

REPORT OF THE

Final Year of the Research and Dialogue Programme

on

**Cities, Rural Migrants, & the Urban Poor:
Issues of Violence and Social Justice**

The Ordinary City and Explorations of an Urban Future

**Calcutta Research Group
2017**



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Introduction

Over the last year, the Calcutta Research Group (CRG), in collaboration with Ford Foundation, continued doing research on the condition of the urban poor in India, the attending dynamics of urbanization and the related issues of social justice and protection from violence. The earlier report (2016, http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Rural_Migrants/Final_Research_Briefs.pdf) had covered the work of 2014-16 in this area. This is the final report, which covers the work of 2016-17. This report draws upon all the earlier activities under the same research and dialogue theme. The relevant information is on the CRG website. The relevant links are:

- http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Rural_Migrants/Rural_Migrants_Concept.asp
- http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Rural_Migrants/Rural_Migrants_Events.asp
- http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Rural_Migrants/Rural_Migrants_Report.asp
- http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Rural_Migrants/Rural_Migrants_Publications.asp
- http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Rural_Migrants/Rural_Migrants_Links.asp

It is necessary to mention that these links have been visited by many researchers, journalists, students and teachers, who could access all the research material and the database, which had been put online. The print versions of the research papers and earlier reports have been exhausted.

The research in the final year aimed at exploring some of the new issues raised in course of addressing the core research themes in the preceding two years. As part of the project, in August 2017 the Calcutta Research Group organised a Public Lecture by Subir Sinha from SOAS, London, on “Separation, Mobility and the Ordinary City: On Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity”. The Public Lecture served as the prelude to the Sixth Critical Studies Conference, opening up space for further and intensive discussion on research being done on a plethora of concerns and issues, all relevant to the central theme of migrants and urbanization. The conference saw the presentation of research work done on such varied areas as urban governance, gender and migration, vulnerable bodies and marginal subjectivities, transformation of the cityscape, and the urban question and the Northeast. While the cityscapes of Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata featured prominently in the work presented at the conference, research on the conditions and lives of migrants in such cities as Jaipur, Bangalore and Hyderabad, and states in the Northeast such as Assam within India, and cities abroad such as Dhaka in Bangladesh, and Johannesburg in South Africa were also presented and discussed.

In the same spirit of wider enquiry and interrogation of broader themes arising out of the research on rural-urban migration, such as environment and migration, small towns and migration, logistics and migration, etc., the final workshop was held in Kolkata on “Towns and Migrants: Explorations of an Urban Future” on 26 - 27 December 2017. The workshop was more structured in its form and approach to the project, and concentrated on three domains, once again pertinent to the overarching theme of migrants and urbanization – frontier towns and cities, small towns and census towns and the changing face of urban activism.

Several other initiatives were accomplished in this period. As part of the research, CRG researchers also completed a collective work on rivers, ecology, and migration in eastern and northeast India and made it ready for publication. Already, a summary of the researches has been translated into Hindi and Bengali. Two books will be published on the basis of the three year research, both to be published by Orient Blackswan (2018): The first is titled, *Migrant and the Neo-liberal City*, and the second *Ecology, Precarity and Migration in the Riverlands of Bihar, Bengal and the Northeast*. The initial research on the second theme was

carried out in 2014-15 with the support of the IUCN (International Union of Conservation of Nature). Another volume will be published, consisting of selected papers presented in the Sixth Critical Studies Conference.

In this period books were added to the library of Calcutta Research Group. A particular section of the library has been created specifically for these books, and other academic resources associated with the project. The website of CRG is in the process of developing a new section dedicated to the theme of city and migration, and themes of preceding research done in collaboration with Ford Foundation, such as autonomy, governance, and social justice. All the research and archival material will be available for readers' use. In this period CRG also digitised the entire collection of *International Migration Review* for 1995-2005. It will now be made available to all those who are interested in research and scholarly work on migration.

Finally, as suggested in the preceding paragraph, the entire research had several intense workshops, series of public lectures, dialogues, and produced reports and publishable findings. CRG researchers placed their findings in academic forums, before students, interacted with journalists, wrote in newspapers and e-columns, and the findings were widely disseminated through newspapers and television channels, which reported CRG's work.

This report is divided into four sections. The first section contains research briefs by researchers and scholars. The second section provides the schedules and reports of the public lectures, conference and the final workshop. The third section lists publications. The fourth section lists researchers and participants who participated in the programmes.

The purpose of publication of this report is three-fold: first, to reinforce the point that the migrant sits at the heart of the city in the neo-liberal time; second, to suggest a provisional theoretical framework that can accommodate the figure of the migrant labourer as a critical element in the transformation of the city; and third - and this has enormous policy implications - to acknowledge the invisibility of the migrant in contemporary discourses (both official and otherwise), of urban development. The research has brought to light the neglect in governmental policies of the rural migrants, their lives, and conditions. The research shows that the neglect is compounded by a continuous attempt to sidestep these issues in order to maintain a sanitized, gentrified, and aestheticized vision of the city. One may argue that this attitude reflects the relationship between labour and urban space - the fundamental problematic in the emergence of the modern neo-liberal city.

All these studies taken together, point to a detailed and much more nuanced understanding of the centrality of the migrant figure in urban policy discourses of contemporary times. They also introduce a novel way of studying the ground-level practices of construction of the identity of the migrant and its relation with the violence visiting the migrants almost on daily basis. Two further forms of violence are at work here: one is the violence of omission which dilutes the actual imperative of social justice by overlooking the acts of discrimination; and second is the categorical violence which results from the failure to challenging the existing narratives of homogeneity produced through a nexus of exploitative and extractive mechanisms. In opposition to this approach, this report seeks to disintegrate the singular category of the migrant worker along the lines of various social, political and economic markers such as gender, class, caste, age, place of origin, etc, and explore the structural relation between the production of urbanity and informalization of labour in contemporary India. In conversation with each other, the research briefs in this report will hopefully offer a comprehensive outlook on the linkages between migration and urban policy, and delineate a unique research agenda required to critically engage with existing policies on labour and urbanity.

Indeed the last workshop was specifically held with the aim of outlining the first rough draft of that research agenda, namely while attention is overwhelmingly on big cities,

what is happening to small, medium, and census towns? How is the fate of such towns too linked with migration? In what way are these towns shaping Indian politics? The story of Indian democracy, development, and the quest for social justice will be incomplete without such an investigation. It will complement the past research on migration to big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata.

Section I

RESEARCH BRIEFS

Theme I

The Ordinary City

- *Separation, Mobility and the Ordinary City: On Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity / Subir Sinha*

The paper centred on what was categorized as a paradigmatic city, an archetype; colonial and postcolonial notions of 'city-ness'; and the postcolonial city that was an exemplary to cities that were removed from the administrative centres of state and capitalist power, in other words, the ordinary city. Subir Sinha in his paper offered a critique of the existent paradigms of urbanism and what was perceived as constituting 'city-ness' in the postcolonial context be it Latin American or the Indian context. Sinha contended that the 'paradigmatic city' was a myth, an artificial construct, a fabrication, or at the most a 'fleeting reality'. It served as a flawed model for deconstructing post-colonial cities. Its creation and continuance were the consequences of a connivance of social theory, comprising radical social theory and its postcolonial variations. The paradigmatic city was entrenched in 'separations', 'segregations', 'flows' and mobilities', which were consciously preserved by urban planning and was not an epitome of the attributes of universalism and modernity as advocated by social theory. On the contrary it encompassed aspects of exclusion and violence.

The radical variations of social theory perceived the city as a 'generalized condition of sociality', a platform to insert a series of radical transformations suggesting that in its absence there would be "no civil society, no intellectuals and masses, no public spaces or spheres, no working class, no mass political party, no revolution". In reality, Sinha contends that cities have always been sites of segregation or separation either by way of erected walls, gates and armed fortifications, in terms of racial and class segregations and even more pronounced in the form of settlements and in colonies. It was only since the 1960s with its pronounced racial eruptions that the fascination with the paradigmatic city began to wane.

The other focal point of the paper was what Sinha refers to as the concept of ordinariness or the 'ordinary' city connoting in his words, 'the new outsides of old cities, and of other, more remote centre of inhabitation'. The characteristic features of ordinariness (following as Sinha observes, Sanyal and Bhattacharya) being the dominance of the information sector, self-employment, partial integration of the informal sector with national and global capital though predominantly non-capital, inadequate international financing and banking facilities, a lack of basic utilities and the preponderance of adhocism or "jugaad", the informality perhaps accruing out of exclusion or adverse incorporation. Beset by contradictions, marked by natural calamities, violence and incessant civil war are prevalent both inside and outside the paradigmatic city wherein securitization is institutionalized. Separation in the ordinary city is discernible by way of 'lifestyle choices' and 'aesthetic demands'. It is marked by an absence of the politics of the street and quiet encroachment as well as the aspect of anonymity that is manifestly missing. It is distinguished by the virtual nonexistence of civil and political society. The ordinary city is characterized by inequality of power and the concentration of power is in the hands of a strongman rather than the state.

However ordinary cities can be transnational as well as translocal and the concepts of separation and restrictions within these cities demand consideration. The ordinary city is projected as the future of the postcolonial metropolis, the result of the migrations of the decades of 1990s and 2000s, the upshot of private accumulation and advance of capitalism, a situation ripe for the contestations and protests by the new entrants and the subalterns.

Sinha concluded with the observation that the perfect/paradigmatic city, worthy of emulation is a misnomer. The fact of the matter is that in contemporary circumstances where mass migrations and the war on terror are the norms, the concept of a universal citizen is incongruous and it is the paradigmatic city that becomes a post-colonial one and not the other way round. Similarly the ordinary city will never really graduate into a post-colonial metropolis but it is the latter that will be converted into a larger version of the ordinary city. The starting point for any construction should be the ordinary city with an emphasis on the common nature of a city along with its heterogeneity.

