

Ninth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop

Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants

Kolkata, 8-14 November, 2024

A Report

Calcutta Research Group

in collaboration with

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS), South Asia,

Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna

&

several other universities and institutes in India and abroad



Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen
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The Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) is a German-based foundation working in South Asia and other parts of the world on the subjects of critical social analysis and civic education. It promotes a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic social order, and aims at present members of society and decision-makers with alternative approaches to such an order. Research organisations, groups working for self-emancipation, and social activists are supported in their initiatives to develop models that have the potential to deliver social and economic justice.

The work of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, South Asia can be accessed at www.rosalux.in.

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**Ninth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop
on
Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants**

A Report

Calcutta Research Group

**In collaboration with
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS)-South Asia
&
Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna
2024**

Acknowledgements

The Calcutta Research Group (CRG) is thankful to the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS)-South Asia, Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), The European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR), University of Oldenburg, Rabindra Bharati University, and several other universities and institutes in India and abroad, for the support and collaboration in organising the Eighth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop on “Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants,” from 8 to 12 November 2024, at *The Sonnet* in Kolkata. This programme is part of several ongoing research projects of CRG on migration and forced migration studies in collaboration with the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS)-South Asia, and several other universities and institutes in India and abroad.

The activities and programmes spanning across multiple disciplines with participation of scholars, activists, academicians, journalists, media representatives, from diverse backgrounds and work experiences and excellence, 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 the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS)-South Asia, for their long association, support and collaboration with CRG over the years in a multitude of research and educational initiatives as well as in media renditions, popular discourses and dialogues with minds working in grassroot foundations. 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. CRG is also grateful to scholars from the partner institutes for enriching the programmes with their ideas and contributions and for enabling CRG to take the work further ahead. CRG expresses gratitude and is indebted to all valued resource persons and guests for their significant contributions in the offline and online seminars, panel discussions, webinars, lectures and workshops and in making the programmes distinct and engrossing. CRG thanks the rapporteurs of all the programmes for their assistance.

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Overview of Research Activities

Overview of Research Activities

The Calcutta Research Group (CRG) over the past twenty-five years has tried to open a discourse on redefining migration and migrants from a Global South perspective, critically analysing the global turn in migration studies that failed to comprehend the regional nuances of particularity and complex social outcomes. In the last few years, with readjustments in the post pandemic world that has opened a new face of capital restructuring where migrants and refugees as marginal humanity suffered at the bottom line of the society be it in terms of solidarity, charity or effects of wars, violence or climate change. CRG has been exploring the emerging complex of institutions, procedures, policies, practices, and laws that outline the multifaceted forms of care and protection linked with the well-being of the society, realignment of borders and disaster mitigation in the backdrop of climate calamities. Creative programmes such as travelling photo exhibition and film screening, work of translation, workshops, primary investigative studies at grassroot level for incorporating research findings into ground practices and network building have been some of the approaches culminating into the research activities this year. In understanding the significance of justice for vulnerable population groups, including the displaced, those disaster-driven, preparing cities to battle climate hazards and conflicts and the responsibilities to protect people through community building, the methods of studying governmental practices, labour protection, the societies in democratic set-ups, reeling under the burdens of pandemic as well as a post-COVID world, the intricacies of journeys and mobility within a country and beyond its territorial limits, different dimensions of security and have been re-examined through the studies that the staff researchers and contracted researchers have engaged in through course of this academic year.

Migrants are the most vulnerable communities all over the world. There are multiple reasons behind the vulnerabilities. War, natural disasters, economic bankruptcy, state policies and the recent Covid 19 pandemic are a few of them. Several policies have been drafted to improve the living conditions of the people since the end of World War II, but any concrete solution to the problem is yet to be found. New challenges have emerged with time and technological progress complicate the whole process. Keeping these challenges in mind, Calcutta Research Group has organised research programmes, media fellowship, workshops and conferences throughout the year. In 2024, apart from its research agenda on the migrant and refugees CRG focused on the dynamics of the cities in the global south. Based on the theoretical perception of Antonio Gramsci's "City as the Southern Question", CRG aimed to begin research on the different problems in the cities of the Global South. CRG organises public lectures,

workshops and conferences on migration, displacement, urbanization, climate change, disaster and displacement due to development throughout the year.

The Calcutta Research Group (CRG) has been engaged in the study of migration, especially forced migration and the dignity of migrants in particular for more than 25 years. The two declarations on the protection of refugees and migrants ([Kolkata Declaration](#) & [Afghanistan Declaration](#)) adopted during the Research and Orientation Workshops in 2018 and 2021 are evidences of the possibilities for the intervention of the Research and Orientation Workshops and Conferences of CRG. The Declarations addressed the different dynamics of the contemporary global refugee crisis which is valuable for its understanding of the gravity and nuances of migration in the present period, its articulation in the South Asian milieu, its expression of solidarity with the victims of forced displacement, and its assessment of international efforts to improve the distress of such uprootedness. The declarations portrayed the lens through which CRG views migration and reinforced its identity and position as an informed interlocutor on the subject. Prepared in the wake of the Global Compacts, the matters to which the Declaration turned attention are fundamental to CRG's research agenda and its valued association with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung's project 'Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants' and the Institute for Human Sciences's (IWM), Vienna, project 'Refugees, Migrants and Urban Justice'. CRG's attempt to deal with the issues through conducting media programmes, drafting policy briefs and prepared a *Compendium on Mapping the Vulnerabilities of Refugees and Migrants* and the Annual Workshop on the newly imposed challenges to deal with the idea of the global protection has been aimed to engage researchers, teachers, journalists and activists.

In 2024, The Annual Research and Orientation Workshop sustained the study. Apart from the workshop CRG has organized research, special lectures and different workshops throughout the year. The Distance Segment of the workshop was conducted from June to October 2024 with several online classes held by workshop module tutors with respective module participants and finally the Annual Workshop was held in Kolkata from 8-12 November 2024.

The detailed programmes are available at
http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2024/RLS_Migration_2024_Home.asp
and http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2024/IWM_Migration_Home_2024.asp

Annual Planning Meeting

ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING 2024

The Annual Planning Meeting of 2024 was held on 13 March 2024 in the CRG Office premises. The five staff researchers Rituparna Datta, Rajat Kanti Sur, Debashree Chakraborty, Shatabdi Das and Sucharita Sengupta, presented their respective research proposals followed by suggestions and remarks by the discussants.

Session 1

Rituparna Datta's presentation on **"Calcutta 1947-51"** was a biographical narrative, a telltale story of the labouring lives in the city of Calcutta in its transition to postcoloniality and decolonised futures taking the notion of labour beyond its hegemonic Marxist framework of labour at the extractive frontier. The city here, thus, becomes more than just narration of the urban geography and leans on deciphering the feelings of living in the city taking recourse through the trajectory of lived experiences of those who built the cities.

Discussant **Arup K. Sen** suggested that the research looks into the new notions of the making of the working class in Calcutta in post-Partition years developing on E.P. Thomson's model of the making of the English working class. The massive flux of the refugee population in the post-Partition years, especially in the urban spaces, the distinction between the migrants, refugees, citizens and others were blurred as they survived as labouring souls. Samata Biswas added the anthropological view in this biographical narrative to take into account the making of Calcutta, its growth and making and unmaking as a premature metropolis. Shyamalendu Majumdar suggested that while reading the cosmopolitanism of the cities, it is important to take into account the nestling of population in segregated spaces in the cities that are talks of the existential hues of living in the city. The labouring spaces, according to Arup K. Sen, hint at the pattern of control over the industrial neighbourhoods apart from the factory space that one can locate following the Gramscian structure of hegemony and interactions of everyday lives of the labouring classes. Housing, for example, in the locational clusters, not only describes both the sympathy and apathy of the employers towards the wellbeing of their employees, but also shows the constant adjustability of these classes, what might be termed using Paul Willis' expression "learning to labour". Following the arguments of the subalternists, it is necessary to see labour beyond its traditional folds, of looking at the interaction with cities as just a resource front, as the process of metamorphosis of the cities is far entrenched than visible.

Session 2

The title of **Rajat Kanti Sur's** proposed paper was **“Health, Work and Security: Migrant Women Workers in Colonial Calcutta (1881-1951).”** Sur argued that the migrant women, especially those who were working in different fields in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Calcutta, were not in focused discussion in the public documents, like census reports, municipal surveys and other public resources. Apart from the women labour in the jute mills, the overall situation of the migrant women workers did not come out prominently in previous research arguments of eminent historians and anthropologists. Based on archival documents and literary records, the project, as Rajat Sur discussed, would focus on the health and security of the migrant women workers in colonial Calcutta. Taking the first officially declared complete census as the reference point to begin his argument, he tried to analyse the changing socio-historical scenario of the colonial policymaking for the city's working-class population, especially the migrant women workers.

Discussant **Paula Banerjee** appreciated the hypothesis; however, she mentioned that the plan of working on both health and security of migrant women workers within a limited period of time, may be difficult. She suggested that the research focus on the larger frame of security that incorporates health and social safety, and stated that the shifts in the attitude of colonial administration towards migrant women workers may be thought of as an important aspect of the research. She added that the idea of “security” and how it made the migrant women a vulnerable category could be looked into, along with police records, memoirs and journal articles (particularly, the article by Tanika Sarkar on manual scavengers' strike). Arup K. Sen commented that the idea of security may be problematised and referred to reports on migrant labour (published in 1906 and 1923) and Anna Seiler's work on Titagarh Jute Mill as well as Manikuntala Sen's autobiography.

Session 3

Debashree Chakraborty's research proposal tentatively titled **“All that Climate Change does: Maheshaabeel and the 2022 Silchar Flood”** described how the untimely pre-monsoon showers in 2022, in Assam, led to massive flooding in the state and in the Barak Valley. In the presentation Debashree talked about how the pre-monsoon showers ultimately led to flooding of a backwater reservoir near Silchar in June, creating massive floods in the city of Silchar. The research proposal also focused on the human intervention that led to the flooding and how this intervention was perceived through the polarised lens of religion and politics by the national media, thus, sensationalising the

narrative of climate change.

Samata Biswas, the discussant in the session, commented on the lack of overall congruity in the framing of the argument in the proposal. She noted that the research proposal manoeuvred across three coordinates, while it could focus on any one. She also advised that the climate change part be re-thought, because the framing of the argument hinted at the possibility of other perspectives to come up more succinctly in the final paper. The analysis of the multiple narratives associated with the Maheshabeel disaster could perhaps provide more context and theoretical foregrounding to the paper rather than vying around the narrative of climate change alone. Samata Biswas noted that Ranabir Samaddar's concept of "bio-politics from below" could be a theoretical entry point to understand the resistance and solidarity that the Maheshabeel case brought forth. Paula Banerjee's comments too were on similar lines. She suggested that analysing the multiple narratives involved in the case could be a way of looking into the situation. She also noted that it would be important to zero-in one vantage or entry point to initiate the theoretical argument rather than going into multiple aspects.

Session 4

Shatabdi Das began her research proposal presentation on "**Ghost Towns of Bengal**" with the analysis of the decline in industrial production, abandonment of a number of coal mines, and the switch of coal mining method from underground mining to the open cast mining method towards the end of 1990s and the beginning of twenty-first century, when the railway operations, the allied industries of mines and ancillaries of iron and steel units, began playing important economic role in the region with a shift in the economic dependence on service sector. She emphasised the various factors that have contributed to the growth of urban settlements in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal, and went on to detail out the instances of gradual transformations into ghost towns in the study area. Shatabdi elaborated on the processes that culminated into the fall of industrial performance and re-alignment of the sectors of economy in the region, while also enlisting the causes of urban growth and decline of towns in the study area. The presentation detailed out the accounts of current demographic and social scenarios in some of the industrial townships with case studies.

Discussant **Ranabir Samaddar** specified the possibilities of exploration of the theme that may draw parallels with the cities of the US, namely Detroit, Pittsburgh, and others. He suggested readings on ruins, gold rush and the ghost towns of the US, and the role of migrants in theories of urbanisation and scales of city-making. Literature on dystopia, the rust belt of US, bridges between cities and countryside and the status of railway cantonments in the context of neoliberal economy were also indicated. Arup K.

Sen pointed out that the restructuring of urban scape related to the neoliberal journey of India and the plight of informal migrants in deserted towns could be looked into, especially at a time when the country aims at the development of smart cities. It was suggested that the study may connect with cycles of migration, livelihood options, class power and processes operational in making of ghost towns and its dynamics. Paula Banerjee emphasised on the understanding of the working conditions in the gold mining towns of Africa and the struggles of mine workers. Rajat Roy threw light on the urban renewal fund introduced in 1991 in India and its consequences on workers (especially in the industrial units under the public sector undertakings), who had been worst hit and rendered jobless; this reflected on the way in which policies for implementation of funds for urban renewal in some ways lead the path to ghost towns.

Session 5

Sucharita Sengupta while presenting her research proposal titled **“Assessing promises and paradox of the ‘Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Secure Migration’”** underscored that the research ruminates on what the notion of security as assured by the likes of the ‘Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’ (GCM) implies for vulnerable groups of population like migrants. ‘Security’ is a term that is often used, and abused, in delineating the relationship between the state and its subjects. Indexing the notion of security on the conceptual dyad of ‘justice’ and ‘protection’, thus, the research intends to investigate international conventions like the one mentioned above, that vow to “securitise” lives of migrants, either corroborating or in discordance of ground realities in the context of South Asia. Sucharita discussed that during the decade of the ’90s the concept of security concretely emerged in academia. Traditional security studies did not consider the notion of security as all pervasive- that anything and everything can be a security issue, rather, the concept was largely used to denote military threats and antagonistic states, unlike contemporary notions of security. Against this backdrop, she explained, that the research paper would attempt to examine what the Global Compact entails to ensure “safe, orderly, and secure migration”, evincing instances from countries like India, Bangladesh, and evoked ‘what happens to questions of justice and humanitarianism in this reference?’

