

**GLOBAL PROTECTION  
OF  
REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

**7th Annual Research & Orientation Workshop  
& Conference**

**13-19 November 2022**

**A Report**

Calcutta Research Group  
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS)  
Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna



## Acknowledgment

The multi-disciplinary activities and diverse programmes organised throughout the year by the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) would not have been possible without the constant support of all the partner institutes. CRG expresses gratitude to Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) and the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, for their long association, support and collaboration with CRG. Senior members and distinguished scholars of CRG have not only ceaselessly been part of framing and guiding CRG's programmes but have also motivated and initiated dialogues and discussions in research programmes throughout the year – CRG is grateful for their encouragement and participation. We are indebted to all our valued resource persons and guests for their significant contributions in our offline and online seminars, panel discussions, lectures and workshops and in making the programmes more vibrant.



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# Overview of the Project





## Overview of the Project

Calcutta Research Group has been working towards securing the rights for refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers over the last twenty-five years. During this period, this institution has contributed a lot in the field of studies on migration and forced migration, gender, displacement, labour, protection, peace and justice. It has constantly disseminated its rich repository of knowledge in these areas through its research programmes. This year's research programme focussed primarily on protection amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, climate disaster, the precarious conditions of labour, and issues of protection. CRG's workshops, seminars, special lectures and the online and offline programmes have attracted audiences from the academia and legal and social activism. Several individuals, including academics, representatives of NGOs, civil rights organisations, researchers and students from India, South Asia and beyond, took part in the research programme of CRG this year. In fact, the primary research agenda for 2022 emerged from the innovative research ideas conceived by CRG through the relentless brainstorming sessions. Earlier, the Kolkata Declaration on the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants, adopted during CRG's Third Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference in 2018, and an appeal for justice and a coherent protection policy for refugees and migrants of Afghanistan issued during the Sixth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference in 2021, both signed by distinguished scholars, journalists and jurists, helped in consolidating CRG's advocacy programmes further.

The Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference, organised by CRG, in this way, continues to provide a concrete roadmap, which guides the institution's research and advocacy programmes. The two Declarations (2018 and 2021) emphasise the importance of a comprehensive and critical understanding of the contemporary refugee and migrant crisis. Following these, the Workshop and Conference in 2022 put special emphasis on the newly emerging issues of climate change and climate migration, on the one hand, and the expanding base of platform economy and platform labour, on the other. This year's Workshop also focussed on the idea of ethics in relation to the migrants, whose livelihood and everyday lives were put to test during and after the pandemic, with minimal healthcare support, thus questioning the larger base and strength of healthcare infrastructure and the significance of protection. The Workshop and Conference also emphasised the importance of paying simultaneous attention to the different categories of migrants, pointing out the similarities between these categories, the consequent phenomenon of "mixed and massive population flows", and the reality that stateless populations face in the form of immediate danger of displacement, total disenfranchisement, and a situation of basic "rightlessness". CRG's research also underlined that most of the population groups, dispossessed of their basic rights, belong to the labouring classes of society, and that informal migrant workers are mostly from among refugees and migrants. These perspectives continue to apprise CRG's work on migration studies. It was emphasised that, the overall situation is now marked by the displacement on account of wars or war-like situations, and environmental degradation. Based on past work, CRG, in the coming years, aims to explore and identify alternative knowledge from the everyday life of migrants, refugees, and stateless persons who are victims of wars, conflicts, developmental disasters, and environmental catastrophes.

Since 2015, CRG's annual workshop has responded to the increased vulnerabilities of forced migrants. From a policy perspective, the previous two annual workshops inquired into why the two Global Compacts were flawed, when viewed from the perspective of the global South, and accordingly, the Workshops were successful in addressing several challenges that plagued the protection framework. When the pandemic arrived, CRG focussed its gaze on the perilous situation of migrants, forced or otherwise. It also brought out through its research the vulnerability of all working migrant population groups. Among the major issues revealed by the pandemic was that of public health. This and other emerging issues were addressed in the annual Workshop held in November 2022. The annual workshops, particularly the last two held in the post-pandemic phases (<http://www.mcrg.ac.in/wc.asp>), have given CRG enormous lessons in developing interactions and dialogues; building content and pedagogic skill; instilling synergy between different activities, working groups, and institutions. CRG aims at developing its programmes on the basis of these lessons. In the light of the above context, this year, the Seventh Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and the Critical Studies Conference partially recasted the thematic approach of the programme concretely addressing some of the frontier issues in migration and forced migration studies. The event was organised in collaboration with the [Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung \(RLS\)](#), the [Institution for Human Sciences \(IWM\), Vienna](#), and several other universities and institutions in India.

In 2022, the project opened with the Staff Researchers' Workshop held in January 2022, followed by webinars, public lectures, dialogues and follow-up Workshops (from April to June), the distance-segment of the Seventh Annual Research and Orientation Workshop (from July to October) and finally the Annual Workshop and the Seventh Critical Studies Conference in November thus marking the twenty-fifth year of CRG's foundation and work. The report is divided into the following segments:

- Staff Researchers' Workshop
- Research Briefs
- Public Lectures and Webinars
- Dialogue and Follow-up Workshop
- Annual Workshop
- Critical Studies Conference
- Evaluation
- Participants and Organisers
- Research Outcomes

# **CRG Staff Researchers' Workshop**



The CRG Staff Researchers' Workshop was held online on Zoom, on 28 January 2022, at 6 PM (IST). It was attended by a total of twenty participants including resource persons, researchers and other invitees. The moderator for the session was Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group. He opened the session and introduced the themes of the proposed research work by CRG's staff researchers, namely Rajat Kanti Sur, Rituparna Datta and Shatabdi Das.

**Labour Cooperatives in India in the Post-Globalisation Era: An Analysis of the Co-operative Movement in West Bengal and Bihar Since the 1990s**

*Researcher: Rajat Kanti Sur, CRG, Kolkata*

*Discussant: Arup K. Sen, Serampore College, and CRG, Kolkata*

Rajat Kanti Sur began his talk by mentioning the necessity of building co-operatives in the National Commission of Labour Report in 1969. He explained that the study would focus on how the perception of co-operatives has changed with time and the adverse role of trade unions on it. The study would look into the transformation and changes in the cooperative movement with special focus on the condition of the labour cooperatives in both West Bengal and Bihar in the 1990s. The proposed study would analyse the emergence of new co-operative movements in the 1990s, with focus on migrant co-operatives in Bihar and sex-workers' co-operatives in West Bengal.

Arup K. Sen mentioned that the choice of the area of study should be primarily based on the researcher's accessibility to the field and suggested that the gradual changes in the ratio of the footloose and permanent labourers should be an important part of the discussion on co-operatives. The discussant also suggested Immanuel Ness' book and Antonio Gramsci's famous writing on "factory councils". Manish K. Jha had mentioned that the researcher could look at the changes in politics in both West Bengal and Bihar to understand the transformations in the socio-economic position of the labourers. He suggested the justification of the reason behind the selection of co-operatives in both West Bengal and Bihar in order to analyse the changes. Amit Prakash advised the researcher to look into the transformation and shift in the idea of building a co-operative and the political role that co-operatives play in several cases, and to initiate the study from the 1980s to understand the complexity of labour relations. Byasdeb Dasgupta suggested that the researcher could bring-in Marx's idea on class and class struggle while studying the co-operatives. The researcher could look into the debate on ideal co-operatives, and the similarities and dissimilarities in the formation of co-operatives in West Bengal and Bihar as a central theme in the proposed research.

***Bhootlane Ki Katha: Living in the Coolie Lines and Construction of Dignity, Health and Well-Being 1830-1920***

*Researcher: Rituparna Datta, CRG, Kolkata*

*Discussant: Samita Sen, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, and CRG, Kolkata*

Rituparna Datta's paper proposed to map the design and pattern of the living spaces of the coolies or the coolie lines and linking it with the study of memory, grief, hopes through the trope of health. The study would aim at using biographical and fictional literature and substantiating it with the official reports on emigration and other archival records. The research would look into the rationale of the living spaces as an extension of fears, anxiety, and hopes, as connoted by Sinclair. The existing literature on indentured mobility focuses on the recruitment processes and living conditions in the plantation colonies, but fails to cover the importance of architectural patterns that had modified the socio-physical bodies of the coolie inhabiting the coolie lines. The study would attempt to analyse the role of the location and setting of the coolie lines within plantation estates such as distance from hospitals, sugar factories, court, police station and their effect on the health and well-being of the labourers.

Samita Sen, remarked that the caveat of binaries of free and unfree servitude have plagued indentured labour studies. She remarked that the research may aim to highlight key points in labour studies from the

perspective of health. The two themes that potentially dominated the study were the conditions of migration and actual working conditions. Sen suggested that the researcher could take account of the significance of the 'choice' to migrate and the subsequent generational differences. Although the instances of duping the coolies in false imagination of plenitude might be applicable to the first generation of the labour migrants; with the subsequent generations of repatriates coming back with stories of horrors, it would be difficult to make the claim of duping the coolies. It was suggested that the central focus should be on the positioning of labour within the inferences of health of the coolies.

### **Urbanisation and Climate Crisis: A Study on Kolkata**

**Researcher:** *Shatabdi Das, CRG, Kolkata*

**Discussant:** *Mahalaya Chatterjee, University of Calcutta, and CRG, Kolkata*

Shatabdi Das spoke about the growing vulnerability of Kolkata and its surrounding areas to flood, inundation and storm surges, triggered by the impacts of climate change and the shocks of climatic hazards owing to the close location of the riverine city to the coast. Growth of population, urban sprawl and changing dependencies on wetland ecosystem have been pushing the city towards heightened risk of submergence under circumstances of rising sea level. It was outlined that the study would attempt to look into the trend of demographic and land-use changes and infrastructural development along with the climatic catastrophes (storms, cyclones) from the year 2000 to 2021, in and around Kolkata. The study would aim to explore the designs of plans and policies for making the city resilient to climate change as the cases of waterlogging, flash floods following long duration of incessant rainfall and growing number of storms witnessed in the eastern part of the country in recent years.

Mahalaya Chatterjee discussed that the paper could examine the options of alternate livelihood opportunities that urbanisation has created in the city and the changing migration pattern as a result of urban growth. The research could enumerate the role of the local government in combating natural events and the approaches of the disaster management taskforce in disseminating information on prevention and mitigation of hazards in educational institutes. She suggested that the study area could encompass the districts of North and South 24 Parganas with Kolkata as the epicentre of risk. River and wetland management along with canal management could be an interesting part of the research because it would highlight the system of rejuvenation of canals that play an integral part in flood prevention in the city. A comparative analysis could be made of the role of disaster management in the city, the delta and surrounding areas. Chatterjee stated that there are ample studies on the occurrence of floods but it should also be important to probe into the causes of flood, significance of land-use changes and the impacts of human interventions in the making of such disasters. Ranabir Samaddar mentioned the work by Walter Kalin on climate change induced displacement for reference. Shyamalendu Majumdar also commented on the nature of shift from traditional farming to pisciculture practice in saline water for livelihood, in Ganga-Brahmaputra delta region of India and Bangladesh. Samita Sen suggested that shrimp farming in Vietnam and other countries of South-East Asia would be good case studies.

For reading the full report on the CRG Staff Researchers' Workshop [click](#).

# Research Briefs

## Research Briefs

The CRG staff researchers in 2022 worked on the themes of solidarity and co-operative building, communities settled in wetlands and river banks, climate crisis and disaster vulnerability, and health and



wellbeing in the coolie lines. The contracted researchers analysed mitigation of conflicts for pastoral communities, narratives of citizenship, climate refugees, governance in Central Asia during pandemic, populist policies, drought policies, and impact of urban renewal on slums. This segment compiles the research briefs.

### **Solidarity for Survival: Cooperative Building as a Solution to Overcome Vulnerability**

*Rajat Kanti Sur, CRG, Kolkata*

The research critically looks into the idea of cooperative building as a solution to help marginal and migrant labouring communities in India. It examines the labour cooperatives built in the late 1970s and '80s with the old Marxist idea of cooperative as a “transforming force to stop class antagonism” by studying three traditional cooperatives (the cooperative at KMDA, The Satyajug Industrial Cooperative and the New Howrah Hosiery Labours’ Cooperative) to understand the effectiveness of protecting the challenges faced by the migrant labourers. The paper also looks into the emergence of the Usha Multipurpose Cooperative and Credit Society (in short, Usha), the only sex-workers’ cooperative in South Asia. The study focuses on the viability of the cooperative model for the migrants, especially the migrant workers involved in risky professions, while trying to understand the effectiveness of the model of cooperative-building for the migrant workers (e.g., migrant labours, domestic workers or sex workers etc.) through an ethnographic study on the Usha Multipurpose Cooperative and Credit Society. The [full abstract](#) can be read on the CRG website.

### **The Kaibarta Question in Barak Valley, Assam: A Curious Case of Settlements in Flux**

*Debashree Chakraborty, CRG, Kolkata*

The paper explores the migration pattern of the Kaibarta community of the Barak Valley in Southern Assam, who came and settled in parts of Barak Valley across different points in time, but mostly after the Partition. The community settled across the wetlands and river banks of the Valley, and pursued their occupational needs. However, no permanent settlements exist for the community as they have been on the move from one place to another, inside the Valley, in search of livelihood and also to flee from ecological calamities that continue in the Valley. The research paper looks into the migration patterns of the Kaibarta community in the Barak Valley with the aim of understanding the historical origins of their migration by focusing on how the settlement of the Kaibarta community re/shaped the socio-political and ecological underpinnings of the Valley. For reading the full abstract [click](#).

### **Kolkata and Climate Crisis**

*Shatabdi Das, CRG, Kolkata*

The study focuses on the analysis of the factors that trigger climate crisis and disaster vulnerability in Kolkata owing to the city’s location in an estuarine-riverine topography. The city in close proximity to the Gangetic delta — makes the capital city of West Bengal vulnerable and prone to the shocks and stresses of climate change and natural disasters. Drying up of water-bodies and conversion into built-up space, loss of area under agriculture in peri-urban locales to construction, increasing density of concrete structures, growing urban heat island effect and rising population density, together with shrinking water surfaces, damages inflicted by soil salinisation post-cyclones, have been significant problems in the Kolkata Metropolitan Area. The research attempts to analyse the pattern of demographic and urban development along with the impacts of climatic catastrophes (storms, cyclones) from the year 2000 to 2021, in the Kolkata Metropolitan area, the impacts of environmental hazards and climate crisis on the population and economy of the region. The study aims to briefly outline the contributions, scope and implementation of disaster management plans by disaster management authority, law, governance, and coastal zone management act in combating climate crises and urban issues. The [full abstract](#) is available on the CRG website.

### **“Bhootlane Ki Katha” : Living in the Coolie Lines and Construction of Dignity, Health and Wellbeing 1830-1920**

*Rituparna Datta, CRG, Kolkata*

The research links the dots of market hallucination that arose out of the mystical logic of faith associated with the imagination of the better-life in transmigration and the dystopian reality in diasporic life that created a pragmatism of reverse utopias of memory regeneration, through the associative material culture in the geo-cultural landscapes of 'indentured archipelago'. The British colonial powers argued that coolie migration was a relief measure of population redistribution and using the labour capital lying idle in India due to the dwindling status of the indigenous agrarian economy. But how this pool of labour was aspired to migrate has often been left unquestioned in the discourse on indenture except for the oft reference to the Arkatis or indigenous recruiters who resorted to nether means of maliciously influencing the docile prospective labourer by creating a utopian image of 'plenitude' of food-wealth-pleasure in the plantation colonies in the habitual occupational zones of 'peasant time'. The title of the research is framed as an inspiration from the autobiographical narrative of Totaram Sanadhya which carries a vivid description of living in the coolie lines in Fiji. The study is a critical analysis of indentured labour mobility that reinforces its nationalist critique and lays out the details of the integrative notions of care in health and in social well-being through the exploration of the spatial imaginations and realities of living designs and the accords and discords in the continuum of utopia and dystopia as two polarities functioning through expectations and actuations as reflected in fictional or autobiographical literature and official reports in indentured migration from India. For full abstract [see](#).

### **Mitigating the Impact of COVID and Conflict: Empowering and Securing Futures of Belonging to Pastoral Communities Children in Jammu and Kashmir**

*Afreen G. Faridi, JNU and JK Lakshmi Path University, Jaipur*

The paper focuses on the issue of marginalisation of tribal children which is exacerbated due to an absence of developmental discourse that is based on social-constructionist and eco-materialist perspectives on rights and power. While the Indian government has promoted policy tools that enable tribal groups to represent their interests and become collaborators in the policymaking process, the tribal response to state policy of marketisation and globalisation is nebulous. The research seeks to unravel the impact of conflict and the COVID pandemic on the nature of child work and education within pastoral tribes of Kashmir living in border areas and within a conflict zone in the era of global pandemic. The research shall serve as steerage for future labour policy aiming at empowerment of tribal children on the margins in the Indian sub-continent. The full abstract can be read [here](#).

### **Navigating Precarity: Analysing Multiple Narratives of Citizenship in Assam**

*Samik Roy Chowdhury, IDSK, Kolkata*

*Gorky Chakraborty, IDSK, Kolkata*

The study focuses on the investigation of a location (Assam) where the precarities of rights and status become competing articulations of citizenship. While, one can find a significant quantity of academic literature on the emergence of precarious citizenship, there remains a gap concerning the relationship between precarity of rights and status. The research looks at how differing articulations of precarity influence the state's understanding of citizenship, culminating in a layered and descriptive perspective on precariousness of citizenship. The study addresses the role of mobilisation and the agency of different groups and their claims vis-a-vis the state. The study documents the perspectives of two geographically and politically distinct locations, namely, the Brahmaputra Valley and the Barak Valley, in the attempt to understand how the dimensions of location and domicile affect the articulation and the perspectives on citizenship. For reading the full abstract [click](#).

### **Climate Refugees: Health and Livelihood in the Bay of Bengal - India and Bangladesh**

*Debojyoti Das, India*

*Upasana Ghosh, Indian Institute of Public Health, Bhubaneswar*

Scholars working on migration studies pertaining to the Indian Ocean region have engaged at great length with the remittance economy, indentured labour regimes, transoceanic mobility and debates on cosmopolitanism. This research specifically focuses on a lesser studied subject — the internal climate refugee crisis and its ‘nexus’ with livelihood stresses, that have been accentuated by climate change, affecting community resilience, health and well-being. The ways by which environmental refugees overcome their ‘vulnerability’ and enhance their individual and collective agencies to successfully deal with climate, health and livelihood challenges in their ‘new’ socio-economic and political settings, is still a new and developing area of inquisition. This paper, by undertaking collaborative research project, studies how climate refugees in selected coastal communities across the Sundarbans delta use and enhance their individual and collective agencies to devise new survival strategies in the context of endangered livelihoods. An abstract of the research can be read [here](#).

### **The Pandemic and Governance in Central Asia**

*Anita Sengupta, Asia in Global Affairs, and CRG, Kolkata*

It has been widely assumed that the pandemic offered opportunities to ‘suppress dissent, test strategies of public control and strengthen authoritarian norms in Central Asia’. While governments monopolised the pandemic narratives and emergency legislation was imposed criminalising transgressions, it was, in most cases, security services with little experience in handling health crisis who were at the helm of the crisis management leading to a securitised approach to what was essentially a public health crisis. This research looks at Parliamentary and Presidential elections and public protests in Kyrgyzstan in 2020 and early 2021, followed by constitutional changes that argued that structural factors, in this case illegitimacy of the government combined with mismanagement of the pandemic, defined public response to the government. Though migration was not at the centre of political debates during the elections and the popular movements, the deepening of existing vulnerabilities of both migrants and those left behind became embedded in the discourse around the demands for change. Populism had economic roots in Kyrgyzstan and the new political landscape gained legitimacy through a leader who claimed to stand for an open government free of corruption. For the abstract of the study [click](#).

### **Politics of Populist Policies in West Bengal**

*Santi Sarkar, Vidyasagar University, Midnapore, and CRG, Kolkata*

A new series of welfare schemes like Swasthya Sathi, Duare Sarkar, Paray Samadhan, Laxmir Bhandar, etc., have been added to the older schemes like Khadya Sathi, Kanyashree, Sabuj Sathi. Special package of schemes for the tribal people dominated backward Jungle Mahal areas of south-western parts of the state of West Bengal, recognition of ethnic identities (in some areas) for fulfilling special needs; in the regime of the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal has been witnessing a new height of populist politics. Under the pretext of what will follow next, come together the possibilities and faultlines of populist politics in general, and Banerjee’s in particular. This study looks into the nature, prospect and results of these populist policies following two field studies, undertaken by the author, in Amlashole (of the erstwhile Paschim Medinipur, now in the Jungle Mahal stretches of Jhargram district) and in some tea gardens of Dooars region of Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts of North Bengal. Both of these places had hit the headlines in the first decade of the new century for hunger deaths and lack of basic amenities and dearth of welfare schemes. The paper particularly focuses on the impact of these popular policies and schemes on migrant labourers. The abstract is available [here](#).

### **Drought Policy in the Context of Climate Change and ‘Post-Humanism’: A Desk Review of Indian Droughts**

*Sohini Sengupta, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai*

The paper focuses on issues related to loss, depletions, disappearances, and collapses of ecosystems caused by human societies as a result of climate change. Delving deep into the concept of the ‘Anthropocene’, the research points out that discourses about a planetary transformation like the Anthropocene create political and ethical obligations to create viable modes of living and the need to interact with different ecologies. Of all the other climate hazards, droughts are one of the least obvious. Its effects are chronic, slow-acting, and typically less dramatic, and can be interpreted as an issue with adaptation. The paper looks into the drought policy of the Indian government, drought meteorological information, and drought-related news stories like creating food and water stocks, public policy, maximising the value of water, crops, and land use through technology-aided decision making, etc.

### **Urban Renewal Stage in City’s life and its Impact on Slums and Slum Dwellers – A Case Study of Noida City**

*Ankita Singh, National Institute of Education Planning and Administration, New Delhi*

*Johnny K. D., IIT Kanpur*

The research focuses on the “Impact of Noida’s Resettlement Scheme on Slum Dwellers” and covers broader themes like city, urbanisation, slums, community, civil society, citizenship, etc. The study attempts to trace the relation between slums and slum dwellers as by-products of urbanisation processes. In this era of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, urbanisation is an inevitable reality and so are the slums. There is a direct relationship between urbanisation and slums in most developing countries like Bangladesh, China, India, Pakistan, etc. (UN Habitat Report 2003). India is no exception as it houses 2,613 slum settlements across different states (NSSO, 2014). “A slum is a compact settlement with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions” (NSSO, 2014). India is home to more than 1.3 billion people. According to the 2011 Census, 2613 slums reported from cities and towns accounts for 12.92 million slum households across the country. In total, 65.49 million people occupied these slum households (NSSO, 2014). For the abstract of the research [click](#).