- ***Camps and Cities: the Making of Citizens at the Margin/ Nasreen Chowdhory***

The task of the paper is two-fold. First, it argues that camp for refugees is no longer exceptional, it is active political space for refugees to engage with ideas of belonging and second, it is a place to assert claims of citizenship. Drawing from citizenship discourse the paper engages with the literature to assert that the right-based analysis has attempted to engage with non-citizens, and India is no exception to the rule. The concept of citizenship has been stretched to accommodate some of the basic developments and need of human existence, but it has remained individual focused, while the rights of aliens and migrants have remained in the periphery. Sassen argues post-national citizenship is more broad-based than the concept of denationalized citizenship, as state remains the point of interest, citizenry rights evolves outside the state, while denationalized is when citizenship rights remains within the domains of the state. While the debate appears to be dominated by the concept of denationalized and post-national, it subsumes citizenship as universal rights by virtue. Secondly, the paper seeks to engage with Agamben's understanding of camp, but moving away from 'idealization and ahistorical' notion of camp, i.e., by re-centering the analysis of camps away from exceptionality, and 'de-exceptionalising the exception' to paraphrase the political theorist Bonnie Honig. The paper interrogates a more agent-driven, political membership of inhabitants, especially those who are more rooted in materiality of the camp. This is not to suggest that camp space neutralizes form of hierarchies of inclusion and questions of membership, instead it allows inhabitants to negotiate, contest varied notions of belongings through their everyday engagement with state to seek entitlements for themselves. The paper seeks to argue that the idea of citizenship has evolved to engage with claims of citizenship making of refugee groups in India.

- ***Criminalizing the Migrant: Street carriers and the Colonial State in 19th-20th century Calcutta and Bengal/ Somdatta Chakraborty***

This paper enquires into the contested spaces of negotiations between the colonial state and the street carriers of late 19th and mid twentieth century Calcutta and beyond. A conspicuous section of the working-class stock manned the different kinds of transports running in the city. As with time, this class went on swelling, in number and influence, among its working-class peers, the British government saw to it that they do not experience social mobility and thus remain confined within their peripheral, migrant identity. Running on mappable roads and alleys, it was comparatively easier to circumscribe their existence. Here by 'street carriers', Chakraborty principally implies the hackney carriage drivers and palanquin bearers who operated in the rivers and seas of Calcutta and the Bengal Presidency between the mid nineteenth and early twentieth century and use this term to this intent throughout the article. Originating mostly from Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, the hackney carriage drivers or the palanquin bearers were migrants who had contributed significantly to the morphological evolution of Calcutta. As the city grew from strength to

strength, its civic life and public sphere expanded which necessitated greater logistical connectivity. Thus, over time as such street carriers began to form the dominant sections of the transport labour force on road, they became more visible and thus susceptible to the grids of colonial control. Archival documents corroborate how the state's drive to define the multiple spheres of operation of the labouring section was elaborate and many pronged. Thus, while licensing was a chosen modality of control, labelling them as 'counterfeiters', 'truants' or 'deviants' was yet another. Through this paper, Chakraborty discusses and dissects how the colonial state systematically strove to 'otherize' this sizeable section of workers by officially portraying them as transgressors. As the workers retaliated, their response to such state sponsored censorship and criminalizing added to the ongoing discourse of power and hegemony.

- ***The Production of a 'Migrant' versus the 'Local': The Case of a Right-Wing All-Male Organization on the Margins of the City / Radhika Raj***

This paper argues that the idea of a 'migrant' is deliberately produced and mobilized to advance political agendas and is deeply influenced by class, caste, religion and regional biases. Who is a 'migrant' and who can claim to be a 'local', and in turn demand rights to the city, is a deeply political, strategic exercise. Furthermore, the production of the category of the migrant as 'unclean', 'illiterate', 'encroacher', 'undeserving', 'criminal' goes hand-in-hand with a regional right wing party's ambitions of neoliberal city-building, convincingly packaged and sold as the right of the 'local' middle-class and lower-middle class, heterosexual male. This paper unpacks and interrogates these produced, binary categories of 'local' and 'migrant', by studying sites of community organization and the role of sport, religion, local social service, in fostering this sense of 'local' at the level of a neighbourhood. Today, about 49% of Mumbai's population lives in slums, where people are forced to carve out life strategies in the face of state neglect, threat of evictions and market-friendly policies that limit possibilities for resistance and negotiation. These vulnerable informal settlements, mostly populated by religious minorities, *dalits*, migrants, are battlegrounds for mobilizations with conflicting interests, and as well as everyday resistance to state neglect. Based on year-long ethnographic fieldwork in a slum that was the site of one of India's largest Hindu-Muslim riots, the paper presents a thick description of the collective life of one *mitramandal* called Jai Jawan. Through the *mandal*, young men establish themselves as self-styled guardians of the neighbourhood and decide who can and cannot live or lay claims to the locality. Their sense of pride and belonging comes from defining themselves as original 'sons of the soil', and purpose, from their fight to safeguard their claims to city and culture against the Muslim and North Indian 'other'. These spaces, events, and institutions are keys to this understanding how these categories operate in everyday life. While participation in such religious, nationalist movements may provide young men an escape from everyday feelings of marginalization, they seriously diminish possibilities of collective public action and justice that is inclusive in nature.

- ***Interstate Migrant Workers and Social Identity: A Case Study on Malayalam Films / Prasad R***

For the past two decades interstate migrant labourers are the major suppliers of labour needs of Kerala. The availability of jobs, left behind by Malayalees who are emigrating the world over, along with higher wage rates have attracted migrant labour from South, Central, North and North Eastern parts of India to Kerala. Even migrant labourers from foreign countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh are also working in Kerala. Labour Department of

Kerala estimates that there are around twenty five lakh interstate migrants working in Kerala. The development projects of Kerala depend on this labour force. They have now become an indispensable part of Kerala. More than a labour force their presence has made wider social impacts too. Being an unorganized labour category they are socially and economically highly vulnerable in Kerala. They are exploited with, long work hours, low salary and unsafe work conditions. They are forced to live in unhygienic living conditions and are denied of basic citizenship rights. The linguistic difference adds to the problems that they confront in Kerala. In spite of all their contributions, they are still framed with in all kinds of stigma and stereotypes. This is very well reflected in Malayalam films. Over the years they are being frequently depicted in Malayalam films including the popular movies. There are films which exclusively deal with the stories of these migrant labourers. More than the print media, the visual media occupy the social spaces of Kerala to a much wider level. Hence, this has to be scrutinized at a deeper level. The present article takes up this issue by analyzing the presence of interstate migrant labourers in Malayalam films. It raises critical questions regarding how they are portrayed in Malayalam films, what is the identity they are attributed with in Malayalam films etc.? The analysis is conducted based on Malayalam films that are released during the past one year. Theoretical concerns of the paper are related to questions of identity, public sphere and social transformation.

- ***Street-food Vending: From Precarious Existence to Social Inclusion, Case Stories from Bangalore/ Annapurna Neti and Puja Guha***

The paper explores street food vending in Bangalore, from the perspective of migration, inclusion and dignity of work. Food vending is one of the oldest and an important street vending activity. It is an important livelihood opportunity for the migrants, who are often one of most precarious groups in the urban informal economy. There are several factors for the same. Firstly, street food vending sector is relatively easy to enter and requires minimal skills. Secondly, food vending has strong cultural roots. This gives the migrants the opportunity to bring in their own culture in form of food, which gets immediate social acceptance. Hence there is a higher degree of social inclusion for the migrants. Thirdly, food as a sector is looked as a noble profession, thus associating dignity to the nature of work. The paper uses case stories of street food vendors in Bangalore, both migrants and non-migrants, and makes an attempt to understand their choice of this particular livelihood activity, the challenges that they face in navigating through the socio-political space of the urban informal economy and their perception about their 'work'. The paper finally comments on the Street Vending Act (SVA) and its effect on the street food vendors, especially the migrants, posing the question whether provisioning of legal space will reduce the precariousness of the migrants or would it add to the vulnerability to their already precarious existence. The broad objectives of the paper are to examine street food vending as a sustainable livelihood activity and means of inclusion into the society, especially for migrants, in Bangalore; to understand how migrants navigate through the legal spaces of food vending and utilize their networks in doing so; and to critically examine and briefly comment on the SVA (yet to be implemented in Bangalore), in terms of possibility of inclusion of the migrant street food vendors in the larger society.

- ***Social Imaginaries and Medical Dystopia: 'Health Migrations and Care-givers' in Kolkata City from Mizoram/ Anup Shekhar Chakraborty***

The paper gleans, and construes the trends of 'health migrations' in Kolkata city from Mizoram, one of the eight states of North East of India. The bulk of the concerns that propels

this investigation revolve around: What are the social imaginaries of health at play? What is the mark left by the colonial experience in this construction and perception of health, medicalization, sanitation and well-being? Why do people move at the first place and what compels them to move and become health migrants? What are the marked signposts in health migrations? What and which group resort to such practices for treatment to become 'health migrants' and does such mobility cut across gender? Is the trend in health seeking behaviour on the rise? What are the specializations and health problems that attract such movements? What is the effect of media and advertisement on the same? What are the finance implications of such movement of people? Does it entail out of pocket expenses or health investment/ medical insurances or both? How have the trends in such health migrations affectedly transformed the urban spaces in terms of logistics/infrastructure and civic amenities etc., where such facilities/expertise are located? How has the disparate local community in such 'lived' health towns/ health cities/ health "villages" (for instance Mukundapur in Kolkata) and also the flow of myriad hues of associated people with health practices and support systems negotiated their role/spaces within the same? What is the nature of the economics at play in such health townships (service towns/cities/spaces) and its relation to health trends and practices? Also, the discussion unweaves the strange case of amorphous 'care-givers' ('trained nurses') flowing into now the 'city of health (Kolkata)' from the fringe backward (therefore unhealthy/unclean) spaces of North East of India, lived spaces which have been listed as lacking in medical facilities.

- ***Urbanisation by the Border: Reshaping the frontier space in Northeast India / Snehashish Mitra***

By investigating the urban formation of Champhai town, the paper showcases how the concepts and imaginations one associates with the city as a global centre, such as flows, transactions, governing institutions and interactions, resurface in a frontier space with its own unique specificities and spatio-ethnic rhythm. Until recently frontier has been considered to be an area considerably out of the reach of the state with its own dynamics of resistance, internalization and innovation; recent global wide endeavours of cross border connectivity has bought the frontier areas under the logistical lens and which in turn has attested the status of 'logistical hubs/towns' to the border settlement and towns. While the paper begins with the agenda of interrogating the urbanism of Champhai across the borders, the preceding sections point out that the connotations of being situated in a borderland doesn't restricts itself to Champhai and expands across Mizoram. Management of the flows across border will shape Champhai's future and will be crucial to the Mizo identity project. The national borders don't always coincide with the borders of ethnic solidarity and imagination. Also the national border creates the notion of citizenship which at times undermines the communitarian linkages. The anticipated vibrancy created in the borderlands as a result of its spatially transitional status would likely steer the peripheries into trajectories which would have the potential to be less dependent, if not independent, from the centre. Sufficiency if achieved would naturally lead to an enhanced bargaining power of local power hierarchies and may as well reorient the terms of border and citizenship in the region. Therefore it's through the contradictions of flows and fixities that Mizoram has to navigate its way from a frontier space to a probable post-frontier space in the coming days wherein the role and functioning of border towns like Champhai will have considerable bearings.