Discussant **Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury** suggested that the research could examine one or two issues, and pointed out that it would be important to refer to the recent publications by critical security study scholars. He added that the research may also attempt to look into the role of regional organisations like SAARC and BIMSTEC, to address the issue in question. Ranabir Samaddar emphasised that the research would be enriched by the aspect of ‘safe, orderly and regular migration’ in

the context of the Global Compact, keeping in mind the larger question of social security, in addition to the citation of Michel Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), wherein the institutional gaze itself became the new mode of punishment. Samata Biswas highlighted the criticisms levelled against the western universalism of the Universal Human Rights Declaration (UDHR) and stated that it would be both an interesting and challenging work to contrast this with the universality proposed by the Global Compact. Arup K. Sen mentioned the discourse of rights that gets defeated in the context of refugees like the Rohingyas; and the framework of 'ethics and care' becomes important to bring up the question 'whether existing rights are enough in addressing precarity?'

Research Briefs

RESEARCH BRIEFS

The CRG staff and honorary researchers in 2024 worked on the themes of climate change, ideas of security among the working women, mapping of vulnerabilities due to environmental hazards, migrant labours in the unorganised sector, migrant labours in the hazardous industry, analytical history of the subaltern life of Calcutta, mining and the ghost towns in Bengal and the public theatre. CRG has aimed to publish two policy briefs related to climate change and migrant labour as well as a research report on the environmental hazards and vulnerability.

All that Climate Change Does: Maheshabeel and the 2022 Silchar Flood

Debashree Chakraborty

The paper located the micro-effects of climate change by taking into account a study of the 2022 flood in Silchar, Assam. The paper described how the untimely pre-monsoon showers in 2022, in Assam, led to massive flooding in the state and in the Barak Valley. In the presentation Debashree talked about how the pre-monsoon showers ultimately led to flooding of a backwater reservoir near Silchar in June, creating massive floods in the city of Silchar. The research proposal also focused on the human intervention that led to the flooding and how this intervention was perceived through the polarised lens of religion and politics by the national media, thus, sensationalising the narrative of climate change. Read the full abstract at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2024/Abstract/Debashree_Proposal.pdf

Negotiating the idea of Security: Migrant Women Workers in Colonial Calcutta (1881-1951)

Rajat Kanti Sur

The paper dealt with the role of migrant women in the workforce in colonial Calcutta. The researcher argued that the migrant women, especially those who were working in different fields in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Calcutta, were not in focused discussion in the public documents, like census reports, municipal surveys and other public resources. Apart from the women labour in the jute mills, the overall situation of the migrant women workers did not come out prominently in previous research arguments of eminent historians and anthropologists. Based on archival documents and literary records, the project, as planned in the research proposal, would focus on the health and security of the migrant women workers in colonial Calcutta. Taking the first officially declared complete census as the reference point to begin his argument, he tried to analyse the changing socio-historical scenario of the colonial policymaking for the city's working-class population, especially the migrant women workers.

Read the full abstract at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2024/Abstract/Rajat_Proposal.pdf

Ghost Towns of Bengal

Shatabdi Das

The research analyses the decline in industrial production, abandonment of a number of coal mines, and the switch of coal mining method from underground mining to the open cast mining method towards the end of 1990s and the beginning of twenty-first century, when the railway operations, the allied industries of mines and ancillaries of iron and steel units, began playing important economic role in the region with a shift in the economic dependence on service sector. She emphasised the various factors that have contributed to the growth of urban settlements in the Paschim Barddhaman district of West Bengal, and went on to detail out the instances of gradual transformations into ghost towns in the study area. Shatabdi elaborated on the processes that culminated into the fall of industrial performance and re-alignment of the sectors of economy in the region, while also enlisting the causes of urban growth and decline of towns in the study area. The presentation detailed out the accounts of current demographic and social scenarios in some of the industrial townships with case studies. Read the full abstract at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2024/Abstract_Shatabdi%20Das.pdf

Calcutta: A (Sub) Alter (n) Biography of a City 1947-51

Rituparna Datta

The research involved the labouring experiences and labouring lives of the city through biographical narrative. A telltale story of the labouring lives in the city of Calcutta in its transition to postcoloniality and decolonised futures taking the notion of labour beyond its hegemonic Marxist framework of labour at the extractive frontier. The city here, thus, becomes more than just narration of the urban geography and leans on deciphering the feelings of living in the city taking recourse through the trajectory of lived experiences of those who built the cities. The research studies the process of city making and servicing the cities, protest and urban popular movements. Read the full abstract at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2024/Abstract_Rituparna%20Datta.pdf

Calcutta and the Birth of Theatre

Shyamalendu Majumdar

The research located the development and growth of Bengali theatre with the urban developments in the city. The research located the emergence of theatres halls in the city in the middle of the eighteenth century and later evolved as one of the popular entertainments in the from the beginning of the

nineteenth century. The politicization of theatre made the idea of the city more interesting and needed the place to use it. The research also covered the idea of emergence of theatre with the development of the city and its transformation from nineteenth century to twentieth century. The new wave of theatre movements in the 1930s and 40s has also been discussed in the research. Read the full abstract at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2024/Abstract_Shyamalendu%20Majumdar.pdf

Assessing promises and paradox of the ‘Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Secure Migration Sucharita Sengupta

The research studied the different notions of security as assured by the likes of the ‘Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’ (GCM) implies for vulnerable groups of population like migrants. ‘Security’ is a term that is often used, and abused, in delineating the relationship between the state and its subjects. Indexing the notion of security on the conceptual dyad of ‘justice’ and ‘protection’, thus, the research intends to investigate international conventions like the one mentioned above, that vow to “securitise” lives of migrants, either corroborating or in discordance of ground realities in the context of South Asia. Sucharita discussed that during the decade of the ’90s the concept of security concretely emerged in academia. Traditional security studies did not consider the notion of security as all pervasive- that anything and everything can be a security issue, rather, the concept was largely used to denote military threats and antagonistic states, unlike contemporary notions of security. Against this backdrop, she explained, that the research paper would attempt to examine what the Global Compact entails to ensure “safe, orderly, and secure migration”, evincing instances from countries like India, Bangladesh, and evoked ‘what happens to questions of justice and humanitarianism in this reference?’ Read the full abstract at:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Security_Studies/Abstracts_FullPapers/Sucharita_Sengupta_Abstracts.pdf

Contracted Researchers

Working and Living Environment of the Labour in the Hazardous Industry: Legal Remedy for Migrant Workers and their Families in the Asbestos Industry

Gopal Krishna

This policy brief explains the condition of the migrant workers in the asbestos industry and their nature of employment. They have been considered as casual workers in most of the cases and therefore vulnerable to the field of labour security. These workers suffered from the different types of occupational diseases including asbestosis, pulmonary diseases and cancer but ignored in the labour laws because these labours have been appointed in contractual basis. The policy brief criticises the use of

asbestos in India despite the regulations from WHO and ILO and its hazardous impact on labours. The policy brief shows the negative impact of the labour policies in the different regions as one of the major causes behind the increase in the number of cases of occupational hazards. The policy brief also gives some recommendations at the end. Read the full abstract at:

http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2024/Abstract/Gopal_Proposal.pdf.

Inter-state Protection of Migrant Workers in India: Harmonisation of National Standards for Sustainable Social Justice

Paula Banerjee

This policy brief explains the structural vulnerabilities of the inter-state migrant workers in India. This policy brief focuses on the crisis and tried to present an interdisciplinary mechanism of human rights and legal framework which has been ratified by different verdicts in India. The brief mentioned different protection mechanisms followed in India and analysed the constitutional provisions. The policy brief mentioned about some recommendations for the new and promising labour laws.

Read the full abstract at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2024/Abstract/PB_Proposal.pdf.

Environmental Hazards and Vulnerability: The Case of Bengal

Shatabdi Das

This research explains the vulnerability due to environmental hazards in the Bengal delta as well as the nature of environmental hazards due to the fragile ecology and topography, namely river front, extractive economy in the life of mines, the systems and sequences of development cities, and the instances of hazards such as floods. The research explained the

Read the full abstract at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration_2024/Abstract/Shatabdi_Abstract.pdf

**Ninth Annual Workshop
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NINTH ANNUAL RESEARCH AND ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

‘Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants’

8-14 November 2024

Introduction

Calcutta Research Group (CRG) has been engaged in the study of migration, especially forced migration and the dignity of migrants in particular for more than 25 years. The Research and Orientation Workshop is one of the flagship programmes, pivotal to CRG’s aspiration to voice the experiences, opinions and discontents of the South in global discussions on the subject. 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 addressed the different dynamics of the contemporary global refugee crisis which is valuable for its understanding of the gravity and nuances of migration in the present period, its articulation in the South Asian milieu, its expression of solidarity with the victims of forced displacement and its assessment of international efforts to improve the distress of such uprootedness. Prepared in the wake of the Global Compacts and the matters to which the Declaration turned attention are fundamental to CRG’s research agenda and its valued association with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung’s project ‘Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants’ and the Institute for Human Science’s (IWM), Vienna, project ‘Refugees, Migrants and Urban Justice.’ The Workshop of this year was divided into six core and two elective modules. These were:

Core Modules:

Module A: Issues of Protection, Punishment and Technology in Securitized State

Coordinator: Nasreen Chowdhury, University of Delhi & CRG, India

Module B: Law and Jurisprudence on Protection of Refugees and Migrants

Coordinator: Sahana Basavapatna, Lawyer Bangaluru & CRG, India

Module C: Statelessness: Contemporary Challenges and Strategies

Coordinator: K.M. Parivelan, Woxsen University & CRG, India

Sucharita Sengupta, CRG, India

Module D: Gender, Race, Religion, and Other Fault Lines in Protection Architecture

Coordinators: Paula Banerjee, AIT Bangkok & CRG, India

Madhurilata Basu, Sarojini Naidu College for Women & CRG, India

Module E: Refugee and Migrant Labour: Precarious Forms and Globalisation

Coordinators: Manish K. Jha, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai) & CRG, India

Mouleshri Vyas, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai) & CRG, India

Module F: Ethics of Care and Protection

Coordinator: Samir Kumar Das, CRG, India

Secondary Module with Options (Participants have to choose any one from the options)

Module G1: Climate, Ecology, and Displacement

Coordinator: Shatabdi Das, CRG, India

Module G2: Media and Migration

Coordinator: Samata Biswas, The Sanskrit College and University & CRG, India

Distance Segment (July-November 2024)

The first online orientation meeting for the workshop was held on 20 July 2024. Participants of all modules attended the meeting. The Module Coordinators of all Core and Secondary Modules introduced respective themes to the participants. The first online module meeting began from 1 August 2024. Each Module tutor took three sessions with each group of participants. The initial classes and accepted revised abstracts from participants based on their introductory comments and rework of some of the research titles and sub-themes that the participants worked on. The second phase of the online classes and module meetings were held in end-August and early-September of 2024, where the Module Coordinators discussed in detail the abstracts that they had received along with the outlines of draft research papers sent by the participants. Participants were guided and given detailed feedback/notes for their assignments and scope of improvement and revisions for the core and secondary modules. The third-round of meetings were held in late October and the first week of November 2024, and the Ninth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop was held from 8-12 November 2024 in Kolkata.

Workshop Sessions

Inaugural Session

With a warm welcome, Director **Shyamalendu Mukherjee** opened the inaugural panel introducing the workshop and conference as a flagship program of Calcutta Research Group (CRG). He introduced how over the years, the workshop and conference opened up food for thought, a lot of scope of interaction with people from around the world, building knowledge, friendship and above all a bag full of good memories each time. It is not only about pedagogic experience, but also about exchange of ideas between academics and scholars from different Universities and organisations.

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, the President of CRG introduced how the research organisation was set up in the mid-1990s by a group of academics, journalists, lawyers, activists. They felt in their own academic milieu they were not able to deliver what they wanted, that is where CRG was formed. CRG has been working on refugees, migration, statelessness, women's rights, human rights. The workshop started as a two-week long program first in 2003. Now in the last 3 years, it is in a new format. The Workshop and the Conference have been merged. He introduced another group of participants, the EMMIR students in the workshop, who are part of a Master's Course organised by CRG. Since last year CRG has been organising a Masters Course for European students. The rapporteuring work responsibility was announced and a brief introduction of each participant in the workshop was held.

Britta Peterson, Resident Representative of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) remarked how unique and helpful the collaboration with the CRG is in German diplomacy. She narrated the brief history of RLS. Named after the famous revolutionary, it is affiliated with the Left party in Germany. RLS mainly work on topics of labour relations and labour rights. In this context, the topic of migration is of utmost importance. Other areas of work are climate change. RLS works with Dalits and Adivasis, who are struggling to access education. Another topic is peace and security. The re-election of Donald Trump is a result of the problems that have not been resolved. The ascent of right-wing populism in Europe is a result of unresolved issues related to migration. It only escalates the challenge of integrating migrants in the society. Democracy and civil rights have only been based on the concept of the nation-state. Nation state is a concept that excludes refugees and migrants. It has specific situations in Europe and South Asia.

Inaugural Panel: Migrant Labour in the Unorganised Sector

Discussion on RLS Policy Briefs

Chair **Arup Kumar Sen** - CRG member and treasurer opened the session. He highlighted that while migration has a long global history, recent years in the era of liberal capitalism have introduced a new, precarious dimension

to it. Migrant labour, he noted, has become a key driver in the global economy. He emphasised that the panel would explore various aspects of this phenomenon, from precarious working conditions to the political dimensions of migrant labour.