# Lectures and Webinars



## As the West Goes to War: Crafting Peace Today

Webinar, 25 April 2022

**Panellists:** *Marcello Musto*, York University, Toronto  
*Sandro Mezzadra*, University of Bologna, Bologna  
*Ranabir Samaddar*, CRG, Kolkata

**Moderator:** *Paula Banerjee*, University of Calcutta, and CRG, Kolkata

The present war in Europe and its representation in global media has greatly unsettled the world, particularly with speculations on the possibility of a third World War. This scenario brings several concerns to immediate focus, including the impacts of a European war in the third world countries, the understanding of ideas like democracy and liberalism in the face of military aggression, and the very idea of the West itself — what the boundaries and critical understanding of the West now mean in the current political and economic circumstances in Europe, America, and the expansion of NATO. The discussion focussed on understanding the notions of “peace” and “war”, the need to have a “global culture”— “a new internationalism”— rather than dwelling on the dredges of globalisation which is almost on its path of decay; the relation between the Left and the war and the necessity to understand wars not through individual ambition but in relation to the dominant socio-economic model emerges as important outcome of the discussion. The discussion raised questions on the idea of “just war” because the very idea of war, in whatever form, is against peace. It also stressed that democracy should be thought about from political perspective rather than through a cultural lens as the latter reduces the ideations associated with the concept of democracy.

The question-answer session that followed the panel discussion brought up questions of feminism and decolonialisation, integrating the subjects with issues of war, peace and the West. The discussion raised the question of war as the complex phenomenon with far-reaching consequences; and with contemplated non-alignment and neutrality, the need for a radical reconfiguring of internationalism and peace activism, and the lessons that history continues to give us at present despite its discontinuities. The panellists as well as participants in the audience (online) brought to light the shift in the ethics conserving world peace, and the significance of decentred questioning and constant dialogue on the West and global peace, from the position of the Global South. The full report on the [Webinar](#) is available on the CRG website.



Calcutta Research Group invites you to an online panel discussion on

### As the West Goes to War, Crafting Peace Today

Marcello Musto, York University, Canada  
Sandro Mezzadra, University of Bologna, Italy  
Ranabir Samaddar, Calcutta Research Group, India

Moderator:  
Paula Banerjee, University of Calcutta & Calcutta Research Group, India

Date and Time:  
Monday, 25 April 2022 at 7.00 pm IST (3.30 pm CET)

<http://www.mcrg.ac.in/>  
MahanirbanCalcuttaResearchGroup

[Register Here](#) to participate in this online event.

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Poster of the Webinar, 25 April 2022

## Universalism of the Oppressed: B.R. Ambedkar's Annihilation of Caste Public Lecture (Online), 8 June 2022

Speaker: **Ranabir Samaddar**, CRG, Kolkata

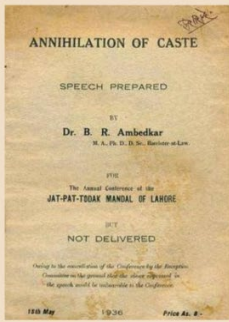
Moderator: **Samata Biswas**, The Sanskrit College and University, and CRG, Kolkata

The universals of the oppressed have emerged from concrete circumstances and concrete determinations. They are the concrete universals which become pathways to alternatives. In this way, they become the truth. The historical questions that confronted the radical anti-colonial thinkers were: What is this condition in which the colonial society finds itself racially and caste wise abused, discriminated against, and dominated internally by a few and externally by a colonial master power? What is this history that pushes the society into the prehistory of slavery, into savagery, into the mysterious frontiers of inequality? How does this condition give birth to a State and a type of politics that perpetuates discrimination, domination, and inequality? This lecture by Ranabir Samaddar explored these questions by delving into B. R. Ambedkar's *The Annihilation of Caste* (1936) which is a remarkable manifesto of the ideas of universal ideal of non-discrimination, equality, justice, abolition of race, caste, and colonialism emerges through concrete determinations of the associated questions. The talk drew attention to some of the sections to show that its messages aim at wider audiences by way of untying particular questions and working out the resolutions of those particular questions. The talk suggested that the emancipative ideas growing within the colonial and postcolonial milieu have much to offer in terms of transformative thinking of the future, for these ideas attain universality not through an espousal of universal principles, but through determining particular questions of society and politics. The full lecture is accessible [online](#).

25 YEARS OF CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP  
A Public Lecture Series

**Universalism of the Oppressed:  
B.R. Ambedkar's *Annihilation of Caste***

8 June 2022, Kolkata, 4 pm IST



**Lecture by Ranabir Samaddar**  
*Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies,  
Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

**Moderator: Samata Biswas**  
*Assistant Professor, The Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata*

Register for online participation:  
[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_d5dwztLOS0W0-dnxQUD6pA](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_d5dwztLOS0W0-dnxQUD6pA)

Poster of the event



Public Lecture (online), 8 June 2022



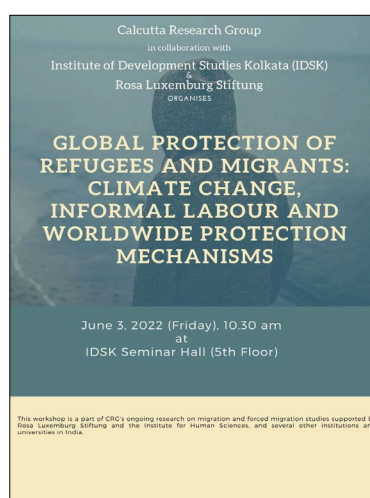
# Follow-up Workshop



## Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants: Climate Change, Informal Labour and Worldwide Protection Mechanism

Follow-Up Workshop, 3 June 2022

The Follow-Up Workshop on **Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants: Climate Change, Informal Labour and Worldwide Protection Mechanism**, was held on 3 June 2022, at the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata (IDSK). The event was organised by CRG in collaboration with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and IDSK. It was a one-day event that drew up on the past Workshop. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury briefed the audience about the nature and purpose of the Workshop. Ten Panellists presented their papers, which touched on the following topics: i. Climate Change, Displacement and Migration; ii. Migration, Labour (with special emphasis on informal labour); iii. Protection Mechanism in the Contemporary World. The Panellists included previous years' Workshop participants, CRG researchers and scholars of IDSK. The event came to an end with the screening of *Calcutta, A Migrant City* (Part II), a film produced by CRG in collaboration with RLS and IWM where Samata Biswas explained CRG's motive behind making the film. The full report can be read [here](#).



Poster of the Follow-up Workshop, 3 June 2022

## Defining Keywords in Refugee and Migration Studies

Consultative Meeting, 29 June 2022

The first meeting for a volume on keywords and key-texts in migration studies was a brainstorming session to chalk out the trajectory of the work — a compendium of keywords from the Southern/Postcolonial Perspective. Paula Banerjee introduced the theme and the scope of the project. A brief outline of the project was presented by Priya Singh. Since migration is a lived reality in South Asia, it was decided that the work should reflect the contestations of South Asian Migration by focusing on words/experiences like 'girmityas', 'shramik special', etc., that are typical of the region. Ranabir Samaddar and Manish K. Jha discussed about how several terms have been introduced to the world from South Asia such as Public Health, etc. Ranabir Samaddar pointed out the challenges of identifying and categorising words and suggested that the idea is to explain the word and not the concept. Two sets of presentations were made. The presentations covered a wide spectrum of ideas ranging from protection mechanism, camps, borders and mobility, labour migration, environment and culture. Samata Biswas, Rajat Kanti Sur, Debashree Chakraborty, Shatabdi Das, Nasreen Chowdhory and Sucharita Sengupta presented brief notes on the topics mentioned above and also suggested a few keywords. The Editorial Advisory board was constituted with Paula Banerjee, Priya Singh, Manish K. Jha, Nasreen Chowdhory and Samata Biswas. For full report [see](#).



**Seventh Annual Research and  
Orientation Workshop**  
*Global Protection of Refugees and  
Migrants*



## Concept Note

The environs of the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) — the city, the nation, and the region — has witnessed momentous episodes of human displacement and population movements. CRG's decision to devote itself to the study of migration — the forced dimension to it in particular and dignity of the migrants — was, therefore, an organic outcome of its twenty-five years long engagement with socio-political issues. The Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference is the flagship programme of this sustained study. This annual event is pivotal to CRG's aspiration to voice the experiences, opinions and discontents of the South in global discussions on the subject, and CRG has responded vigorously to the increased vulnerabilities of forced migrants. Focusing on the issue of care, protection and ethical practices related to protection, recent editions of the event probed the inadequacy of the Global Compact of 2018 and was successful in addressing several challenges facing the protection framework such as institutional dynamics and the changes therein, fault lines in the global protection map, and statelessness. During the pandemic, CRG examined the perilous situation of migrants, forced or otherwise. It also brought out through its research, the vulnerabilities of all working migrant population groups and the critical question of their access to public health. In 2022 CRG has focused on some issues that are pertinent in the post-pandemic times too. The role of the “government of the people” becomes more important in recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine. The global responsibility to protect the migrants has become enormously important. The recent phenomena related to climate change and displacements due to climate change have brought new challenges in the life of migrants. CRG has organised workshops, conferences and facilitated discussions with scholars, activists, journalists and researchers on environment and examined the precarious condition of “environmental migrants”. The Seventh Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference reflected CRG's recent involvements and attended to both persistent and emergent issues in migrant protection.

The two declarations on the protection of refugees and migrants (Kolkata Declaration and Afghanistan Declaration) adopted during the Research and Orientation Workshops in 2018 and 2021 respectively, are evidences of the possibilities of interventions for protection of refugees and migrants. The Declarations, valuable for understanding the gravity and nuances of migration in the present times, articulation in the South Asian milieu, expression of solidarity with the victims of forced displacement, and the assessment of international efforts to ameliorate the distress of such uprootedness — portrayed CRG's lookout on migration issues and related consequences, and reinforced its identity as an informed interlocutor on the subject. Prepared in the wake of the Global Compacts, the Declarations focused on the aspects fundamental to CRG's research agenda and its valued association with the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung's project ‘Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants’ and the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, under its project ‘Justice, Protection and Government of the people — a two-year research and orientation programme on Protection and Democracy in a post-COVID world’.

The Seventh Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and Conference, November 2022, provided a robust starting point for envisaging CRG's future trajectory in studying migration. The event comprised a three-and half-day Workshop followed by a two-and-a-half-day Conference. Deliberations during the Workshop centred on six modules, and brought together young researchers, academics, activists, human rights advocates, journalists, artists, filmmakers, and experts from the fields of humanities, social sciences, legal studies and others, to provide an immersive and enriching encounter with the study of migration and forced displacement. Young scholars presented their studies under the active guidance of their respective module tutors, esteemed academics in their own disciplines and areas of specialisation.

The **Seventh Annual Research and Orientation Workshop on *Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants*** in 2022 hosted six working groups on the following themes, with each thematic module having its respective coordinator(s).

***Module A. Protection and Punishment: The Faultlines of Caste, Gender, Religion and Race***

Coordinator: Nasreen Chowdhury.

***Module B. Globalisation and Migrant Economy with Special Focus on Labour and Platform Economy***

Coordinators: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Arup K. Sen.

***Module C. Law and Jurisprudence on Protection of Refugees and Migrants***

Coordinator: Sahana Basavapatna.

***Module D. Statelessness***

Coordinator: K. M. Parivelan.

*Module E had two options;*

***Module E1. Pandemic, Migrants, Refugees and Public Health***

Coordinator: Samir Kumar Das.

**OR**

***Module E2. Ethics of Care and Protection***

Coordinators: Manish K. Jha and Mouleshri Vyas.

Participants in the Workshop were selected from applicants from South Asia as well as other parts of the globe and were assigned to the modules based on their preferences, as well as their research specialisations.

**Distance Segment (July-October 2022)**

CRG designed and organised the distance segment of the Workshop prior to the physical event in Kolkata in November 2022. The idea was to remotely provide effective mentorship to the participants and guide them in formulating their research plan and in writing their abstracts and full papers. To this end, an online meeting with the participants and the resource persons was organised on 21 July 2022, where the design and the deliverables of the Workshop were explained. Following that, each module had three virtual meetings between the participants and the module tutors from July to September 2022. These meetings were organised to guide the Workshop participants in developing their papers on the basis of the abstracts submitted beforehand. The respective Module Coordinators (Tutors), and in some cases invited external experts, explained the theme and the scope of the modules, discussed the abstracts in details and provided them with critical suggestions on their research and writing. Besides these formal meetings, the tutors also mentored the participants through individual email communications throughout the distance segment of the programme. At the end of the distance segment, three participants discontinued due to personal issues and the Workshop moved onto the next phase with the remaining 24 participants. Two of them (one from Afghanistan and one from Bulgaria) participated online.

The **Inaugural Lecture** of the Workshop was delivered by **Joris Schapendonk** on “**How to Re-View Migrant Positionality and European Border Regimes.**” There were no parallel sessions in the Workshop, except the presentations of Module E1 and Module E2. The first part of the module sessions had lectures by the Module Coordinators while the second part of each module session had presentations of the research by the participants. **Tom Vickers**, Associate Professor in Sociology at the Nottingham Trent University attended the Workshop and the Conference as the **evaluator**. The Workshop came to a close with the **Valedictory Lecture** (online) of **Ayse Caglar** on “**A Complex Landscape of Im(mobility), Labour Regimes and the Coloniality of Power.**” There was a **Field Trip** to the **Metiabruz-Khidderpore dockyard area** adjoining the Kolkata Port. The main aim of the trip was to revisit the transit route of the migrant labourers since mid-nineteenth century.

Further information of the event is available on the [CRG website](#).



## Programme Schedule

### Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants

#### SEVENTH ANNUAL RESEARCH AND ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

in collaboration with

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna

13-17 November 2022, Venue: Hotel Monotel, Kolkata

#### 13 November 2022: Day 1

**5:30 pm-6:00 pm:** Registration & Tea

Inaugural Session

Chair: Byasdeb Dasgupta, *University of Kalyani, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**6:00 pm-6:10 pm:** Welcome Address by Byasdeb Dasgupta

**6:10 pm-6:20 pm:** Introduction to Calcutta Research Group and its programme by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**6:20 pm-6:35 pm:** Introduction of Participants

**6:35 pm-6:50 pm:** Introducing the Workshop, assignments and responsibilities by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury

**6:50 pm-7:30 pm:** Inaugural Lecture

**“Mobility and Resonance: How to Re-view Migrant Positionality and European Border Regimes”**  
by Joris Schapendonk, *Radboud University, Netherlands*

**7:30 pm-7:35 pm:** Vote of Thanks by Debashree Chakraborty, *Calcutta Research Group, India*

**7:30 pm:** Welcome Dinner

#### 14 November 2022: Day 2

**9:00 am-9:30 am:** Registration

**9:30 am-10:30 am:** Module Lecture: **“Module A: Protection and Punishment: The Faultlines of Caste, Gender, Religion and Race”**

Speaker: Nasreen Chowdhury, *University of Delhi, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**10:30 am-11:00 am:** Tea Break

**11:00 am-12:30 pm: Presentations by the Participants of Module A**

1. Akanksha Kapoor, *University of Delhi, India*, “**Refugee Protection and the state in South Asia**”
2. Debashree Chakraborty, *Calcutta Research Group, India*, “**Tracing Kaibartta Migration in the Valley of Southern Assam**”
3. Julian Gutierrez Castano, *York University, Canada*, “**Forced Displacement and Racialisation**”,
4. Lalnundika Darlong, *Tripura University, India*, “**Social Exclusion and Feminization of Poverty: (Re) Negotiating the Protection of Rights of Displaced Bru Women**”
5. Priyanka Chak, *South Asian University, India*, “**Migration, Gender and Race: The word ‘Rohingya’ as Bullying**”

**12:30 pm-1:30 pm: Lunch Break**

**1:30 pm-2:30 pm: Module Lecture: “Module B: Globalisation and Migrant Economy with Special Focus on Labour and Platform Economy”**

Speakers: Arup K. Sen, *Serampore College, and Calcutta Research Group, India*; and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury

**2:30 pm-4:00 pm: Presentations by the Participants of Module B**

1. Afreen Gani Faridi, *J. K. Lakshmiapat University, India*, “**Mitigating the Impact of COVID and Conflict: Empowering & Securing Futures of Children Belonging to Pastoral Communities of Jammu and Kashmir**”
2. Anasma Gayari, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*, “**Political Subjectivity and India’s New Service Sector: A Study of Migrant Labour from the North-East Region in Delhi-NCR**”
3. Imran Philip, *Calcutta Research Group, India*, “**Gender, Labour and Migration: Situating Women Migrant Workers in Kolkata**”
4. Niwash Prakash, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*, “**Crisis, Vulnerabilities, and Multiple Subjectivities: A Case Study of Migrant Labour in Delhi**”

**4:00 pm-4:30 pm: Tea Break**

**4:30 pm-6:15 pm: Visualising Migration in Kolkata: Historical and Contemporary Experiences: Photo Exhibition and Documentary Screening**

**4:30 pm-5:00 pm: “Trail of Blood: Part I: The Calcutta Killings of 1946 and its Afterlives”**  
Inauguration of a travelling photo exhibition

Artist: Dipanwita Saha, *Software Engineer, IBM, and Visual Artist, India*

**5:00 pm-6:15 pm: Film Show (Kolkata, A Migrant City: I, II, III)**

Introduction: Samata Biswas, *The Sanskrit College and University, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**6:15 pm-7:30 pm: Break**

**7:30 pm-8:10 pm: Special Online Lecture, “The International Organisation for Migration and the Global Governance of Migration: Colonial Unknowing, Commitments, Challenges”**

Speaker: Megan Bradley, *McGill University, Canada*

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

**8:10 pm-8:30 pm: Discussion and Q&A**

## 15 November 2022: Day 3

9:00 am-9:30 am: Registration

9:30 am-10:30 am: Module Lecture: **“Module D: Statelessness”**

Speaker: K.M. Parivelan, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences-Mumbai, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

10:30 am-11:00 am: Tea Break

11:00 am-12:30 pm: **Presentations by the Participants of Module D**

1. Abu Faisal Md Khaled, *Bangladesh University of Professionals, Bangladesh*, **“The Rohingyas and Statelessness: Constructing and Contesting Diaspora Identity on Social Media Platforms”**
2. Marufa Akhter, *Independent University, Bangladesh*, **“Forced Displacement and Lost Agency of Rohingya Women”**
3. Md. Atique Rehman, *University of Dhaka, Bangladesh*, **“Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity in Stateless Condition: A Study on the Critical Discourse Analysis of Rohingya Men in Bangladesh”**
4. Sharmistha Mallik, *University of Calcutta, India*, **“Climate Change: A New Threat in the Making and Unmaking of Statelessness”**

12:30 pm-1:30 pm: Lunch Break

1:30 pm-2:30 pm: Module Lecture: **“Module C: Law and Jurisprudence on Protection of Refugees and Migrants”**

Speaker: Sahana Basavapatna, *Calcutta Research Group, India*

2:30 pm-4:00 pm: **Presentations by the Participants of Module C**

1. Alexandra Cooper, *Foundation for Access to Rights, United Kingdom*, **“The Difficulty in Navigating Refugee and Migration Law in Unestablished National Legal Frameworks”**
2. D. G. Niruka Sanjeevani, *General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka*, **“The Shifts of Migration Patterns in Sri Lanka: Analysing the Impact of Ongoing Financial Crisis on the Growth of Out-migration”**
3. Sudha Rawat, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*, **“Nation, Language and Violence during Sri Lankan Civil War: Voices and Narratives of the Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in India”**

4:00 pm-4:30 pm: Tea Break

4:30 pm-5:30 pm: Special Lecture: **“The Politics of Space: Refugees, Displaced and Stranded”**

Speaker: Amena Mohsin, *University of Dhaka, Bangladesh*

Chair: Lydia Potts, *Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, Germany*

## 16 November 2022: Day 4

9:00 am-9:30 am: Registration

9:30 am-10:00 am: Introduction to the **Field Trip: “Calcutta, A Migrant City”**

Coordinator: Sabir Ahamed, *Pratichi (India) Trust, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**10:00 am- 11:00 am:** Parallel Sessions: Module Lectures for **Module E-1 & Module E-2**

**“Module E-1: Pandemic, Migrants, Refugees and Public Health”**

Speaker: Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**“Module E-2: Ethics of Care and Protection”**

Speakers: Manish K. Jha, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences-Mumbai, and Calcutta Research Group, India* and Mouleshri Vyas, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences-Mumbai, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**11:00 am-11:30 am:** Tea Break

**11:30 am-1:00 pm:** Parallel Sessions: **Presentations by the Participants of Module E-1 and E-2**

**Module E-1 Presentations**

1. Chaitali Biswas, *Ananda Bazar Patrika, India*, **“Pandemic and the Crisis of Class Equalisation”**
2. Dishari Sarkar, *Sarojini Naidu College for Women, India*, **“Re-Thinking Media Representation of Migrant Domestic Workers in Bengali Mainstream Dailies during the Pandemic: A Feminist Perspective”**
3. Miriam Jaehn, *National University of Singapore, Singapore*, **“Intimate Encounters and Shifting Im/mobilities: Rethinking Anthropological Practices During a Pandemic”**
4. Tarak Nath Sahu, *Vidyasagar University, India*, **“The Predicament of Migrant Workers for the Sudden Spurt of COVID-19: With Special Reference to Gold Jewellery Sector”**

**Module E-2 Presentations**

1. Ambika Rai, *University of North Bengal, India*, **“Navigating Gender Dimensions in Transitional Labour Mobility among the Bharias (Head Porters) in Darjeeling Hill Town”**
2. Kaveri, *Calcutta Research Group, India*, **“The Politics of Protection of Refugees and Migrants”**
3. Khalid Bezaad, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Afghanistan*, **“Negative Impacts of not considering the Ethics and Care of Protection” (Online)**
4. Subha Srishti, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences-Mumbai, India*, **“Left Behind Women in Flood Affected Kosi Region of Bihar”**

**1:00 pm-2:00 pm:** Lunch Break

**2:00 pm-6:00 pm:** Field Trip

Coordinator: Sabir Ahamed

**7:00 pm:** Dinner (Outside)

**17 November 2022: Day 5**

**9:00 am-9:30 am:** Registration

**9:30 am-10:30 am:** Parallel Sessions: Presentations of Rapporteurs’ Reports by the Participants (Reporting on the module presentations, lectures, film show and the field trip)