- ***The Role of the State in Urban Violence Against Marginalized Castes: Manual Scavenging in India Today/V. Ramaswamy & V. Srinivasan***

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) define an improved sanitation facility as “one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact.” These facilities include connections to public sewers, as well as onsite sanitation systems such as septic tanks, pour-flush latrines, simple pit latrines, pit latrines with slabs, ventilated improved pit latrines, and composting toilets. On paper, the progressive adoption of these facilities counts towards reaching the MDG targets, but in reality, most improved urban sanitation facilities may in turn be leading to the violation of the human rights of highly marginalized communities. Based on UNDP data from 2006, WaterAid reported that India’s military budget is eight times greater than their funds allocated to water and sanitation. Diarrhoea claims some 450,000 lives every year in India – more than in any other country. During a meeting in Bellagio, Italy, in 2000, an expert group brought together by the Environmental Sanitation Working Group of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council agreed that current waste management policies and practices are abusive to human well-being, economically unaffordable and environmentally unsustainable. They therefore called for a radical overhaul of conventional policies and practices worldwide, and of the assumptions on which they are based in order to accelerate progress towards the objective of universal access to safe environmental sanitation, within a framework of water and environmental security and respect for the economic value of waste. In this backdrop, we look at the inhuman practice of manual scavenging that is found in India. The paper brings to light the reasons why manual scavenging continues to exist in India today. The very existence of manual scavenging must be seen as a form of state violence, especially when there are explicit orders from the Supreme Court on the matter. The state is directly responsible, through its acts, or failure to act, and the state also supports and reinforces attitudes and social practices stemming from caste and untouchability.

- ***Citizenship, Urban Governance and Access to Civic Services: Delhi Municipal Elections 2017/Rumki Basu and Moitree Dey***

The research paper studies the implications of the changing demographic profile of Delhi, the different urban needs of its residents and its changing implications for urban governance. It looks at the statutory difference between the “planned” and the “unplanned” housing structures under MCD jurisdiction in terms of their impact on resident entitlements under municipal governance and studies the role of the judiciary in defining the rights of each category of “urban” citizen since all evictions from “unauthorized” colonies have been carried out by the executive under court orders. Finally, it analyzes the new ideas that have been floated in the manifestoes of BJP and AAP in terms of citizenship and civic services in urban governance given the irreversible demographic profile of a city which has only 25% of its residents living in “planned” colonies entitled to “civic” services as defined under the Municipal Corporation Act of Delhi the marginalized castes. The research looks at both models: (a) “universal” or (b) “differentiated” in terms of citizen access to basic urban civic services and offer a rationale for choosing one or the other for the city of Delhi. The “majority” of Delhi’s urban dwellers are floating migrants with no clearly defined rights to its urban city space or its civic services. It proposes that should there be a universal entitlement policy with regard to basic civic services (bench marks universally defined) for all city dwellers, or should all basic amenities be given access on the basis of “private capacity to pay” or the “ability to pay” mandatory taxes? This is the basic research question this paper addresses.

- ***Gender-based violence on Less Advantaged Migrant Women in Peri-urban Johannesburg and how They Respond/Nora S. von Kitzing***

This paper examines how less advantaged migrant women (less advantaged in respect to their legal status: irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) navigate Soweto and Diepsloot, Johannesburg in light of recent gender-based violence incidences and xenophobic attacks by the police, taxi drivers and the broader society. These peri-urban settlements are reported to have some of the highest gender-based violence prevalence in South Africa, 500 sexual-assault cases were reported to the Diepsloot police since 2013. The South African Police Service recorded 51,895 sexual assaults in 2015/16 in all of South Africa. Most recently there has been an intensified public response resulting from recent rapes in taxis and the police being reluctant to help. In 2017 foreign-owned shops were looted and three foreign nationals were killed in Jeppestown, Johannesburg. The goal is to show how less advantaged migrant women experience, negotiate and respond to xenophobic treatment and especially gender-based violence. Moreover, the intersectionality of their 'illegality' and 'womanhood' is explored, to highlight their particular vulnerability and showcase the fluidity of xenophobic and gender-based violence. With a 'right to the city' approach, the essay draws out how women's rights are diminished in urban spaces. It further explores how less advantaged migrant women navigate the city with the politics of invisibility, how they choose to remain in abusive relationships to avoid other more violent public spaces, and how they participate in the political 'protest' culture to strive for gender and urban justice. Binaries such as colonized/free black women's bodies are illustrated. The contrast of citizen/migrant rights and the diverging reality is demonstrated. In addition, concepts of visible/invisible borderlines are explored.

- ***Gender, Migration and The City: An Alternative Perspective from The Global South/Oindrila Datta Gupta***

The paper deconstructs the traditional understanding of migration and studies the theoretical underpinnings of female migration in the cities while understanding the circumstances under which they migrate, the conditions, experiences as well as responses from the host city and the state in context of globalization, acceleration, differentiation, politicization and feminization. It anchors the migration of women in the cities for definite work especially in domestic roles and examines whether the migration of women in contemporary world is re-inscribing the histories of migration and exploitation or generating new ones in the process. As cities become the spaces for women migrants to escape the discrimination and exercise freedom they also get plugged into the informal market such as trafficking, sex industry, and low paid domestic work rendering them invisible in the entire economic circuit. Female migration mainly in the urban locales accompanies a production of changing role of women in their families and home country. Migrating independently, they assume the role of main economic providers and heads of households thereby acting actively in public and social roles reinforcing their status and reconfiguring gender relations and power equations in the urban space thereby carving a new space for them. The paper while looking into theoretical aspects also investigates the issues and challenges faced by the women migrants in the global south (developing countries) mainly in Indian mega cities, such as Kolkata, Delhi, and Mumbai and analyze the legal framework for the women refugees and migrants who are stationed here. The gendering of city engages historical, social and political processes theoretically to understand women as subject and city as an object of the study, helping to understand

women as crucial actors in the cities contesting, resisting the patriarchal structures and striving for justice in the urban spaces carved by them. The study helps to expose the multi-level character of gendered belongingness in the city, its inclusivity in the urban governance to tackle crime, violence and inequality in the cities towards women inviting more women representation leading to a transformation of the cities in the global south.

- ***Migrant Women's Aspirations in the City/ Mithun Som***

There is an increasing trend of women migrating alone to the city for education or employment in the last couple of decades. Increased presence of women in the cities plays out in a different way than men. Their presence in public spaces brings in a certain tension related to their sexuality. The city perceives a threat that sexuality pose to the functioning and imagining of the city. There have been gendered critiques on urban spaces which were part of the larger debates going on, on the threat being perceived by women's appearance in public spaces. While critiquing Henri Lefebvre's idea of "right to city", Tovi Fenster had argued that "right to city" had overlooked the patriarchal power control which stops women from accessing public spaces of a city. Liz Bondi and Linda McDowell had unearthed the loopholes in urban planning and geographies, where the gendered perspective to plan a city have always been overlooked by the planners. In order to understand how the women migrating alone to the city are posing questions and causing 'unrest', one needs to understand what does the city mean for a migrant woman and how does she interact with the city. What brings her to the city and what does she aspire for? How does the baggage of caste, class, region and religion with which she enters the city plays a crucial role as to where she gets located in the city? And in what way the complexity of other factors like support network, interaction with institutions play a role. Through this paper, these questions are addressed to try and understand in what way the women migrating to the city are changing the narrative. This study is based on in-depth interviews of 51 women who have migrated alone to the city of Hyderabad for education or job. These interviews are conducted as part of the ongoing project on "City and Sexuality- Study with Youth Living and Working in Hyderabad City" at Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies.

- ***Exploring the Environment and Migration Nexus in the Brahmaputra Valley/ Murchana Roychoudhury***

For the longest time, the Brahmaputra has been the source of inspiration for many poets and story tellers from Assam. Like the inhabitants along its banks, the Brahmaputra embraces a heterogeneous identity. This paper is a retelling of the narrative of the banks of the river, incorporating its dynamic elements and weaving together stories of the people displaced due to environmental factors. The 1970s saw researchers venture into a new kind of academic discourse that made linkages between environmental degradation and migration. Despite these attempts, the international community has failed to come to a consensual understanding of terms like "environment migrants" and "climate refugees". The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) has no mandate for so-called "climate displacement" as it falls beyond the scope of its Statute and the Refugee Convention. This lack of universal recognition of the problem is a cause of concern, especially in the eastern parts of India. The districts of Assam located in the lower course of the Brahmaputra like Dhubri, Goalpara and Barpeta feature in the world map as "hotspots" for climate change. The people living in these areas are particularly vulnerable to effects of climate change which manifest in the form of frequent floods, steady erosion of the banks due to change in

the volume of water and lack of availability of fresh water. This paper focuses solely on the nature of forced internal migration as a result of displacement due to the above reasons. This study is an inter-disciplinary approach to comprehend climate-change induced 'internal migration' using qualitative research. Lack of universally recognized definitions that differentiate 'environment migrant' from others constrains the study to secondary sources like journals, relevant books and government reports. It also examines various indices like the Environment Vulnerability Index throughout the discussion. To conclude, this paper establishes the fact that environment degradation and effects of climate change on the river Brahmaputra are a significant cause of internal migration from areas close to the river in lower Assam to the urban centres.