Britta Petersen, a representative of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, discussed Germany's recently introduced **Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations in Supply Chains**, which came into force in 2023. This legislation introduces an individual complaint mechanism intended to empower workers—not only in South Asia but worldwide—to report abuses by employers, such as non-compliance with human rights, labour standards, and environmental regulations. The law also strengthens the role of trade unions. However, Petersen outlined several



Inaugural Panel Discussion: Arup Sen, Gopal Krishna, Britta Petersen and Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay

challenges and loopholes in the law's implementation, such as changes in government, limited workers being aware about their rights, the difficulty of overseeing entire supply chains, lack of cooperation from some companies, and corporate lobbying against the legislation. She emphasised that these challenges are the reasons why the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung is working to support authorities involved in enforcing this legislation.

Gopal Krishna, Patna High Court & Member of CRG, India picked up on Peterson's presentation, how local is global through the specific case of Asbestos industry in India. The delegate emphasized that no single building or pipeline in India is free of asbestos, which is carcinogenic and hazardous. Despite banning asbestos mining, India imports asbestos, primarily from Russia, Brazil and Kazakhstan, while global bans exist due to its carcinogenic

nature. Asbestos exposure, especially in the construction industry, endangers migrant workers, who unknowingly carry asbestos fibers to their homes and communities. Although India's government has made some progress, such as removing asbestos from railway platforms, enforcement and acknowledgment of asbestos-related health risks remain inadequate. Scientific committees worldwide, including the WHO, have confirmed asbestos's dangers, yet India continues to resist classifying it as hazardous. Diagnosis of asbestos-related diseases is difficult in India, often mistaken for tuberculosis. This issue underscores the Supreme Court's stance that the right to health is fundamental to human dignity and beyond mere survival. The unresolved question remains: how many studies are needed to act decisively against asbestos?

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, IISER-Mohali, India in his talk focused on migrant workers and their access to voting. Bandyopadhyay emphasised how the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the vulnerabilities of migrant workers,

emphasising the need for a response that strengthens their rights beyond livelihood, including their ability to vote and participate in democratic processes. While the Election Commission of India has extended voting rights to non-residents, many internal migrants still face disenfranchisement due to their inability to travel home to vote. Adjustments have been made for specific groups, such as Kashmiri migrants, but broader reforms are needed to enable migrants to vote in their host constituencies. Migrants, who play a vital role in the economy through their labor and remittances, lack representation in both elections and trade unions, often working in sectors where unions are less active. Scholars argue that internal migration, which has increased by 45%, requires a social security framework and legal reforms that recognize migrant workers as full citizens, not just recipients of charity. This issue is not just about migrant welfare, but about the health of democracy in India itself amidst rising internal migration.

The session was closed by Arup Kumar Sen, who expressed gratitude for the inaugural ideas shared. He emphasised that the political subjectivity of migrant workers must be understood in relation to their specific concerns. Reflecting on conversations with migrants, he highlighted the often-overlooked perspective—the logic of capital. To conclude, he quoted Rosa Luxemburg, stressing how capital extends its influence into non-capitalist territories, underscoring the broader economic forces affecting migrant workers.

9 November 2024

Module A: Issues of Protection, Punishment and Technology in Securitised State

Module Lecture



Module A Lecture: Nasreen Chowdhury

Module Tutor **Nasreen Chowdhury** from **Delhi University** presented her paper on the role of AI and technology in securitisation policies and debates of refugees and migrants. She started her talk by outlining how the idea of protection has been envisioned because in some sense, we are trying to understand whether refugee communities have protection, and whether protection then transmutes into something called punishment. So somewhere, protection and punishment become “two sides of the same coin”. Secondly, she highlighted how technology is affecting protection in the context of Refugees and Migration management. Migration management is inherently a political exercise as a refugee figure represents the dispossessed body, devoid of rights, mobility, and resources. A refugee is therefore dependent on the state for accessing resources and rights to what we call human dignity. Further Prof. Nasreen added that migration data has long been viewed also as a political exercise to justify greater intervention to

support, especially when threatened by national sovereignty and xenophobic narratives. In this context, data plays a very crucial role in figuring out whether who is going to be allowed to stay and who will be excluded. It is therefore not surprising that the regulatory and the legal space around the use of these technologies remain very murky, underdeveloped, and uncertain with very much legal ramifications to begin with.

The primary purpose of technologies used in migration management is to track, identify, and control border crossing. The issues around emerging technologies in the management of migration are not just about inherent use of technology, but rather how it is used and by whom and which state and private actors are setting the stage for what is possible and what is possibly prioritizing the matter of who to protect, when to protect, and who not to protect. Thus, the state appears to have the final authority to decide who is to be allowed and under what conditions?

In the second section of her presentation, she reflects on the intersection of borders and digitization. She notes that the emergence of migration technology in the past decade has led to the development of a subfield known as digital migration studies. This area focuses on understanding the relationship between digital media technologies and migration. Technology contributes to the establishment of a new dimension of identity referred to as the 'digital alter ego'. The concept of a digital alter ego, or digital migrant, arises from the digital traces collected through artificial intelligence and automated systems. These traces take the form of fingerprints, interviews, travel records, and other data. This information is then compiled to create a set of details necessary for establishing an individual's identity for official purposes. Digital identity has become an integral part of one's legal identity, serving as a primary means by which an individual is recognized and is able to access and interact with public sector services. The digitization of identity management signifies the emergence of a new area of control for nation-states and reflects a shift in digital power. This power allows governments to know individuals with unprecedented detail and confidence, effectively attaching a permanent identity to each person. In this sense, she argued that the human body is an anchor to which certain kinds of data are attached. This data then gets fed into a biometric database and could subsequently be accessed by state authorities to make administrative decisions on behalf of individuals. The resulting migrant often is traced to this mechanism which empowers the security authorities to direct, restrict and reconstruct the geographical, social and digital trajectories.

Participants' Presentation

Julija Kekstaite from **Ghent University, Belgium**, in her presentation '*Departheid in Post-Soviet Space? The Shifting Geopolitics and Racialisation of Migration Governance in Lithuania*', analysed the intersection of geopolitics and racialisation in Europe's migration governance by zooming in on the specific case of Lithuania. Since 2021, Lithuania has seen the arrival of illegalised migrants from Africa and Middle East and Ukrainian citizens escaping Russia's war in Ukraine. While these mobilities have occurred in parallel, they have evoked a strict categorical hierarchy in the Lithuanian government's discourse and policy response. The paper

seeks to understand why one group of migrants was treated as deserving refugees while violence towards the group whereas oppression and violence toward others barely receives any political and societal opposition. Julija explained this by introducing a term 'Departheid' coined by Dutch anthropologist Barak Kalir (2019, p. 20) that foregrounds the 'systemic production and structural (mis)treatment of illegalised migrants on a massive societal scale with little palpable opposition' in conversation with a growing body of work of literature on race, coloniality and double hegemony in Europe's Eastern periphery. She discussed how Departheid in Eastern Europe takes up specific forms and should be studied both relationally and historically.



Module A Presentation Julija Kekstaite, Poushali Basak, Pulkit Buttan, Muhammad Imtiyaz

Poushali Basak, Researcher at CRG, in her presentation, '*Gender Justice and Security in an Era of Violent Masculinist Populist Politics*', reflected on the contemporary protests in West Bengal against the rape and murder of the trainee doctor in R.G. Kar hospital, where the question of security in the health sector has been one major emerging question. By exploring the contestations around security, Poushali's presentation interrogated what are the meanings of security in the context of sexual violence and human rights violations. By delving into the factual history of gender justice in different cases of sexual violence in India, her

presentation unfolded how the Indian political fabric and governance system has always nurtured a misogynist, patriarchal, casteist law enforcement system and judiciary that have serially granted impunity to perpetrators and institutions. In context of these arguments she raises questions such as, whether security, freedom, rights ever been a concern of masculinist, authoritarian and, populist regimes? Or has it been only related to border and international politics, in building a 'securitised state'? She argued that the hasty passage of the *Aparajita Bill* in West Bengal and police encounter in Badlapur sexual assault in Maharashtra further unveil the dictatorial and aggressive character of present Governments which is inclined to retributive than reparative justice. Furthermore, she interrogated how to bargain for security in a political atmosphere where inciting hate and violence has become the political normal. She also critically looked into the linkages between lack of security with factors such as lack of infrastructural provisions (inadequate toilets, restrooms, transport, ICCs and LCCs). By drawing from examples of Mathura, Bhanwari Devi, Khairlanji, women wrestlers in India, she looked into the questions of how gender justice and security have been limited to feminist movements leading to procedural changes but no changes in governance structures.

Pulkit Buttan from **Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai**, presented on *'Crossing Borders, Seeking Hope: A Study on Pakistani Migrants' Experiences in India'*, delved into the challenges faced by Pakistani Hindu migrants in India, with a focus on how documentation mediates their lives and interactions with the state. It was derived from his field experiences in Majnu Ka Tila Camp and Signature Bridge, Delhi. His paper examined the role of documentation in shaping the migrants' legal and social identities, power dynamics, and access to rights. Drawing on thinkers like Michel Foucault, the study viewed documentation like visa, passports and other identification documents as a site of state control, revealing how migrants' identities and rights are both restricted and negotiated through their official documentation. He argued that the Citizenship Amendment Act represents a significant policy shift, providing a pathway to citizenship for religious minorities from neighboring countries who entered before 2014. The Act is a response to the perceived persecution of these minorities but also excludes recent migrants. For eligible migrants, it offers a path from "rightlessness" to legal recognition, giving hope for a more secure life. Drawing on the interviews with the Pakistani Hindu migrants, his work identifies three critical phases in the migrants' journeys: pre-migration, migration, and post-arrival. Before leaving Pakistan, migrants face bureaucratic and social challenges, often needing to use pilgrimage visas as a workaround to migrate. Upon arrival, they encounter complex bureaucratic processes for extending visas or applying for citizenship. These documents determine their access to work, movement, and residence, effectively governing their social and economic lives and their identities. In conclusion, the paper asserts that for Pakistani Hindu migrants, documentation serves a dual function, functioning as a tool of negotiation in their quest for stability and identity. The CAA, while beneficial for some, illustrates a larger struggle between inclusion and exclusion, highlighting the layered complexities of refugee policies in post-colonial societies. Their pursuit of citizenship symbolises a desire for recognition and freedom, making the act of documentation a powerful yet ambivalent component in their journeys.

Mohammad Imtiyaz from **Jamia Milia Islamia** presented on *'Documentation, Identity and the State: Governing Citizenship Amid Climate Precarity in Barpeta'*, drew from ethnography of Miya community in Barpeta, Assam to empirically explore the menacing impact of climate change on at-risk geographies, compelling residents to abandon their homes and how these migrants are dealt with by their states in a rapidly warming world. In this context he argues that it becomes crucial to navigate the state's role in dealing with communities impacted by climate change and who already have specific subjectivities attached to their identity, such as being seen as 'outsiders' in the case of Bengali identity in Assam. This reveals the state's duality in dealing with the citizens/subjects, as described by Mamdani, which can be either that of a protector or a punisher. Furthermore, he argues that the use of documentation is a crucial element in the governance of both 'citizens' and 'refugees.' As the documentation provides legibility to both citizens and refugees to avail certain welfare services recognised by the state and portrays whether the state is working as a 'protector' or a 'punisher'. However, the effects of climate change, along with past social hostilities and political discourses based on identity politics in Assam, compel these

forcefully displaced people into a liminal classification, as articulated by Dasgupta, who asserts that refugees represent a liminal category, being ‘neither citizens nor foreigners.’ Being internally displaced with a securitised identity and contested citizenship status, the people of Bengali identity, especially those who are residing in the ‘char’ areas of Assam, are at the forefront of receiving the brunt of climate change and forced to leave their lands due to its submergence in rivers like Brahmaputra. As these people move towards urban spaces other than their own segregated spaces, their already securitised identity makes them more vulnerable to assimilating with the society/local people or directly demanding welfare services from the state. To corroborate this, the paper draws upon interviews conducted in the ethnographic study of Barpeta. Identity and documentation in the case of ‘climate migrants’ in Barpeta becomes a contention for their citizenship and leaves them in a liminal condition of ‘neither a citizen nor a refugee.’

Module B: Law and Jurisprudence on Protection of Refugees and Migrants

Module Lecture

Module Tutor, **Sahana Basavapatna, lawyer from Bengaluru**, started her presentation on the principle of ‘non-refoulement’ - the panel session explored the challenges and legal intricacies involved in protecting refugees and migrants in India. It highlighted the lack of refugee-specific legislation in India, the use of constitutional provisions like Articles 14 and 21, and the role of international law principles, especially non-refoulement. The discussion emphasized judicial interpretations, inconsistent application of rights, and the reliance on the UNHCR for refugee status determinations. The presentation underscored India's absence of a dedicated legal framework for refugees, which results in a reliance on constitutional guarantees of equality and the right to life under Articles 14 and 21. This reliance is coupled with international law principles, but it remains inconsistent in judicial application. Although India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, customary international law and non-refoulement have been significant in judicial decisions, where courts often uphold this principle for certain refugee groups. Without a formal government mechanism for refugee recognition, the UNHCR steps in as the primary body for determining refugee status in India. This creates varied “community-based recognition” patterns that reflect disparities in how different refugee groups are recognized and treated.