Room 1: Reporting on Modules A, B, C and Film Show

Moderator: Sahana Basavapatna

Room 2: Reporting on Modules D, E-1, E-2 and Field Trip

Moderator: Samata Biswas

**10:30 am-11:00 am:** Tea Break

**11:00 am-12:00 pm:** Plenary Lecture of the Workshop: **“A Complex Landscape of (Im)mobility, Labour Regimes and the Coloniality of Power”**

Speaker: Ayse Caglar, *University of Vienna, and Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, Austria*

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

**12:00 pm-1:00 pm:** Feedback Session with the Workshop Participants (including the feedback of the field trip)

Moderators: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, and Tom Vickers, *Nottingham Trent University*

**1:00 pm-2:00 pm:** Lunch Break

Seventh Critical Studies Conference

MIGRANT ASIAs:

REFUGEES, STATELESSNESS & MIGRANT LABOUR REGIMES

17-19 November 2022

Venue: Hotel Monotel, Kolkata

17 November 2022

**4:30pm–5:00pm:** Registration & Tea

**5:00pm–5:30pm:** Inaugural Session

Chair: Shyamalendu Majumdar, *Calcutta Research Group and Sivanath Sastri College, India*

**5:00pm–5:10pm:** Welcome Address by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Calcutta Research Group and Rabindra Bharati University, India*

**5:10pm–5:30pm:** Introducing the Conference, Ishita Dey, *Calcutta Research Group & South Asian University, India*

**5:30pm–5:40pm:** Self Introduction by the Conference Participants

**5:40pm–6:30pm:** Keynote Lecture: **“Medicalisation of Racism and Classism in the Context of Migration”**

Speaker: Sevasti Trubeta, *Magdeburg-Stendal University of Applied Sciences, Germany*

9:00am–9:30am: Registration

9:30am–11:00am: Parallel Sessions: Panels 1A and 1B

### Panel 1A-Seeing Like a State

Chair and Discussant: Arup K. Sen, *Serampore College, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

#### Panellists:

1. Ajeet Kumar Pankaj, *Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, India*; Manish K. Jha, *TISS Mumbai, India*; Saima Farhad, *University of Kashmir, India*; and M. Ibrahim Wani, *University of Kashmir, India*, **“Document’ and North-Indian Labour Migrants: Governing Labour Mobility in Manipur”**
2. Baidehi Das, *University of Hyderabad, India*, **“Exploring ‘recent histories’ of Re-Bordering Along Indo-Bangladesh Border: Stories Emerging from Villages Lying Along Porous Borders of North Twenty-Four Parganas in West Bengal”**
3. Yojak Tamang, *Institute of Development Studies Kolkata, India*, **“The Seasonal Migrant Labourers Living on the Edges of the State”**

### Panel 1B-Seeing Like a State

Chair and Discussant: Anup Shekhar Chakraborty, *Netaji Institute for Asian Studies, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

#### Panellists:

1. Sonika Gupta, *IIT Madras, India*, **“Tibetan Rehabilitation in Arunachal: Local State and Geopolitical Anxieties”**
2. William Singh, *Pachhunga University College, India*, **“Border Crossings in Mizoram: Desirables and Unwanted Communities”**
3. Santi Sarkar, *Vidyasagar University, and Calcutta Research Group, India*, **“The Politics of Populist Policies in West Bengal”**

11:00am–11:30am: Tea Break

11:30am–1:00pm: Parallel Sessions: Panels 2A and 2B

### Panel 2A-Metamorphosis of the Migrant: State, Migration and Identity Politics

Chair and Discussant: Manish K. Jha, *Calcutta Research Group and TISS, Mumbai, India*

#### Panellists:

1. Rajarshi Dasgupta, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*, **“Metamorphosis of the Migrant: State, Migrant and Identity Politics”**
2. Anasma Gayari, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*, **“A Cosmopolitan Race: Representations of Northeast Migrants in Delhi- NCR”**
3. Krishanu Bharagava Neog, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, India*, **“Migrant as Political Entrepreneur”**
4. Bidhan Golay, *Sikkim University, India*, **“The Migrant at Home: A Case of the Gorkha Conundrum”**

### Panel 2B-Climate Migration: Documents and Distractions

Chair and Discussant: Nirmal Kumar Mahato, *Vidyasagar University, and Calcutta Research Group, India.*

**Panellists:**

1. Upasana Ghosh, *Indian Institute of Public Health, India*, and Debojyoti Das, *India*, **“Climate Refugees: Health and Livelihood in the Bay of Bengal – India and Bangladesh”**
2. Sohini Sengupta, *TISS-Mumbai, India*, **“Indian Droughts, Drought Policy and Climate Change”**

**1:00pm–2:00pm:** Lunch Break

**2:00pm–3:00pm:** Special Lecture (online): **“A Critical Genealogy of the Forced Migratory Labour in the Asian Mediterranean Sea”**

Speaker: Joyce C.H. Liu, *National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan*, and Jonathan Parhusip, *National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan*

Chair: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury

**3:00pm–3:30pm:** Tea Break

**3:30pm–5:00pm: Panel 3-Partition: Texts and Contexts**

Chair and Discussant: Samir Kumar Das, *University of Calcutta, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**Panellists:**

1. Anindya Sen, *Assam University, India*, and Debashree Chakraborty, *Calcutta Research Group, India*, **“Partition, Migration and Identity Formation: Narratives from Southern Assam”**
2. Anushmita Mukherjee, *North Bengal University, India*, **““Those forgotten after Partition’: Migration and Identity in Debesh Roy’s Select Works”**
3. Samata Biswas, *The Sanskrit College and University, and Calcutta Research Group, India*, **“What Does the Border Mean for Children? Narratives from the Indo- Bangladesh Borderlands in Manjira Saha’s Chhotoder Border”**

**5:00pm–5:15pm:** Tea Break

**5:30pm–6:15pm:** Jayanta Dasgupta Memorial Lecture: **“Gig Economy and Migration - The Future of the Work or of Precariat?”**

Speaker: Lydia Potts, *Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany*

Chair: Shibashis Chatterjee, *Jadavpur University, India*

**19 November 2022**

**9:00am–9:30am:** Registration

**9:30am–11:00am: Parallel Sessions: Panels 4A and 6B**

**Panel 4A-Solidarity and Agency: Case Studies**

Chair and Discussant: Sahana Basavapatna, *Calcutta Research Group, India*

**Panellists:**

1. Rajat Kanti Sur, *Calcutta Research Group, India*, “**Solidarity for Survival: Cooperative Building as a Method to Overcome Vulnerability**”
2. Joseph K. Lalfakzuala, *Government T. Romana College, India*, “**People’s Response to the Influx of Myanmar Refugee in Mizoram: Implication and Limitation of the State policy**”
3. Deeksha, *TISS-Mumbai, India*, “**On the move for Care: Conceptualising Migration for Healthcare in Asia**”
4. Johnny KD, IIT Kanpur, India, and Ankita Singh, *National Institute of Education Planning and Administration, India*, “**Urban Renewal in City’s Life and its Impact on Slums and Slum Dwellers – A Case Study of Noida City**”

#### **Panel 6B-Asian Mobilities**

Chair and Discussant: Ruchira Goswami, *West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, India*

#### **Panellists:**

1. Ali Dad Mohammadi, *Porsesh Research and Studies Organisation, Afghanistan*, “**The Tragedy of Overload: Suppression to Exodus of Afghan Hindus and Sikhs (1992-2021)**”
2. Anita Sengupta, *Asia in Global Affairs, and Calcutta Research Group, India*, “**The Pandemic and Governance in Central Asia**”

**11:00am–11:30am:** Tea Break

**11:30am–1:00pm: Parallel Sessions: Panels 5A and 5B**

#### **Panel 5A-Migration and Refugee Issues in and around Central Asia: A Socio-Cultural Perspective**

Chair and Discussant: Anita Sengupta

#### **Panellists:**

1. Nandini Bhattacharya, *Calcutta Girls College, India*, “**Labour Migration and its Social Impact on Post-Soviet Tajikistan: An Overview through Cinematic Lenses**”
2. Veena Ramachandran, *Birla Institute of Technology and Science-Pilani, India*, “**Exile, Liminality, and Nation: A Study on Tibetans in Exile in India**”.

#### **Room 2: Panel 5B-Climate Migration: Crisis and Resources**

Chair and Discussant: Sohini Sengupta, *TISS, Mumbai*

#### **Panellists:**

1. Nirmal Kumar Mahato, *Vidyasagar University, India*, “**Climate Migrants, Resource Scarcity and the Sustainability Issue: The Case of Jungle Mahals Region**”
2. Shatabdi Das, *Calcutta Research Group, India*, “**Kolkata and Climate Crisis**”

**1:00pm–2:00pm:** Lunch

**2:00pm–3:30pm: Panel 4B-Labour and Transition: Then and Now**

Chair and Discussant: Ishita Dey, *South Asian University, India*

#### **Panellists:**



1. Raj Kumar Thakur, *Assam University, India*, **“‘Coolie’ Question in the Age of Transition, the 1940s to 1960s”**
2. Kamal Thapa Khsetri, *National Human Rights Commission, Nepal*, **“Protection of Nepalese Workers in India and Nepal”**
3. Rituparna Datta, *Calcutta Research Group, India*, **“Coolies, Climate and the Territories of Mobility”**
4. Emirilda Thabah, **“Coal Mining and Labour in Meghalaya.”**

**3:30 pm–5:00 pm: Valedictory Lecture**

**“An Intelligent Guide to the Responsibility Paradox”**

Speaker: Ranabir Samaddar

Chair: Amena Mohsin

**5:00 pm-5:10 pm: Distribution of Certificates**

**5:10pm-5:25pm: Remarks by Participants and Partner Institutions (RLS & IWM)**

**5:25pm-5:30pm: Vote of Thanks: Shatabdi Das**

**Farewell Dinner**

## Inaugural Session

The inaugural session of the Workshop was chaired by Byasdeb Dasgupta. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury introduced the research and areas of specialisation of the Calcutta Research Group and the themes of the Annual Workshop, often referred to as the ‘Winter Workshop’, over the last twenty-five years. This was followed by introduction of the Workshop participants in the context of the subjects and themes of their study and research interests, and an overview of the segments, various aspects of the online and physical sessions of the Workshop, assignments and responsibilities of module participants for rapporteuring and preparing reports on the module presentations as well as sessions and panels of the workshop and Conference.

## Inaugural Lecture

### “Mobility and Resonance: How to Re-view Migrant Positionality and European Border Regimes”

*Joris Schapendonk, Radboud University, Netherlands*

Joris Schapendonk commenced his lecture by highlighting the importance of the Workshop in the context of bringing forward a platform to generate dialogues and criticisms on migration studies that is distinct from the mainstream euro-centric and integrationist approach. Schapendonk then enlisted three major themes of the lecture: firstly, the study of mobility in terms of critical migration studies, situating it beyond the lens of conventional smartphones and airports; secondly, the democratising of mobility as a platform for marginalised communities’ expressions of agency and resistance; and thirdly, “unfreezing of migrant positionality.” Drawing parallels between the value of mobility for Europeans and Afropeans, Joris commented on mobility as a source of hope. The lecture stressed on the approaches governing migration and the restriction of migrant workers to the agricultural and construction fields. This sedentary approach influences “nation state building and nation state bordering” in many ways and in some cases migration studies fail to address movement and its over fascination with departure and integration. This divides and excludes the migrant from the society as ‘other’. Criticising migration studies’ fascination with settlement-oriented mobility as ‘the’ form of cross-border movement, the speaker pointed out the erosion of hospitality, citizenship rights and ‘belonging’ to a bounded notion of place and community. He argued that, one finds a plea to radically discontinue the academic and societal practice of seeing the migrants as the external barriers of differences. The democratisation of mobility, demands that migrants be recognised as active creators of space and Europeanness.

In the discussion that followed, the questions addressed the juxtaposition of sedentarisation with securitisation, both in terms of economic security and the securitisation of the body and the mind. Schapendonk responded by referring to Tazioli, that control and securitisation is not restricted to the border but includes surveillance. Furthermore, bringing up the concept of Unitarianism, ironically to prevent the possible migration to Europe, the development of NGOs from Europe operating elsewhere in the world, thereby indicating their own mobility. On the question of sedentarisation in times of COVID crisis, based on the Netherlands, Schapendonk mentioned that during the pandemic with the food delivery service labelled on the essential list, the food delivery jackets were used by non-migrants to be able to move. This explained that in times of immobilisation, even non-migrants employ similar tactics as migrants to overcome the barriers to movement.



**Inaugural Session (Workshop)**



**Inaugural Lecture by Joris Schapendonk**

## Workshop Module Lectures

### **Module A. Protection and Punishment: The Fault Lines of Caste, Gender, Religion and Race**

*Nasreen Chowdhory, University of Delhi, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

Nasreen Chowdhory began the module lecture by talking about going beyond the binaries of protection and punishment and engaging with the dichotomous concepts of sovereignty and power. She emphasised on the power of the state to punish those who digressed from the norms. The non-citizens do not get access to protection (both literally and metaphorically) at par with the citizens and are forced to live in make-shift camps. She further elaborated on how the international human rights norms do not provide any restrictions on the right to exit a country but rather regulate the norms of entry in the host country. The state not only regulates the entry of people but also human bodies. Moreover, Chowdhory talked about the Dublin Convention, which broadened the purview of European Union deportation rules. She discussed the aspect of dispossession of rights in the absence of a legal framework. She stressed on the fact that dispossession can be seen as a continuum waiting to be recognised and accommodated. In the state of rightlessness and the gaps in the legal frameworks, refugees are forced to live in precarious conditions, thus reducing their existence to, what Agamben calls, the 'bare life'.

In the next part of her lecture, Chowdhory examined the Global Compact of Refugees (GCR). The analysis of the GCR brought out the shortcomings in dealing with the regional questions of South Asia, as it does not pay much attention to the ways in which refugees are shaped by the countries of the Global South and South Asia in particular. The GCR and the 1951 Refugee Convention entails the biases towards protection, as the latter provides for a narrow definition of the 'who is a refugee'. The refugees are often seen as the 'undesirable other', who are considered as a threat to the state. According to Chowdhory, the binaries of 'us vs them', in addition to the categories of refugees (according to the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019), can be traced to the colonial period. She concluded with the observation that, to decide who belongs and who does not, entails technicalities and legalities. The thought-provoking session was followed by a discussion, where questions were raised on the contextualisation of indigeneity to claim ownership and the tensions between protection and punishment. Chowdhory asserted that the lack of protection to refugees, implies a life of punishment, for years in exile, without any solutions. While concluding her lecture, she posited that, though the binaries of legality/illegality and a legal framework are significant, there is a need to look at the practices of sanctuary, in terms of cultural practices.

## Module B: Globalisation and Migrant Economy with Special Focus on Labour and Platform Economy

*Arup K. Sen, Serampore College, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

*Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

Arup K Sen initiated the module proceedings with the observation that, in order to critically engage with labour issues in the present day, analysis of the concepts of globalisation, refugees and migrants also become important. He gave the example of the World Wars when the ‘refugee’ emerged as a dominant subaltern subject. Referring to Hannah Arendt’s text, *We Refugees*, he argued that one must read the emergence of the concept of globalisation in a similar way — by going back to the classical texts in the Marxist tradition such as *The Communist Manifesto* by Marx and Engels. Sen drew reference from the twenty sixth chapter of *Capital*, “The Secret of Primitive Accumulation” where Marx had made a distinction between primitive accumulation and capitalistic accumulation. Moving on from Marx, the presentation also revisited other fundamental texts such as Antonio Gramsci’s essay in his *Prison Notebooks*, “Americanism and Fordism.” Sen reminded us that capitalistic accumulation is not merely an economic process; it is also at the same time a political one. It was Rosa Luxemburg who expanded on Marx’s notion of capitalistic accumulation in *The Accumulation of Capital: An Anti-Critique* and argued that the story of primitive accumulation and capitalistic accumulation goes side by side and it is the ideal combination for uprooting and dispossessing people in the contemporary reality at the global and local levels. The neoliberal journey of capital is to make workers footloose and the dynamics of migration cannot be understood until one keeps in mind the dispossession of people from their subsistence through primitive accumulation. Yet one should have historical understanding to situate the contemporary dynamics of capital labour relations such as digital capitalism, platform economy, etc.

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury expanded on the contemporary conditions of informalisation, casualisation, precarisation as well as platformisation of labour and the kind of new relationship between capital and labour in the contemporary times of diffusion of digital technologies, artificial intelligence and algorithm. He argued that the humanity and spirituality of labour has taken a new form in the recent times. Since the 1970s, there have been huge welfare cuts and market deregulation which made the jobs of the workers increasingly precarious. Two major shifts that have ushered in cultural, political and economic changes in the labour market are, firstly, the condition of precarity that have emerged through the rise of temporary, informal or contingent work and secondly, responsabilisation, i.e., the transfer of responsibility of the welfare of worker and risk management from the state/employers to the individual workers. The consequence of these two forces is that a growing number of workers are now told that they are free to design and govern their work lives; however, they must do so in a manner that is rational, prudent and responsible through risk minimisation. In the basic model, platform workers enter into formal agreements with on-demand companies with ride hailing organisations and aggregators like Uber, Ola, etc. or delivery agencies like Swiggy, Zomato, etc. They have no permanent employment contracts and receive none of the traditional benefits of a minimum wage guaranteed working hours, holidays, sick leave, sick pay and job security of other kinds. There are broadly three distinct trajectories that has given rise to the platform economy. First is the destabilisation of the formal employment; second, the rise of entrepreneurial culture in the form of startup companies; and third, technological rationalisation of the work process, all giving rise to new form of risks and uncertainties for workers. There is also a lack of labour union and deterioration of older solidarities which weaken protection for the workers. Platform economy is, therefore, a new form of capitalism that pushes the labour further towards precarity and unfreedom.



**Module A Lecture by Nasreen Chowdhory**



**Module B Participants with the Module Coordinators**

### **Module C: Law and Jurisprudence on Protection of Refugees and Migrants**

*Sahana Basavapatna, Calcutta Research Group, India*

Sahana Basavapatna spoke on ‘Mechanics of Deportation: Note on a Case’. In her lecture, she gave a brief overview of one of the cases she worked on as a practicing lawyer. She focused on the case that concluded in March, 2022, concerning Sameera, a Pakistani national, who had been incarcerated for around eight months in a detention centre in India. She was recently deported back to her nation after a long battle of five years since her arrest in 2017 along with her daughter who was born in the prison five months after her arrest. Basavapatna brought forth various laws and court cases related to illegal migration, deportation in India from the view of Foreigners Act of 1946. She argued that an understanding of the Foreigners Act is crucial as it is the law that guides and regulates those who come to India from abroad, including refugees. She explained that laws directing deportations of foreigners seldom consider the process of deportation itself. The mechanics of deportation involving India and Pakistan is unique in its own way, she added. She spoke of the convoluted and complicated process that deportation entails. With respect to Sameera’s case, she noted that the Citizenship Amendment Act protected a Pakistani national of certain classes from prosecution for any alleged violation of the law, especially those related to travel; however, in case of foreigners professing Islam as their religion, neither of these options are made applicable, nor can this category of persons have access to the UNHCR refugee determination system. Through a detailed explanation of the case and the various stages of difficulty that Sameera and Basavapatna herself had to go through, the speaker brought to light the highly complicated legal battle that awaits a foreign national’s deportation to their country of origin. Even after a successful petition for deportation, Sameera had to be placed for months in a detention centre. The lecture revealed the lengthy process of document verification and numerous other complications that came in Sameera’s way. This opened up greater concerns regarding legal frameworks and practical mechanisms in this context.

The discussion that followed the lecture, gave rise to questions linking the legal system with colonial and post-independence laws and amendments, possibilities of durable solutions for refugees where their ‘illegality’ essentially becomes a fundamental block in their safety and mobility, the complications regarding access to the proceedings of the trial, as well as legality, citizenship and the CAA.

### **Module D: Statelessness**

*K. M. Parivelan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

In his lecture on ‘Statelessness: Challenges to Inclusion and Human Rights’, Parivelan highlighted that the total number of people experiencing forced displacement now exceeds 100 million. This means 1 person in every 78 people on earth has been forced to flee — a dramatic milestone that few would have expected

a decade ago. The total number of stateless persons now stands at around 4.3 million. The 1954 Convention defines “stateless person” as someone “who is not considered as a national by any State under operation of its law.” Parivelan explained that statelessness can arise from legal differences between countries, people renouncing one nationality without having acquired another or even, more simply, from failure to register the birth of a child. He further mentioned the threat of climate change with regards to statelessness — that along with the earlier factors triggering statelessness, there is a potential new category: small islands which, condemned by changing climate to be swallowed by the sea, will see their entire population become stateless. He then went on to describe the central international legal instruments on statelessness: the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, which was adopted in 1954, and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, which was adopted in 1961. Moreover, other protective legal frameworks on statelessness exist, which were expounded upon by Parivelan: the Convention on Status of Refugees, 1951 & 1967 Protocol; the Convention on Statelessness, 1954 & 1961; the UDHR- articles-14 & 15, which direct the right to seek asylum & non-deprivation of nationality, respectively; the ICCPR- Articles 1 and 27, which allow right to self-determination and treatment of minorities; the ICESCR- Article 2 (3) on economic rights to non-nationals; and the SDG- Goal 16, which talks about promoting Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies.

In the brief discussion that followed the lecture, Parivelan answered questions on human rights mechanism for potential statelessness of minorities, the role of nation state in the post-colonial era in rendering citizenship rights at one point and denying the same to others, and the role of corporations as service providers to stateless persons and how this affects the very concept of belonging to a state (which is now being compromised by the digitisation of services of the corporations). Parivelan responded with explanations of how minorities face the risk of being doubly vulnerable when faced with the possibility of statelessness, with their gender identity not accepted in travel – but that there is a growing demand to address these vulnerabilities. To the second question, he mentioned citizenship is a part of social contract, and emergence of nation state which essentially do not recognise multinationalism, may cause narrowness in the concept of it. There needs to be clarity to address the matter or to extend the state outside the border, in the sense of accommodating, and in this, plurality is required. Finally, to the third question, he mentioned that today, many countries try to outsource their responsibility but that will further marginalise communities. To address this, the state must not discard its responsibility.