- ***Exploring Sub-National State-led Responses to Climate Change: A Case Study of the Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change / Shiladitya Ray***

In November 2015, the Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) was formally launched as a part of the Centre's initiative to tackle climate change through state-level action plans. Assam, according to several studies, "falls within areas of greatest climate sensitivity, maximum vulnerability, and lowest adaptive capacity". Adding to this very observable vulnerability of Assam is an often, under-recognized factor – demographic shifts and associated economic, social, political, and security-related pressures arising from climate change-induced internal migration within, and external migration into Assam. Dealing with this problem requires a two pronged approach – first, there arises a need for universally defining terms like "environment refugees" and/or "climate migrants". Second, it not only requires the state to be active in rehabilitation efforts, it also requires conceptualization and creation of alternative livelihoods and sustainable infrastructures in climate change "hotspots" so that inhabitants have other alternatives to migration. Thus, while the adoption of the SAPCC marks a progressive step in the battle against climate change, is it broad enough in its scope? Does it only take into account the effects of climate change in relation to natural resource management and the environment, or does it adopt a more dynamic approach wherein it factors in other variables like the effects (good or bad) of climate change-induced migration? The study attempts to assess the situation from the government's point of view. For this, government reports, policy documents, and other relevant publications have been examined. The research is done through an exploratory approach and with qualitative methods. Keeping in mind the primacy of the state with regard to governing climate change, an attempt has been made to explore how the Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) is looking to mitigate and control the effects of climate change in Assam in general, and (if at all it is cognizant of, and trying to) address the issue of climate change-induced migration in Assam in particular.

- ***Environmental Migration and the Dynamics of Labour economics: Narratives from the Bank of River Brahmaputra in Post-colonial Assam / Nabajyoti Deka***

The discourse on environment induced migration is not new in the public domain. One such instance is the towns and cities located along the bank of the river Brahmaputra in Assam which are witnessing a noticeable transformation on the socio-economic front. Although the river valley has seen people migrating from different geographical regions since time unknown, it is the post-colonial period which has seen widespread movement of people across the valley, particularly to the relatively bigger towns and cities. Historically, the British were responsible for bringing large number of immigrants from the central part of

India to the valley as manpower for construction of roads, bridges, railways, tea plantations, poppy cultivation, coal mining, oil and gas, timber etc. As commercial centres and towns got established along the river side, movement of people from hinterlands to these new centres of trade & commerce in the post-colonial era has become a frequent phenomenon. But, the recent events of devastating floods - which many environmentalists argue as repercussions of climatic changes-gives a different impetus to the movement of people from rural to relatively urban locations. Large scale immigration of people from across the border, a part of which may be accounted for climatic changes in Bangladesh, has already remained a major social, political and economic reason to worry for Assam, and India. Several towns including the urban region around Guwahati has already witnessed a surge in human capital. The increase in availability of manpower, though mostly unskilled and semiskilled by nature, is already affecting the way economic activities happen in these urban centres. So, how will the changing demographics across the bank of the river Brahmaputra influence the 'labour economics' of the region? Is the climatic-change-induced migration going to re-establish new supply-demand equilibrium for the labour market? This paper attempts to understand the influence of manpower migration - particularly induced by climatic uncertainties - in reshaping the labour market in the towns and cities of Assam.

- ***Post-Industrial Urban Regeneration in a Transitional Metropolis: Implications for the Right to Adequate Housing and Environmental Justice in Urban Core / Souvanic Roy and Tathagata Chatterji***

Kolkata has been the site of historical processes of migration and cross border refugee movements into the city. Migrants have found access to affordable housing through the Thika Tenancy Act. Refugees have been accommodated through informal vesting of seized lands and by giving them access to informal jobs such as hawking in a bid to consolidate the incoming population into a vote bank. However, as the state seeks to turn the city into a "gentleman's city", there is both the need for informal services and cheap labour as well as an increasing level of uncertainty, fear and risk that permeates into various urban poor groups - including citizens displaced by development induced displacements, or established migrant communities who are made to feel unwelcome and unwanted in a changing economy as well as among newly arriving migrants. Thus, the ability of migrants to interpret the state's and civil society's actions, or read the market's needs for informal work, and create bridges or fill in gaps left by the state - akin to what Simone terms as "people as infrastructure" is left deeply shaken and disrupted. Thus, it begs the question as to how migrants are dealing with this new climate of increased risks and new opportunities.

The authors draw our attention to the intensification of conflict in informal settlements in Kolkata where Thika Tenancy Act, which enabled migrants to access affordable housing options in the city's core areas, is being substantially diluted under the influence of property developers. Through two case studies of slums in Howrah and Kolkata, they raise important questions about the transformation of rights to housing amongst migrants and the increasing precarity faced by them.

- ***The "Invisibles" in New Town Rajarhat: the Politics of Place-making by New Migrants and the Internally Displaced Refugees of Urban Development / Ratoola Kundu***

Kolkata has been the site of historical processes of migration and cross border refugee movements into the city. Migrants have found access to affordable housing through the Thika Tenancy Act. Refugees have been accommodated through informal vesting of seized

lands and by giving them access to informal jobs such as hawking in a bid to consolidate the incoming population into a vote bank. However, as the state seeks to turn the city into a “gentleman’s city”, there is both the need for informal services and cheap labour as well as an increasing level of uncertainty, fear and risk that permeates into various urban poor groups – including citizens displaced by development induced displacements, or established migrant communities who are made to feel unwelcome and unwanted in a changing economy as well as among newly arriving migrants. Thus, the ability of migrants to interpret the state’s and civil society’s actions, or read the market’s needs for informal work, and create bridges or fill in gaps left by the state – akin to what Simone terms as “people as infrastructure” is left deeply shaken and disrupted. Thus, it begs the question as to how migrants are dealing with this new climate of increased risks and new opportunities.

This paper traces the contestations that arise between internal refugees and new migrants in an emerging urbanizing landscape that treats both groups as “invisible”. What are the networks and negotiations that new migrants and internal refugees use to access shelter and livelihood in New Town? What kinds of different skills, resources, and identities are channelled to influence these negotiations? How do we make sense of these spatial practices of migrants and refugees in a space that aspires to becoming urban and world class at the same time are some the questions that this paper seeks answers to.

- ***The ‘Entrepreneurial’ Refugee in the Bazaars: Sindhi Migrants in Jaipur’s Walled City / Garima Dhabhai***

Jaipur, located well within the North Indian heartland and the capital of a Rajput princely state was never the frontier city for transient migrant populations, who trickled into India after partition. However, the influx of Sindhi Hindu refugees to the city in the 1940s and 50s transformed it politically, culturally and materially. Jaipur is predominantly framed within another post-colonial moment- that of princely states’ merger with the Indian state and subsequent modernization of the city in the 1940s under Mirza Ismail and its ‘modern’ ruler Man Singh II. This paper braids these two frames of history (partition and merger) to understand the fashioning of Jaipur as a postcolonial capital city and subsequent infrastructural developments there. The Sindhi refugees were rehabilitated within the older precincts of Jaipur in newly created bazaars running parallel to the southern wall of the city. Over time, the wall has been declared a ‘heritage’ structure unleashing a legal battle over spaces claimed by the Sindhi traders of these markets. The paper delves into the spatial politics in the walled city of Jaipur that had originally been dominated by Hindu and Jain merchants. The uneasy relation between old traders and new entrants into the bazaar economy was also intensified by diverse social and cultural practices of these communities. The spatial and physical mapping of competing communities, like the Sindhis, Muslims and *baniya* Hindus in the walled city were undergirded by contending claims to ‘authenticity’ and ‘*purusharth*’ (entrepreneurialism). The ‘entrepreneur’ refugee became the focal point of political enunciations in post-colonial Jaipur as also the economies around capitalization of the city.

- ***Land and Labour at the ‘Borders’ of Kolkata: Refugee Lives in-between Town and Country / Himadri Chatterjee***

The paper presents an ethnographic snapshot of a peri-urban settlement (Netajipally) at the north-eastern border of Kolkata city. Drawing on field-based study the research pieces together a historically grounded montage of life narratives that speak of journeys spanning several refugee camps and agriculturist colonies. Kolkata received a significant number of

refugees from Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) during the 1947 'Partition', the communal riots of late 1950s and 60s and during the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971. A significant number of these refugees were from artisanal and peasant castes (scheduled castes) of the *Namasudra* community. This population; categorized as Rural/Agriculturist refugees; were 'dispersed' from the refugee camps in the city to agrarian colonies and work-site camps in the immediate hinterland. Simultaneously, urban planners were attempting large scale transformation of the agrarian hinterland of the city through planned transformation of land use. These attempts at spatial transformation and emplacement of the refugees in the agrarian hinterlands of Kolkata offer a rich context to evaluate the historical and political centrality of Land as a source of livelihood and shelter in the peri-urbanization process. The paper investigates the erasure of the urban hinterland from land and settlement documentation, which Ananya Roy has argued, was unmapped by the state apparatus; by focusing on the question of land and (informal) labour. It describes an entanglement of two rather contradictory governmental purposes of housing 'agriculturist' refugee populations in the urban periphery while planning substantial urban transformation of the same spaces. The paper turns the lens of quiet politics proposed by Solomon Benjamin from the population to the state in order to follow spatial transformations and emplacement affected by government agencies through myriad acts of de-peasantization and de-agrarianization.

- ***Geneva Camp Mohammadpur and New Suburbs in Dhaka / Rajarshi Dasgupta***

This paper studies the making of suburban settlements at the peripheries of postcolonial Dhaka, focusing on the case study of a large refugee settlement known as the Geneva Camp in the Mohammadpur locality. Formerly the western border of Dhaka, an area dotted with marshland and water bodies, Mohammadpur became home to a population of Urdu speaking refugees from India, following widespread violence as Bangladesh came into being. Held at the social and physical margins of Dhaka, however, this population has proved instrumental in the development of elite localities and suburbs in and around the area. Identified for long with the architecture of squatters in south Asia, Geneva camp has of late turned into prime real estate property. It has over the recent years witnessed a curious coexistence of slums and up-market housing projects driven by a large share of foreign investments. The hybrid topography is made more complex and intense by the juxtaposition of civil society associations and a population denied of citizenship. It provides a wide pool of casual and informal though often skilled workforce, willing and amenable to extreme surplus extraction. As a result, the culturally more homogeneous and traditional localities of the capital of Bangladesh are being displaced by these new kinds of suburbs emerging at the border, which offer cheap accommodation to migrant urban professionals arriving every day. Much of the capital, labour and actors fuelling the current growth of Dhaka are being drawn from such new suburbs, which paradoxically play a central role from a peripheral location. The paper attempts to generalize certain tendencies from this case study about the wider phenomena of the role of refugees in the urbanization of south Asia.