The discussion highlighted court cases involving refugees from different regions, such as Burmese, Iraqi, and Sri Lankan nationals, showcasing both protective rulings and inconsistencies in judicial willingness to protect refugee rights. Specific cases, like *Zotan Sankui and Bhoji v. Union of India* in 1989, displayed judicial acknowledgment of non-refoulement, though recent cases involving Rohingya refugees show less leniency. There was an observation of judicial deference to the executive branch, especially regarding decisions about who may stay in India. This deference often limited the scope of protection for refugees, particularly under the Foreigners Act and associated executive orders. Panelists noted that refugee nationality, ethnicity, and legal representation significantly affect judicial decisions and the level of protection afforded to individuals. This points to the need for skilled legal

advocates who understand the complexities of refugee rights. The session also acknowledged the challenges posed by recent legislation, such as the CAA, which complicates refugee rights in India and narrows protections, particularly for communities like Afghan refugees.

Participants' Presentation

Anjali J. from Indian Police Foundation, India, presented a paper on '*Gender and Migration: Legal Complexities in Interstate Migration in Kerala*' where she discussed the intersection of gender issues with migration laws, highlighting the unique challenges faced by women migrants in Kerala. Her presentation noted the impact of both state and central migration policies, underscoring gaps in social protection for female migrant workers.

Basel Abou Rokba from Andhra University, India, presented on '*Syrian Refugees in Turkey: An Overview of Migration and Settlement Patterns.*' His talk provided insights into the living conditions, resettlement challenges, and economic integration issues faced by Syrian refugees in Turkey. Basel also drew comparisons with the Indian context, noting differences in government support and societal acceptance.

Spriha Roy from Observer Research Foundation, India, presented on '*Decoding the Disaster Management Act 2005: At the Crossroads of Women, Migration, and the Indian Sundarbans.*' It examined the Disaster Management Act's implications on women and migrants in disaster-prone regions like the Sundarbans. She highlighted how centralized powers during crises can sometimes undermine local governance, posing additional challenges for migrant protection.

Srajan Srivastava from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India discussed the '*Citizenship Amendment Act: Implications for Afghan Refugees in India from an Ethnographic Perspective.*' He emphasized the unique vulnerabilities of Afghan refugees, including how the CAA influences their access to rights and public health. Srajan presented ethnographic insights into the lived experiences of Afghan refugees, drawing attention to the impact of legal status on social and health outcomes.

Conclusion: The session closed on a hopeful note, advocating for collaboration among lawyers, academics, and civil society to address refugee protection in India. While challenges persist, the speakers underscored the importance of pursuing creative legal strategies and fostering awareness to push for a consistent legal framework that protects refugees' rights more effectively.

Module C: Statelessness: Contemporary Challenges and Strategies

Module Tutor **K.M. Parivelan**, Woxsen University and Module Coordinator **Sucharita Sengupta**, researcher at **CRG** outlined the aims and subject matter of the Module. Parivelan identified two main objectives: examining how statelessness, as a concept and issue, fits into the discourse on forced migration, and exploring its overlaps

with related phenomena such as refugee status. Historically linked to migration and exile, statelessness involves complex issues that require greater clarity. Parivelan explained the concept of statelessness, its types, and the politics of rendering individuals stateless by denying or revoking citizenship.

Statelessness can be *de jure* (legal exclusion from state membership) or *de facto* (legal citizens unable to access services due to structural barriers). He used examples from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and India, stressing the need to question exclusionary nation-state policies defining citizenship.



Module C Lecture: K.M. Parivelan and Sucharita Sengupta

Sucharita Sengupta explored the Rohingya refugee crisis, focusing on the precarious conditions faced by the Rohingya in Bangladesh camps. She argued that the 2017 influx of Rohingya refugees marked a watershed moment, introducing a new dynamic to the refugee crisis in Bangladesh. Drawing on her extensive fieldwork, she shared personal narratives from the Rohingya, highlighting their perspectives on refugee rights and their aspirations to see an end to the crisis. Following her presentation, the floor was opened for comments and questions. When asked why Bangladesh continues to shelter the Rohingya

despite security threats, while India does not, Sucharita suggested that the timing of the crisis, coupled with the porous nature of borders and geographical proximity, might explain the differing responses.

Participants' Presentation

Dolma Tsering, from **National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University in Taiwan**, presented her research, *'By Mistake? Contextualising Stateless Tibetan Students' Experiences in Taiwan.'* She explored the lived realities of stateless Tibetans in Taiwan, focusing on the differential treatment between students and Buddhist monks. Her analysis highlighted the Taiwanese government's selective granting of residency, employment, and healthcare rights to students, while monks are excluded. Drawing on the concepts of politics of exception and neoliberalism, she argued that Tibetan students pursuing advanced degrees are viewed as potential contributors to Taiwan's skilled workforce, aligning with the state's economic priorities. However, this policy excludes students in Chinese language programmes, underscoring the government's strategic approach to citizenship rights. Dolma concluded that neoliberal statecraft permits flexible application of these rights for desirable groups, such as skilled migrants, while imposing stricter controls on others deemed less beneficial to the state's goals.

N. Pautunthang, from the **Institute for Social and Economic Change, India**, discussed *'The Plight of Zomi Refugees in Delhi, India.'* He traced the struggles of the Zomi people, who fled Myanmar's Chin State in the 1980s to escape persecution, forced conscription, and economic hardship. Despite decades in India, most Zomi refugees remain unrecognised as refugees or citizens, living in a precarious limbo without access to healthcare, education, or basic rights. Pautunthang highlighted the protracted process for obtaining UNHCR refugee cards, which leaves the vast majority undocumented. He argued that India's refusal to grant exit permits or citizenship perpetuates their statelessness and compels them to endure harsh living conditions. Stressing India's moral responsibility, he called for the recognition of Zomi refugees and the provision of fundamental rights, noting that some civil society organisations are advocating for their improved treatment.

The third presentation was delivered by **Sariful Islam** from **South Asian University, India**, titled *'Ending Refugee Crisis: Analysing International Refugee Governance and Rohingya Perspectives.'* Drawing on postcolonial theoretical frameworks, he argued that while the Rohingya adopt the dominant discourse surrounding potential solutions to their refugee crisis, their lived experiences shape their preferences for these solutions. Factors such as the timing of their arrival in Bangladesh, the duration of their stay, socio-economic status, and age significantly influence their choices among the three classical resolutions: integration, resettlement, or repatriation.

The final presentation, delivered by **Tawafuddin Azimi** from **Mahatma Gandhi University, India**, in his paper *'Mapping the Refugee Crisis in Post- American Afghanistan: An International Approach'* illuminated the plight of refugees in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of American forces. Tawafuddin noted that Afghanistan is consistently ranked among the world's least peaceful nations, with escalating violence and conflict forcing many to seek refuge abroad, particularly after the Taliban's return to power. His talk highlighted Iran and Pakistan as the primary destinations for Afghan refugees, due to shared linguistic, cultural, and religious ties. However, refugees in these countries often endure discrimination and restricted access to fundamental rights, compounding their hardships. Tawafuddin also underscored the Taliban's severe curtailment of women's rights as a key factor driving migration, with Afghan women particularly affected by bans on education, employment, and freedom of movement.

Module D: Gender, Race, Religion, and Other Faultline of Protection Architecture

Module Lecture

One of the module's coordinators, **Paula Banerjee** from the **Asian Institute of Technology, India, and CRG**, began the module by examining the concept of intersectionality, commonly used in feminist research, while urging a critical perspective, especially in the South Asian context. She argued that various disasters—natural, financial, and political—create interconnected vulnerabilities, often exacerbated by state responses that reinforce

masculinised societal structures. Banerjee pointed out that crises lead to protectionist regimes that reflect punishment and control, particularly over women.

Her lecture explored how the women's movement in South Asia has sought to address autonomy through legal and social frameworks, but these often position women's rights against community rights, resulting in further marginalisation. Despite this, Banerjee noted the resilience of grassroots women's movements, which now form coalitions with civil society to strengthen their claims for autonomy.

Through case studies on Typhoon Haiyan, the Boxing Day Tsunami, COVID-19, the Global Financial Crisis, and political conflicts, Banerjee highlighted how such crises disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, especially migrants. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, exposed the precarity of migrant workers, trapped in urban centres and forced to undertake dangerous journeys home due to inadequate state support. Banerjee emphasised how migrants, as the most vulnerable section of the workforce, bear the social and economic costs of these crises. She concluded by calling for structural changes to address these inequities while recognising the ongoing agency of marginalised groups in advocating for their rights.

The second coordinator of the module, **Madhurilata Basu** from **Sarojini Naidu College for Women and CRG**, delivered a presentation on care, care workers, and the question of protection. She explored how access to care, and the ease with which it is received, is often determined by one's citizenship status. The lecture centred on the National Rural Health Mission, the role of Asha Workers, and the intersection of care with human rights. Professor Basu argued that crises expose and deepen existing social fault lines, particularly in the context of migration. The movement of care workers to the Global North, she noted, is fraught with challenges, including job insecurity, exploitation by fraudulent employment agencies, and various other risks. The module's lecture was followed by participants' presentations.



Module D Lecture: Paula Banerjee and Madhurilata Basu

Participants' Presentation

Gurleen Kaur, Independent Researcher, India in her presentation '*A Gendered Analysis of Climate Change Induced Migration in South Asia*', discussed the severe impact of climate change on vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls. She highlighted that climate change disproportionately affects the poorest, destroying livelihoods and forcing displacement, but migration is often a privilege for those with

disposable income, leaving the poorest, especially women, trapped. Kaur noted that women, comprising at least 70% of the world's poor, face gendered challenges in responding to climate change due to restrictive norms. While men dominate public spaces, women are confined to the home, limiting their access to services and increasing their vulnerabilities, including exploitation and gender-based violence. Although men are also affected, Kaur argued that women have fewer resources and options to cope. She concluded by urging that climate-induced migration be recognised in government policies, acknowledging the links between structural inequalities, poor governance, and the exacerbated impacts of climate change on both genders.

Pooja Priya from **University College Cork, Ireland**, in her paper ***'Exploring Interracial Marriage as a Strategy of Homemaking for Nigerian Migrants in Delhi'***, examined African migration to India, which is often analysed through push-pull dynamics—factors like the Congo War and economic upheaval driving migration, and better opportunities in India attracting migrants. However, existing scholarship largely overlooks the homemaking practices of African migrants upon arrival.

Priya critiques how studies on African migration, particularly in Urban Geography and Sociology, focus predominantly on material aspects of homemaking, neglecting the emotional and relational dimensions. Her paper highlights the intersectional approach to understanding the lived experiences of Nigerian migrants, particularly their pursuit of interracial marriage with Indian citizens as a strategy for establishing a sense of home. Priya argues that racial, social, and state-level challenges further shape these migrants' experiences, influencing their sense of belonging or marginalisation in Indian cities.

Tahseen Fatima from the *University of Delhi* presented a paper titled ***'Migration, Work, and Livelihood: A Study of Home-Based Workers in Jahangirpuri'***. Her research challenges the traditional dichotomy between the home and the world, which often confines women to the private, domestic sphere, particularly within capitalist societies where the productive and reproductive roles are intertwined. Fatima focused on migrant Muslim women in Jahangirpuri, Delhi, who engage in home-based informal work. She explored how migration shifts the nature of both productive and reproductive labour, especially for women, and examined the marginalising effects of migration on their livelihoods. The study also looked at how informal work in the destination area impacts these women's lives, highlighting the complex dynamics of migration and work.

After the lecture and presentations, key discussions emerged around power and hierarchy. Prof. Nasreen Chowdhary highlighted the need for a new paradigm to address the limitations of intersectionality. Prof. Samir Kumar Das pointed out that while individualisation isolates women, collectivisation often fails, preventing united resistance. Prof. Banerjee noted that South Asia shows issue-based solidarity and subversion, which could form a new paradigm of agency. Comments also focused on theoretical concerns, particularly distinguishing between "cases" and "case studies," and the roles of love, care, and community in interracial marriages.

Special Lecture I: Migration and Languages: Violence, Trust and Resistance

The special lecture, *'Migration and Languages: Violence, Trust and Resistance'*, began with an introduction of Marie-Caroline Saglio-Yatzimirsky from the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Inalco), France, by the chair, Samir Kumar Das from the University of Calcutta and Member of CRG, India. He highlighted her academic achievements, including her publications with Routledge and Imperial College Press, before transitioning to Saglio-Yatzimirsky's lecture.

Her lecture explored the intricate relationship between migration and language, raising key questions: What do migrations do to languages, and what do languages do to migrations? How do words and discourse provide insight into the contemporary migratory experience, its violence, and the means of resistance by exiles? Saglio drew from anthropological and sociolinguistic surveys conducted by the ANR LIMINAL programme in camps, encampments, reception centres, and at the French, English, and Italian borders. These surveys revealed a specific vocabulary born from the languages spoken by displaced people—*migralect*, a singular language forged in migration.

This lexicon serves as a kind of lingua franca, comprehensible to all, facilitating cross-border communication and encounters. Overflowing with emotions such as anger, derision, and suffering, it is constantly evolving, influenced by the arrival of new speakers and the political and legal changes that shape the context in which it is spoken. However, *migralect* is also a *lingua non franca*, with certain terms reserved for specific groups—the State or the exile—and used to exclude, outsmart, or conceal. Through this, Saglio highlighted the (infra)political dimensions of language in the multilingual spaces of contemporary migration.

Dividing her lecture into three sections—violence, trust, and resistance—Saglio referred to Ranabir Samaddar's forward in *Talking Camps*, noting that migration often leads to confrontations marked by linguistic collisions. Language is central not only to communication but also to survival, identity, and political positioning, raising questions about the state, nationality, and the dominance of national languages. For migrants, language becomes a crucial tool for integration into the state or dominant linguistic communities, shaping their experience of violence, trust, and resistance.