Module C lecture: Sahana Basavapatna



Module D Lecture: K.M. Parivelan

### Module E1: Pandemic, Migrants, Refugees and Public Health

*Samir Kumar Das, University of Calcutta, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

The module addressed the public health crisis that the pandemic constituted, and its significance specifically for migrants and refugees. Samir Kumar Das introduced the module by questioning the dilemma of the public health crisis. He emphasised that the pandemic constituted the pathological in which on the one hand migrants experienced the full force of the state and on the other hand, the disappearance of the state in terms of providing for the public health of the people. This retreat of the state in times of the pathological led to three responses: acute anxiety and paranoia embedded in racism, a fencing off from each other, and the targeting of migrant workers who are the backbone of the economy. The public health crisis and the

visuals it created makes one acutely aware of the marginalisation, ostracisation, and disregard for migrant workers in times that constituted the normal, and the pathological. Further, Samir Das noted that the ‘post’-pandemic constitutes a time in which norms are fluid. Currently in times of transition, the pathological still impacts life, and norms are contradictory and ambiguous. So, the question that lingered for migrant workers: will they disappear, or remain pushed out into the abyss of invisibility, discrimination, and marginalisation as the pathological has uncovered that there was never any empathy and concern for migrants’ lives.

## Module E2: Ethics of Care and Protection

**Mouleshri Vyas**, *Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

**Manish K. Jha**, *Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai, and Calcutta Research Group, India*

In her discussion, Mouleshri Vyas highlighted social work and ethics negotiated in diverse spaces by practitioners. The ethics of care and protection recognises that one can and should respond to marginalised and vulnerable community members with care and empathy. The questions that she raised are: What should be the nature of such care and protection? Who decides about this issue, and what issues emerge in this practice? She pointed out that the practices of social work in India, need to have a standard ethical code of conduct, along with consideration of its possible fallouts. Talking about invisibilised care economy and the values in the work of care provisions, she reflected on care as the most basic and normative moral value, crucial in building social harmony and sustaining lives at household, community, and state levels. It was underlined that everyone is both the care giver and receiver and hence care should make its way into policy and practice. The lecture mentioned the practitioners and the need for training and framework that people in their profession must universally accept. Ethics has to be constantly negotiated, but there will never be a uniform response — this essentially forms both the strength and the limitation of discussions on ethics.

Manish K. Jha pointed out how self-awareness becomes important in shaping actions, reflexivity, intentionality and spontaneity. Examples of adversity of work circumstances from Manesar Maruti strike, and migrants dying in Qatar to build a city for the Fifa World Cup, it was brought up how at the core of ethics is rights, dignity, a general understanding and respect for human values and also restorative justice. In the hierarchical nature of society, the ethics of care and protection further gets hierarchised. The discussion concluded with Paulo Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’. The session stressed on the interrelationship between caregiver and person receiving care, and reflected on the engagement with policy and practice.



Module E1: Samir Kumar Das



Module E2: Mouleshri Vyas and Manish K. Jha

### **“The International Organisation for Migration and the Global Governance of Migration: Colonial Unknowing, Commitments, Challenges”**

*Megan Bradley, McGill University, Canada*

The lecture revisited the origins of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), its colonial dimension, its evolution, and its recent focus on humanitarian work and implications. Megan Bradley based her presentation on a research project that drew on 75 interviews with IOM personnel and other workers, conducted over a period of seven years. Bradley critiqued IOM's inclination towards funding members, over the fundamental mandate of protection of migrants' rights. The IOM has taken part in actions regarding the management of migration crisis, including provision of services in migration detention, collaborating with nations in the global north in migration deterrence practices, and advancing projects to return migrants to their countries of origin. Bradley introduced the concept of the 'colonial unknowing'. Colonial unknowing is the willing ignorance about colonisation and racialisation, and facilitating the reproduction and naturalisation of these relationships. On some occasions, colonial unknowing recognises historical problematic, ignoring the present. One fact that supports this argument is that IOM archives are not open to the public, therefore the actions of the organisation in the past cannot be studied in detail. It was argued that IOM member states were anxious about diplomatic embarrassment because of the backlash from certain racist migration policies.

The IOM was declining in the 1970s and 80s, but it suffered a transformation towards the end of the 1980s and emerged as a contractor in the international migration system. This transformation has brought many changes. The organisation has adopted some policies and practices committing to human rights; it has become global, and now it is also working in India, specifically attending to the Rohingya crisis; and it has become associated with the UN, presenting itself as its migration agency. It has many activities under the umbrella of migration management, including migrant displacement, repatriation, statistics production, and management of natural crises. The IOM joined the UN system to gain legitimacy, although it appears as a non-normative organisation. Now, the organisation is positioning itself as an organisation that speaks for migrants, but there are internal tensions between nation members from the global south, who support migrant rights, and wealthier nation members from the global north, who prioritised their interest in migration management. Even while offering a critique and sharing concerns about the IOM, Megan Bradley highlighted the importance of its work based mostly on positive feedback from different migrant workers and analysts. The work of IOM must be understood as part of the migration management complex, researchers must update their assumptions and analysis to be critical of the organisation, as the organisation considers itself part of the UN and follows human rights guidelines. Some of IOM's recent actions can be understood as blue-washing polemic services such as detention centres and the return of migrants. The archives continue to be closed, ignoring a past that should be acknowledged and corrected.

### **“The Politics of Space: Refugees, Displaced and Stranded”**

*Amena Mohsin, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh*

Amena Mohsin's talk was in part non-fiction, ethnographic, and auto-biographical. She brought to light her personal journey that shaped her political ideology over the years. While describing it, she uttered the famous second wave feminist movement's slogan "personal is political". The lecture reflected the global and regional aspects of migration and refugee politics. Her speech critiqued the idea of space and emphasised the two basic and important parts of space i.e., cognitive and physical space. The notion of space was building inside her during her days in a Pakistani concentration camp. According to her, the idea of "a land of freedom" was created in her mind while being captive in that Pakistani concentration camp. The confinement taught her the meaning of freedom, space and cognition. She also described the situation as, that of 'rightlessness'.

The first part of the lecture described the situation of strandedness, and dealt with how the politics of strandedness had affected her being. She started with Shakhawat Hossain's observation of strandedness which says how not having no line was too dangerous for those stranded and for the ones detained. She also mentioned how her parents never wanted to bring up the memories of those days. Yet, she felt to talking about her journey was relevant and important in the contemporary political scenario, both regionally



and globally. In the Q-A session the audience raised questions on how personal space works in the making of a feminist, time and the production of auto-ethnography, identity, function and space as a source of individualism, and personal narratives on nationalism.

### “A Complex Landscape of (Im)Mobility Labour Regimes and the Coloniality of Power”

*Ayşe Caglar, University of Vienna, and Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, Austria*

During the pandemic, people’s citizenship status functioned neither as unnecessary nor was it a sufficient condition for people to be subjected to or exempted from mobility restrictions. While the governance of mobility and immobility against the backdrop of the pandemic could be interpreted as symptomatic of new realities of citizenship, Ayşe Caglar argued that what might look like paradoxes reflect the contradictions of citizenship and mobility rules which highlight the colonial lineages of today’s citizenship regimes and mobility rules. Thus, labour is the key to understanding the puzzling landscape of mobility and immobility and the rights arrangements in times of pandemic.

People employed in certain sectors, such as agriculture, industry, health, and care work designated as essential service providers, were allowed to bypass the cross-border mobility regulations. Thus, a nuanced understanding of borders through the lens of the essential workers enables one to see how these rearrangements contributed to the making and remaking of governable, mobile bodies of vulnerable labour. Migrant workers were desired as mobile labour to thwart the breakdown of the supply chain undertaking the essential work. The anti-migrant right-wing and local governments even welcomed these migrants because they ensured the continued functioning of certain sectors of the economy. Today’s proliferation of border regimes and their simultaneous restrictiveness and selective openness are hailed as selectivity and elasticity — the proliferation of which is intrinsically embedded in the historical genealogies of empire states and nation-states. What the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed is not simply the resurrection or return of the bordering technologies and colonialism, instead, coloniality remains an inherent feature of the border regimes of today’s nation-states. Multiple and selective policies ensured labour illegally and socially disposed forms crucial for the appropriations and allocations required for capital accumulation and capitalism. In case of coloniality and racial capitalism, Caglar argued, in conclusion to the lecture, that it is a particular form of power and the associated racial hierarchies of capitalism, instead stays inherent with colonialism.



**Amena Mohsin**



**Ayşe Caglar**

## Module Presentations

**“Refugee Protection and the State in South Asia”**

**Akanksha Kapoor** attempted to look at the aspect of refugee protection in the post-colonial states of South Asia and how these states are tolerant towards refugees and provide them with shelter, despite being non-signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention. She elaborated how India treats different refugee groups differently in the absence of a coherent refugee policy. She engaged with the theoretical concepts of belonging, the politics of belonging, humanitarianism and boundary and looked at the North-South disparity of sharing responsibility and protection. Furthermore, Kapoor discussed how the boundary-making practices used by the colonial powers were inherited by the post-colonial states, and how this exercise of bordering both internal and external created the binaries of citizen/alien; insider/outsider among others, by incorporating those with shared affinities, excluding other. She concluded by discussing the role of judiciary for refugee protection in India and the notion of charity and the rights-based approach. Questions were raised regarding the notion of charity, assimilation of refugees in foreign policy, and securitisation. Kapoor replied that, in the absence of uniformity and due to lack of moral obligation in providing refugee protection, engaging with the countries of origin through bilateral conventions would be important.

**“Theorising Race and Space in a Transnational Context”**

**Julián Gutiérrez Castaño** tried to explore the impacts of colonialism and white supremacy in Colombia (Latin America) and India (South Asia), reflecting on how racism impacts the lives of people and communities affected by forced displacement in different parts of the globe and how one can contribute in dismantling racism in such spaces. He elaborated how the national elites took advantage of the racial ideologies imposed by European powers to legitimise their privileges, the low categorisation of some groups becoming a source of internalised racism, and the impact of these categorisations in the division of labour implied that racialised bodies could be over-exploited. Castaño further discussed how the caste system in Latin America and India were technologies developed by different colonial projects (although the original Varna system in India predates the colonial era), which classified, exploited, and controlled people in order to maintain power relations and social hierarchies. On a question with regard to how people affected by race and caste could be integrated, he emphasised on the need of dismantling internalised racism, especially in case of Latin America.

**“Social Exclusion and the Feminisation of Poverty: (Re) Negotiating the Protection and Rights of Displaced Bru Women”**

**Lalnundika Darlong** presented the lived experiences and perspectives of women, who are typically perceived as passive subjects. He attempted to comprehend the social inclusion and exclusion situations faced by the Bru IDPs, particularly in women and female headed households, who have been displaced from the state of Mizoram to the state of Tripura. He also explored the treatment of displaced women in host communities and the problems faced by them regarding their safety and rights. Furthermore, he used the theoretical premise of “feminisation of poverty” depicting the social exclusion of gender expression, leadership roles, and other issues that also surfaced during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Additionally, he demonstrates how using the ethnographic approach produces narratives, in-depth studies of sensitive topics relevant to the complexity and nuances of their social and state connections, as well as means for retaliation against their wrongful rights.

**“Migration, Gender and Race: The word “Rohingya” as Bullying”**

**Priyanka Chak** tried to investigate the ways in which the nationalist othering took place in the everyday lives of the indigenous people in Bangladesh, after the Rohingya influx in 2017. The indigenous people were subjected to othering because of their appearances, socio-cultural practices, food habits and the way they lead their lives and had to bear the brunt of constant bullying through verbal and non-verbal means. Chak also tried to examine how nationalism is perceived and experienced through everyday interactions. In her research she conducted an ethnographic study of the indigenous people along with interview and observation methods to gather information. The speaker was asked about the complexities in the portrayals of indigenous people as the other or second-hand citizens. Priyanka replied that colonial legacy and media

representations portrayed them as exotic. She added that indigenous people are denied existence when their status or profiles are identified on the basis of the Bangla language and not their indigenous identities.

### **“Tracing Kaibarta Migration in Barak Valley of Southern Assam”**

**Debashree Chakraborty** tried to examine the patterns of migration of the Kaibarta community, a migrant community in the Barak Valley of Southern Assam. The Kaibartas are forced to live on the fringes and are confined to places like wetlands and chars, making their livelihood options difficult. She tried to trace the precarity associated with their livelihood because these settlers do not have any claims on the land. The people of the Kaibarta community have been forced to migrate internally owing to the dearth of rehabilitation and settlement arrangements made by the state. Chakraborty tried to look into the patterns of migration by tracing the historical origins of migration. For her research she tried to engage in the representational study of the precarious lives of the Kaibartas by looking at literary texts.

## **Module B: Globalisation and Migrant Economy with Special Focus on Labour and Platform Economy**

### **“Mitigating the Impact of COVID and Conflict: Empowering and Securing Futures of Children Belonging to Pastoral Communities of Jammu and Kashmir”**

**Afreen Gani Faridi** broadly discussed the impact of conflict and the COVID pandemic on the nature of child work and education within the pastoral Bakkarwal community of the border state of Jammu and Kashmir. He analysed how laws affecting federal structures, property relations and policies on spatial mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic, determined the transhumance mode of existence of such pastoral communities. He highlighted the use of multi-regional and sectoral data provided by government and other extra-state agencies on labour practises amongst tribes, that would be essential for locating the local against the trans-national. This would enable the use of comparative methods for a comprehensive understanding of the possible future for pastoral children.

### **“Neoliberal Labour and Mobile Subjectivities: A Photo Essay on Labour from the Northeast in Urban Villages of Delhi”**

**Anasma Gayari** with 18 selected photographs, attempted to capture the interplay of globalisation, capitalism and migration and its implications on the subjectivities of racialised migrant labour from the Northeast region of India in Delhi-NCR. The shared sense of insecurity and alienation pushed the migrants from the Northeast, who constitute the mass of service providers in the neoliberal service sector of the city, to ghettoise together in the urban villages. While their physical ‘otherness’ is valorised in the capital city’s affective service industries such as call centres, shopping malls, luxury hotels etc., because of their ‘un-Indian’ looks, outside the economic spaces their ‘otherness’ is effectively maintained through social discrimination and violence. These twin processes of violent commodification and reinforcement of racialisation is, however, challenged by migrants’ own multicultural ethos and practices. There is an emergent pan-Northeastern identity which is potentially cosmopolitan, as it tends to push the confines of territoriality and race, and seemingly subaltern, as it is a counter-hegemonic identity forged from below. In order to make way in the neoliberal labour market and in the metropolitan city, migrants have to constantly engage in a strategic navigation with their own identities at local, regional and global levels, thereby leading to the phenomenon of mobility of subjectivities. She concluded by highlighting the need to study the implications this has on the urban electoral politics, on the possibility of collaboration with local, regional and international political interests and whether there is a new politics of belongingness and solidarity on the horizon.

### **“Gender, Labour and Migration: Situating Women Migrant Workers in Kolkata”**

**Imran Philip** in his study attempted to understand the dynamics and problems associated with India’s internal migrant workers. His research focused on the working and living conditions of the female domestic workers in Kolkata. He tried to locate the status of migrant women during the pre-COVID period, and the plight of women migrant domestic workers during and after the COVID pandemic. He concluded by highlighting that the difficulties faced and the roles of all women migrants as domestic workers are not the same; religion, class position, patriarchy, and larger political situation also play important roles.

### “Crisis, Vulnerabilities, and Multiple Subjectivities: A Case Study of Migrant Labour in Delhi”

**Nivash Prakash** in his paper tried to locate the lower caste urban poor population in a settlement named Kusumpur Pahadi in South Delhi. More specifically, he focused on the daily wage migrant labourers and their experiences of different kinds of crises, such as the pandemic and climate-induced adverse changes such as heatwaves. He highlighted that, as shown by the COVID-19 pandemic, pandemics spell restrictions on mobility and job loss, the seasonal heat waves increasingly produce a daily crisis of amenities like water, drainage, toilet and ailments, that not only impact their economy but also their politics and perception of the state.



Module A Presentations



Module B Presentations

### Module C: Law and Jurisprudence on Protection of Refugees and Migrants

#### “Refugee Camps as a Site of Violence: An Exploration into Violence Against Women in Kalindi Kunj Camp”

**Sudha Rawat** explored the forms of gender-based violence against Rohingya women who are residing at the Rohingya refugee camp in Kanchan Kunj Camp near Kalindi Kunj. She began her presentation with a presentation which offered a hand-drawn depiction of the site and location of the camp. She discussed the role of site, location and conditions of camps in generating situations that put women at risk of gender-based violence against them. She mentioned that her work is inspired from Ulrike Kraus’s work on Kyaka II refugee camp in Uganda.

#### “The Shifts of Migration Patterns in Sri Lanka: Analysing the Impact of Ongoing Financial Crisis on the Growth of Out-migration”

**D. G. Niruka Sanjeevani** discussed forced migration between Sri Lanka and India. The discussion was divided into two sections, the conflict induced Tamil refugees, and the economic refugees suffering the onslaught of the ongoing crisis situation of the country. She also referred to Indian court cases related to Sri Lankan refugees staying in India, such as the court case of Gunarathnam and others versus Government of India, and P. Nedumaran versus Union of India, to name a few.

#### “The Difficulty in Navigating Refugee and Migration Law in Unestablished National Legal Frameworks”

**Alexandra Cooper** (in her online presentation) mentioned the current realities with regards to the Ukraine and Syrian refugee situations. She pointed out the disparity between the Syrian and Ukrainian refugee influxes, and the indifferences in welcoming them and carrying out divergent policies and practices. Highlighting the disparity in the global sympathy towards those displaced in Ukraine as opposed to the constant overlooking of the Syrian crisis, she argued that asylum must be given to the displaced without discrimination. She concluded that European asylum mechanisms need to be revised along with sound protection mechanisms.

### **“Rethinking Discourse of Approaching Trafficking of Rohingya Women and Girls in Cox’s Bazar”**

**Marufa Akhtar** attempted to address the vulnerability of stateless Rohingya women and girls living in the Cox’s Bazar camp. The concept of epistemic injustice was used by her to explain the contemporary discourse of addressing the concern of trafficking of Rohingya women. Akhtar showed how narratives of women being marginalised, oppressed, and excluded from being heard and from agendas, results in underreporting and a lack of understanding of actual trafficking practices. She argued that approaching the trafficking of Rohingya women and girls from the feminist framework can allow to observe women as a referent to security and provide a lens to include knowledge from voiceless women whose future is undermined.

### **“De-construction of Hegemonic Masculinity in Stateless Condition: A Study on the Rohingya Men in Bangladesh”**

**Atique Rahman** argued that discriminatory citizenship policies, oppressive laws, large-scale violence committed by the state and majority community often create displaced, refugees and stateless persons. Rahman focused on the Rohingya male refugees and how this section of refugee community negotiates and renegotiates their masculinity in relation with Rohingya women in stateless condition. The de-construction of hegemonic masculinity among the displaced males in stateless condition can rest on various dynamics ranging from experiences of persecutions in their country of origin in the past to the present uncertain conditions in refugee camps. In the discussion that followed, he mentioned that the emergence of hegemony was also seen within the community level particularly when the power and social hierarchies were carefully observed. The refugee community has its own kind of social and patriarchal structure in which the male enjoy supremacy. Therefore, that can be manifested through their actions and discourse making process. The prevalent patriarchal structure was reinforced in a heightened manner in the protracted refugee condition.

### **“Climate Change: A New Threat in the Making and Unmaking of Statelessness”**

**Sharmistha Mallik** argued that globally both women and the environment, have found themselves in danger. The binaries of migration-displacement, temporary-permanent, and voluntary-involuntary have become important for discussion while speaking on climate refugees or climate statelessness. Globally, environmental degradation exacerbated the existing issues of food insecurity, and water scarcity leading to conflict and compelling many to flee as women and children are the most vulnerable. She presented the dimension of nationality, climate refugee, evolving statelessness, and the question of women and its gradual evolution with globalisation in the post-colonial world, emphasising the small island nations and the other low-lying areas in the global south. Also, she spoke on the Kantian environmental ethics of shared and collective responsibility as well as on climate justice. Moreover, the need to change national laws and conventions on refugees and statelessness and adopt new agreements and policies while taking into consideration the cases of climate refugees was underscored.

### **“The Rohingyas and Statelessness: Constructing and Contesting Diaspora Identity on Social Media Platforms”**

**Abu Faisal Mohammad Khaled’s** presentation mapped how Rohingyas attempt to establish and negotiate with the formation of Rohingya identities post-displacement (as a significant number of them settle in the Global South as well as the Global North) — identities concerning nationalities, state and statelessness. Khaled argued that for the Rohingyas, for whom statelessness has been a collective community problem, identity is of a hybrid and fluid nature. Noting the limited possibilities of asserting their identities and establishing solidarity networks in offline spaces, Khaled showed how this drives a greater online engagement for the claim towards a distinct Rohingya identity and political articulations from these diasporic communities; this digital interaction largely rose post 2017. His analysis focused on the scale of engagement and the predominant domains of engagements by Rohingyas in the cyberspace. Khaled’s study revealed that there is greater engagement from the Global South on Facebook, while the majority of Rohingya activists on Twitters are located in the Global North. The paper revealed the activism and

dissemination of information as carried out on both platforms — more intra-community based and wider emotional access on Facebook, and, targeting of international organisations, policy making spaces and global activism on Twitter. The domains of citizenship (belonging, state, home) and political mobilisation (issues of genocide, advocacy for human rights, justice and dignified repatriation) were analysed in these digital interactions. The paper showed how the internet becomes a space for information sharing and resistance for these Rohingyas.

## Module E-1: Pandemic, Migrants, Refugees and Public Health

### “Pandemic and the Crisis of Class Equalisation”

**Chaitali Biswas** highlighted the problem faced by women in the equalisation of workers’ rights as a class and not an heterogeneous category, which particularly emerged as a crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. The public health crisis and the visuals it created made us acutely aware of the marginalisation, ostracisation, and the disregard for migrant workers in times that constituted the normal, and the pathological. In her presentation Biswas showed how these processes have constituted a normal already pre-pandemic but how the pandemic exacerbated especially female migrant workers. She also showed how women’s issues of menstrual health worsened as female migrant workers had to walk home for hundred kilometres without access to sanitary napkins, toilets, or water. These issues are important as lack of menstrual hygiene can significantly impact women’s health and life. While these issues were acute before the pandemic to women migrant workers, the pandemic did not constitute a moment of relief, neither did it make attention for these issues ‘urgent’, rather culminated into another crisis and invisibility of protection for women.