- ***The Congested City: Towards and Understanding of the Crowd in Calcutta in 1950s and 1960s / Anwesha Sengupta***

Since 19th century the urban planners have frequently compared the city with a human body. Like the body itself, they argued, the health of the city depended on the flow of air, water, people, and commodities within the city. Similar concerns shaped various urban development schemes of Calcutta in the colonial period. The frequent 'operations' of slum

“clearance” and footpath “clearance” in Calcutta have been justified by this logic in colonial and post-colonial times. As Calcutta became increasingly congested with refugees after 1947, repeated concerns were raised about its ‘health’ by the city administrators and a section of the urban elite. ‘To be a good city, as well as a well-run city, both its size and its density of population must not exceed a certain limit,’ wrote a chief executive officer of Calcutta Corporation. Calcutta, in his view, was not a ‘good city’ but a city that was fast degenerating into a ‘permanent concentration camp.’ To make the situation worse, many of these new comers (refugees) had never lived in cities before, they did not know the mode and discipline of city life, observed the officer. Thousands of destitute bodies jostling together in the streets, pavements and railway stations were an assault to the bourgeois urban aesthetics. As they marched on the streets, blocked roads and occupied street corners in demand of food and rehabilitation – they further threatened the government and irritated the city elite. The paper elaborates on the nature of the governmental and the popular anxiety regarding the refugee ‘congestion’ in Calcutta; which refugee was welcomed and who was perceived as a threat to the health of the city, and the consequent measures taken by the administrators (like the dispersal scheme or the eviction bill of 1951). Thus, it brings together the early post-colonial debates, discussions and practices of urban planning and management and the discourse of ‘refugee problem’ in the context of Calcutta.

- ***The (Un)Sanitary City / Samata Biswas***

‘Rape schedule’ is established as a concept in much of feminist writing, as something structuring and restricting women’s lives and movements. At the same time, such a blanket term doesn’t take into account the lives of sex workers and that of people living in the streets, whose bodies and livelihoods cannot be contained by such a schedule. Campaigns against gendered violence in cities have sought to physically mark the modern metropolis and institutions within them in terms of experiences of assault and harassment; challenging other, functional layouts of the city. Keeping the above two in mind, this paper looks at the city through the lens of sanitation. How does access to toilets (in their different forms) movement of women across the city? How does it shape their everyday dietary practices, and sanitary expectation? How do women living on the streets access them, and where? What happens to trans women, many of whom spend large parts of their days at busy cross-sections of the roads? Access to clean and safe sanitation also implies that someone has to clean toilets, at all hours. Sanitation work, in cities, has traditionally been associated with migrant labour, of specific ‘untouchable’ castes. How does sanitary work determine their movement across city spaces, often during hours that are considered ‘unsafe’? These considerations will hopefully germinate in the understanding of a city structured around human sanitary practices, molding the gendered body to suit (the lack of) access.

- ***Labour, Precarity and the City: Exploring the Making of the Urban Labour in Kolkata / Supurna Banerjee***

The migrant labour for long has formed a significant part of the workforce of the city, Calcutta being no exception. These migrants have shaped the city as much as the city has shaped them and their lived experiences. Against the background of ongoing transformation in the world of work through industrial deceleration, growing casualization and consequent new forms of labour, this paper looks to examine the precarious labour located at the margins of the city and how their specific precarities and resistance to it is shaped by their everyday negotiation with the city. Through in-depth interviews with migrant women workers, the paper explores the making of the urban labour in Calcutta. The lived

experiences of the labouring women in Calcutta are shaped by the intersections of their gender, class, caste and other identities, experiences that are further complicated by their migrant origins. But to understand their implications, it is not enough to study them in vacuum. It is the proposition of this paper that the social constructions of the labouring woman in Calcutta is shaped by and can only be contextualized within the everyday negotiations with the city. This will provide an insight into the way the city shapes patterns of precariousness and resistance. The interaction between the labour and the city also illustrate how the notions of home, belonging and migration are often problematic and cannot be situated within binaries.

- ***Infrastructural Development and the Issue of Compensation in Colonial Calcutta / Kaustubh Mani Sengupta***

This paper studies the issue of compensation with relation to the infrastructural development of colonial Calcutta. It looks at some cases of construction of new roads and the Strand Bank along the Hooghly in the nineteenth century. The urban improvement schemes were predicated on the availability of appropriate funds. Apart from problems arising from technical considerations, engineering difficulties or cultural disapproval, financial constraint posed difficulty at every turn. The viability of a project often depended on the guarantee of an assured 'return'—the idea of 'recoupment' was crucial, which determined the course of a scheme. Along with that, there was the problem of deciding the 'value' of the property—how does one determine the worth of the land to be taken up? What were the cultural and social elements, apart from market considerations, that influenced the decision of the state and the individual proprietors? How does one calculate the amount of compensation to be paid? Specific cases elicited different methods and often the profit of the state had to be sacrificed. Acquisition of land for public projects entailed paying up the proprietors. Some people accepted the proposition, some resented. New challenges were posed and modes of negotiations varied.

- ***The Rental Economy of a City: Calcutta Improvement Trust and the Politics of Urbanization in the Twentieth Century / Iman Mitra***

This paper looks at the urban question of Calcutta from the conjoined perspectives of an institutional politics of spatial organization and everyday practices of rent extraction after the Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT) started its operation in 1912. Founded by the British in the previous year to 'improve' and 'expand' the city by building new roads, clearing congested neighbourhoods and implementing various sanitization projects which included demolition of unsavoury establishments like slums and bazaars, the CIT became one of the most influential actors not only in the domain of urban development schemes but also as a stake-holder in the sphere of urban land valuation and speculation. By restructuring the city and giving it a new look, the CIT effected two sets of urban transformation: it created a new discourse of improvement where the enhanced mobility of traffic (by building new roads and widening the older ones) was connected with reshuffling of the adjoined neighbourhoods - especially their commercialization and valorization; secondly, they planned to finance their schemes by acquiring, selling and renting land in these commercialized zones. While the previous studies on the CIT have mentioned these unique features, and discussed its autonomous organizational structure and how it invited a range of reactions from the inhabitants of the city in the wake of its establishment, they have not focused on the shifts in the urban land market caused by the schemes initiated by the Trust. With availability of new archival materials, this aspect comes to light and one is able to

explain the connections between urban development and everydayness of rent extraction and land speculation in twentieth century Calcutta. The paper uses the newly digitized archive of the Calcutta Improvement Trust to explore this process of creation of a rental economy in the history of urbanization in the twentieth century. At the same time, it studies how the category of rent makes its appearance – the structures, modes, actors and relationships – in an archive of urban planning and how the politics of organization of this archive may influence the politics of categorization itself.

- ***Class and Tenancy Question in Calcutta, 1912-1922 / Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay***

This paper studies a specific form of “primitive accumulation of capital” in the central part of Calcutta in the second decade of the 20th century. During this decade, an ambitious street scheme of the Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT) recycled more than 200 acres of prime land of the city, and dis-housed at least 50000 individuals living in densely populated neighbourhoods of Surtibagan, Jorabagan, Jorasanko, etc,—where upper caste Bengali Hindu rentier class population lived with an increasingly prosperous Marwari community, a lower-middle class Bengali constituency, an up-country Muslim trading community, and a huge mass of migrant (male) working class population working in Barabazar area mostly as coolies and transport workers. The Central Avenue Scheme of the CIT in this area created a lucrative speculative land market and reshuffled the ethnic distribution of property-ownership and tenancy. This paper takes a “micro-history” approach to study this transformation in Calcutta. It proposes to accomplish this task by tracking the life of a street in archives. It shows how such an exercise gives us an introduction to the rental geography of a city. The period under review is sandwiched between the 19th century traditions of urbanism and the 20th century narratives of mass political formation, and thus it has remained largely unattended by historians, despite the fact that the First World War had a significant global impact on the urban land market and tenancy relations. The paper addresses this research gap and also attempts to bring in inner-city urban redevelopment at the heart of the study of Primitive Accumulation of Capital.

- ***Water Encounters: The Everyday Politics of Migrants in a New/becoming city /Lalitha Kamath and Radhika Raj***

While the new peripheral city of Vasai Virar dreams of competing with Mumbai and other metropolises in its worlding aspirations, electoral politics, processes of city building and state making revolve centrally around promises of access to water. Political posters assure 24-hour water supply, large dam projects are the 25 centrepiece of election manifestos and yet the materialization of these promises is uncertain. Particularly in the remote, interior *chawls* being built on what were earlier paddy fields, the ordinary, everyday act of getting water remains a contested and violent domain. The realm of water, its promissory nature, concrete materialization, and struggles over everyday access are thus deeply political acts that are also highly gendered. One reading of this is that men of power shape public life and city futures through promises of providing the water that is crucial for the city’s expansion while poor, ‘migrant’ women struggle with the everyday, homely and private, chore of accessing water. The paper argues, however, for a more nuanced interpretation of this gendered, public-private binary construction. The authors see women’s water encounters as the site of their challenge to the (deliberate absence of the) state, where they demand the right to water and mark their claim to inhabit the city. This is also the realm where the socio-spatial politics of ‘local’ versus ‘migrant’, ‘*marathimanoos*’ versus ‘*bhaiyya*’, and municipal

versus village are played out. Through their everyday act of collecting water, and the embodied consequences of control and suffering intrinsic to this struggle, women are agents of quiet politics and builders of everyday social infrastructure that is a key to nurturing viable places in this city that is yet to become (Simone). The paper is based on fieldwork in an informal settlement in Vasai Virar, Makarandnagar, inhabited by people who have been evicted from Mumbai, but originally hail from eastern UP and Bihar. It has been built by local Patil landowners on their farmland in response to the demand for labour from the small-scale industries nearby. The paper draws on narratives of 'migrant' women and the water anxiety that orders their days and lives. The paper also reflects on politics and power in the *basti* within the context of city-wide party and infrastructural politics, to examine how women negotiate the freedoms and constraints of their new home in the city and what this says of them as political agents in their intimate and public life.