In conclusion, Saglio referenced James Scott's idea of subordinate resistance, illustrating how migrant communities develop their own lexicons to resist linguistic domination, creating a cross-border language of resistance that speaks of suffering, anger, and solidarity. These migrant lexicons, ever-expanding and shifting, both establish trust and fuel resistance against language-based oppression.

Following Saglio's presentation, Samir Kumar Das facilitated the discussion, which was followed by a Q&A session focused on five main questions. The conversation began with inquiries about the role of language in migration, specifically how linguistic ties influence migration patterns. For example, Sri Lankan migrants often choose Tamil Nadu because both communities speak Tamil, and Bangladeshi migrants find it easier to move to West Bengal due to the shared language of Bengali. The discussion then turned to the experiences of migrants and refugees in Europe, particularly France. One focus was on Congolese refugees in French camps who adopt Lingala as their primary language for survival in a French-dominated linguistic environment.

Further questions addressed the situation of Arab migrants and asylum seekers in Europe, specifically regarding the linguistic challenges faced by both refugees and authorities. A key point of discussion was whether European police are trained to understand Arabic terms in refugee camps, and if similar training is provided to authorities to assist asylum seekers at sea, particularly when they request rescue. This raised concerns about why police and legal authorities often claim not to understand the languages spoken by refugees, potentially hindering their ability to provide help.

10 November 2024

Module E - Refugee and Migrant labour: Precarious forms and Globalisation

Module Lecture

The module co-ordinator Manish K. Jha from **Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai** reflecting on the recent U.S. elections, where immigration was a central issue, he pointed out how the rhetoric around detention and deportation of undocumented migrants gained electoral appeal, regardless of the moral or ethical implications. He observed that, across many states, there was a tendency to depict migrants as "illegal," driven by a xenophobic narrative that migrants were "taking jobs" from native citizens, which made the lives of migrants even more precarious. He opened the question, "how do we visualize the precarious migrant?" Whether we imagine them stranded in the Mediterranean, crossing the Naf River, or fleeing their homeland, these images underline their vulnerability and societal discrimination. He then introduced a distinction between two categories of migrants: those moving for better livelihoods through organized migration, and those fleeing crisis, including ethnic cleansing, dying in transit, and facing surveillance or othering. He highlighted a contradiction within populist policies, pointing to a report stating that 61% of respondents believe that undocumented migrants fill jobs that citizens do not want. This contradiction, he argued, is an example of how misinformation is politicized, making the lives of migrants even more precarious. Issues like human rights violations, sexual trafficking, and mental health problems are often buried under the broader narrative of migrant collectives.

Manish K. Jha also explored how migrants are constructed within political discourse. Using the example of the United States, he questioned who is considered "American" in a country known for being a "nation of immigrants." He explained that laws, policies, and discourses define the distinction between citizens and migrants. In the current globalized world, Prof. Jha pointed out, capital moves freely across borders, yet migrants' movements are heavily restricted through tools such as digital surveillance technologies. He noted that in India, similar issues of interstate migration are politicized through misinformation, which further complicates the issue. In conclusion, Prof. Jha stated that Module E would delve into these complex issues, focusing on the mechanisms available to migrants in insecure labor conditions and exploring how they can form collectives to improve their situation.

The second module co-ordinator, **Mouleshri Vyas**, from **Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai**, summarized five key observations on the precarious conditions faced by migrant and refugee laborers in informal sectors. First, these workers endure minimal job security, irregular incomes, and limited social protections, often in hazardous environments, as they struggle to secure a foothold in urban peripheries. Second, Vosko's framework highlights the deep-rooted precariousness shaped by labor market insecurity, social location, and employment status, exacerbated by the disconnect between migrants and state institutions. Third, neoliberal policies and the rise of the gig economy have led to fragmented labor, invisibilized work, and growing control over labor processes, with gig workers, in particular, experiencing insecurity and low wages. Fourth, migrant and refugee workers are relegated to low-status, marginalized jobs, a trend worsened by the historic caste-community-occupation linkage, which defines the work and conditions for specific social groups. Lastly, the report calls for examining strategies used by these workers to build networks and solidarity amidst challenges and explores how unions and worker collectives are adapting in response to shifts in employment and labor governance.

Participants' Presentation

The paper *'From Home to Hell: Reflecting on the lives of Migrant Workers from West Bengal'* by **Joydeep Sarkar**, Independent Researcher, highlighted five key observations on the precarious conditions of migrant and refugee laborers in informal and organized sectors. First, migrants often face extreme job insecurity, irregular incomes, lack of social protections, and unsafe work environments, making it challenging for them to establish stable livelihoods. Second, Vosko's framework on precarious employment reveals that employment instability is shaped by complex factors, including labor market insecurity, social context, and legal status, which leave these workers disconnected from state protections. Third, neoliberal policies and the rise of gig work have led to increased invisibility and fragmentation of labor, with many workers categorized as independent contractors, thereby reducing labor rights and protections. Fourth, migrants are relegated to marginalized jobs, as reflected in the bottom rung of the informal economy where they endure hazardous conditions, isolation, and limited access to support networks. Finally, the report calls for further examination of how migrants create networks and

strategies to navigate these challenges, and how trade unions and collectives are evolving to address the unique vulnerabilities faced by migrant labourers.



Module E: Participants' Presentation. Spriha Roy, Tushar Dakua and Joydeep Sarkar

The paper *'Assessing the Precarious Labour Migration and Precarity of Indian Labour Migrants During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nepal'* by Tushar Dakua from Indian Institute of Population Sciences, Mumbai, examined the conditions faced by Indian labor migrants in Nepal, highlighting five key observations from a recent study. First, Indian migrants in Nepal, particularly in unorganized sectors, endure precarious conditions, exacerbated by exploitative recruitment practices, unsafe working environments, and limited access to essential services. Second, informal recruitment

through contractors has led to economic exploitation, wage theft, and inadequate living conditions, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which worsened their vulnerability due to lockdowns, food scarcity, and social stigma. Third, overcrowded and unsanitary accommodations compound the challenges for migrants, with female workers facing heightened harassment risks. Fourth, the study reveals a gap in support from both Indian and Nepali governments, as migrant workers lack protections despite commitments made under the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). Finally the paper called for increased Indo-Nepali cooperation and urgent reforms to uphold labor protections, manage migration more effectively, and align with international labor standards to protect migrants' rights.

The paper *'A study of psychosocial stressors faced by the informal workforce in Kashmir'* by Syed Wasifa Mehraj Kamili from University of Kashmir, highlighted five key observations on the complexities of labor migration and its impact on migrant workers, drawing from recent studies and data. First, economic motivations are a primary driver for migration, with approximately 169 million migrant workers globally, many of whom move to urban centers in search of better earning opportunities. Second, internal migration in Asia, particularly in India, has surged, with about 600 million people living away from their origin, often traveling from states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to industrial states such as Delhi and Maharashtra. Third, a significant number of these migrant workers are absorbed into unorganized sectors—especially in construction, agriculture, and manufacturing—where they face precarious work conditions, low wages, and a lack of labor rights protections. Fourth, the absence of adequate social security and welfare measures further exacerbates their vulnerability, exposing them to hazardous living and working environments without access to health or social support. Finally, these workers

endure psychosocial stress due to cultural adaptation, isolation from family, and the challenge of maintaining their cultural identity in unfamiliar socio-political settings, which negatively impacts their mental well-being.

Module F: Ethics of Care Protection and

Module Lecture

The session began with the lecture by Module Co-ordinator, **Samir Kumar Das, University of Calcutta and**



Module F Lecture: Samir Kumar Das

CRG, emphasising the ethical imperatives in supporting victims of forced displacement. The session opened with Samir Das's thought-provoking introduction to the ethical imperatives of supporting victims of forced displacement. He emphasised that those unaffected by displacement must cultivate meaningful connections with displaced individuals, as ethics is inherently dialogical, emerging through interaction and shared reasoning. This ethical dialogue fosters a communal bond that transcends boundaries, enabling the formation of an inclusive and caring community. Das underscored that such argumentation must remain flexible, avoiding rigid moral systems, and instead, embrace plural perspectives to build consensus.

Drawing on Peter Penz, he stressed the value of middle-ground ethical theories that acknowledge uncertainty while fostering solidarity. Das highlighted that ethical actions often originate from unconscious compassion, a natural inclination discussed by Kwame Anthony Appiah, which complements conscious reasoning to guide responses to crises. He also reflected on Nietzsche's analysis of morality, noting that ethical reasoning and action are not always linear but evolve dynamically in response to contextual challenges. The lecture explored three key ethical frameworks. The first was a rights-based approach, where care for displaced individuals is seen as a duty tied to their right to well-being. However, Das pointed out its limitations, especially when rights, such as those against displacement, conflict with collective goals like community development, as seen in urban evictions in South Asia. He argued for balancing these tensions through compensation and rehabilitation while prioritising the minimisation of suffering.

The second framework examined community and kinship ties as a basis for care. While strong in South Asia, these ties often reinforce existing inequalities and rivalries, limiting their ability to extend compassion beyond familiar boundaries. The third framework, rooted in humanitarian ethics, considers displaced individuals as equal ethical partners, shifting the focus from self-improvement to mutual care within a broader moral community.

Samir Das also reflected on the interplay of ethics and power, arguing that ethical care must navigate the power structures shaping society while striving to erase visible power dynamics. He noted that true ethical commitment

emerges from what Derrida describes as "performative powerlessness," where argumentation and reasoning avoid becoming instruments of domination. This nuanced approach, Das concluded, is essential for constructing a binding, inclusive, and adaptable ethical response to displacement paving the way for course participants' presentations.

Participants' Presentations

The first paper delivered by **Said Muslim Sadat** of **Mahatma Gandhi University, India**, titled '*Constructing Ethical Communities: The Role of Argumentation and Reasoning in the Care of Displaced Afghan Populations in Iran*,' examined Afghan migration to Iran and its socio-political and humanitarian complexities. Sadat traced the waves of migration shaped by key events, including the Soviet invasion in 1979, the Taliban's rise in 1996, and their return in 2021, each significantly impacting Iran's demographics.



Module F Participants' Presentations: Said Muslim Sadat and Sabeena Khatoon, Coordinator: Samir Kumar Das

Despite shared cultural and religious ties with Afghanistan, Iran's humanitarian efforts are hindered by domestic challenges, leading to limited access to services, legal protections, and frequent exploitation for Afghan migrants. Sadat emphasised ethical communities—societies built on care and dignity—and proposed that Islamic principles, such as *Ummah* (community) and *Amman* (protection), could guide compassionate policies. Bridging international law and Islamic ethics, his study advocates for a framework that upholds Afghan migrants' rights and dignity while fostering integration into Iranian society.

The second presentation by **Sabeena Khatoon** from **University of Hyderabad** titled '*Migrant Child Beggars in Indian Railways: Exploring Space, Stigma, and Ethical Concerns*,' delved into the lives of migrant child beggars within India's railway systems. Drawing on findings from a phenomenological study involving in-depth interviews with 50 migrant child beggars aged 8 to 16 and 60 railway passengers, Khatoon employed Space and Place Theory alongside Social Stigma Theory to frame her analysis. Her research revealed that railway stations function as both temporary shelters and perilous environments for these children. Khatoon observed a spectrum of passenger reactions, ranging from empathy to suspicion and indifference, which perpetuate the stigmatization and marginalization of these vulnerable individuals. Her study emphasised the urgent need for interventions addressing both the physical risks and the entrenched societal prejudices these children face. By advocating for a

multi-dimensional approach that tackles spatial and social challenges, her work highlighted the ethical imperative of fostering empathy and understanding to improve the circumstances of migrant child beggars.

Conclusion: The session concluded with a lively discussion among participants, who reflected on the ideas presented and explored practical ways to apply these ethical frameworks, particularly in supporting displaced populations and marginalized groups. The presentations collectively emphasized the importance of ethical reasoning, dialogue, and community in addressing the complex challenges facing displaced individuals.

Module G1- Climate, Ecology and Displacement

Module Coordinator **Shatabdi Das** from the **Calcutta Research Group** began her lecture by clearly defining the key terms explored in the module. She emphasized how the intersection of climate, ecology, and displacement forms a complex, interconnected web that both influences and is influenced by these interdependent factors. Terms such as ecology, climate change, human ecology, environmental perception, and environmental ethics were elaborated upon, particularly in relation to the phenomenon of displacement. Das highlighted the intricate causal relationships underlying migration drivers, emphasizing the overlapping socio-economic, political, and environmental forces that significantly shape migration patterns. Further, she examined the complex terminology of ‘environmental refugees’ or ‘ecological refugees,’ as coined by Lester Brown, discussing the various push factors behind displacement. She also presented Richard Brown's three categories of environmental refugees: “people fleeing desertification; those displaced by rising sea levels; and victims of environmental conflict.” In conclusion, she offered recommendations, including investments in climate mitigation projects, the strategic development of urban areas to ensure resilience and adaptability, and the formulation of collaborative policies focused on reducing carbon emissions to address these pressing challenges.

The Q&A session covered several important topics. One question explored how local responses to the Uttarakhand disaster are linked to the mapping of the region, asking for insights on this connection. Another query focused on what a balanced approach might look like for addressing the climate change crisis. A participant shared observations on the tension between development and sustainability, raising concerns about how these two goals can be reconciled. Another question delved into how to navigate the relationship between local resilience and legal frameworks. Additionally, there was a comment on the issue of dispersed planning and the lack of implementation of allocated funds for environmental projects. Finally, a participant discussed the environmental laws and policies, specifically referencing the bill passed in the Lok Sabha in 2022 and its potential impact.