### “Re-thinking Media Representation of Migrant Domestic Workers in Bengali Mainstream Dailies during the Pandemic: A Feminist Intervention”

**Dishari Sarkar** attempted to re-think the mainstream media representation of the gendered migration of women workers, especially those engaged in domestic work, through an intersectional feminist lens. Her paper proposed to counter the very understanding of migration as a ‘malestream’ process that blindly otherises women or the gender factor as an active agent of migration concerning the popular idea of domestic work as a non-independent work. She mentioned that domestic workers face double challenges when it comes to representing their voice and demanding equal rights as a working class. Considering five leading mainstream Bengali newspapers, such as *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Ei Samay*, *Bartaman*, *Gansbakti*, and *Sangbad Pratidin*, she tried to understand the language and politics of Bengali mainstream media representation through newspaper reporting and the formation of news discourse of the working-class, which intersected with gender and migration, and that shapes the perceived reality of labour as a class in the public sphere. She asserted that the Bengali news culture and the style of journalism frame the reality for its audience. She also commented on the intricacies of governmentality, state of displacement, and gendered labour rights in Bengali mainstream media representation.

### “Intimate Encounters and Shifting Im-/Mobilities — Rethinking Anthropological Practices During a Pandemic”

**Miriam Jaehn** in her paper based on her interactions with refugee-migrants in South and Southeast Asia, discussed what happens to anthropological practices when intimate ethnographic encounters between strangers and with “strangerness” are hampered; and also, how anthropologists can rethink and reconceptualise their techniques of knowledge to find connectedness in times of crises and shift of immobilities. Focusing on her experiences transitioning from encounters with Rohingya refugees in the field, to engaging with them online during the COVID-19 pandemic, she argued that the shift from offline to online encounters involves strenuous acts of translation that inherently transform and reconfigure established intimate relations between researchers and refugee-migrants. Translating intimacies from one space to the other leads to new encounters with each other’s “strangerness”, and as such, initiates novel intimate relations (at times takes away) with and between the same persons. She suggested that in the face of researchers’ and refugee-migrants’ shifting im-mobilities and the breaking apart of their previous intimacies with each other, there is a need to draw on techniques of digital ethnography to recover the intimacy found through and beyond each other’s “strangerness”. The challenges and frictions in doing so

offer valuable insights into the different conditionalities of ethnographic encounters and intimate relations offline and online.

### **“Livelihood Status of Gold Jewellery Migrant Workers from West Bengal: The Brunt of COVID-19 Pandemic”**

**Tarak Nath Sahu** in his research on gold jewellery workers from West Bengal, probed into the impact of the pandemic on livelihood and employment status. Emphasising the involvement of individuals as gold-jewellery makers in other states and the repercussions they have faced during the pandemic, he mentioned the necessity of the intervention of higher authorities for the sustenance of the craft and livelihood of the artisans. The empirical insights provided through the study indicate severe disruption in their income, employment and socio-economic status ensuing the spread of the virus. The study enlisted the insecurities of working as gold jewellery workers and questioned the sustainability of the economic engagement. He concluded by suggesting measures like creating necessary awareness of workers’ rights, strengthening local governance and laws, provisions of social protection benefits, etc., that can help such workers sustain during a crisis and build a resilient future.

## **Module E2: Ethics of Care and Protection**

### **“Reproductive Health Care and Child Care of the Migrant Bharia (Porter) Women in Darjeeling Hill Town”**

**Ambika Rai** spoke on reproductive health care and child care amongst small section of marginalised, undocumented migrant women who labour in the hill town of Darjeeling. She pointed out that, as a result of lack of utilisation of contraception, due to lack of knowledge, women opt for painful procedures to prevent pregnancy. Rai’s research comprehended this through the concept of ‘kar’ i.e., lack of agency and choices. Further, the research went on to elaborate the agencies that have helped women get access to health and childcare services. The paper highlighted the problem of limited engagement of the state in the case of migrants, and thus, the creation of hurdles for migrant population, in getting access to protective measures.

### **“The Impacts of Neglecting the Internally Displaced People after the Collapse of the State in Afghanistan”**

**Khalid Beza** discussed the neglect and plight of internally displaced people in the face of the collapse of state machinery in Afghanistan. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) unlike refugees, are on the run in their own homes. Afghanistan is one of the countries with the largest number of internally displaced persons, immigrants, and refugees. Military actions and violence because of political instability, natural disasters, climate change, drought, and poverty increase the number of internally displaced people, refugees, and migrants in this country. These issues should be resolved with compassion while building human relationships. This can decrease the number of IDPs in the country and as well as reduce the crimes, illness, and insecurity in the country. Beza applied the library method, and expert opinions in the field, in addition to qualitative method in his research.

### **“Politics of Ethics, Humanitarianism and Aid of Stateless Refugees in India”**

**Kaveri** spoke about the politics of humanitarianism, the ethics of care and protection, and aid while looking at the responses made by national and international agencies to the Rohingya crisis. In doing so, she emphasised the provisions of protection and care to the victims of ethnic conflict, institutionalisation, exclusion, violence, xenophobia, etc., that render people as stateless and into refugeehood - a highly sensitive and politically motivated issue in the Global South. Her paper provided an insight into the insufficient, inconsistent, and highly disjointed national and international responses to care, protection, and aid politics that contributed to the collective failure to address the crisis. The paper sought to advance a wider debate of state, rights, and humanitarianism based on the moral and equitable language of rights within the nation-state paradigm, while highlighting the importance of constructing protective infrastructure on a preventative basis at the local, national, and international levels.

### **“Understanding Care in Everyday life of Left-Behind Women in the Kosi Region of Bihar”**

**Shubha Srishti** highlighted how in the flood-affected Kosi region of Bihar, the combined effect of ecological disaster and repressive socio-economic and political structure, force people to out migrate, dominated by single male migrant undertaking seasonal migration. Her paper looked at the everyday life of ‘left-behind’ women or non-migrant wives of male migrants as an epistemic source. In the migration process the family’s caregiving strategies, rupture and transform resource circulation, gender and generational roles, definitions and divisions of labour. The paper tried to bring in narratives around stages of negotiations, insecurity, conflict and tension of everyday life and the changes in power and autonomy for different family members. The paper also engaged with how the ‘Ethics of Care’ shaped the fieldwork practices and strengthened relationship between the researcher and participants.



**Module D Presentations**



**Module E2 Presentations**

### Photo Exhibition

The photo exhibition “Trail of Blood: The Calcutta Killings of 1946 and its Aftermath,” was inaugurated on 13 November 2022 and was open till the last day of the Conference. The photos in the exhibition were taken by **Dipanwita Saha**, an independent visual artist based in Kolkata, and the exhibition was curated by **Debasree Sarkar** from CRG.

The photo exhibition was funded by the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, under its project ‘Justice, Protection, and Government of the People: A Two-Year Research and Orientation Programme on Protection and Democracy in a Post-COVID World (2021-2023).’ The exhibition documented the events and aftermaths of the riots of 16 August 1946, which was the biggest communal riot to have taken place in Calcutta, with the death of more than four thousand people. The violence of the Calcutta Killings, the Partition and the uncertainty of the times has lived on, in the lives and memories of many residents of the city, the cityscape and oral and written narratives. Saha captured these memories through images of sites, archived scenes, heirlooms from the Partition era, and individuals who directly or indirectly experienced the violence. With almost fifty photographs on display, Saha’s exhibition opened up a coherent tale of loss from the bygone times.

Saha’s paternal and maternal family both moved from Bangladesh to Kolkata after losing their homeland, and the memories put together by the photo exhibition comprised sources from both her family and elsewhere. Poignant photographs, such as the meagre heirlooms brought into the city from beyond the borders, ancient cemeteries which fell to ruins in the post-independence departure of the residents of the area, and so on, depicted a changing landscape and how the Calcutta Killings meant irretrievable loss for many, that would last for generations. The photographs of landmarks lost in history, sites where communal violence broke out, the dilapidated structures of sanctuaries and medical care, relatives of those who lost their lives, and living witnesses of the period, were accompanied by narrative explanations, which showed not only families and individual lives, but the entire cityscape of Calcutta transformed yet abound with the imprints of historical events.





**Discussion on Photo Exhibition**



**Film Screening and Discussion**

### Film Screening

**Samata Biswas** introduced three documentary films about migration in Kolkata. The series, *Calcutta, A Migrant City I, II and III* comprising of three films — *Calcutta, A Migrant City*, *Tale of a Migrant City*, and *City of Transit* — before their screening. The project of this series of documentaries began in 2019. The fundamental question at the centre of this project was — what makes a migrant city? As a city with three hundred years of history, there are a few families who can claim themselves to be original inhabitants of Kolkata. This city has grown through industrialisation, commerce, colonialism and one of the pillars of Kolkata's growth has been migration — and the people who have built this city — construction workers, domestic workers, medical workers and the like.

The first film, *Calcutta: A Migrant City*, attempts to capture the historical waves of migration that created Kolkata. This involves the Armenians, Jews, Parsis, British and Anglo-Indians; and on the other hand, the partition refugees; the labourers who came from the Chhota Nagpur plateau from Bihar, from what is modern day Jharkhand, Orissa. The influx of these migrant populations — not all of them permanent, but often seasonal, shaped Kolkata's culture, architecture and geography. The film also tries to observe how women's participation in labour changes across the course of history. Biswas discussed how, during the production of the film, the notion of citizenship was being disputed; questions of who is a citizen, who is an insider to a geographical space, to a nation, and who is a migrant were being challenged, and it is from that moment of turmoil that the film strove to address the question of citizenship.

The second film, *Tale of a Migrant City*, explores the growth of labour in partition refugee colonies in South Calcutta, and addresses questions of how the refugees came to settle there, how they found access to the land, how migrant women changed the shape of the neighbourhood, how the city's language, culture, food habits changed with the influx of the partition refugees. The film included voice-over narratives with relevant archival images, and oral history of refugees from East Pakistan who settled in these areas as well as histories of people who were displaced. The history of partition, as the film shows, does not end in 1947. It moves on with refugee flows in the 60's and 70's, during the Bangladesh Liberation War, as well as in the 1990's.

The third film, which was produced in 2021, titled *The City of Transit*, attempts to look at the history of indentured workers who were sent from the plains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to sugar colonies and plantation economies in Mauritius in Fiji in British Guyana, etc. The film also documents the lives of migrant workers in the riverine and transit networks of the port and land adjoining the dockyard, which facilitated different types of migration flows in colonial as well as post-partition Calcutta. The films have been produced as both ways of reflecting on colonial and post-colonial Kolkata as a migrant city and also for documentation and dissemination of the experiences of history, the present and the road ahead for migrating communities.

## Field Trip

A field trip was organised on 16 November 2022 as a part of the Workshop. The coordinator for this trip was **Sabir Ahamed** who provided an introduction to the historical background and planning of the field trip. The field trip was held in coordination with the team of ‘Know Your Neighbour.’ Ahamed guided the participants around the Kidderpore and Metiabruz dock areas, which are considered as prominent locales for the migrant population in Kolkata. Ahamed referred to these locations as “heritage on margins”. He elaborated on the lives of the partition refugees in Kolkata, the diversity in lives and languages of the city, and migrant communities involved in jobs that are gradually becoming obsolete — drivers of yellow taxis, hand-pulled rickshaws, *bhishtinaalas* and jute workers.

Kidderpore and Metiabruz encompass diverse population groups — both Bengali and Hindi speaking communities, Hindus and Muslims, Urdu and Hindi-speaking Muslims and Hindus primarily from the Purvanchal region (present-day eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand) and Odisha and a small Anglo-Indian community, among others. The first destination for the field trip was Suriname Ghat in Kidderpore, which had served as a take-off point in the British era for over a million Indians migrating from Suriname Ghat as indentured workers to the Caribbean islands, South Africa, Mauritius and Fiji Islands to work in sugar plantations during the colonial period. From there, the participants visited the Imambara, the Mariners’ Club, the Dock Area and Spring Bridge. Bichali Ghat, one of the locations, where Nawab Wajid Ali Shah’s steamer, *McLeod*, first docked in Kolkata. The Imambara of Khidderpore, a smaller version of the Imambara in Lucknow, houses the graves of Wajid Ali Shah and his son. The discussion included the histories of sailors during the era of the Company Raj, and that of the *Girmitiya* workers.

The final destination of the walk was the local slum area of the dock, where migrant workers and their families from outside of Bengal live. Besides, truck drivers, their helpers, and car mechanics too live there with their families. They migrate from different parts of the country to the city in search of work. The dockyard and its surrounding neighbourhood have historically been a melting pot of different communities. The workshop participants interacted with workers and drivers, as well as the local women who are either migrant workers themselves or family. Around sixty to seventy families live in this particular slum together, despite their diverse social backgrounds. The conversation revealed that they lack infrastructure, social security, benefits of health and transport, or adequate financial assistance from the government. Their stories are essentially stories of struggle to survive. While the nature of work for migrants and their lives have changed in the last hundred years, the struggle for life and livelihood, and many other challenges faced by migrant workers continue.



Workshop participants in the field trip



Workshop participants at Sibtanabad Imambara

## Workshop Report Presentations

### Report Presentation Session I: Modules A, B, C and Documentary Screening, Photo Exhibition

The first parallel session for the workshop report presentations was chaired by **Sahana Basavapatna**. **Akanksha Kapoor** was the presenter of the report for **Module A**; **Imran Philip** presented for **Module**

**B;** and **Sudha Rawat** presented for **Module C.** **Debasree Sarkar** presented the report of the **Documentary Screening** and **Photo Exhibition.**

Akanksha presented the report for Module A, with takeaways from Nasreen Chowdhory's module lecture on "Protection and Punishment: The Fault Lines of Caste, Gender, Religion and Race", followed by the discussion of research by the Module A participants. The report highlighted Akanksha's work on "Refugee protection in the post-colonial states of South Asia"; "Theorising Race and Space in a Transnational Context by Julián Gutiérrez Castaño"; Priyanka's work on "Migration, Gender and Race" with the word "Rohingya" as Bullying; and finally, "Kaibarta Migration in Barak Valley of Southern Assam" as explored in Debashree Chakraborty's work.

The module report for Module B was presented by Imran Philip. He shared the summary of Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Arup K. Sen's module lectures on globalisation, refugees and migrants using history and philosophical traditions. The report summarised the key points in Afreen Gani's paper on "Mitigating the Impact of COVID and Conflict: Empowering and Securing Futures of Children Belonging to Pastoral Communities of Jammu and Kashmir", and Anasma's presentation on the "Neoliberal Labour and Mobile Subjectivities: A Photo Essay on Labour from the Northeast in Urban Villages of Delhi", Imran's paper on "Gender, Labour and Migration: Situating Women Migrant Workers in Kolkata" was summarised as well. The final points were on Nivash Prakash's paper, attempting to locate the lower caste urban poor population in a settlement named Kusumpur Pahadi in South Delhi.

The report for module C was presented by Sudha Rawat with an overview of the module lecture, "Mechanics of Deportation: Note on a Case" by Sahana Basavapatna, who had brought forth various laws and court cases related to illegal migration, deportation in India from the view of Foreign Act of 1946. Sudha briefly recounted the presentations of the module participants: Sudha's work titled "Refugee Camps as a Site of Violence: An Exploration into Violence Against Women in Kalindi Kunj Camp" explored forms of gender-based violence against Rohingya women who are residing at the Rohingya refugee camp in Kanchan Kunj Camp near Kalindi Kunj. Niruka's discussion focused on forced migration between Sri Lanka and India using economic and conflict as causes of migration. Alexandra Cooper's paper "The Difficulty in Navigating Refugee and Migration Law in Un-established National Legal Framework" pointed out the disparity between the Syrian and Ukrainian refugee influxes and their receptions along with divergent policies and practices.

Debasree Sarkar presented a report on the screening of the three documentaries — *Calcutta: A Migrant City*, *Tale of a Migrant City*, and *City of Transit*. She discussed how the Calcutta Research Group seeks to develop these as ways of thinking about Kolkata and as knowledge that can be disseminated for education. Nasreen Chowdhory appreciated the nuances exhibited in the reports in that they captured the crux of the arguments. She suggested that the participants contemplate how rights are interrogated and understood. Sahana Basavapatna suggested that it would be useful for the participants to return to their papers and acquire feedback while they take back learnings from the workshop. She appreciated how the workshop participants were open to suggestions and critical feedback on their work.



Rapporteurs' Presentation 1



Rapporteurs' Presentation 2

### Report Presentation Session II: Modules D, E1, E2, and Field Trip

The second parallel session of the Workshop report presentations was chaired by **Samata Biswas**. In this session, **Md. Atique Rahman** presented the report on **Module D**; **Miriam Jaehn** presented the report on **Module E1**, while **Shubha Srishti** presented the report for **Module E2**. A report on the field trip to Kidderpore and Metiabruz organised on 16 November 2022 was covered by **Dishari Sarkar** and **Chaitali Biswas**, and the report was presented by **Dishari**.

In the report for Module D on “Statelessness”, Md. Atique Rahman summarised the lessons on statelessness highlighted by K.M. Parivelan in the module lecture, including the rising problem of statelessness across the globe and the legal provisions to protect the refugees. This was followed by brief discussions on the papers of the presenters Abu Faisal Md. Khaled — “The Rohingyas and Statelessness: Constructing and Contesting Diaspora Identity on Social Media Platforms”, Marufa Akhter — “Forced Displacement and Lost Agency of Rohingya Women”, Sharmistha Mallik — “Climate Change: A New Threat in the Making and Unmaking of Statelessness” and Rahman’s paper — “Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity in Stateless Condition: A Study on the Critical Discourse Analysis of Rohingya Men in Bangladesh”. Samata Biswas remarked that the papers by Md. Atique Rahman and Marufa Akhtar were in conversation with each other as they addressed the negotiations of gender-specific identities — the former with masculinity and the latter with women, in case of life in the Rohingya camps. She also recommended that the participants should collectively think on the ethnographic challenges they faced in their work, and the ways in which these challenges vary across modes of research, both the physical and the digital.

The report of Module E1 on “Pandemic, Migrants, Refugees and Public Health”, included a discussion on the module lecture by Samir Kumar Das, focusing on the question — what constituted the dilemma of the public health crisis. The report noted Samir Das’s emphasis that the pandemic constituted the pathological in which on the one hand migrants experienced the full force of the state and on the other, the disappearance of the state in terms of providing for the public health of the people. This was followed by briefings of the module presenters — Chaitali Biswas — “Pandemic and the Crisis of Class Equalisation”, Dishari Sarkar — “Re-Thinking Media Representation of Migrant Domestic Workers in Bengali Mainstream Dailies during the Pandemic: A Feminist Perspective”, Miriam Jaehn — “Intimate Encounters and Shifting Im/mobilities: Rethinking Anthropological Practices During a Pandemic”, and Tarak Nath Sahu — “The Predicament of Migrant Workers for the Sudden Spurt of COVID-19: With Special Reference to Gold Jewellery Sector”— including comments on Dishari and Chaitali’s focus on the specific invisibility of media coverage of the women migrant workers’ distress during the pandemic. Tarak Nath’s research focused on the impacts of the pandemic on gold jewellery workers on their livelihood and income, and Miriam moved to a relational approach and enquired how the pandemic impacted the intimate relationships between anthropologists and migrants and refugees. Samata Biswas mentioned how the presentations brought forth the nuances of media representations and digital ethnography, and etched out a shift in the methodologies in migration studies.

The report for ‘Module E2: Ethics of Care and Protection’, recapitulated the module lectures by module tutors Mouleshri Vyas and Manish K. Jha on the theories and praxis of the ethics of care, as well as the central points from the module presentations by Ambika Rai on “Navigating Gender Dimensions in Transitional Labour Mobility among the Bharias (Head Porters) in Darjeeling Hill Town”, Kaveri’s research titled “The Politics of Protection of Refugees and Migrants”, Khalid Bezaad’ work on “Negative Impacts of not considering the Ethics and Care of Protection”, and Subha Srishti’s study titled “Left Behind Women in Flood Affected Kosi Region of Bihar”. Samata Biswas congratulated the panel for the coherence of themes of research in the module — for the module presentations progressing in sync with one another and the module lectures as well.

In the report on the field trip, Dishari Sarkar summarised, the ethos of the field trip and the destinations that have been covered. Following this, she discussed the outcomes of the field trip and the lessons and interactions among the participants. Samata Biswas highlighted the importance of the China Town as a locale for Chinese migrants in Kolkata.



Seventh Critical Studies Conference

*Migrant Asias: Refugees,  
Statelessness and Migrant Labour  
Regimes*





## Concept Note

Asia, with its multiple border regimes, colonial histories, contestations and conflicts, development trajectories, and displacement, is a rich and complex terrain where commodities, resources, ideas, and people are always on the move. As a key region of migrant origin, transit, and destination, Asia offers a varied and complex account of multiple mobilities that sometimes unfold simultaneously. What motivates Asians to migrate, how do they organise their move and how are these migrants of differing hues “managed” or “cared for”? Can a migration lens offer us newer insights into what constitutes “Asia” as a region and whether it is more appropriate to study “Asias” instead of as “Asia”?

In recent times there have been renewed attempts to reconceptualise Asia as a dynamic yet historically interconnected geographical and cultural formation. The impulses behind these attempts are varied, ranging from challenging the pervasive epistemic Eurocentricity to the global domination of western markets or even the argument that cultural and philosophical resonances and continuities exist within the region. Some scholars have also argued for adopting the ‘Inter-Asian’ or ‘Asia as a Method’ lens, seeing it as a de-imperialising and decolonising project, while others have critiqued the revivalist and imperialist tendencies inherent in these projects.

Any “Asian” history of migration, like in other regions, is influenced by factors as varied as regional histories of migration, colonial conquests, structural and environmental considerations as well as the politics of statecraft that often force people to move. Thus, ethnic conflicts, clash of religious ideologies, ethno-linguistic representation in electoral democracy, neo-colonialism and the fight for democracy etc. over the last several decades within the larger Asian continent have “made” refugees of various forms and kinds, not all of whom would sit easily within the classic definition of a “refugee” as accepted under international refugee law. The Arab-Israeli conflict rendered Palestinians permanent refugees. The civil war in Syria in 2011 and the consequent displacement of Syrians within the country and outside, the more recent withdrawal of American military from Afghanistan in August 2021, the arrests and detention of several human rights activists in Hong Kong in 2020, and the Rohingyas in Burma who are constantly looking for a safe haven, are just some examples of the conflicts in the region and their fallouts. Partitioning of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 led to a mass exodus of people across what eventually became India and Pakistan, followed by the Liberation War of 1971 that led to the formation of the Bangladesh state. These histories of displacement have a bearing on citizenship laws, especially through ‘cut off’ timelines about the movement of people across borders to determine citizenship. With securitisation of borders, and stricter border policing arrangements (both formal and informal) between States, reports of for instance, of the Rohingya and Tamil refugees taking to high seas, intercepted and deported from the shores of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, or Australia or Afghan migrants living in transit camps (across the world) shows how existing legal regimes fail to protect forced migrants.