- ***Jed-o-jehad of Everyday: Two Cases of Negotiating Space Making by Migrant Women/Maggie Paul and Yogita Naruka***

Migrant identity in city spaces is infused with expressions of constant mobility, relocation and resettlement. The living conditions of migrant families are embedded with emotions of vulnerability, fear and anxiety. These emotions take centre stage especially in the lives of migrant women since the restrictive social environment intensifies the precariousness and adds to their everyday struggles. The vulnerabilities are spread across the dimensions of claiming housing spaces, building a home, finding livelihood and opportunities for education, searching for avenues of leisure and finally, maintaining intimate relationships. Migrant women however, constantly negotiate their way around these vulnerabilities and evolve context specific 'tactics' to make certain claims. This paper explores the everyday negotiations in terms of making claims for housing space from ethnographic material drawn from two field sites namely, Bainganwadi and Bawana resettlement colony located in Mumbai and Delhi respectively. These are highlighted as one of the primary tactics for negotiating the 'fear' and 'vulnerability' associated with their 'migrant' identity in the city. While sharing this common thread, however, the two cases emphasize differential means used to lay these claims, depending on personal and environmental context as well as their specific status as migrants. Therefore, the paper aims to present a diversified view of everyday negotiations and underscore the multiplicity in understanding the same in reference to migration and women in scholarly work. Bainganwadi is an informal housing community located at the edge of a suburban ward in Mumbai characterized as an ever-expanding home to migrant population from across the country. Bawana resettlement colony is another field site discussed in this paper. Located at the margins of Delhi, it was an outcome of the major urban restructuring that Delhi witnessed in the year 2003 to prepare itself to host the international commonwealth games in 2010. The narratives capture the fear and anxieties embedded in the lives of women as they are in the process of settling themselves in the new habitat. Their everyday negotiations to cope with these anxieties and struggles, hence, inform us about the complex relationship that the 'migrant women' from share with city spaces.

- ***Paabandi, Izzat, Galat Saubat: Negotiating Public Lives and Intimate Relationships in a Working-Class Muslim Neighbourhood / Mahuya Bandyopadhyay***

This research is based on fieldwork in a largely Muslim working-class *basti* (slum) close to Kolkata, India. The century old *basti* came up in the early 1900s to fuel the rise in demand for

labour in the then flourishing jute mills of Calcutta. The jute mills were largely served by migrant labour from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The paper draws on narratives of young women, who were born and grew up in this neighbourhood and are not only aware of their migration histories; but also articulate how connections to a hometown and *biraadari* (kindred) complicate their relationship to the city and shape the processes of making city spaces. The numerous discussions with them reflect on global flows in relation to issues of choice and freedom in intimate relationships, desires with regard to education, careers and lives of choice and their entanglements with local structural and cultural aspects of everyday life in the *basti*. The paper reflects on politics in the neighbourhood, the experience of narrow avenues for education, work and employment, the familial and community based constraints on women's lives, mobility and choices, and the opening up of institutional spaces that enable different sorts of negotiations of constraints. How do the young women negotiate their freedoms and their constraints? Fieldwork was conducted around the time that West Bengal was poised for a historic political turn around, after more than thirty years of Left rule. Party politics and its implications for the choices and lives of these young women serve as another anchor for the discussion here. People's lives in the *basti* must, therefore, be narrated in the context of the public critique of high-handed governance and the concomitant discourse on the need for change and democratic decision-making. The connections between these may not be hard to locate. How these connections translate into everyday life in the *basti*, impinging on the decisions people, especially young women, make with regard to their lives, is crucial for this paper. Through this, the paper demonstrates how global contexts and local histories intersect, are accepted and/or resisted in the intimate and public lives that these young women are attempting to script for themselves.

Theme II

Towns and Migrants: Explorations of an Urban Future

- *The Generic City: Meta-political Remarks on the Future of the City at the Time of Absolute Capitalism / Livio Boni*

The Derridian or post-Derridian philosopher Catherine Malabou proposed a triple reading of the notion of “plasticity”. This term can indeed signify both the capacity *to give* a form, as in “plastic arts”, and to *take* a form, as in the case of what is called “neuronal plasticity”, but also the possibility to *annihilate* any form, as in the French term “*plastiquage*”, or in the case of plastic explosive invented by Alfred Nobel. In the paper, the author transposes this tripartition of the meaning of plasticity to the heuristic understanding of the evolution of the city. To make a city, there must be a minimal stable form, sometimes identified with a historical or monumental core, which is supposed to remain unchanged over time. At the same time, a city changes all the time because, as Charles Baudelaire wrote, “the form of a city changes more quickly, alas! than the human heart”. However, besides these two opposite modalities by which plasticity operates -a plain and closed form as opposed to a changing and open one - there is a *third* modality, which is particularly significant in the development of the contemporary city: the transformation by way of destruction. This happens through the sudden abolition of all established forms and through the erasure of the social and economic organization of space prompted by Capital’s occupation of the city as a crucial site of accumulation. This corresponds to what David Harvey described as “accumulation by dispossession”, or to what Mike Davies called “urbanization without industrialization”.

With this context in mind, the paper proposes some *metapolitical* considerations on the notion of urban plasticity in the threefold meaning being talked about, bearing in mind that it is actually under the dominance of the “third type” of plasticity, the “explosive” one, that the evolution of the urban matter has to be considered. In order to do this, the paper briefly analyzes some of the categories proposed by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, founder of OMA (Office of Metropolitan Architecture), one of the world’s largest project firms, and, more importantly, one of the few contemporary architects who feels the need to *theorize* the future of the city, through his well known manifestos, such as *Bigness*, *Junkspace* or *The Generic City*, written at the end of last century. These texts have attracted the attention of several contemporary thinkers, such as Fredric Jameson, Antonio Negri, Giorgio Agamben, Peter Sloterdijk and Bruno Latour, even if sometimes they seem to take Koolhaas's postmodernist provocations too literally. The paper follows in their steps through posing one question: is there a form, or a pattern of forms, which regulates the evolution of the city at the time of “absolute capitalism” (quoting Balibar)? Can we understand the contemporary economy of the urban space in a way that is able to include its imaginary and fantastical production, without reducing it to a simple dystopia, and without falling back into a nostalgia for a “sufficiently-good” (Winnicott) city which, in all probability, never existed? These are some of the questions that the paper asks and answers in the form of an hypothetical proposition about the aesthetical production, or overproduction, of the city.

The paper also defines the generic city as the as a city without a stable identity and with no center, and emphasizes that such a model does not originate in Europe and not even in North America. Koolhaas in his pamphlet “The Generic City” cites Shenzhen, Shanghai, Singapore and Lagos as examples of the generic city, and the author of the paper continues in a similar vein by designating East Asian cities as the prototype of the generic city. The

author discusses how the shift of the future of the city from North to South and from West to East is a trend that Koolhaas deigns significant. Marxist thinkers like Braudel and Sassen have theorized about the city's role in the reconfiguration of Capital in the post-Fordist era, through an analysis of the forms of spatialization induced by neo-liberal capitalism, or by "absolute capitalism". What the paper interrogates and affirms is that Koolhaas's generic city also contributes to a topology of urban capitalism, more specifically to a conceptualization of the spatial translations of capital through a reading of three matrices of the generic city, namely, the airport, the shopping center and the escalator.

The term 'metapolitical' that the author uses to look at the generic city, must be understood as an emphasis on the aesthetic dimension's inclusion in the political analysis of the city. He proposes that every new invention in the aesthetic field has a metapolitical effect, producing a new range of representations, articulations and making thinkable a new critical horizon concerning politics. Looking into the metapolitical implications of Koolhaas's aesthetics of the generic city, the paper finally draws our attention to two aspects, that the author considers essential to understanding the generic city: the generic city's (somewhat distant) relationship with a more or less authoritarian regime and the otherwise neglected space of the countryside. Taking the examples of Chinese generic cities, the author raises questions about the role played by generic urbanization in China, in the construction of the authoritarian consensus during the last twenty years, and the neglect and deep marginalization shown to the countryside in our sociological, anthropological and aesthetic representation of the city.

- ***The Urban Turn/Ranabir Samaddar***

The paper opens with the assertion that the urban turn of our times begins in the context of agrarian crisis, a crisis that the agrarian sector in today's capitalist economy is facing the world over. Taking up the question of neglect of the countryside posed by the previous paper on the generic city, this paper describes the restructuring of cities underway by painting the picture of cities as gluttons, gobbling up the suburbs and countryside, becoming greater and greater in size, accommodating more and more people, and emerging as the destination points of thousands and thousands of migrants.

The paper goes on to trace how studies in capitalism have negotiated the urban turn through the decades - Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England* associated the city with the condition of the working class, Walter Benjamin looked at the city as the place of desire of commodities, Lefebvre focussed on the city as a produced space and David Harvey's work emphasises the rights dimension to the city. The postcolonial studies of the city looks at it as the site of the politics of the governed - characterised by endless negotiations between the subaltern, unorganised masses populating the slums and the governing class. What becomes evident from this trajectory is the increasing dissociation of the city and the class angle. The city increasingly appears as a site of circulation, hence a non-class site, almost autonomous by itself.

With the city and the sea redefining the frontiers of migration, the paper calls for greater focus on the figure of the migrant, which will reveal more clearly the inter-linkages between urban policy, governance, forms of labour, migration, urban rent, and neoliberalism as the political ideology of urbanization. In other words, we can speak meaningfully of a neoliberal milieu only with the eyes of the migrant. What the author thus proposes in the paper is the methodological need to focus on the figure of an outsider to understand the dynamics of neoliberal growth, which is usually studied from inside. In the post-liberalization era, urban transformation, driven by finance-driven accumulation and infrastructural activities, required the entry of new migrant labour in a variety of forms.

However, the migrant remains an *outsider* to the process. The migrant tells us of a labour force that must be available whenever and wherever required, but will not be deployed all the time. It has to remain invisible. The paper thus not only looks at various aspects of urban transformation, but also reflects on the central contradiction in this process of transformation, namely, the necessity of a ready mobilization of labour—displaced, dispossessed, dispersed, and often mobile and yet unable to lay claim to the space called the city. But the city must have such a labour force with the new forms of servicing it requires, such as care, entertainment, infrastructure-maintenance, waste-processing, etc. The neoliberal city cannot do without migrant labour.

The focus on the migrant as an outside figure, though produced by capitalism yet remaining outside this neoliberal growth, helps us remove many of the unnecessary complexities and diversions in the task of understanding the transformation taking place. Such a focus allows the class question to surface through various obfuscations. Indeed, the re-partitioning of city space with new flexible borders and boundary-making exercises cannot be understood without predicating them on the figure of the migrant, because the migrant brings to the fore the class question involved in urban space-making since the traditional way of thinking about class has always been to think about factory labour. Yet with the factories in the cities disappearing and making way for the resurfacing of the city as a space for the struggle for justice, the figure of the migrant remains crucial in determining huge governmental exercises of management of economy, politics, populations, and institutions.

