underlined the question of how Nepal, based on a welfare model can deal with its own workers, and its negotiating capacity with the host countries especially at a time when the trade union movement has become weak globally because of informalisation of work and erosion of trade union rights. He reinforced the nature of state as similar to India where the state does not want to deal with the worker with lack of initiative for the workers even by the civil society movements in Nepal.

The last speaker **Noor Sanauddin** underlined the current situation of the Pandemic in Pakistan, the link between Covid 19 and the migrant labour and the role of the government and civil society in responding to the pandemic. Reflecting on the nature of spread of the virus, he stated that the religious gathering of the Tablighi Jamaat in Lahore, Pilgrimage from Iran and Saudi and the migrant labour coming from the Gulf were the major contributors to the spread of the virus. He underlined that about 90% of the migrant labour in Pakistan worked in the Gulf and at the time of return, the airports lacked proper testing and quarantine facilities. As a result of the Covid crisis in Pakistan, the rate of joblessness increased and daily wages dropped as well. The government initiative was seen through the Ahsas Emergency Cash programme in which cash was distributed among the poor families while the government encouraged small and micro enterprises. Civil society initiatives included a lot of philanthropist activities with the role of Peshawar University teachers Association in distribution of essentials to the poor. He mentioned how the state was using the crisis to suppress dissent of the opposition in the country.

This was followed by the conclusion of the session by joining the threads of concern raised by the panellists by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury where he underlined the key questions highlighted in the session in terms of how Covid 19 has contributed to the re configuring of the borders (international and internal), stigmatization of the migrant labour and the advisories for staying home by the government. He also pointed to how in the Indian context politics has been judicialised by the state where we also find new processes of de humanisation particularly of unskilled labour.