What also makes studies on Asian migration complex is the experience of uneven development across the region and state of the economy. It is well known that uneven development has contributed to the gendered nature of migration — specially, in the “care economy”. “Transnational” domestic workers as caregivers and other forms of commodification of intimate labour (and especially mail-order marriages or participation of poor women in transnational reproductive labour) open up the question of feminisation of labour. If on the one hand therefore, migration is propelled by the “care” economy, on the other hand, it would be useful to comprehend how “refugees”, for instance, the Afghans in Iran, Tibetans in India, and Bhutanese in resettlement countries, try various methods to negotiate a life of dignity and worth. Their contribution to national and regional economies, often calculated only in terms of remittance, needs to be analysed substantively.

“Migrant Asias” will remain incomplete without a robust and critical engagement with Asia’s connectedness with other continents — especially Africa. Scholars working in the Indian Ocean region have shown us the significance of this connectedness in terms of the exchange of material objects and ideas. Yet, there needs to be a deeper engagement with politics of racism intertwined with casteism, for instance, in the case of bonded labour from South Asia working in European plantations in Africa or Australasia. How do these experiences of forced labour complicate our reading of caste, race and gender?

In this backdrop of the long and complex history of Asian migration and migration within Asia, Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group is organising its Seventh Critical Studies Conference on “Migrant Asias” to explore what it means to be a “migrant” or a “refugee” in Asia today. Can the story of migrants or refugees or the stateless help better comprehend totalitarian regimes in the making and critically understand the status of democracy in Asia? How have the attempts to reconceptualise Asia as a dynamic yet historically interconnected geographical and cultural formation stretching from the Middle East in the West to East Asia in the East, and incorporating all the regions in between including South Asia, South-East Asia, and Eurasia, added to the scholarship on migration studies?

The **Seventh Critical Studies Conference** titled *Migrant Asias: Refugees, Statelessness, and Migrant Labour Regimes* was held from 17 to 19 November 2022. **Sevasti Trubeta** delivered the **Inaugural Lecture** of the Conference. The title of her lecture was “**Medicalisation of Racism and Classism in the Context of Migration.**” The Conference sessions were divided into 10 parallel panel discussions on the following themes:

- **Seeing Like a State**
- **Metamorphosis of the Migrant: State, Migration and Identity Politics**
- **Climate Migration: Documents and Distractions**
- **Solidarity and Agency: Case Studies**
- **Partition: Texts and Contexts**
- **Solidarity and Agency: Case Studies**
- **Labour and Transition: Then and Now**
- **Migration and Refugee Issues in and around Central Asia: A Cultural Perspective**
- **Climate Migration: Crisis and Resources**
- **Citizenship and Rights to the City**
- **Asian Mobilities**

The Conference Selection Committee comprising Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Ishita Dey, Sahana Basavapatna, Sanam Roohi, Samata Biswas and Sabir Ahamed, met over a hybrid meeting in July 2022, and selected the conference participants as well as two panels for presentations. A total of 31 participants presented their papers in the different panels of the conference, which included seven contracted researchers of RLS and IWM and CRG’s staff researchers Rajat Kanti Sur, Rituparna Datta, Shatabdi Das and Debashree Chakraborty (who jointly presented a conference paper with Anindya Sen). The participants of the workshop also attended the conference sessions and interacted with panel participants and discussants. The participants came from different parts of India such as Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Delhi. Participants from Afghanistan, and Nepal joined online. The conference ended on 19 November 2022 with the **Valedictory Lecture** titled “**An Intelligent Guide to the Responsibility Paradox**” by **Ranabir Samaddar**.

Further information on the [Conference](#) is available on the [CRG Website](#).

### Inaugural Session

The inaugural session was chaired by **Shyamalendu Majumdar**, while **Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury** delivered the welcome address for the conference participants. The research endeavours of the Calcutta

Research Group in the past 25 years, and the winter workshops which have been held in the past were highlighted. He also mentioned the publication of the research conducted by young scholars and academics working at as well as in collaboration with CRG. In her introductory remarks **Ishita Dey** brought out the key themes in the conference, that aimed to bring new criticalities in migration research in Asia, given the varied and complex nature of the region. She emphasised how the conference aims to focus on ‘Asias’, rather than Asia, through multi-layered approaches.

### **Inaugural Lecture**

The inaugural lecture of the conference was delivered by **Sevasti Trubeta**, from the University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg-Stendal, Germany. Trubeta spoke on **“Medicalisation of Racism and Classism in the Context of Migration.”** In the lecture, Trubeta discussed her concepts of medical racism and medicalised classism in the context of migration. In her presentation she argued that medicalisation refers to the power of medicine to shape societal relations and especially the use of medical measures to regulate and control mobility. Similar to cultural racism in the postcolonial period, which absolutised cultural difference — where the colonised were necessarily considered to be culturally lacking, or ‘uncultured’, the concept of medicalised racism, Trubeta showed, absolutises the biomedical perception of disease. Through medicalised racism, the phenomenon of migration is ascribed a pathological aspect where pathogenic germs seen as inherent in the bodies of the migrants and, like hereditary features, can be transmitted from one generation to another. By this racial logic, the endemicity of diseases are located, not to geographical locations, but to the bodies of inhabitants of such lands. In this context, she argued, refugees and immigrants are then considered potential vectors of infectious diseases and therefore their mobility comes to be seen as cause of global insecurity. In this way the risk of disease appears to be ascribed to the collective heredity of those who originate in the Global South.

Trubeta connected her discussion on medicalised racism to the intersection of theoretical approaches and classism — from which she derived her concept of medicalised classism. At the heart of medicalised classism, Trubeta argued, was the naturalisation of class membership and the collective representation of mobile precarious workers as potentially infecting bodies. Medicalised classism she projected that based on the assumption that even though the pathogenic germs are invisible, the precariousness and class affiliation are visible markers and symptoms — can betray the dangerousness of the mobile workers for the wealthy society.

Trubeta illustrated case studies for her theoretical discussions by mentioning the plight of migrant workers especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the recent COVID-19 lockdowns, migrant workers were ambivalently treated in several countries as essential to production of food and other provisions as well as emergency services on one hand, and as potentially dangerous carriers of the virus, on the other. She illustrated through images the kind of inhumane treatment these workers had to go through — such as blast spraying of sanitisers/fluids on their bodies, and cramped spaces in quarantine centres to ‘protect’ the more privileged classes from them. This kind of treatment, Trubeta concluded, may be considered a new phenomenon, as may be seen in historical examples like the Ellis Island or the Mexican mobile workers in the USA in the beginning of the twentieth century.



Seventh Critical Studies Conference (Inaugural Session)



Inaugural Lecture (Conference) by Sevasti Trubeta

## Panel Discussions

### Session 1

#### Panel 1A - Seeing like the State

The session ‘Seeing like the State’ was initiated by the **chairperson Arup K. Sen**, with the introduction of the subthemes of the panel presentations. The first paper titled **“Document’ and North-Indian Labour Migrants: Governing Labour Mobility in Manipur”** was presented by **Ajeet Kumar Pankaj**, jointly written by Ajeet Kumar Pankaj, Manish K. Jha, Saima Farhad and M. Ibrahim Wani. Ajeet Kumar Pankaj highlighted how certain documents like Aadhaar card, pan card, ration card, health card and so on, supposedly designed to empower citizens become tools of surveillance in the state of Manipur. Though these documents are meant to prove identity and citizenship and are sources of entitlements and welfare schemes, the state also uses these documentary evidences as governance tools, to mark out the legal and the illegal. Thus, poor labour migrants in Manipur often go through governmentality in the course of migration. Very few migrants possess the aforementioned documents and even if they possess documents that does not make them entitled to basic rights. Additionally, the imposition of ILP or Inner Line Permit has made migrants, especially new migrants more vulnerable and one of the objectives of ILP is to force these labour migrants out of Manipur and to discipline labour migrants in Manipur. Starting from source to destination they are haunted by trauma and they are subjects of constant state surveillance in their journey in Manipur. Labour migrants have developed various tactics to negotiate with the state. However, these negotiations also often lead to extortion of money on the part of the authorities and these regular practices of the state become means to harassment, exclusion, detainment, and extortion of money from labour migrants if they fail to prove their legal status.

The second paper titled **“Exploring ‘Recent Histories’ of Re-bordering Along Indo-Bangladesh Border: Stories Emerging from Villages Lying Along Porous Borders of North 24 Parganas in West Bengal”** was presented by **Baidehi Das**. This paper was based on the author’s fieldwork primarily in Dukhali (name changed), located on the Indian side along the Khulna-North 24 Parganas border and on the reflections of how this place became a “border in practice” through fencing, merely a decade ago. She started with the narrative of a Namasudra person in North 24 Parganas. She further historically reflected on how the Indian state began to face troubles in accommodating so many refugees after the 1971 partition and amidst the loose management of borders, how black money became prominent in Dukhali and how prevention of illegal trade was given as a reason for border control. These policing practices, on account of being relatively new, are based on certain “unpredictable rules” that have come to determine the everyday lives of the residents. She highlighted how communal riot in the past years as a phenomenon resumed in the state after a long time and how the location of a riot in the border zone was treated as a point where history became prominent. She reflected on how a divided electorate was created with the coming to power of the political party BJP in 2014 and how secularism fell apart so quickly in one of its bastions. Before concluding she reflected on the efficacy of the tightened security measures and controlled mobility at the borders. According to a 2016 study on US-Mexico border, these practices often end being counter-productive. Border control leads to increased intermediaries or Dalals. Another

impact of increased border control is the rise in organised crime. She concluded by saying that borders can be used to create an ambience of artificial peace. The project of reasserting the nation through border control especially under the contemporary right-wing government must be explored in order to treat the border not only as the historical cause of contemporary occurrences but also as the outcome of contemporary histories.

The third paper with the title **“The Seasonal Migrant Labourers Living at the Edges of the State”** was presented by **Yojak Tamang**. The research drew on migrant labourers in the Kalimpong district of West Bengal coming from Nepal. In the colonial times, wage labour was negotiated for capitalist imperialist intentions, accompanied by intense exploitation of labour bodies. He also talked about how a large number of women were employed in the plantations in colonial times, keeping in mind that the plantation required a productive governable population. Currently, some of the male and female labourers have left for their homes in Nepal, while some have stayed back. They do not earn much. He used his narratives to point out the various nuances of the spaces of consumption and extraction and patterns of mobility which has changed with the emergence and operation of the modern state. As the 1950 Indo Nepal treaty allowed free mobility, new labourers were recruited and proletarianisation of labour was done. He concluded by re-emphasising the precarity trap in which the labourers currently live and he also asked in this context whether justice is territorial or not.

The session concluded with the chairperson Arup K. Sen’s reflection on how the sub-themes in the papers presentations of the panel were connected. He further stressed on the key concepts such as migration, labour and border and recalled how Sandro Mezzadra has spoken of border as a method and Etienne Balibar points out that not only there are different kinds of borders, but borders perform the functions of territorialisation and demarcation.

#### Panel 1B - Seeing like a State

The parallel session ‘Seeing like a State’ was chaired by **Anup Shekhar Chakraborty**. **N. William Singh’s** paper titled **“Border Crossing in Mizoram: Desirable and Unwanted Communities”**, explored different dimensions of borders, borderlands and refugees by historically tracing the changing nature of cross-border migration between Mizoram and Myanmar. Through the use of diverse sources like archival data, popular culture, novels, music, etc., the arguments were situated within the larger discourse of post-colonial displacement and map-making. The presentation focused on the differences in the experiences of border-crossing and the actions that follow from the state, non-state actors, civil societies and local communities, specifically in the context of the Mizo and Chakma communities in the eastern and western border of Mizoram. The presentation concluded with an emphasis on how the notion of belonging and non-belonging and the nature of migration vary from place to place.

**Sonika Gupta’s** presentation, titled **“Tibetan Rehabilitation in Arunachal: Local State and Geopolitical Anxieties”**, historically traced the trajectory of the relationship between Tibetan refugees, state and local politics in Arunachal Pradesh. The paper was written in the geographical context of the western region of Arunachal Pradesh, where Tibetan settlements have come up in different phases. The role of policies such as Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy 2014, the rehabilitation package for infrastructure development, license for trade, the attitude of student organisations towards refugee issues and impact of changing political status of Arunachal Pradesh on the nature of the relationship and interaction between the Tibetans and the local community was explained in great details. Because of its geographical location and association with larger foreign relations issue, the Tibetan refugee issue has come within the radar of territorial integrity, national security, citizenship and the role of the state in catering to the refugees as patronage versus rights.

**Santi Sarkar** presented on the theme **“The Politics of Populist Policies in West Bengal”**, where he spoke about populist policies and schemes in the context of certain areas of the district of Jhargram and tea gardens of the Dooars in North Bengal. Combining field survey, interviews, sampling and documented evidences, Sarkar looked at the welfare schemes set out by the West Bengal government, such as ‘Swasthya Sathi’ (Health insurance to every citizen), ‘Duare Sarkar’ (Government at your door step), ‘Paray Samadhan’ (Solution in your locality), ‘Laxmir Bhandar’ (monthly stipends for all women) etc. Sarkar argued that, these schemes, while allowing a possible reading through Foucauldian biopolitics, also usher in a new radical

democracy, as they escalate the popular expectation for more of their kind, and in turn enhance the scope of public scrutiny/gaze of the process of distribution. Sarkar also contemplated the possibilities of participation of the common people (beneficiaries) in the planning process of such schemes at the grassroots level. Field study in Amlashole, Jhargram and the tea gardens of Dooars indicated that while the schemes and their assistance ran for almost over a decade, the demand of such schemes resulted into elevated migrant labour flow to other parts of the state and outside, with no positive outcome in case of prevention of human trafficking; migrant families demanded more schemes like MNREGA that was expected to check the flow of migration. This revealed, that the continuity of populist politics demands constant reinvention of existing schemes attuned to new popular demands, and the limits of populism may lie in the structure of the liberal welfare state.



**Panel Discussion 1B: Seeing like a State**

## Session 2

### Panel 2A - Metamorphosis of the Migrant: State, Migration and Identity Politics

The **chair** and **discussant** for this panel was **Manish K. Jha**. **Anasma Gayari** in her presentation titled **“A Cosmopolitan Race: Representations of Northeast Migrants in Delhi - NCR”** highlighted racial othering of migrants from northeast of India by disengaging with the optimism of cosmopolitanism. She located global cosmopolitanism, embedded in the city and the oppressive regime of production. She highlighted the lived complexities of subjectivities by engaging with sexual violence, racialisation of food habits, ethnic cultural practices, and appearance of the ‘Mongolian Youth’ from the ‘Mongolian fringe’, the colonial term used to identify the frontier region by mainland India and in the urban centres of India. Gayari explained how the Armed Forces (Special Power) Act (AFSPA) entailed military racism in the region. Such a situation triggered large scale migration of the youth to other cities to avoid the situation in the region.

**Krishanu Bharagava Neog** in his paper on **“Migrant as Political Entrepreneur”** explored the transformation of Sukur Ali as a comic figure, consumed by casteism in Assamese society. The presentation highlighted how the image of Sukur Ali comes to be consumed by social media and political parties for electoral campaigns. The presentation incorporated a few video clips which showed how prominent youtubers have produced and consumed a distinct image of Sukur Ali, and portrayed him as a comic character for gaining more views that provide incentives. The paper highlighted that it is the figure of the illegal immigrant that percolates through popular discourse and digital media. The paper also showed how an air of animosity overtakes the mockery owing to the deprecating nature of the content.

**Bidhan Golay** foregrounded his paper **“The Migrant at Home: A Case of the Gorkha Conundrum”** in the historical experience of migration of the Nepalis from western part of present-day Nepal, particularly after the British took over Darjeeling (from Sikkim) in 1835. In mapping migration, the paper tried to underscore the fluidity of migration flows in the region, that was once considered sacred. Herein, the higher incidences of migration compared to other ‘Hill stations’, in Darjeeling located at the edge of the British frontier, was highlighted. Thus, the ‘doubleness’ based on the geographical location of

Darjeeling has left its imprint in the minds of people. The paper also narrated the history of the British rule in Darjeeling as the history of colonial governmentality. Golay argued that, it is colonial governmentality which brought about fundamental changes in terms of deployment of a cognitive apparatus that led to mapping, cartography, census and objectification of ‘tribes’ — the production of space in terms of administrative and official categorisations. The most significant impact was the change in the self-conceptualisation of the people and the space they inhabit. People who began living sedentary lives in Darjeeling became the Nepali diaspora (pravashi). This creation of Nepali diaspora resulting out of modern cartography and mapping is at the heart of the ‘identity crises’ of the Nepalis in India. Golay explored the discursive field of the Nepali literary sphere and juxtaposed the literary production with the political discourse that seeks to create an Indian-Nepali identity. The paper pointed out that while the political discourse on Nepali identity and Gorkhaland sought to erase the ties that bind the people of Darjeeling to the vast geography, the literary production creates a space for spontaneity and the diasporic yearning for home.

**Rajarshi Dasgupta** spoke on **“Metamorphosis of the Migrant: State, Migrant and Identity Politics.”** He divided his presentation into two parts: first, the concept of metamorphosis and secondly, the conditions of it. In doing so, Dasgupta brought up the discussion of migrant memories of home and how technological advancement has led to the creation of new platforms for the representation of self and new subjectivities derived from historical conditions or the transformation of migrants. Also, the larger theoretical significance of these changes, wherein, instantaneous recognition and temporary focus or attention, can be leveraged like resources by entrepreneurial refugees and migrants like Sukur Ali. He explained how migrants have no local stake in the political process in their everyday lives. And, they are only able to survive because they occupy the bulk of the informal economy. And this has a lot to do with the post-colonial state’s change of character, which has shifted from caring to shifting responsibility onto the population itself. While the global recession and a shift from manufacturing to service sectors have created widespread hostility towards migrants. Herein, he pointed out that the consequences of these developments have led to an increasing fluidity of identity among the migrants. Dasgupta highlighted that there are specific political, economic, social, cultural, as well as historical conditions that make the metamorphosis possible. Manish K Jha, highlighted the central theme i.e., the migration question of the identified ‘other’ in the destination of migration and how this ‘other’ is constructed.



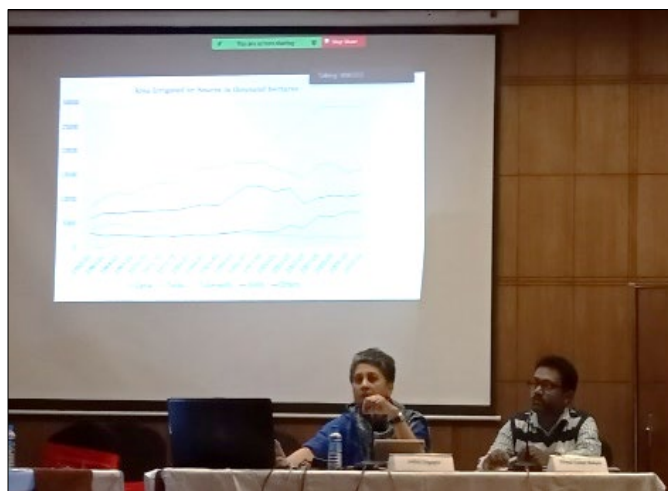
**Panel Discussion: Metamorphosis of the Migrant**

#### **Panel 2B - Climate Migration: Documents and Distractions**

The panel was **chaired over** by **Nirmal Kumar Mahato** while the first speaker, **Debojyoti Das**, presented on **“Climate Refugees in the Bay of Bengal and Sundarbans,”** co-authored with **Upasana Ghosh**. He stated how climate migration, not just climate change, is ingrained in the political economy of deltaic Bengal. The internal climate refugee crisis and its connections to livelihood stresses that have been amplified by climate change constituted the main focus area of the research, in addition to community resilience, health,

and wellbeing. He stressed that maximalist and minimalist debates are essential to comprehend the plight of the climate refugees in the Bay of Bengal and Sundarbans. The research findings showed that people are not interested in farming and have hence developed strategies to make money as migrants. Many migrants from the region work away from their homes for about one or two months, being seasonal migrants.

**Sohini Sengupta**, presented on **“Drought Policy in the Context of Climate Change and ‘Post-Humanism’: A Desk Review of Indian Draughts.”** She argued that issues related to loss, depletions, disappearances, and collapses of ecosystems are caused by human societies as a result of climate change. Although the concept ‘anthropocene’ in anthropology is regarded as controversial, she drew attention to the discourses on planetary transformation like the anthropocene that give rise to political and ethical obligations to create viable modes of living and the need to interact with different ecologies. Of all the other climate hazards, droughts are one of the least obvious. Its effects are chronic, slow-acting, and typically less dramatic, and they can be interpreted as an issue with adaptation. She also discussed the policies of the Indian Government, drought meteorological information, and drought-related news stories. Creating food and water stocks was previously the key tool for public policy, but today, maximising the value of water, crops, and land use through technology-aided decision making takes precedence.



**Sohini Sengupta and Nirmal Mahato in the Panel Discussion on ‘Climate Migration’**

### Session 3

#### Panel 3 - Partition: Texts and Contexts

This session consisted of speakers exclusively from the discipline of English literature, and the panel emphasised various aspects, consequences and memories of the Indian Partition. The **chair, Samir Kumar Das**, gave the introductory comments on the concept and history of Indian Partitions (locating the multiple occasions of partition in Indian history).

The first paper of the panel had been co-authored by **Anindya Sen**, and **Debashree Chakraborty**, titled **“Partition, Migration and Identity Formation: Narratives from Southern Assam.”** The findings emerged from a project undertaken by Sen and Chakraborty in 2017-18, which involved collecting narratives of Partition from families in southern Assam. Conducted during the period of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)-National Register of Citizen (NRC) implementation in Assam, the study tried to gather narratives of Partition and the subsequent migration in Barak Valley. The researchers presented two key arguments in their paper; the first section argued that there were multiple reasons for which people from East Bengal/Pakistan migrated to Barak Valley after the Partition. The discussion brought out how the effects and experiences of Partition differed significantly in Barak valley from that in other parts of India. The initial migrations in this region were voluntary and did not have any relation with violence; the ways of settlement in the region also varied. Hence, no specific pattern of migration could be identified; no monologic narrative emerged from the study, and there was a marked diversity in the experience of Partition in the region. The second part of the paper, spoke about post-partition identity formation in the Valley. Since there was no unifying factor informing post-Partition migration, the identity formation process was



also not uniform — not every migrant identified themselves as refugees. Depending on their reason of migration, the manner of assertion of identity also differed widely. Rather than the 1947 Partition, the Assam Andolan had a significant impact on identity formation as it provided the people of the valley with some kind of uniformity. However, this process of identity formation continues to be in a state of flux hand-in-hand with political developments, and out of this flux people found the scope to formulate resistance.