Spriha Roy, Research Consultant, **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)**, Kolkata, delivered a presentation based on her blog post titled *‘Environmental Ethics: Accounts from the Indian Sundarbans.’* Her presentation offered a glimpse into an interview with Soumya Sankar Bose, a professional photographer who had documented the tragic history of Marichjhanpi. Using the Marichjhanpi Massacre as a case study, Roy explored

the ethical nuances of such events and their broader ecological implications. She provided a brief introduction to the field of environmental ethics, particularly from a social contract perspective, before delving into three key ethical frameworks: utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics.



Module G1 Presentation: Shatabdi Das (Coordinator) Sabeena Khatoon and Tawafuddin Azimi

Joydeep Sarkar, Independent Researcher's work similarly focused on the *'Impacts of Climate Disasters in the Sundarbans.'* The Sundarbans, a UNESCO World Heritage site in the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta, is grappling with severe climate challenges, especially on the islands of Ghoramara and Mousuni. Here, relentless land erosion and cyclone damage have led to the displacement of residents, forcing migration. Once-thriving communities are now dwindling, with Ghoramara's population dropping from 40,000 to a mere 2,000 due to land subsidence. The remaining

residents endure harsh conditions, with tourism and infrastructure faltering amid continuous environmental decline. While migration offers limited relief, those who remain rely on local adaptations such as community support and temporary rebuilding efforts. However, these measures are insufficient against the ongoing climate risks. Sarkar concluded with urgent recommendations to strengthen climate-resilient infrastructure, restore mangroves, and establish protections for displaced residents, highlighting the need for sustainable, community-focused resilience in this vulnerable region.

Tushar Dakua Senior Research Fellow, **International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS)**, India, presented a report titled *'Climate-Induced Displacement in Paschim Medinipur: A Pictorial Narrative.'* This report documented the relief efforts of the NSS team from Vidyasagar University in response to the devastating floods in Pratappur, Ghatal, West Midnapore, following an embankment breach at the confluence of the Shilabati and Rupnarayan rivers in 2017. On 3 August 2017, the team arrived to distribute aid to the affected locals, witnessing widespread damage. The floodwaters had submerged the first floor of a five-storey college building, reaching heights as high as the electricity wires, resulting in a complete power shutdown. Locals gathered around rescue boats with containers to collect aid, while women, children, and the elderly took refuge on rooftops. The team sheltered at the Gram Panchayat office overnight and continued providing aid the following day as the waters receded. Despite these efforts, many homes, particularly those made from bamboo, polythene, and tin, were destroyed. Dakua's report, supplemented with secondary sources and papercuts, illustrated the

extensive devastation suffered by the community. The report concluded with a discussion on the Ghatal Master Plan.

Mohammed Imtiyaz, research scholar at **Jamia Millia Islamia, India**, presented a blog post titled *“The Generational Impacts of Climate Change: Amid 'Forced Migration' and 'State's Apathy'.”* The post examined the generational impacts of climate change in Barpeta, Assam, where recurring land erosion along the Beki River forces families into cycles of displacement and adaptation. It highlighted the complex burdens faced by both older and younger generations: the older generation, affected by “multiple migration,” bears the physical and emotional toll of repeated displacement, while younger generations, facing economic hardships, are often driven to daily wage labour. Imtiyaz also addressed the government's apathy, especially in Gandhi Nagar, a settlement for climate migrants, where displaced families lack sufficient support. The report called for targeted support and climate justice to address the vulnerabilities of regions like Barpeta's erosion-prone Satara Kanara. Imtiyaz shared three compelling stories that illustrated the lived experiences of these displaced communities.

Tawafuddin Azimi, Research Scholar at **Mahatma Gandhi University India**, presented a blog post titled *‘Factors Influencing Afghan Migration Trends,’* examining the surge in Afghan migration since the Taliban's return to power in 2021. Five key observations were made: First, over half of the Afghan population would migrate if borders were open. Second, young, educated individuals, especially from the Hazara and Tajik ethnic groups, are most likely to seek migration. Third, security, economic instability, limited education, and climate challenges drive migration. Fourth, educated youth are leading the migration trend. Finally, this outflow of skilled individuals could harm Afghanistan's development, highlighting the need for mitigating policies.

Sabeena Khatoon, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Hyderabad, presented a photo story titled *‘Raindrops and Resilience: A Photo Story of Pan Shops Weathering Hyderabad,’* which focused on migrant child beggars at railway stations. First, it showed the stations as both shelters and hazardous spaces. Second, the photographs depicted their harsh living conditions. Third, varied passenger reactions, ranging from empathy to stigma, were captured. Fourth, despite their struggles, moments of joy and resilience were highlighted. Finally, the story emphasised the importance of community support, stressing the need for interventions to improve the children's physical and social wellbeing.

Sved Wasifa Mehraj Kamili, a Research Scholar at the University of Kashmir, India, presented a blog post titled *‘Divided Between Two Realms: A Transition of Survival, Adaptation, and Changing Landscape in Jammu and Kashmir.’* The post explored the intersection of environmental changes and migration in the region, offering five key observations. First, environmental disruptions, such as floods and resource depletion, are increasingly driving migration, influenced by economic, social, and political factors. Second, seasonal migration is common among interstate workers and the Gujjar and Bakarwal nomadic communities. Third, these communities

have long practiced climate-responsive migration to sustain their livelihoods. Fourth, deteriorating environmental conditions are complicating traditional migration patterns. Finally, Kamili predicts an increase in migration due to climate change by 2050, urging policy intervention to support vulnerable communities facing displacement.

Module G2: Media and Migration

Samata Biswas, Module Coordinator from The Sanskrit College and University and a member of the Calcutta Research Group (CRG), inaugurated the session, which seeks to critically engage with and contribute to the evolving mediascape. Participants in the module produce creative media projects inspired by their core studies, spanning podcasts, short videos, stories, poems, annotated photographs, news articles, blogs, and more. This session included 13 presentations, encompassing works such as book reviews and photo essays.

Samata presented her lecture, *'Framing the Illegal Bangladeshi Immigrant'*, beginning with the principle that "No human being is illegal," a notion she defended throughout. She delved into CRG's initiatives, particularly media fellowships that investigate the influence of vernacular media on perceptions of legality and illegality in South Asia. A significant insight from their work was the shared challenges faced by migrants across the region.

She explored the difficulties in reporting migration, noting that migrants are seldom the intended audience for such news and that editors often lack a nuanced understanding of terms like "forcible displacement." Samata also discussed SAN-CDM, a network established by CRG to promote unbiased reporting through webinars, conferences, and training, while highlighting its reliance on English as a drawback for excluding other regional languages.

The session reflected on key findings: the diversity in vernacular media approaches, the cartelisation of news, media's role in amplifying xenophobia, and the exclusionary use of language, such as Sinhala-dominant reporting in Sri Lanka at the expense of Tamil. Samata emphasised the vital role of accurate terminology to mitigate harm and presented the *Migrant Lexicon* publication derived from the module. She criticised Indian media's routine use of "illegal Bangladeshi," particularly during elections, contrasting Kerala's neutral terminology for Bengali migrants with other states' xenophobic labelling, arguing that the terms we use impact the knowledge we produce.

Anjali J., from the **Indian Police Foundation**, delivered an insightful review of *'Undocumented: Stories of Indian Migrants in the Arab Gulf'* by Rejimon Kuttappan. Drawing from the book's poignant narratives, the presentation highlighted the systemic exploitation, structural injustices, and personal tragedies faced by Indian migrants in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, particularly Oman. Anjali underscored the urgent need for labour law reforms, re-evaluation of international policies, and alignment of national legislation with global standards to uphold migrant workers' dignity and rights.

Basel Abou Rokha, from Andhra University, presented a photo essay titled *'The Media's Role in Escalating Hate Speech and Racism Towards Syrian Refugees in Türkiye.'* The presentation explored growing intolerance in Turkish society towards Syrian refugees, worsened by their increasing population. Traditional and social media were shown to perpetuate negative narratives, shaping public opinion and influencing policies and fuelling social exclusion and violence against Syrian refugees.

Dolma Tsering, of National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University in Taiwan, shared her essay, *'Personal Story Interview: Twice Rejected Due to Chinese Pressure.'* It centred on the plight of a stateless Tibetan woman in Taiwan, trapped between nationality and citizenship. Despite holding a Nepali passport, the absence of citizenship documentation rendered her status precarious. The presentation highlighted the problems arising from conflating the concepts of nationality and citizenship, exposing their devastating impact.



Participants' Presentation: Module G2

Gurleen Kaur, an independent researcher, presented a photo essay titled *'Invisible Women in Nepal.'* The presentation explored the silenced stories of Nepali women migrant workers, highlighting the impact of restrictive government policies on their mobility. It also shed light on the harsh realities faced by women residing in on-site camps without proper documentation, as well as the vulnerabilities of domestic migrant workers to climate change and natural disasters.

N. Pautunthang, from ISEC, presented an *'Overview of the 2021 Zomi Refugee Crisis.'* The presentation highlighted how media reporting influences refugee policies, contrasting Manipur's hostile stance, including revoking the Free Movement Regime, with Mizoram's supportive measures like temporary shelters and medico-legal aid. It underscored the media's critical role in bridging divides or deepening societal rifts.

Srajan Srivastava from Jawaharlal Nehru University presented a compelling photo essay titled *'Place-making among Afghan Refugees in Delhi.'* His work highlighted the significance of place-making as a process where refugees create spaces that reflect their identity, culture, and needs, fostering a sense of belonging. The presentation underscored how, after being uprooted from their homeland, refugees must redefine their connections to place and community in their new environment.

Pooja Priya from University College Cork, UK, shared a reflective essay titled *'Ethnographic Fieldwork on Nigerian and Congolese Migrants in Delhi: Exploring Their Practices of Home-making.'* Through

photographs and storytelling, she presented her doctoral research on homemaking practices among Nigerian and Congolese migrants in New Delhi. Her study examined their experiences in Pentecostal churches, high-density neighbourhoods, and local markets, while addressing themes of gender and individual perceptions of home. She also discussed challenges encountered during interviews and fieldwork.

Poushali Basak of the Calcutta Research Group, India, presented a podcast titled *'Migration and the Queer Self'*. The podcast explored the multifaceted impact of migration on queer and trans lives, emphasising their continuous displacement caused by domestic violence, family rejection, social stigma, and lack of legal recognition. It examined how urban spaces influence queer and trans visibility and vulnerability, questioning whether cities serve as havens or perpetuate violence. Basak's work shed light on the intersection of migration and identity, exploring the narratives of transition and resilience within queer and trans communities.

Pulkit Buttan from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India, presented on *'Migrant Identities in Transition: A Study of Hindu Pakistani Communities in Delhi.'* Drawing on interviews with Hindu migrants in Majnu Ka Tila camp and Signature Bridge, Buttan explored the uncertainties and stigma they face while navigating societal labels. His study highlighted the fluidity of identity, showing how these migrants are shaped by, and also shape, both Pakistani and Indian societal contexts. By examining their self-perceptions amid societal pressures, Buttan critically analysed the narratives and power dynamics underpinning migrant identities, with a focus on justice and equality.

Said Muslim Sadat of Mahatma Gandhi University, India, presented *'Media and Migration'*, using posters to highlight incidents involving Afghan migrants and their impact on social media. One depicted a 2020 incident near Yazd, Iran, where three Afghan migrants were killed after officials attacked a van carrying undocumented individuals, sparking outrage over the criminalisation of migration. Another showed footage from August 2024 of Iranian police beating an Afghan migrant, Mahdi, triggering public demands to end such mistreatment. These incidents underscored the harsh realities faced by Afghan migrants and the role of media in exposing their struggles.

Sariful Islam of South Asian University, India, presented a media product on *'The Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh'* focusing on the government's response and the challenges to repatriation. Drawing on secondary data and interviews, he highlighted Bangladesh's role as a long-term host to Rohingya refugees. Islam argued that the military coup in Myanmar and ongoing conflicts have made repatriation difficult. He suggested that Bangladesh's policies towards the Rohingya need to be reoriented to find sustainable solutions, calling for policy changes from both the Bangladeshi government and the international community.

Tahseen Fatima from the University of Delhi, India, presented a photo narrative titled *'Threading the Daily Life: Narratives of Home-Based Workers'*, focusing on migrant Muslim women in Jahangirpuri, Delhi, who

engage in piece-rate home-based work within the informal economy. Her work highlights the complex dynamics between home and workplace, public and private, and productive and non-productive labour. Fatima explores the experiences of these women, emphasizing migration, work, and labour while challenging mainstream portrayals of Muslim women through stereotypes like hijab, niqab, and talaq.

Julija Kekstaite from the University of Ghent, Belgium, presented a hybrid poetic photo essay titled *'Signs of Life and Desire Along the EU's Eastern Migratory Route'*. Her work captures the emerging migratory route to the EU through Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Finland, focusing on the resilience and desire of migrants who traverse dangerous forests and swamps. The essay shifts the focus from suffering to the small signs of life and hope left behind by migrants on their journey, offering a more nuanced perspective on their quest for a better life.

Discussions and Q & A

Questions were raised regarding the political economy of media products and the limits of representation. Additional inquiries addressed the necessity of a moral compass in storytelling and whether the ethical norms for representation in media should also apply to academic research.