The other question relevant to urban transformation, and which the paper looks into is whether the 'urban' is the same thing as the city. Not all cities have transformed and transformed in the same manner and speed; and some towns have been, on the contrary, ruralised. Referring to Max Weber's notion of citizenship, the author also analyses how the term 'urban' today can hardly be associated with an idea of citizenship that would denote membership of a community. The 'urban' then, has come to denote, both substance and an illusion. On one hand it indicates that something new indeed is happening to the city, on the other hand, the 'urban' we have turned our attention to is a ghost, a phantom, speaking of other realities of a world changing along neoliberal lines.

- ***Raxaul as a Frontier Town at the Intersection of the New Silk Road / Mithilesh Kumar***

Raxaul is a nondescript town on the border of Bihar and Nepal. It seems to have taken unkindly to the fact that, legally, India and Nepal share an open border with free movement of goods and people. Instead, through its traffic snarls, the railway line passing right in between the two sides, and, these days, illicit liquor; Raxaul is marking its own material borderline between Bihar and Nepal. Historically, Raxaul has been and continues to be the primary transit town for commodities into Nepal. However, the importance of this derelict town is only now becoming visible when an ICP has been commissioned instead of the old customs point and a new container depot at Birgunj has been made. These infrastructural and logistical apparatus is visibly changing the "interchange" town. These logistical developments come in the wake of the Chinese Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and India-Japan's Asia Africa Growth Corridor. Raxaul has suddenly turned into a geopolitically important town for both China and India.

The proposed research aims to analyse the changes in Raxaul through an ethnographic study of railway goods siding at the Raxaul station linking it with Kolkata and Visakhapatnam ports which is creating a new network of logistical power. In the process,

the paper also demonstrates that changes in this border town are used strategically by workers for migration and also changing the agricultural economy of Champaran in Bihar.

- ***Knowing the Frontier City: New Urbanization in Northeast India / Snehashish Mitra***

Urban research in India till now being 'metrocentric', research has been largely confined to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bangalore. The smaller cities have largely bypassed academic scrutiny despite the fact that 41% of the urban population resides in towns with less than 100,000 population. At a regional level, Northeast India is entirely absent in the urban scholarship, barring Duncan McDuiara's work on Imphal's transition as a borderland city. Research on the region has been confined to the issues of ethnic politics, armed insurrections, tribal anthropology and in recent times on 'Look and Act East Policy'. Notably, urban centres like Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Shillong, Jorhat in Northeast India have been functioning in the region since the colonial time period, as administrative and economic centres thriving on the revenues generated from the extractive economy of tea, timber, and oil. In particular, Guwahati's urbanization trend in the last two decades has challenged the notion of Northeast India being peripheral and underdeveloped. There is an ongoing proliferation of investments in the real estate, leisure industry and infrastructure across the cities in the region.

Reorganization of territories in Northeast India in the form of new states and districts has given rise to newly formed urban centres (*e.g.* Aizawl, Kohima, Mushalpur, Kakching) over time, which are often dominated by the local ethnic majority. As India looks to connect with its eastern neighbors through 'Look and Act East Policy' for increased trade and connectivity, Northeast India assumes the role of bridging the space wherein borderland cities like Imphal, Dimapur, and Agartala gains new status as nodes of connectivity and transit points. Significantly a series of frontier towns have come up across the borders which are envisaged to facilitate the cross-border trades and flows. Most of these border towns are located along the borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh. Over time the porous borders have allowed unaccounted flows of people and goods, through informal networks operated by local agencies. As sub-regional connectivity is propagated across Southeast Asia, the frontier towns are increasingly coming under the radar of infrastructure, logistics, and capital. Local Custom Stations have been set up in Moreh, Champhai, Mankachar and Dawki. Such organized focus on commerce has led to expansions of the frontier towns, influenced by the local specificities as well as the statist agenda in the borderland.

The question of labour required for the expansion of these towns are complicated by the Inner Line Permit (ILP) in Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, which inhibit the movement of the labour from the Western mainland, but ceases to be a barrier for the contiguous population in the east. The towns are often important nodes of smuggling, as the porous borders on undulating topography make it difficult for surveillance by the local and central governments. Local ethnic politics, contested landscapes, along with a violent history of conflict often renders an unruly character to the towns in the Northeast. Such factors influencing urbanization process in the Northeast, are unanticipated in the urban experiences of elsewhere in India. The paper flags some of these factors which characterize the frontier urbanization in the Northeast and attempts to uphold the significance of investigating small cities which would complicate theoretical models that considers all "urban" processes as universal and singular.

- *Agartala as a Frontier Town/ Subir Bhaumik*

The author, right at the onset, establishes Agartala (Latitude N 23 -50` and Longitude E 91-17`) as a frontier city. It is located right on India's border with Bangladesh. The international border checkpost of Akhaura lies on the city's western fringe, 3 kms from the state assembly building, 1 km from the state police headquarters and 5 kms from the present state secretariat (2 kms from the former state secretariat) where ministers and senior bureaucrats hold office. The Bangladesh check post in Akhaura lies 500 yards away from the Indian checkpost. That makes Agartala the only state capital town of India located right on the border. The paper delved into the history of Agartala's expansion before outlining the government's plans to make it 'gateway to North East India' and turn it into an "eco-friendly, green city and environmentally sustainable where people want to live, visit and invest." Agartala's distance from the Indian mainland is more than offset by its locations close to major cities of Bangladesh. Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet are all within three to four hours by road or rail . That these cities have international airports ensures Agartala citizens can use these to connect to the world much as they can use their own airport to connect to mainland India.

The paper also studies in great detail Agartala's advantageous position in the context of India's desire to reach out to the far East. In particular, the author throws great light on Agartala's relationship with Bangladesh in this context. Tripura has a strong vested interest in good relations with Bangladesh -- and the better they are the better is the prospects for Agartala's growth. It helps that Agartala figures prominently in the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation, which is why the present Bangladesh government headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is soft on Tripura and has allowed sale of surplus bandwidth to help Agartala emerge as the third Internet Gateway of India. It has also allowed transit of oversized cargoes to Agartala via Chittagong and Asuganj land port to help Tripura develop the 726MW Palatana gas fired power project, from where Bangladesh is now buying electricity. The transit through Bangladesh makes Agartala the gateway to India's northeast, while it provides northeast India access to sea through the Bangladesh coast.

Agartala's economy has largely thrived on informal trade with East Pakistan and now Bangladesh. It has been the smuggling hub of India's Northeast, its position only rivaled by Moreh, a border town on Manipur-Myanmar border. Now textiles, food products and ceramics made in Bangladesh enter the northeast Indian market via Agartala along with other third country products. Indian products , specially psychotropic substances like phensydyl cough syrup , make their way into Bangladesh and everything from weapons to textiles would flow to serve the Tripura local market, because Indian products were expensive due to transport costs. Agartala could also be the backyard of Bangladesh's fledgling IT industry and at the same time be the eastern hub of India's IT industry as it seeks to reduce its dependence on the US market and expand into East and South-east Asian markets.

Tripura's dealings with Bangladesh have led to a quiet optimism that once Tripura achieves all-round connectivity on completion of the projects it has entered into with Bangladesh, the state will be ready for an industrial take-off that has eluded it since independence, asserts the author. Agartala's past, present and future is inseparably linked to Bangladesh. Since the neighbouring economy is growing at more than 6 percent per annum, Agartala can expect the spin-off effects -- but only if Indian policy allows that to happen.

- ***The Small Town in India: 'Subaltern Urbanisation' and Beyond / Ritam Sengupta***

Even as official and corporate urban development in India and the global south seeks to invest in newer paradigms like 'smart cities', the 'small town' continues to persist as well as reinvent itself as the ordinary yet essential intermediary in the urbanisation process. In recent times, newer ways of gleaning and reading data has led up to suggestions that the 'small town' might in fact not be simply an intermediary, but rather an essential element in/of India's emerging urbanities. While this proposed significance emphasises the 'small town' as a new object of knowledge, this paper sets out to qualify a distinctive mode of enquiry with respect to questions of the urban and urbanisation as might be founded on this (relatively) recent epistemic interest, especially in the case of India.

This paper could be prefaced by specifying that the otherwise commonplace descriptor - 'small town' in this paper refers (negatively) to all areas as made out to be 'urban' or 'town' (the criteria for this is discussed in a subsequent section) by the Census of India that do not cross the population level of a million, beyond which urban areas in India become the 'metros' or metropolitan urban areas. In thus overlapping the question of the 'small town' with the entire gamut of non-metropolitan urbanisation, there could be in certain ways a simplification of a range of scalar questions as to what could be classified 'medium' or 'large' towns within the entire range of urban settlements with a population under a million. This 'simplification' is however firstly to serve a heuristic purpose of isolating an area of enquiry that is the question of urbanization beyond metro-cities that has till now surfaced only sparingly within existing urban studies in India and beyond. Questioning this absence of research and thinking about towns and urban areas outside metros is one aspect of urbanity addressed by this paper.

The wide casting of the 'small town' as encompassing all non-metropolitan phenomena is however also to serve a second and more key objective. This pertains to the understanding -within policy but also to an extent within critical discourse - of urbanisation as following *as such* from metropolitan processes, developments and 'spillovers'. Here metropolitan centres could mean the 'global cities' of the north and as a corrective of this west-centred conception of global control, the 'mega cities' of the south could make an appearance as drivers of national growth and urbanisation. Combined with the actual absence of research on smaller-scale urban areas, this conceptualisation of urbanisation as driven entirely (essentially?) by metropolitan inducements is the primary object of interrogation in this paper. And this interrogation can for now be enabled by the posing of 'small town' as the umbrella category to group all non-metropolitan forms of urban development. The disassembling of this category to locate the diversity in non-metropolitan urbanities is of course what can follow this conceptual interrogation.