**Anushmita Mukherjee's** research was titled **“Those forgotten after Partition’: Migration and Identity in Debesh Roy’s Select Works,”** drawing reference from Roy’s literature that involved curation of fictional narratives out of non-fictional lives. The paper was divided into three central parts—an introduction to the Koch Rajbangshi community, an expounding of the sociohistorical theories that were used to discuss Roy’s stories, and the reading of select works of Roy — particularly *Mafassali Brittanto* and *Tista Parer Brittanto*. Using a macro-theory approach for *Mafassali Brittanto* and micro-theory approach to *Tista Parer Brittanto*, Mukherjee focused on two fundamental questions — why do people migrate, where are the migrants coming from and where they are going. She elaborated on the pathos of hunger portrayed in Roy’s novels; different characters in the novels are consumed by hunger even as they produce crops themselves. She described how the decision to migrate often relies on the judgement of the advantages the moving may have, as compared to the original location of habitation; however, in case of the characters in Roy’s novels, migration is not the accumulative kind, but a coping mechanism—where they are forced to migrate in order to survive. Mukherjee pointed out how the upper caste migrants often have access to accumulative migration (having networks and community safety nets) while lower caste communities are forced to rely on migration as coping mechanism. Particularly in cases of migration from rural to urban areas, the migrants often find themselves without work, habitation or legal protection from the state, as is depicted in Roy’s novels. Using Roy’s characters, Mukherjee showed how such migrants, without familial protection, social security and networks of solidarity, lose all points of reference and identity. However, she argued that it is through this anonymity that resistance emerges for the migrant figure in Roy’s books — they negotiate with the urban space to engage in everyday acts of resistance.

**Samata Biswas,** in her work **“What Does the Border Mean for Children? Narratives from the Indo-Bangladesh Borderlands in Manjira Saha’s Chhotoder Border,”** attempted to critically analyse both visual and linguistic narratives from Manjira Saha’s book *Chhotoder Border*. The book included a compilation of children’s articulations—largely through narratives or pen and paper drawings—of life at the borderland. Saha had consistently worked on and with the children in the border district of Nadia, a region which produces a large number of migrant workers—both to India and Bangladesh, many of them young. Biswas employed close reading methods to analyse the visual and linguistic texture of the book. She observed that three recurring tropes emerge from the analysis—the border fences with lights and barbed wires, the border security force (BSF), which the children often confuse with the police, and members of gangs smuggling drugs and goods. Biswas elaborated on the nuances of the depictions of borders by children, and the language and terminology used—for some, the border is intimidating, for others, a beautiful spectacle, and for yet others, a notable site for visitations, or celebration; the well-constructed structures of the border and the well-dressed officials stood out in sharp contrast to the endemic poverty of the borderland and its people. While for children, border is a marker of division, the article recognised networks of kinship and historical and contemporary connectivity across the border. Biswas marked the fluid interpretations of the BSF figures in the testimonies of children—often mistaken as the Bengal police; female BSF officials referred to as ‘ladies police’ rather than ‘aunties’, since the terminology used for male BSF officers was ‘uncles’ — thus being outside of the volatile kinship formed with the latter. The linguistic and religious identities that somewhat ‘otherise’ the BSF officers were also remarked upon; Biswas noted how the BSF uphold ‘security socialities’ with the locals. These relations are influenced by multiple factors and are in no way monolithic. The children also depicted the threat of violence and illegality in the risk of smuggling in the area. The statist rhetoric of legality and illegality does not exist in binary in the borderland; and it was mentioned that children weren’t aware of the differential nature of legitimacy and illegitimacy, and the complicity of the BSF in smuggling through the act of taking bribes.

The Question-Answer session brooked questions on communitarian repositories of memory with regards to partition and their role in shaping identity formation, the generational transmission of partition memory, and the connection felt by settled migrants to their land of origin. Samir Kumar Das raised

questions on the unified depiction or monolithic narrative of partition, and the importance to note the diversity of experience and how they are not in consonance with each other. He drew from Sudipta Kaviraj and Ernesto Laclau's works to speak about the lack of coagulation that brings people together and generates a consciousness of kind. He observed the history of partition as a history of lack, and the politics of the partition migrants as the politics of bare life rather than identity.



**Panel Discussion: Partition-Texts and Contexts**

#### Session 4

#### Panel 4A - Solidarity and Agency: Case Studies

**Sahana Basavapatna** chaired the session. **Joseph K. Lalfakzuala** elaborated on the history of Chin-Lushai, one of the main pillars of which was formed by the Chin-Lushai Conference held at Fort William, Calcutta, in 1892, in his work **“People’s Response to the influx of Myanmar Refugees in Mizoram: Implication and Limitation of State Policy.”** He highlighted that the state of Mizoram in India has traditionally sheltered refugees with shared culture, histories, and economic ties and reflected on how during colonial times certain administrative practices undertaken propagated a ‘divide the nation’ stance — a phenomenon which went beyond the colonial times. Joseph reflected on cross border ‘Nationalism,’ the idea of integration of Mizo inhabited areas and the crumbling of democracy in Myanmar since 1989. He spoke about the response of Mizoram to the influx of the current ‘Burma’ refugees after the February 2021 Myanmar coup. The presentation elaborated some of the initiatives which the Government of Mizoram has taken for Myanmar nationals, such as the issuance of temporary identity cards (following the decision taken by the State High Level Committee), enrolling children in schools as a part of the state’s rehabilitation policy and so on. More than 6000 children of refugees are enrolled in different schools across Mizoram at present; however, problems may arise later regarding their enrolment in colleges with the prevalence of restrictions and surveillance on the part of the government.

**“Urban Renewal Stage in City’s Life and Its Impact on Slums and Slum Dwellers: A Case Study of Noida City, Uttar Pradesh,”** was presented by **Ankita Singh**, co-authored with **Johny K.D.** The paper in its introductory part denoted slums as a significant by-product of urbanisation process and how the slum population faced unique challenges within and outside the slum settlement. A major part of the paper focused on the impact of Noida’s rehabilitation programme on the slum dwellers. Singh elaborated on her methodology and mentioned that Noida was taken as the study area because of the interesting and unique socio-economic profile of the slum dwellers and despite the diversity among the slum dwellers, the common goal remained - the right to a decent living. Migrant workers who traditionally served as a vital need of Noida from 1970-2000 formed a significant section of the slum dwelling population, providing cheap labour to the factories. However, the current rehabilitation scheme deemed unjust and unfair to the poor slum dwellers because of insufficient amount of compensation for displacement, inadequacy and poor quality of housing apartments. She concluded with recommendations that the government could consider for assurance of access to education and health for the slum dwellers and involvement of the slum dwellers in the preparation of a rehabilitation scheme.

**“On the move for Care: Conceptualising Migration for Healthcare in Asia,”** presented by **Deeksha**, briefly contextualised medical travel in Asia. Medical travel from Global North to Global South has continued dominating the discourse on transnational mobility for healthcare, but south-south medical

travel has grown as a popular theme of study in the recent times. However, medical tourism has also come under severe criticism as it exhibited health inequalities and a neo-liberal capture of healthcare under the garb of tourism. The paper was based on the author's ethnographic study in Delhi, where the respondents were mostly transnational people from Bangladesh and Nepal. The bulk of medically mobile people are inter-regional and cross border without any fixed category of diseases and destinations. Drawing from narratives from the field, she highlighted home as a 'space of care' reframed in several ways in the regime of medical mobilities, where the south Asian medical traveller tries to access medical care without much financial burden, thus, migrant networks having an influence on medical care, concluding that there are localised constructions of medical care.

**Rajat Kanti Sur** talked on **“Solidarity for Survival: Cooperative Building as a Method to Overcome Vulnerability,”** and enlisted four types of cooperatives — industrial, primary, housing and multi-purpose, and that the cooperative plays a significant economic and political role in denoting the notion of class. West Bengal has had the tradition of running small cooperatives of fishermen, weavers, and others, and the West Bengal Cooperative Societies Act 2006, only further strengthens the ground. His paper focused on labour, construction workers and sex workers' cooperatives and the gradual establishment of labour cooperatives since 1980s such as the Nagorik Mancha. Construction workers' cooperative like the Imarat Silpa Shramik Abasan had put up a distress fund to save construction workers during the pandemic, one of the most affected groups during COVID-19. He also talked about the sex workers' cooperatives, like USHA Multipurpose Cooperative Society which is an initiative by doctors and businessmen, the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee in Kolkata, and the Ashodaya cooperative in Bangalore. USHA got the status of a multipurpose cooperative in 2007 and played an important role in ensuring citizenship identity of the sex workers, especially in 2004, when it started negotiating with the State Election Commission to get voting rights for sex workers. In most cases, the perils of cooperative are based on trust, as incidents of corruption creep in; the board members often behave as lords. Despite the complications faced by members of the cooperatives, these have played important role for fighting the cases of justice for economically vulnerable groups.



**Panel Discussion: Solidarity and Agency**

#### **Panel 4B - Labour and Transition: Then and Now**

The session on Labour Transition had four panellists, namely Emirilda Thabab, Raj Kumar Thakur, Kamal Thapa Khsetri, and Rituparna Datta, while the presentations were **chaired by Ishita Dey. Raj Kumar Thakur's** paper titled **“Coolie’ Question in the Age of Transition, the 1940s to 1960s,”** observed the lives of coolies in the tea plantations of Assam over the period of 1940s to 1960s — marking a period of transition from the colonial regime to a new nation. Thakur attempted to ask and answer whether there were continuities with colonialism — arguing that decolonisation must be perceived as a dialogic process and viewed from multiple approaches. The paper focused on the production of tea as a global commodity and coolies employed in the production of the same; he noted that migration was a global phenomenon that was crucial to the empire. He examined industrial plans and policies of the post-colonial Indian state

and its conversations with the coolies, and attempted to show how a transition projected these migrant populations in a negative light. He marked how the new legal policies in Assam placed the tea garden workers as outsiders, under the excuse that including them in social security policies would disrupt the local political arithmetic. The study showed the many complex overlaps between the tribes of Assam and the labourers, and the lack of political representation for tea garden workers. The paper revealed the utilitarian policies that focused on increasing productivity of tea as a commodity with a global market, and the sacrifice of rights and dignity of the workers. Foreign capital continued to have a sway in the production of tea, thus creating a persistent shadow of the empire even after independence. The workers found this period to be one of uncertainty in the face of lay-offs, nominal wages and sacrifices for industrialisation. The paper concluded that the struggle for political and identarian representation for these workers, would be a long one, in a nation where the protection of workers' rights is cast them aside in favour of the growth of the industry at large.

**Emirilda Thabah** on the subject of **“Coal Mining and Migration in Meghalaya,”** talked about rathole mining, one of the most common modes of mining in Meghalaya — a primitive method involving digging deep, narrow pits for mining. The narrow confines make mining by children, or sometimes using cranes, common. The 2014 National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned rathole mining in Meghalaya, but it continues to be a prevalent — although illegal — practice even today, with large revenues generated from the practice. Studies have revealed the environmental degradation caused by coal mining in Meghalaya — including acidification of water, etc. Emirilda spoke about the legal disputes over the ban on mining, as it affected incomes, livelihoods, and revenues for the state. Around 35,000-1,50,000 workers are interstate migrant workers in Meghalaya, largely from Bihar and Assam; there are also several international migrant workers. The coal mining industry largely attracts seasonal migrant workers from the months of September-April, when the risks of rathole mining are relatively low due to low rainfall. These mining practices reveal great life risks of migrant workers, often living in unsanitary, makeshift camps with high crime rates and occupational hazards. Thabah also talked about the tribal and non-tribal populations among the workers. She argued that in Meghalaya, the definitions of insiders and outsiders in the coal mine workers have been redefined.

**Rituparna Datta** in her paper titled **“Coolies, Climate and the Territories of Mobility,”** tried to look at climate and acclimatisation to ecological change as a method to understanding coolie mobility, and the dialogism between their belonging and social welfare within the empire. She noted that it is at times difficult to find the intermediality of these ecological responses or the trajectory of climatisation within the history of indentured migration, as not using surviving pieces of tangible materiality but by a sustained space transforming it into intergenerational memory heirlooms or sustained epistemic sources in everyday lives; in a way trying to connect how universal human connections sustain the human-nature connection in a state of refractive belongingness. In her paper, Dutta tried to trace the connection of life, land and climate, and their integral interplay in the colonial politics of coolie mobility that had been largely overlooked in all forms of colonial history. She spoke about the feeling of ‘ecstasy’ associated with both escape and in establishing connection to one’s natal land, and remembrances of the same in diasporic life. The study looked at climate through the prism of labouring capital to understand how the narrative of poverty, famine and changing agro-economy pushed coolie mobility. The risk of mortality during the sea voyages and its continued impact on redesigning the travelling season, and the tensions in the thought histories that tied the belongingness of life to land for coolies who were ‘escaping’ natal homes were discussed.

The paper **“Protection of Nepalese Workers in India and Nepal,”** was presented by **Kamal Thapa Kshetri**, on the legal frameworks for protection of Nepalese workers in India (as the receiving state), the risks and problems faced by these workers, the border governance system, the mechanism for migrant workers in India and Nepal, and the ways for overcoming these challenges. He observed that the high magnitude of migration remained historically consistent between India and Nepal, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Contemporary labour migration to India has been mainly reported from three Provinces of Nepal: Sudurpaschim Province, Karnali and Lumbini Province. The major push factors for migration, Kshetri argued, included scopes of livelihood, seasonal work, lack of immigration administrative policies at the Indo-Nepal border, etc. He also spoke about the general legal mechanisms, and the border functions during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Government of Nepal maintained certain entry points from India to Nepal with registration of migrants. Kshetri reasoned that, the lack of regulatory and security

mechanisms led to delay and lack of investigation and information regarding Nepalese migrants who have gone missing in India, hence, aggravating the challenges of providing protection for migrant workers.



**Panel Discussion: Labour Transition**

### Session 5

#### **Panel 5A - Migration and Refugee Issues in and around Central Asia: A Socio-Cultural Perspective**

The session began with **Nandini Bhattacharya's** presentation on **“Labour Migration and its Social Impact on Post-Soviet Tajikistan: An Overview along Cinematic Lenses,”** exploring how the approaches of film directors have changed over the decades and genres. The presenter attempted to develop her argument using five movies released in Tajikistan over two decades. She said that each film was distinct yet had subtle similarities with each other. These films represented various facets of labour migration and everyday life of migrant communities belonging to the domestic, transport, construction, and other sectors, like the film *Frishte Kifti Rosht*. She discussed the film *Ovara* that revolved around the life of an orphan child without his parents and went on to underscore the precarious life of women, expecting mothers with vulnerabilities, and the number of deaths that occurred due to the unavailability of medical services in post-war life in Tajikistan. The third film in the presentation was *Taqvini Integoril*, that remarkably documented migration through the life of a mother and her daughter. An excerpt from the film showcased the roles adopted by older women in the villages and celebrating together through songs. A fourth film *Tangno* showed that powerful men from villages attempt to harass young girls while the older women stand up for girls against the men of the villages. The final film of the discussion was the documentary *Ant: Films by a Different Generation*, made by a migrant who used his savings from the work of a labourer, to buy a camera. The film used ants as allegory to present the difficulties, complications, and humiliation faced by migrant workers in their daily lives. Such films, eye-openers in their own right, documented the unseen lives of migrants otherwise neglected by their respective state political systems. The researcher implied that the films are a site of resistance and a way of bringing forth the issues of migration in central Asian countries.

**Veena Ramachandran's** paper titled **“Exile, Liminality, and Nation: A Study on Tibet in Exile in India,”** attempted to examine the statelessness of the Tibetan exile community in the Indian state, with specific reference to the youth in exile. She began her presentation by problematising the whole gamut of exile and liminality, and expounded the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and refugee green books that serve as the primary marker of the refugees' affiliation with the government in exile and proof of Tibetan citizenship. Ramachandran pointed out the issue of exile and out-migration of Tibetan youth to western countries, alluding to the lack of uniformity in India's policy, CTA, and its liminality, Sino-India complexities, anxieties of the post-Dalai Lama situation, and regional dimensions. The author also mentioned that people in exile are forced to adapt to the host countries, however, Tibetan youth are sometimes eager to migrate to western countries that offer strong state support and transnational climate.

#### **Panel 5B - Climate Migration: Crisis and Resources**

The **chair** and **discussant** for this session was **Sohini Sengupta**. In his paper on “**Climate Migrants, Resource Scarcity and the Sustainability Issue: The Case of Jungle Mahals Region,**” **Nirmal Kumar Mahato** traced how deforestation by the colonial state altered the human-nature relationship in the Jangal Mahal and Manbhum regions of West Bengal. The paper explained how the environmental policies had impacted the subalterns and Adivasis in the region, who lost their forest rights due to large scale deforestation. Also, deforestation and salination of water had impacted primitive subsistence farming and made survival difficult in the region, especially during famine and drought. As a consequence, a lot of the indigenous inhabitants, the Adivasis migrated to Assam and Darjeeling to work in the tea estates as tea garden labourers. The paper also highlighted the trajectories of population mobility to Burdwan, which was motivated by the increase in rice production.

**Shatabdi Das** in her presentation titled “**Kolkata and Climate Crisis**” highlighted the pattern of changes in land cover and land-use in Kolkata while delving into the trend of climate hazards and their consequences over the last two decades. The changes in weather pattern, incidences of cyclones, the mechanism and planning strategies for disaster management and the geographical location of the flood prone areas in the city were discussed. Migration pattern in the Bengal delta region and the status of environmental migrants struggling with the impacts of climate crisis were summarised in the discourse. The paper provided glimpses of disaster management policies in urban planning, especially in the light of growing environmental pollution and the assessment reports of the IPCC. The study also looked into the vulnerabilities of the Sundarbans to climate changes and the impact of land-use changes in the delta region. The study in conclusion tried to understand the role of planning and mitigation measures for combating climate crisis and the significance and role played by the East Kolkata Wetlands in supporting environmental conservation in the city.

**Sohini Sengupta**, the discussant of the panel explicated the connection between capital, regimes of extraction, and processes of capitalist accumulation that impact people, forests and nature. She highlighted how state enabled such extraction through newer kinds of capital accumulation in various epochs and ruling regimes and moved on to the fact that tribal people have been homogenised with time, and how state recognises new surplus population for capital accumulation, without the provisions of protection. The importance of water-bodies in providing protection during climate hazards and the ecosystem functions as well as the economic services that ponds and lakes provide in provision of livelihood opportunities were underlined.



**Panel Discussion: ‘Climate Migration: Crisis and Resources’**

#### **Panel 6: Asian Mobilities**

The **chair** and **discussant** for this panel was **Ruchira Goswami**. “**The Tragedy of Overload: Suppression to Exodus of Afghan Hindus and Sikhs (1992- 2021),**” presented by **Ali Dad Mohammadi** located the tragedies befalling Afghan Hindus and Sikhs, constituting a large population group in Afghanistan in the 1970s, once host to diverse religious groups that today find their histories in obscurity. The research was undertaken before the fall of the Afghan government, with only 2 provinces out of 15 now inhabited by these communities, their numbers falling from 220,000 individuals in 1992 to about 100 in 2021. Mohammadi located the threats to the community leading acting as push factors for

migration. The period of Taliban rule is considered the worst for the community, because the Hindus and Sikhs had to blend in with the majority populace. The failure of the government to provide security to the groups in the mid-2010s and the collapse of the return policy for Afghan Hindu and Sikh migrants were discussed. The paper located the contemporary lived reality of the two communities, centred around the violence faced by them. Mohammadi observed that institutional suppression is engineered through conversion practices, intimidation to create general insecurity, property confiscation, and erosion of basic democratic rights, and thus concluded with the assertion that systemic processes of lack of representation in structures of power, executive and juridical corruption and social alienation that created unsafe space for the Hindu and Sikh communities, led to their forced exodus from Afghanistan.

**Anita Sengupta**, presented on **“The Pandemic and Governance in Central Asia,”** and briefed about the authoritarian expanse of the state, the explicit swell of power during the pandemic, even while garnering humanitarian aid. The author emphasised the securitised approach to a public health emergency in the region, and the suppression of information, especially by medical health professionals. Sengupta located parliamentary processes and public protests as structural issues within the democracy, and lack of legitimacy acerbating the problem in Kyrgyzstan. Factors affected by globalisation had a massive impact on the domestic policies of the region, worsening public trust in the government, especially the ability to provide healthcare, giving rise to a populist leader through solidarity movement. The paper highlighted loss of trust in public institution, violation of social contract and increased securitisation of the region. Furthermore, the shrinking of remittances from migrants caused shrinking of economic security — worsened by the pandemic and increased debt undertaking. The paper looked into the gendered impact of such processes on education and finance and mentioned the resilience of the citizenry using collective action to survive, through the making of a populist leader. She addressed the notion that the pandemic provided opportunity to suppress dissent, test public control and strengthen authoritarian norms in Central Asia.

Ruchira Goswami expressed intrigue in the comparison of the two contrasting regimes — Communist and the Taliban regimes in the first paper and suggested that the change in social response to the two communities in the interim period be explored. She referred to the impacts of the pandemic on the rights of people as well as the case for CAA in India, and noted that, the absence of ‘War on Terror’ phase in the analysis of Afghan history, and the need to trace its impact on the migration of Hindu and Sikh communities in the region would be important. Goswami articulated the similarities between citizenry experiences and leadership in Kyrgyzstan and India, and questioned the lack of such political changes in India and the long-term sustainability of an electoral process which relied on populism.