11 November 2024

Urban Faultlines and Violence Presentation by CRG-IWM Media Fellows

Chair: Samata Biswas

Discussant: Iman Kumar Mitra, Shiv Nadar University, India



CRG-IWM Media Fellow's Presentation: Dev Baraya



CRG-IWM Media Fellow's Presentation: Munazah Shakeel

The session consisted of three presentations by **Dev Baraya** from **Progressive International**, **Jaishree Kumar**, **Independent Journalist** and **Manazah Shakeel** from **Jamia Milia Islamia**, the **CRG Media Fellows** who

looked into the production and reproduction of the urban faultlines and violence perpetuated through them. Dev Baraya's presentation, titled *'Beyond The Rubble The Awami Idara's Fight Against Urban Erasure'* was a documentary film that takes a look at the Awami Idara - a 72-year-old communist library located in a working-class Muslim neighborhood in Mumbai - and the distinct changes it has undergone in response to the sharpening rise of a neo-liberal urbanization agenda. The library was formed in 1952 by a group of cotton mill workers living in central Mumbai, and supported by the Soviet Union, the Idara quickly became an important cultural and political hub for the men and women in the neighbourhood. After finishing their day shifts, the labourers would retire to the Idara to read, listen to speeches and watch free plays by the Indian People's Theatre Association. The Idara today expands on traditional expectations of a library, also serving as a community centre - one that conducts sewing lessons for young girls, sets up TB camps, gives out free eyewear and helps set up Aadhar IDs. However, in the name of "development", the BMC has razed the surrounding buildings to the ground, with plans of building sky-high builder apartments. The BMC had tried to seize the land that the Idara was built on too - the only reason they failed was because the community took the matter to the high court and they ruled in favor of the Idara just 4 months ago. Iman Kumar Mitra pointed out that the documentary reflected the violence of erasure in the demolitions of the library that worked as a place of identity for the Muslim working class. It is a mindful erasure of language as the books are largely in Urdu, of important archives and the role of the communist revolution in working-class areas. Further, the presentation also reflected a nostalgia for a lost time, of pain that the people associated with the labour movement, factory production, communist movement, and creation of the library went through.

The next documentary was screened by Jayshree Kumar, titled, *'Sisterhoods of violence and resilience: a look through a shelter home for transgender people.'* The documentary looked into the social exclusion faced by the transgender community and the bonds of resilience and friendship that emerge because of it. The documentary explored the lives of residents of a shelter home designated for the transgender community in the outskirts of New Delhi, and their journey of belonging within the city. It tried to capture the Garima Greh project established by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Even in the geographical space, the Garima Greh is situated in a low-income neighborhood of Dabri Mor, on the outskirts of New Delhi. The documentary showed the ways in which the trans community would form new forms of relationship with each other at the shelter home. The trans people living in the shelter home reflected their fear of being forced to sex work. Eventually they understood the importance of the shelter and created a second home for themselves. Members living in Garima Greh were in search of jobs and some starting their own business. The documentary reflected the creation of a friendly society for the LGBTQI+ society. Discussant, Iman Kumar Mitra pointed out the paradox of the governmental presence in the shelter home. While the home is a policy made by the government, the police which is another institution of the government perpetuates violence. When such a violence takes place in a site that

provides them a sense of belongingness and home then it gives the community a deep sense of shock and betrayal.

The third presentation was made by **Munazah Shakeel**, titled *'Unbricking Srinagar: Urban Revival and Societal Shifts'*, documenting the tourism industry in Kashmir, which is famous for its houseboats, an important image of the region. Houseboats in Dal Lake or Nigeen Lake in Srinagar are flocked by many tourists from throughout India and the world. The celebration of this important part of their culture, however, hides an unpleasant truth. The houseboats may be deemed a tourist experience, but they are not considered as legitimate residences. Inhabitants of the houseboats have been blamed for causing pollution in the area, despite their environmental impact being minimal compared to factories that dump sewage in the area. Under the guise of development, many inhabitants have been displaced and relocated. Currently, many of them have already relocated to the city. Dismantling the houseboats does not just mean dismantling households, it also means uprooting the community. In the discussion, Shakeel recollected seeing the disappointment in people's faces about the situation. They talked of the importance of responsible tourism. Apart from being the backbone of the tourism industry, they are also the backbone of the region's culture and identity.

After the presentation, the speakers took questions from the participants. Baraya answered an inquiry on the current situation of the library. It is still frequented by people, but half of the archives have already been shelved. Until now, people still have to struggle just to ensure the survival of the archive. Regarding the Garima Greh, Kumar talked about occurrences of violence against trans people, which did not only come from transphobia but also within the trans community. Lastly, Shakeel was asked about the involvement of inhabitants in the organization of the industry. She answered that they are not considered legitimate stakeholders. Meanwhile, the houseboats are still being promoted as a haven for tourists.

Special lecture II: Labour in the time of platform economy: Few observations

The Special Lecture started with a welcome speech by **Mouleshri Vyas** and an introduction of **Iman Kumar Mitra**, Shiv Nadar University & Calcutta Research Group, India who delivered a special lecture *'Labour in the time of platform economy: Few observations.'* This talk examined the evolving nature of labour within the context of neoliberalism, digital economies, and surveillance capitalism, with a particular focus on the transformations brought about by gig and platform economies. It questioned whether traditional Marxist frameworks, which conceptualised labour as a social substance crystallised in the commodity form, remained relevant in an era



Special Lecture by Iman Kumar Mitra

where the boundaries between production and consumption blurred, and surplus value increasingly derived from consumer data extraction. Drawing from theorists like Gary Becker and Michel Foucault, the concept of labour had shifted to emphasise self-investment, where individual skills and capacities were seen as forms of "human capital" rather than merely time spent working. This shift paralleled the rise of the informal economy, as highlighted by the International Labour Organisation and scholars like Jan Breman, which illustrated the precarious, unprotected nature of work, particularly in postcolonial contexts.

The growth of the gig economy further complicated the landscape, creating a new class of entrepreneurial workers who, despite being young, urban, and educated, faced fragmented job security and heightened labour market insecurities. Platform capitalism, as explored by Nick Srnicek, redefined economic models by extracting vast amounts of data from both workers and consumers, fostering integration and monopolisation through network effects. Shoshana Zuboff's concept of surveillance capitalism revealed an economic model that capitalised on behavioural data, where value was no longer tied to traditional labour but rather to the commodification of personal experience through predictive technologies.

These transformations were rooted in broader historical trajectories of globalisation since the Second World War, shaped by neoliberal ideologies and financial crises. Digital platforms, emblematic of 21st-century capitalism, highlighted the internal contradictions of these systems, particularly in relation to labour. The vulnerabilities of both migrant workers and knowledge workers, exacerbated by advancements in artificial intelligence, underscored the precariousness of contemporary labour conditions. By examining these dynamics, the talk aimed to uncover the complex interplay between globalisation, platform integration, and the restructuring of labour in the digital age.

Discussion: Mouleshri Vyas highlighted the irregularities and lack of protections in today's labour markets, the exploitation common in the digital economy, and how workers are increasingly being defined as both data producers and consumers, which poses serious challenges. She emphasised the importance of considering the social context, particularly in India, where exclusions based on gender, caste, and other factors remain widespread, and pointed to issues such as access, working conditions, and the changing nature of work.

Discussion: Tawafuddin Azimi raised the question of informal labour and the erosion of workers' rights, describing how power has shifted between digital platforms and gig workers. He raised concerns about the uncertain future of gig workers and the suspicion surrounding app-based jobs like cab drivers and bouncers. He also called for greater digital and practical literacy, linking this to financial systems like UPI, and stressed the importance of political solidarity. He observed that the lack of physical workplaces makes it harder for workers to organise collectively and noted how informal labour practices are increasingly mirroring the exploitative structures of formal sectors.

Arup Kumar Sen focused on the role of the state in supporting both traditional and modern economies, using the "Gang Compound" in South Asia as an example. He highlighted the legal barriers that make it difficult for workers to unite and emphasised the potential for volunteer efforts and community-led initiatives to address these challenges. Together, these perspectives highlighted the complex realities of labour today, shaped by digital economies, social inequalities, and changing power dynamics.

Field Trip

The Ninth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop on Global Protection of Migration and Refugees field trip emphasised unorganised migrant labourers in the tannery areas of Kolkata and the fishermen in the East Kolkata



Field Trip at the East Calcutta Wetland Area

Wetlands. The field trip at the East Calcutta Wetlands aimed to trace the disruption in the ecological balance due to development and urbanisation over the vulnerabilities and the crisis migrant labourers face due to these vulnerabilities. The field trip started with a visit to the Captain Bheri area. It is a part of the East Kolkata Wetlands, one area that comes under the Ramsar Convention and is presently under threat due to several climate hazards. The government acquired the wetland area and turned it into an amusement park for fisheries cultivation. The fishermen came from the villages of North and South 24 Pgs., two

border districts of West Bengal, to catch fish. Most of these fishermen communities were earlier migrants from distant parts of West Bengal and Orissa.

Ashok Chakrabarty, on behalf of the Fisheries Department, the West Bengal Govt introduced the area and reported how the fishermen created a cooperative and started farming. He told the participants the story of their struggle for survival. Chakrabarty also told the participants how the initiative helped to sustain some parts of the East Kolkata Wetlands and maintain biodiversity. He explained the Captain Bheri area's bio-diversity and urbanisation's role behind the loss of biodiversity in that area. The participants also learnt the role of the state in protecting biodiversity. The next stop of the field trip was the Dumping Ground of the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Area. Here, the workshop participants observed the workers in the different waste management plants and the challenges they faced in their workplace.

The last part of the field trip ended with a visit to the Kolkata Leather Complex area to study the life of the migrant workers in tanneries. Participants visited one of the tanneries and observed the workers in every unit and how they processed the leather. They briefly chatted with the workers of every unit of the tannery. The

supervisors of the units informed them that workers were coming from Bihar. Most came to Kolkata to work in the tannery areas for four to six months.

The field visit ended with a dinner at the Chinatown.

Report on EMMIR Presentations Session 1

Christine Jentsch's paper, *'Critical Discourse Analysis of Narratives about Irregular Migration in France,'* explores how political discourse in France frames irregular labour migrants and examines the dissonance between these narratives and migrants' lived realities. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), her study centres on themes of legal exclusion, contextualised through the concepts of illegality and securitisation. Her analysis uncovers a concerning trend: discourse surrounding border control and migration, once predominantly associated with right-wing politics, is increasingly evident across the political spectrum, including left-leaning parties. Migrants are often depicted as a "threat" or as "undeserving", perpetuating stigma. These narratives significantly impact migrants' lived experiences, heightening their vulnerability to exploitation and precarious conditions. This indicates that political rhetoric not only mirrors societal attitudes but also actively shapes the structural vulnerabilities faced by migrants.

Georgia Howitt-Sutton in her paper *'Safe and Legal Routes? Examining the UK Government's Practices Towards the Resettlement of Ukrainians,'* investigates the United Kingdom's private sponsorship scheme for Ukrainian refugees. She critiques this approach, increasingly adopted by states, as a means of shifting responsibility from governments to individuals, thereby narrowing formal protection mechanisms. Analysing Facebook posts from the "UK Homes for Ukrainians" group between April and July 2022, Howitt-Sutton explores how refugees navigate this unregulated process to secure sponsors. Her preliminary findings reveal that refugees often employ empathetic, deserving language to distance themselves from securitised narratives. This rhetoric mirrors existing social hierarchies and power dynamics, with the scheme described by some scholars as akin to "a Tinder for refugees." Ultimately, she argues, this privatisation of migration management undermines the state's role in refugee protection and places the burden on individual citizens.

Irene Vettiyadan in her presentation *'Non-formal Education for People on the Move – An Inclusive Approach for Reconnection and Agency,'* explores how non-formal education addresses the learning, social, and emotional needs of migrant children. Defined as learning beyond traditional classrooms, it treats every interaction as a potential educational experience. Adopting a decolonial perspective, Vettiyadan challenges knowledge hierarchies by valuing all forms of knowledge equally. Using Critical Literacy Pedagogy, she examines power dynamics through a case study at an Open Culture Centre in Polykastro, Greece. Her auto-ethnographic approach, combined with arts-based participatory methods and critical performative pedagogy, fostered agency and social connection among the children.



EMMIR Presentations

Johanna Krysl in her paper *'Navigating Life Realities and Self-Definition Between Skilled Labour Migration and Expatriatism: High-Skilled Female Migrants,'* Johanna Krysl explores the experiences of German women who have made India their home, drawing insights from her own life as a German living in India. Her research examines their motivations, challenges, and evolving notions of "home" and "homeland." Guided by frameworks of labour migration, expatriatism, and concepts of home, Krysl investigates questions such as what drives these women to relocate to India and how

they define and experience belonging in a foreign country. Through in-depth interviews lasting 1 to 1.5 hours—conducted both in person and online—she uncovers the distinct ways these women navigate legal, familial, and societal challenges in their new environment.

Mariana Valtierra Chico's work *'Climate-Induced Migration as an Adaptation Strategy for Women in Central America's Dry Corridor'* explores the gendered impacts of climate change in Central America's Dry Corridor, focusing on women's disproportionate vulnerability and migration dynamics. Covering Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, the region faces extreme climatic events that often lead to forced migration. Valtierra Chico highlights how traditional gender roles may tether women to their communities, raising concerns about those unable to migrate and the policies needed to support them. In Mexico, migrants from the Dry Corridor now rank among the top ten asylum seekers, reflecting the impact of stricter U.S. border controls on migration routes.