## Conference Lectures

### **“A Critical Genealogy of the Forced Migratory Labour in the Asian Mediterranean Sea: Trajectory, Logistic, and a Few Halting Points Today”**

*Joyce C.H. Liu*, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan, and *Jonathan Parhusip*, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan

The online lecture by **Joyce C.H. Liu** and **Jonathan S. Parhusip** on forced migration trajectories in the sea was **chaired** by **Samata Biswas**. The first part of this joint study was presented by Joyce C.H. Liu, where she described the genealogy of the sea route of forced migration that linked Northeast and Southeast Asia through the Asian Mediterranean Sea. The core research question was about the nature of forced labour and institutionalised logistics that persisted throughout history. Her argument was that the logistics facilitating the flow of forced migrant labour dated back to the feudal tribute system over thousands of years, from the pre-modern era to the 21st century. She mentioned that the institution and technology of logistics went through a long history of metamorphosis, but the nature of the mediating institution remained unchanged. The major objective of the study was to propose a perspective of critical legal study that challenges the persistence of the legalised institutions that legitimise and rationalise the extraction of labour and ignore the fundamental equality of all human lives. Liu voiced the stories of Taiwanese people trapped in Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, Cambodia, by human-smuggling groups. These young people mostly had a high school or college degree in education, but had lost their jobs during the pandemic and were in turn lured by fraud advertisements on FB that promised high salaries and good jobs. They went through in-person interviews in Taiwan and flew to Cambodia, hoping for a great future. The moment they landed at the airports, their passports were confiscated, and they were sold to various companies. Most people were tortured with electric batons, and some were physically assaulted if they did not comply. The Chinese entrepreneurs who ran the organised scam industries with Cambodian elites, assisted Taiwanese gangs in the recruitment of people. In Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, dozens of industrial parks exist and each industrial park consists of hundreds and thousands of scam gangs, run mainly by the Chinese. In previous decades most victims were from China, but at present the Taiwanese also fell into their trap through the assistance of local gangs. Deriving instances from a documentary, Joyce explained that thousands of victims work for 15 hours a day on a cryptocurrency romance scam or a cryptocurrency investment scam. The victims were from China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thai, Vietnam, and Burma. A case study conducted by Jonathan Parhusip showed the possible routes of the halting points as a fix to the vicious circle of labour exploitation. Parhusip offered a brief report of several projects from his fieldwork to enable migrant fishers' capacity for space-making and self-protection.

The presentations invited questions on the role played by middlemen in handling the slave trade and whether it works as a surveillance mechanism; on the digital handling on faking digital forgery in such cyber slavery mechanism and on the difference of work for those Taiwanese labourers before and after the COVID situation.



**Online Lecture by Joyce C.H. Liu and Samata Biswas Chairing the Session**

### **Jayanta Dasgupta Memorial Lecture**

**“Gig Economy and Migration: The Future of the Work or of Precariat?”**

*Lydia Potts, Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany*



**Lydia Potts** stressed the significance of gig economy for the Global South, particularly India, even with the dearth of statistics and data. She suggested that CRG should introduce a dedicated module for gig economy in the forthcoming workshops. She then connected her lecture to the lecture by Arup K. Sen and Sabayasachi Basu Ray Choudhury for Module B, where they had contended about the simultaneity of primitive accumulation and capitalist accumulation in the contemporary regime of neoliberalism. She argued that, in the 21st century, migrant labour is the main source of capitalist accumulation. Potts recapitulated the argument made by Ayse Caglar in her plenary lecture in the workshop that migrants who are legally declared as ‘essential workers’ are paradoxically dispossessed from social and economic rights. She then made her central hypothesis that the model of gig economy could be the blueprint for work in the future. According to Potts, gig economy, which forms a part of the platform economy, gained momentum in the last 10 years, which the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) termed as ‘platform revolution.’ She argued that the official data available on gig economy in both Global North and the Global South is lower than the actual reality as within it there are grey or black economy platforms as well as local economies. Even though the pandemic slowed down the growth of the economy and employment, the numbers in the platform economy remain significant, apparently exponentially rising. She provided detailed data and statistics on gig economy in the context of Germany and the United States. She argued that a whopping number of 99% of platform workers are engaged with part time jobs and identified broadly two classes of platform workers in Germany: middle-class Germans and the precariat migrants, with little to no socio-economic rights. As sex-work has been legalised in Germany, sex work has also taken on the gig economy model. Although street prostitution is not a part of the gig economy it is somewhat digitised. The legalisation of sex work, for the purpose of making it safe and secure, and its digitisation, has turned Germany into the brothel of Europe. However, just as in the conventional gig economy there is a dehumanisation of workers through customer evaluation and ratings, so is the same for digitised sex work; its legalisation having failed to provide social justice to workers. Although the gig economy is dominated by middle class workers in the official statistics, it is deeply imbricated with racial and gendered structures. Similar is the scenario in the USA where gig economy is dominated by Black, Hispanic and Asians. In the post-pandemic period, gig economy seems to have become the fastest growing economy in the world. The speaker mentioned that in 2017, a quarter of the total gig workers of the world were estimated to have belonged to India. Key dimensions such as privatisation, liberalisation, and deregulation, along with the deconstruction of the nation-states have led to the emergence of the gig economy.



**The Jayanta Dasgupta Memorial Lecture by Lydia Potts**

### Valedictory Lecture

**“An Intelligent Guide to the Responsibility Paradox”**

*Ranabir Samaddar, Calcutta Research Group, India*

**Ranabir Samaddar** reflected upon the dual nature of responsibility. The notion of responsibility has traditionally been seen from the socio-legal and philosophical perspective, whereas the political reflection on responsibility takes place relatively less often, more so because political ideas tend to be focused on sovereignty rather than responsibility. The present idea of power has the ability to hide its paradoxical existence and reflects a duality — dualities of power and capacity, sovereignty and accountability, protection and destruction, freedom and discipline, crimes and punishment, thought and action, and so on. Politics has never thought of responsibility as one of its fundamental components. Hence from the question of responsibility politics ultimately lost out to law and philosophy. Samaddar pointed out that one fundamental problem raised by Machiavelli was — the Prince can inherit power by legacy or fortune but can sustain it only by virtue. The 1951 Refugee Convention created an institutional power to protect, but it was not a transformative event; since political practices emerge in events of void. The power to protect that does not yet exist, is made possible by the imagination of an empty space with lack of protection, victimhood, vulnerability and death. Crafting a theory of responsible power in the neoliberal times thus begins from that void. Ranabir Samaddar opined on the global space of responsibility and how through the period of emergence of nation-states, the idea of responsibility was framed through the axis of global governance. He talked about human rights and humanitarian laws and conventions such as the Genocide Convention of 1951, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other instruments, and reflected on the ways in which the discourses on civil, political, social and economic rights emerged and were observed by state parties. These conventions laid down the part of an interlinked development of two principles of responsible power – respecting rights and observing obligations. Gross violations of human rights left little time for the big powers to reflect adequately on responsibility. After the second world war, there emerged a new world order and in the 1990s, with conflicts, for instance, the Rwandan genocide, many argued in favour of a redefinition of global responsibility. In 2005, the United Nations defined the responsibility to protect as justified humanitarian intervention to ensure responsibility. The speaker questioned the nature of power and responsibility at the margins. Wars maybe launched by great powers, but the burden of refugee flows created by them are born by countries that had or have little to do with them, and the global refugee regime never questioned this dissociation. He further added that, the present regimes of protection cannot address displacements due to wars. In war and war like situations, the compartmentalisation between and among various groups such as asylum seekers, refugees, immigrant labour, climate induced displaced populations no longer hold credibility. In such a time, it is significant to examine the effectiveness of the global protection apparatus for the refugees, keeping in mind that an overwhelming part of the world’s displaced populations are hosted by countries in the Global South, whereas most of the UNHCR funding comes from states in the Global North. This perhaps forms a significant basis of a post-colonial interrogation into the global protection regime and of the refugees and stateless.



**The Valedictory Lecture of the Conference by Ranabir Samaddar  
Concluding Session**

In the closing session, **Byasdeb Dasgupta** and **Paula Banerjee** delivered the **concluding remarks** and **distributed certificates**. **Nadja Dorschner**, representing **Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS)** shared her experience of the Workshop and Conference (online). She introduced the activities of RLS to the audience

while also praising CRG's work on migration in collaboration with RLS, and the organisation of the Workshop and Conference as a platform to engage with issues of migration. She encouraged the possibilities of new forms of collaboration crossing national boundaries. **Ayse Caglar** from the **Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna**, as one of the collaborating organisations of the workshop and Conference, was unable to join the proceedings due to technical issues.

In the feedback session, participants of the Workshop and Conference expressed their opinions, suggestions and shared some of their learnings, experiences and take-aways from the event, such as Julian Gutierrez Castano, Veena Ramachandran, Marufa Akhtar, Afreen Gani Faridi, Abu Faisal Md. Khaled and D. G. Niruka Sanjeevani, to name a few. The participants responded positively to the structure and organisation of the Workshop and Conference and acknowledged that the events would leave a mark on their understanding and approach of migration studies. They mentioned that the modules and panels and the connected discussions had enriched them. Some of the common points highlighted by the participants were as follows:

- the interdisciplinary nature of the Workshop and Conference introduced many to the approaches of migration studies beyond the individual fields and specialisations of the participants, and pioneered new perspectives.
- strengthening of theoretical understanding and conceptual clarity would aid the fieldwork they were engaged in.
- the collective efforts and group responsibilities with space for shared narratives, understandings and experiences would reinforce them with motivation towards interactive roles in collaborative programmes in all spheres.

**Byasdeb Dasgupta** gave the **concluding remarks** for the Conference, and expressed hopes for sustained connections. **Shatabdi Das** delivered the **Vote of Thanks**.



**Certificate Distribution Ceremony for Workshop Participants**



# Evaluation



## Evaluation

The Workshop and the Conference were evaluated by **Tom Vickers**. Following is the detailed report:



**Evaluation: Workshop and Conference**

This evaluation employs an ‘appreciative inquiry’ approach,<sup>1</sup> focusing on areas of strength that can be built on further, to identify the critical factors that contributed towards the stated goal, to “bring together young researchers and experts from the humanities, social sciences, academics, activists, human rights advocates, journalists, artists, filmmakers and others, to provide an immersive and enriching encounter with the study of migration and forced displacement.”<sup>2</sup> The evaluation has been informed by the evaluator’s direct participant observation of the entirety of the five-day Workshop and two-and-half day Conference, a review of written materials in the workshop online repository, numerous informal discussions with participants, module coordinators and other CRG staff, and an hour-long dedicated feedback session held at the conclusion of the workshop, co-chaired by the evaluator, reflecting their views of the critical aspects of the process, consistent with the collaborative nature of appreciative inquiry.

### **1. Organisation of the Workshop and Conference**

The Workshop and Conference were extremely well organised, both well-planned and flexible when needed. A very thorough presentation of the programme and practical arrangements was given in advance via the online portal and emails, in printed materials made available on arrival, and verbally at the start of the workshop and throughout. A zero-tolerance policy on harassment, bullying, discrimination or belittling was announced on the first day of the workshop and reiterated on later days. This was an excellent approach that other academic events could learn from. Some participants commented that it helped them to feel that this was a safe space, and I observed the atmosphere to be exceptionally collegial, supportive and developmental compared to many other academic events I have attended. Overall, the technical setup for the hybrid online-offline portions of the Workshop and Conference was among the best I’ve seen, improving the accessibility of the event and giving participants access to a wider range of international speakers. The technical support was very attentive and consistent throughout.

<sup>1</sup>Griggs, D.M. and Crain-Dorough, M. (2021), Appreciative inquiry’s potential in program evaluation and research, *Qualitative Research Journal*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 375-393. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-06-2020-0059>

<sup>2</sup>Seventh Annual Research & Orientation Workshop & Conference on Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants, programme, p.7.

## **2. Design of the Programme**

I consider the overall design of the programme to be exemplary, and a model that could be applied to support the academic development of early career researchers at other institutions and in other fields as well. The mentoring of participants over a period of two months, focused around a specific paper, combined with the creation of a peer learning community, led to high quality papers and seems likely to have a lasting positive impact on the academic skills, and networks, for participants. The relatively small number of participants, and their division into small module groups, nurtured community and made it easier for participants and module leaders to get to know each other. This was further strengthened by the expectation for participants to act as peer mentors to one another within their module group, fostering a collective learning community in which there was no evidence of individualism or unhealthy competition. This also appeared to help participants become rapidly comfortable in a new city. Participants reported finding out about the programme from a range of different sources. In many cases this was through the personal recommendations of their professors or peers, which reflects the excellent networks the CRG has. In other cases, this was through social media (YouTube, Twitter and Facebook were all mentioned), reflecting the benefits of such promotion to reach beyond the existing networks. The arrangement for module coordinators to give a lecture prior to the paper presentation of the workshop participant in each module, combined with the keynote lectures, helped to model good academic practice, set the context for each module, and strengthened the ability of participants from other modules to engage in the discussion on complementary modules that might have been outside their field in some senses. This was further complemented by the module coordinators' engagement with the papers in their module — having read and commented on these in advance, the module coordinators were able to give highly informed, nuanced and supportive feedback on the papers at the conclusion of each session. At least one module convened an evening meeting of the module during the workshop, providing valuable additional support. At least one module coordinator offered the participants in their module further opportunities for feedback and support beyond the Workshop, which is exemplary. The designation of participants as rapporteurs for specific sessions of the Workshop was very effective in helping to give them more ownership of the programme, as well as helping with the rigour of the final reporting. Having a dedicated session for feedback within the programme was very helpful, giving participants and the module coordinators more opportunity to feed into the further development of the programme and ensuring that all the participants had the opportunity to share their views with the evaluator. The arrangement for the CRG to have first refusal on publishing the best papers as selected by the module coordinators is in my view an excellent form of reciprocity, and supports a virtuous cycle of the beneficiaries of the workshop producing work that further raises the profile and esteem of the CRG, encouraging further high-quality applications to future Workshops.

## **3. Online Sessions/Distance Segment of the Programme**

Participants reported positive experiences of the online orientation process, valuing both the information that was provided about the programme from the outset and the opportunity to meet other participants and start to get to know each other well before the workshop. This brought benefits in participants' confidence to engage fully during the Workshop. The regular information provided via emails was also considered helpful, and this clearly highlights the importance of ensuring that all participants are receiving emails to their correct address. Having the programme coordinators as a point of contact for practical matters was also considered very helpful. The responsiveness, understanding and supportive feedback from module coordinators/tutors/mentors, was highly valued. Participants described how mentors encouraged participants to share their work as it was, without expecting perfection, in order to enable early feedback, and the tutors/mentors also gave space for independent exploration. Participants were given the opportunity to revise their paper title from that originally submitted, to allow for the development of their ideas, an allowance for intellectual mobility which some participants noted as very helpful. The timing of meetings after work hours was also appreciated.

## **4. Contributions in terms of Policy Advocacy**

The connections to policy were direct and multiple, running throughout all modules. The range of themes addressed by the modules, keynote speakers and participants' papers, took the coverage of policy advocacy well beyond migration policy and migration to also engage with policy in arenas that included employment, health and care, rural and urban development, and environmental protection, to name just a few. Discussion



of the wider work of the CRG and its partners was woven throughout the workshop, further enriching the discussions of the practical applications of research.

## **5. Academic Merits**

The programme produced academic work of a very high standard. Among the participants' papers there was a broad range of more empirical and more theoretical papers, and in my view most excitingly, quite a number of papers that theorised from empirical research in a very sophisticated way. Overall, the standard of participants' presentations compared very favourably to other academic events I have been to. I consider this testament to the ability and hard work of the participants and module coordinators, also to the design of the process, and of the organisational infrastructure and administration — without any one of these it is unlikely such a high academic standard could have been achieved. Participants' questions to one another and to the module coordinators and special lectures showed an excellent academic level, and a strong learning community that had clearly been built through the process leading up to the workshop as well as at the workshop itself.

## **6. Was there Sufficient Engagement with the Question of Research Methodology?**

There was extensive engagement with research methodology. It featured strongly in many participants' papers and was further interrogated through the questions posed to participants by module coordinators and other participants. Among the participants, a wide range of methodologies were employed, evidencing the broad range of activity within the field, the effective recruitment of the programme among researchers with varying methodological approaches, and the expertise of module coordinators to support these approaches effectively.

## **7. Was the Programme Informative?**

The programme was highly informative, producing a wealth of new knowledge that participants seem committed to turning into publications. This evaluator has certainly learnt a considerable amount from listening to the papers and lectures, and one participant noted that they will be much more likely to return to their notes from this programme than most Conferences they have attended.

## **8. How Far Do You Think this had the Potential for Expanding the Frontiers of Research on Migration and Refugees?**

In the view of this evaluator, the programme makes a significant contribution to expanding the frontiers of research on this field, both in the papers it produced and as a long-term investment by enhancing the work of a cohort of young migration scholars from diverse backgrounds, and building their skills, confidence and contacts. Some participants talked about having heard about other Conferences through participating in this programme, while many talked about the positive impact it had on their research. One participant described the workshop as being like five years' learning in five days.

## **9. Possible Areas for Improvement**

As outlined above, this is already an extremely strong programme and it is important that in any changes that are made the critical elements contributing to that strength are maintained. The following are possible areas for further development, most of which emerged through the discussion in the feedback session at the end of the workshop. There was some discussion of the range of countries participants came from, and how this might be increased. It was reported that participation had previously been more diverse but that this was reduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that efforts are being made to build this back up. If this is not being done already, direct approaches to relevant research groups and professional associations may help with this. It should be noted however that the participants were highly diverse in many other ways — for example, coming from many different regions and including some very active participants who were from rural, tribal, and/or first-generation backgrounds, and the workshop recruitment process is to be commended for this.

For some participants it was suggested that the requirement for two letters of recommendation was difficult to fulfil, particularly for those early in their academic career, and there might be merit in reducing this requirement to one letter, or perhaps an option of one academic letter of recommendation and one

equivalent letter relating to the participant's participation in community work or other relevant activity. Similarly, the requirement to be engaged on a PhD programme was suggested to be unhelpful particularly for applicants from countries that have limited capacity for PhDs. An alternative route where research experience and publications can stand in place of a PhD programme might help further broaden the backgrounds of applicants. Where a single participant session took place at any one time, this helped to maximise the audience for participants. While timetabling to fit in all sessions is clearly challenging, it could strengthen the event to extend this approach to all modules. While the Conference venue was generally very comfortable, any venue comes with limits.

For an aspect of the event such as the photo exhibition, which was static in a small space, timetabling multiple viewing times may be more effective to ensure everyone can engage with it fully. Participants generally seemed to appreciate the temperature to be moderate, and not overly chilled. The inclusion of a field trip within the workshop was very positive, although the size of the group seemed to create some logistical challenges for our wonderful guides, and perhaps this could be addressed by breaking the workshop participants into more than one group. Timekeeping by session chairs is always challenging, particularly when discussions are so rich, but overall, I felt there was a reasonable balance between exercising discretion to allow discussions to unfold organically and making sure we didn't fall too far behind. I feel it is important to ensure that participants are given adequate breaks to both maintain energy levels and allow for informal discussion, and building a little more time than needed into break timings can allow for when some sessions need to overrun.

There is a question of how the community created through this Workshop can be sustained over the longer term. Although some of this will no doubt happen organically and informally—and there is already talk of some joint publications among participants — as I understand it there was previously a formal alumni programme when the workshop was in its earlier, longer form, and it may be worth considering something similar given the strength of the community I saw in evidence at the workshop this year. For example, this might involve some continuing status with the CRG, for example some form of annual membership, perhaps involving continued access to the CRG library, and further involvement with the CRG's online lectures.

Overall, everyone involved in the Workshop and Conference is to be commended on a very successful and exemplary event. It was a real pleasure to have the opportunity to learn from the process and the content of the event, and I wish the CRG all best wishes for future iterations of this programme.

# Participants & Organisers



## List of Participants

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# Research Outcomes





## Publications

### Occasional Papers

1. Castaño, Gutiérrez Julián. "Theorising Race and Space in a Transnational Context." *Policies and Practices*, No. 136 (December 2022): 1-23. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP136.pdf>
2. Chakraborty, Debashree. "The Kaibarta Question in Barak Valley, Assam: A Curious Case of Settlements in Flux." *Policies and Practices*, No. 130 (December 2022): 1-13. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP130.pdf>
3. Das, Debojyoti and Upasana Ghosh. "Those Who Stay Behind: Lived Experiences from Indian Sundarbans Amidst Climate Change and Migration." *Policies and Practices*, No. 134 (December 2022): 1-11. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP134.pdf>
4. Das, Shatabdi. "Kolkata and Climate Crisis." *Policies and Practices*, No. 140 (December 2022): 1-19. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP140.pdf>
5. Datta, Rituparna. "'Bhootlane Ki Katha': Living in the Coolie Lines and Construction of Dignity, Health and Well Being 1830-1920." *Policies and Practices*, No. 141 (December 2022): 1-25. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP141.pdf>
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7. K. D., Johny and Ankita Singh. "Urban Renewal Stage in City's Life and its Impact on Slums and Slum Dwellers – A Case Study of Noida City." *Policies and Practices*, No. 139 (December 2022): 1-16. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP139.pdf>
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9. Roy Chowdhury, Samik and Gorky Chakraborty. "Navigating Precarity: Analysing Multiple Narratives of Citizenship in Assam." *Policies and Practices*, No. 131 (December 2022): 1-16. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP131.pdf>
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11. Sarkar, Santi. "Politics of Populist Policies in West Bengal." *Policies and Practices*, No. 138 (December 2022): 1-24. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP138.pdf>
12. Sengupta, Anita. "Pandemic and Governance in Central Asia." *Policies and Practices*, No. 137 (December 2022): 1-14. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP137.pdf>
13. Sengupta, Sohini. "Indian Droughts, Drought Policy and Climate Change." *Policies and Practices*, No. 142 (December 2022): 1-33.
14. Sur, Rajat Kanti. "Solidarity for Survival: Cooperative Building as a Solution to Overcome Vulnerability." *Policies and Practices*, No. 133 (December 2022): 1-14. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP133.pdf>

### Refugee Watch Journal Issues

1. "Contemporary Wars and Politics of Dispossession: Afghanistan and Ukraine." *Refugee Watch*, No. 59, Special Issue (December 2022): 1-129. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/rw%20files/RW60/RW60.pdf>
2. *Refugee Watch*, No. 59 (June 2022): 1-89. <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/rw%20files/RW59/RW59.pdf>

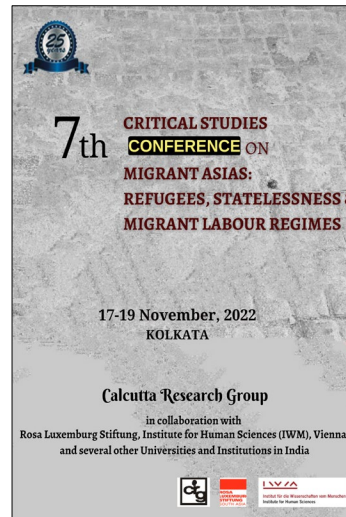
### CRG Distinguished Chair Lecture Series

1. Samaddar, Ranabir. "An Intelligent Guide to The Discriminatory History of Responsibility." *CRG Chair Lecture* (December 2022): 1-22. [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM\\_Migration\\_2022/DCL.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2022/DCL.pdf)

### Online Article

1. Mitra, Debraj. "Researchers, students explore port areas of Kidderpore and Metiabruz." *The Telegraph*, November 20, 2022. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/kolkata-researchers-students-explore-port-areas-of-kidderpore-and-metiabruz/cid/1899114>





Workshop and Conference Posters



Flyers of CRG Documentary Films & Photo Exhibition, 2022



Group Photo with Workshop and Conference Participants, November 2022