Report on EMMIR Presentations Session 2

Raquel Freitas de Carvalho presented a research paper *'The Participation of Migrants in Land Squats and the Right to the City: A Case Study of the Nova Esperança Community in Paraná, Brazil.'* de Carvalho examines Brazil's long-standing inequality in land ownership, rooted in Portuguese colonisation, and its lack of meaningful agrarian reform. She highlights ongoing popular resistance, such as widespread squats accompanied by the protest chant, *'our struggle is every day'*, which voices demands for dignified housing and urban access. Many squats are in peripheral areas with limited social services, including *Comunidade Nova Esperança*, a settlement established in 2020 on Curitiba's outskirts. This community is home to over 5,000 people, including more than 1,000 Haitian migrants. De Carvalho's research investigates the barriers Haitian migrants face in accessing the city of Curitiba and their reasons for joining squats like Nova Esperança. By addressing this through secondary sources and online interviews with residents, she fills a critical gap in the literature on migrant participation in

informal settlements in Brazil. Her study offers insights into urban marginalisation and migrants' struggle for inclusion in the city.

Regina Domino's paper, *'Returning Heroes: Filipino Migrant Workers Confront a Devastated Economy,'* explored the challenges faced by Filipino workers returning home, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many migrants, often employed abroad in industries like construction, returned due to job losses during the pandemic. This raised questions about whether their return signified economic success or failure. While some view returnees as having achieved financial stability, others see their return as a result of unfulfilled aspirations abroad. Regina discussed the limited social protection migrants receive in host countries and their reliance on state policies, NGOs, market mechanisms, and social ties in the Philippines for support. She introduced the concept of transnational social protection, noting that Filipino migrants maintain strong ties with both their home and host countries. Return migration is not solely about remittances but also about achieving social inclusion. However, Regina identified gaps in the Philippines' reintegration policies, which focus on skills development but lack comprehensive support for sustainable reintegration. She stressed the importance of enhancing social protection systems that respect migrants' agency. To address these challenges, she proposed developing a Management Information System (MIS) to profile returnees and match them with job opportunities, aiming to improve reintegration strategies beyond entrepreneurship programmes.

Sophie Scheingraber's presentation, *'Disinformation campaigns targeting Ukrainian refugees since the start of Russia's war of aggression contributing to the reproduction and reinforcement of anti-Slavic stereotypes and racism,'* examined how disinformation has perpetuated anti-Slavic sentiment in Germany, with Ukrainian refugees as a central target. She traced anti-Slavism back to the Enlightenment, where Slavic peoples were racialised and marginalised through cultural imposition. This historical prejudice, reinforced by colonialism, positioned Slavs as inferior in the European racial hierarchy, despite their contemporary classification as "white." A post-1945 gap in representation and literature further entrenched their marginalisation. In the 21st century, disinformation on social media, driven by political groups like the AfD, CDU, and BSW, has intensified these stereotypes, often aligning with pro-Russian interests. Such narratives depict Ukrainian refugees as threats to European identity or undeserving of support, relying on ingrained stereotypes of backwardness and criminality. Scheingraber argued that while Ukrainians may be perceived as "white" and at times more privileged compared to other migrant groups, they also remain subject to racialised discrimination. These disinformation campaigns have not only reinforced harmful stereotypes but have also shaped public perceptions, contributing to the broader marginalisation of Ukrainian refugees. Her presentation highlighted the intersection of historical racialisation and modern disinformation, demonstrating how both factors have cultivated a hostile environment for Ukrainian refugees in Europe today.

Theresa Schmidt's paper, *'Towards a Better Quality of Life? Challenging the Migration-Development Nexus: The Cases of Precarious Conditions of Migrant Workers in Rural and Urban Southern Europe,'* critiques the prevailing narrative that migration universally drives development and improves quality of life. While international organisations often frame migration as an economic choice with benefits for migrants, host countries, and their countries of origin, Schmidt highlights the overlooked realities of migrants facing precarious conditions. Many who come to the European Union seeking better lives, particularly in Southern Europe's agrarian sector, encounter exploitative working and living conditions that contradict the migration-development narrative. Schmidt challenges this perspective by examining how the focus on economic gains disregards the plight of migrants in precarious situations. Her research applies the lens of precarity to explore three dimensions of their experiences: working conditions, living conditions, and legal status, including their rights. By analysing these aspects, Schmidt underscores the disconnect between the idealised narrative of migration as a pathway to economic growth and the lived realities of many migrants, revealing the limitations of the migration-development nexus.

Evaluation

EVALUATION OF WORKSHOP

Evaluation of Ninth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop ‘Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants’, held at *The Sonnet* (Kolkata) on 8-14 November 2024

It was a great honour and privilege to participate in the Ninth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop ‘Global Protection of Refugees and Migrants’, held at *The Sonnet* (Kolkata) on 8-14 November 2024, organized by the Calcutta Research Group (CRG), in collaboration with Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, South Asia, Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) Vienna, and several other universities and institutes in India and abroad.

Known for its rigorous academic orientation as well as policy recommendations, CRG has been at the forefront of discussing issues regarding forced displacement, migration, refugees, social justice, labour rights, urban justice and climate crises. Over the years, the annual workshop and conference have become an important fixture of the CRG calendar. The workshop is the culmination of the three month-long hybrid mentoring course where the course participants (faculty members from various institutions, PhD scholars, independent researchers, and journalists) take part to discuss a specific research theme and develop their research paper working closely with an assigned mentor. The reworked papers were presented by the participants in the workshop.

This year the workshop had 6 core modules and 2 elective modules. Drawing participants from the South Asian countries as well as Europe, the core modules discussed issues of Protection and Punishment in Securitised States; Law and Jurisprudence; Statelessness; Gender, Race, and Religion; Refugee and Migrant Labour; Ethics of Care and Protection. The two elective modules were on Climate, Ecology, and Displacement; and Media and Migration. As is evident from this list, a diverse range of issues and topics were discussed and analysed by the participants, mentors, discussants, and the audience during the week-long proceedings. The discussions were oriented both towards policy recommendations as well as careful academic analyses of pressing issues. Various shades of conceptual understandings and theoretical interventions, backed by thorough empirical data, informed the lively discussions.

The workshop was designed carefully and meticulously. Introductory lectures by the module co-ordinators set the tone for each module, after which each participant presented their draft chapters. There were special lectures and sessions as well. The inaugural session focussed on the question of migrant labour in the unorganised sector, and the three presentations set the tone of the workshop. The

two special lectures on the issue of migration and language, and labour in the time of platform economy were also immensely informative and provocative. Then, there were the presentations by the EMMIR fellows. They introduced the European context in the overall discussion. These case studies alerted us to the question of historical differences as well as the specificities of the issues of migration, displacement, ecological factors, questions of ethics and care, among others, across the globe.

The field trip to East Kolkata Wetlands was also a major highlight of the entire programme. It showcased the lives and livelihoods of the unorganised migrant labourers working in the tanneries, various labouring groups in the waste management sector, and the world of the fishermen in the eastern peripheries of the city.

At the end, there was an open forum with the evaluators where the participants freely exchanged their views and opinions regarding the workshop, and the entire programme in general. They specifically pointed out the unique idea of blending both online and in-person interactions, which resulted in sustained conversation over few months. Almost all the participants agreed that the workshop was rigorous but immensely enriching. They benefitted from both the discussions in the panels as well as from the general conversations during breaks between the panels.

Overall, the workshop was an extraordinary experience for me. It was very well-organized, the hospitality was exceptional, and the general academic standard was very high. Parallel sessions will inevitably mean some clashes, missing out on some lectures and discussions. But that is unavoidable in this kind of large gathering. Over the nine years, CRG has perfected the art of conducting the workshop in this particular format. I am certain it will be carried forward in the coming years as well.

Research Outcomes

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Research Papers

Said Muslim Sadat, “Constructing Ethical Communities: A Case of Displaced Afghan Population in Iran” in *Policies and Practices* 158, December 2024.

Tawafuddin Azimi, “The Refugee and Citizenship Crisis in Contemporary Afghanistan,” in *Policies and Practices* 159, December 2024.

Bsel Abou Rokba, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey: An Overview,” in *Policies and Practices* 160, December 2024.

Debashree Chakraborty, “All that Climate Change Does: Mahishabeel and the 2022 Silchar Floods,” in *Policies and Practices* 161, December 2024.

Rajat Kanti Sur, “Negotiating the Idea of Security: Migrant Women Workers in Colonial and Post Colonial Calcutta (1881-1931),” in *Policies and Practices* 162, December 2024.

Syed Wasifa Mehraj Kamili, “Psychological Stressors: A study of Informal Workforce in Kashmir,” in *Policies and Practices* 163, December 2024.

Rahul Yaduka, Ajit Acharya and Ashraful Islam, “Climate and Migration,” in *Policies and Practices* 164, December 2024.

Samir Kumar Das, “Peace and People’s Security: An Agenda for Neoliberal Times,” in *Policies and Practices* 165, December 2024.

Saurabh Bhattacharjee, “Operationalising Human Security in India: Extending Legal and Social Protection to Migrants,” in *Policies and Practices* 166, December 2024.

Ritam Sengupta, “Social Security and the Protection of Digital Insecurity in Contemporary India,” in *Policies and Practices* 167, December 2024.

Sucharita Sengupta, “Human Security and Migration in South Asia: Analysing India’s Response to the Global Compact for Safe and Orderly Migration in India,” in *Policies and Practices* 168, December 2024.

Policy Briefs

Paula Banerjee and Arie Ekawie Baskoro, *Interstate Protection of Migrant Workers in India: Harmonisation of National Legislation and Global Standards for Sustainable Social Justice*, December 2024.

Gopal Krishna, *Working and Living Environment of the Labour in the Hazardous Industry: Legal Remedy for Migrant Workers and their Families in the Asbestos Industry and Construction Industry*, December 2024.

Creative Report

Shatabdi Das, *Environmental Hazards and Vulnerability: The Case of Bengal*, December 2024.

List of Workshop Participants & Organising Team

PARTICIPANTS' LIST (WORKSHOP)

Anjali J. Indian Police Foundation, India
Anindyo Jyoti Majumdar, Jadavpur University, India
Arup Kumar Sen, Calcutta Research Group, India
Basel Abou Rokba, Andra University, India
Britta Petersen, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-South Asia, India
Christine Jentsch, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Debashree Chakraborty, Calcutta Research Group, India
Dev Baraya, Progressive International, India
Dolma Tsering, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Taiwan/ Tibet
Georgia Howitt Setton, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Gopal Krishna, Patna High Court, India
Gurleen Kaur, Asia in Global Affairs, India
Iman Kumar Mitra, Shiv Nadar University, India
Irene Sacchetti, Nottingham Trent University, UK
Irene Vettiyadan, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Jayshree Kumar, Independent Journalist, India
Jitendra Kumar, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-South Asia, India
Johanna Krysl, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Joyce C.H. Liu, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Taiwan
Joydeep Sarkar, Independent Researcher, India
Julija Kekstaite, Ghent University, Belgium and CRG, India
K. M. Parivelan, Woxsen University, India
Kaustubh Mani Sengupta, Shiv Nadar University, India
Lina Dey, Calcutta Research Group, India
Madhurilata Basu, Sarojini Naidu College for Women, India
Manish K. Jha, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai Campus), India
Mariana Valtierra Chico, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Marie Caroline Saglio Yatzimirsky, The Institute of Convergences Migrations, France
Mohammed Imtiyaz, Jamia Milia Islamia, India
Mouleshri Vyas, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai Campus), India
Munazah Shakeel, Independent Journalist, India
N. Pautunthang, Institute for Social and Economic Change, India
Nasreen Chowdhory, University of Delhi, India
Neha Naqvi, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-South Asia, India
Paula Banerjee, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

Pooja Priya, University College of Cork, UK
Poushali Basak, Calcutta Research Group, India
Pulkit Buttan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai Campus), India
Ranabir Samaddar, Calcutta Research Group, India
Rajat Roy, Calcutta Research Group, India
Rajat Kanti Sur, Calcutta Research Group, India
Raquel Freitas de Carvalho, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Regina Domino, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (Mohali), India
Rituparna Datta, Calcutta Research Group, India
Sabeena Khatoon, University of Hyderabad, India
Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University, India
Sahana Basavapatna, Trial Courts of Bengaluru, India
Said Muslim Sadat, Mahatma Gandhi University, India
Samaresh Guchhait, Calcutta Research Group, India
Samata Biswas, The Sanskrit College and University, India
Samir Kumar Das, University of Calcutta, India
Sangbida Lahiri, J.K. Lakshmipat University, India
Sariful Islam, South Asian University, Bangladesh/India
Sevasti Trubeta, Magdeburg Stendal University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Shatabdi Das, Calcutta Research Group, India
Shreyosee Sen, Jadavpur University, India
Shyamalendu Majumdar, Calcutta Research Group, India
Sophie Scheingraber, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Spriha Roy, Observer Research Foundation, India
Srajan Srivastava, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India
Sucharita Sengupta, Calcutta Research Group, India
Sujata Roy, Sarojini Naidu College for Women, India
Syed Wasifa Mehraj Kamili, University of Kashmir, India
Tahseen Fatima, University of Delhi, India
Tawafuddin Azimi, Mahatma Gandhi University, India
Theresa Schmidt, Carl Von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany
Tushar Dakua, International Institute for Population Sciences, India

ORGANISING TEAM

Ashok Kumar Giri

Debashree Chakraborty

Lina Dey

Partha Protim Sarkar

Poushali Basak

Rajat Kanti Sur

Raj Kumar Mahato

Rituparna Datta

Samaresh Guchhait

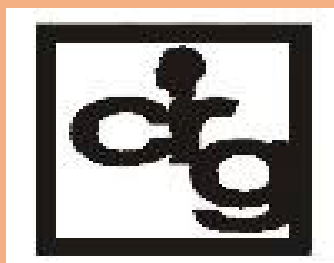
Shatabdi Das

Subhashree Rout

Sucharita Sengupta



Ninth Annual Workshop 2024



CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP
IA-48, SECTOR-III, SALT LAKE
KOLKATA-700097
www.mcrg.ac.in