- ***Resilient Cities and Cities of Resistance / Ishita Dey***

This paper attempts a gendered reading of townscapes in South Asia through a close reading of infrastructure. It endeavors to understand how the figure of the migrant could provide a new way to understand resistance and resilience. It proposes that with shrinking spaces of dissent and ever increasing technopolitics around protests and forms of protest, it becomes important to address how the migrant is seen as both a 'microbial' and 'biopolitical' risk. The paper thus analyzes the resilience put up by the local government following the analysis of such risks and hazards in pockets of Delhi, and the resistance posited to such resilience by the migrants. The author also suggests that there is a need for a methodological shift of understanding collateral risks associated with the migrant - plastic

sheet, sweetshops, food, wires, pipes and documents like identity cards could illuminate how politics of resistance and resilience inform forms of urban activism. Delving into the biography of objects would provide a deeper understanding of the city's infrastructure, which would in turn, inform about the changing face of urban activism. But 'infrastructure' here is understood in Brian Larkin's terms wherein, "Infrastructures are matters that enable the movement of other matter...As things they represent to the senses, yet they are also displaced in the focus on the matter they move around". As such, anthropological work on infrastructure could be situated on the cusp of studying things and the relations between things. This is where the biography of things is situated. The paper analyzes fragments of urban activism in Delhi through three biographies - art projects, documents and leaked pipes, and urban violence. In the paper, they are read as enunciations of technopolitics of infrastructure through a biography of objects and sites that provide a new reading of localized urban activism. Ultimately then, the paper suggests that a biography of objects is a mode that can be used to revisit the modes of urban activism that has emerged in South Asian cities.

[CRG plans to publish some of the research papers under the CRG research paper series Policies and Practices. Some of the research papers have been already published in the South Asian journal on forced migration studies, Refugee Watch. Some will be disseminated online. However, as indicated earlier, an editorial committee has been formed to plan an integrated volume publication with select papers on the basis of the two broad themes: (a) The Ordinary City: Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity, and (b) Towns, Migrants, and Transformation of Cities: Explorations of an Urban Future.]

Section II

PROGRAMMES

Public Lecture I

Separation, Mobility and the Ordinary City: On Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity

by Subir Sinha

On 23 August 2017, Calcutta Research Group organised a Public Lecture by Subir Sinha from the School of Oriental and African Studies on "Separation, Mobility and the Ordinary City: On Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity". The lecture centred on what was categorized as a paradigmatic city, an archetype; colonial and postcolonial notions of cityness; and the postcolonial city that was an exemplary to cities that were removed from the administrative centres of state and capitalist power, in other words, the ordinary city. Subir Sinha in his keynote address offered a critique of the existent paradigms of urbanism and what was perceived as constituting 'cityness' in the postcolonial context be it Latin American or the Indian context. Sinha contended that the 'paradigmatic city' was a myth, an artificial construct, a fabrication, or at the most a 'fleeting reality'. The other focal point of the keynote address was what Sinha refers to as the concept of ordinariness or the 'ordinary' city connoting in his words, 'the new outsides of old cities, and of other, more remote centre of inhabitation'. The characteristic features of ordinariness (following as Sinha observes, Sanyal and Bhattacharya) being the dominance of the information sector, self-employment, partial integration of the informal sector with national and global capital though predominantly non-capital, inadequate international financing and banking facilities, a lack of basic utilities and the preponderance of adhocism or "jugaad", the informality perhaps accruing out of exclusion or adverse incorporation.

The Public Lecture served as the perfect introduction to the Sixth Critical Studies Conference that commenced the following day. The programme schedule is provided hereafter.

Sixth Critical Studies Conference

Refugees, Migrants, Violence and the Transformation of Cities

(23 - 25 August 2017)

Cities world over are attracting increasing numbers of people fleeing villages, small and big towns, other countries and continents to escape conflicts, wars, violence, environmental degradation and natural disasters. Political, economic, social and cultural reasons have combined in this phenomenon of massive and mixed migration. Displacements being protracted, immigrants arrive often to stay. Cities are facing the brunt of this development and are imperceptibly or radically being transformed. In this background, the Sixth Critical Studies Conference was an interdisciplinary attempt to map in a comparative framework, the restructuring of cities under the impact of refugee and migration flows. It explored cityscapes in various parts of the world as inbuilt destination spaces of refugee and population movements, such as irregular and subsistence labour as guest workers, trafficked victims, smuggled women and children, immigrant workers in care and entertainment industry, and above all masses of urban refugees and environmental migrants. The conference thereby sought to understand how with refugees and migrants as inbuilt components of their formation, today's cities constitute and contest at the same time the parallel scales of the local, national, and the global; how as migrant spaces cities become the battleground of discourses on rights, security, economy, citizenship, populism, and culture; and yet how cities can develop as public spaces and spheres of participation in which varied actors negotiate diversity including race, class and gender. With this broad aim, this research conference brought to light in historical and comparative perspectives, the urban experiences of restructuration.

In an increasingly interconnected world, global migration is growing in volume and complexity. These population shifts are altering the political, economic, social, and cultural trajectories of the cities – the destinations of the population flows. In this situation, some cities are panicky, some calling for new urban policies for settlements, local environments, and security measures; some witnessing revival of violence, riots, xenophobia, racism, and populist politics around immigration; others searching for a roadmap to become “cities of refuge”. The responses are often mixed, indicating contradictory realities, which are global. The conference reflected upon such relevant research questions as:

- What is the nature of urban transformation under the impact of the refugee and migration flows, and the ethical, political, and economic responses to this impact?
- How is refugee and migrant participation in public life inscribed or proscribed, facilitated or limited in urban setup and development?
- How are public spaces re-organized? What are their meanings for migrants?
- What spaces, events, and institutions are keys to this understanding? How are the shifting gender-relations reflected and re-inscribed into urban public spaces?
- How are the borders/borderlines with consequent transgressions produced in the city?
- What are the new migrant economies based on particular labour market dynamics and marked by social, racial, and patriarchal attitudes?
- As migrants push the boundaries of governance and administration, what are the ways that effect the political and spatial re-crafting of urban spaces?
- How does urban politics cope with security and surveillance methods and the xenophobic populist turn in politics in the wake of immigrant presence in a city?

- What are the traditional institutions and agencies associated with refugees and migrants in the cities? Who are the new intermediaries in the process with aid agencies influencing them?
- Theoretically, how do we add to the core concepts of urban justice to consolidate and develop the field?

Kolkata as the venue of the conference was an appropriate site for such a discussion. Described as a contact zone in the late eighteenth century, Kolkata had witnessed influx of different population groups who defined and created a city on their own terms. With partition, millions from East Pakistan came to the city, which in time became their home. This was a conflict ridden process. More recently the recurrence of violence has to be seen in the context of the construction near Kolkata of a new town growing out of peasant dispossession. The resultant violence and selective inclusion and exclusion of population groups are features of the contemporary history of the city. It was important to study the process of transformation, steps taken towards enhancing the city's resilience and coping ability.

Experts theorizing the city approached the subject from roughly three angles: (a) the angle of spatial practices, this mode being dominant among urban planners and geographers (b) city perceived on the basis of the mental images that it evokes, this mode being dominant among the cultural studies scholars, and (c) the city as a space for both life and production. Even though the third way of looking at the city tries to get over the singular mould of the first two by positing a subject-object view, and gives us a greater range of conceptual tools to study issues of urban justice, the problem of how to account for its segmentation and linkages, in the formation of the city, and therefore the various fault lines (economic groups, caste, race, gender, religion, etc.) along which the city develops as a site of power, contestations, and claim makings remains. Thus, the conference studied the links of migration with new urban formation and restructuring.

Following are the programme schedule and brief reports of the conference proceedings:

Programme

Day I: 23 August 2017

05.30 - 06.00 pm:	Tea & Registration
06.00 - 06.15 pm:	Welcome Address by Paula Banerjee, Director, Calcutta Research Group
06.15 - 07.15 pm:	Public Lecture by Subir Sinha, School of Oriental and African Studies, on <i>Separation, Mobility and the Ordinary City: On Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity</i>
07.15 - 07.20 pm:	Vote of Thanks by Anita Sengupta, Senior Researcher & Programme Coordinator, Calcutta Research Group

Day II: 24 August 2017

9:00 - 9:30 am:	Opening Remarks
09:30 - 11.00 am:	

Panel 1(A): Crisis, Violence and the Public Space

[Discussant: Pushpendra Kr. Singh, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna; Chair: Sanjeeb Mukherjee, University of Calcutta]

- Nasreen Chowdhory (University of Delhi, Dept. of Political Science): *Camps and Cities: The Making of Citizens at the Margins*
- Somdatta Chakraborty (Calcutta Research Group): *Criminalizing the Migrant: Street carriers and the Colonial State in the 19th-20th century Calcutta and Bengal*

Panel 1(B): Identity and Inclusion

[Discussant: Sudeep Basu, Central University of Gujarat; Chair: Parivelan K.M., Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai]

- Radhika Raj (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance): *The Production of a 'Migrant' versus the 'Local': The Case of a right-wing all-male organization on the margins of the city*
- Prasad R (Loyola College of Social Sciences, University of Kerala): *Interstate Migrant Workers in Malayalam Films: A Critical Review*
- Annapurna Neti (Azim Premji University) & Puja Guha (Azim Premji University): *Street-food Vending: From Precarious Existence to Social Inclusion – Case Stories from Bangalore*

11.00 – 11.30 am: Tea

11.30 – 01.00 pm:

Panel 2(A): The Urban Question and the North-East

[Discussant: Paula Banerjee, University of Calcutta; Chair: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University]

- Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (National Institute of Advanced Studies, Kolkata, Dept. of Political Studies and Political Science): *Social Imaginaries and Medical Dystopia: 'Health Migrations and Caregivers' in Kolkata City from Mizoram*
- Snehashish Mitra (National Institute of Advanced Studies, IISC, Bangalore): *Urbanisation by the Border: Refreshing the frontier space in Northeast India*

Panel 2(B): Urban Governance

[Discussant: Amit Prakash, Jawaharlal Nehru University; Chair: Atig Ghosh, Visva-Bharati University]

- V. Ramaswamy (Calcutta Research Group) & V. Srinivasan (Chennai Metro Union for Construction and Unorganized Workers): *The Role of the State in Urban Violence against Marginalized Castes: Manual Scavenging in India today*
- Rumki Basu (Jamia Milia Islamia, Dept. of Political Science) & Moitree Dey (Matasundari College for Women, University of Delhi): *Citizenship, Urban Governance and Access to Civic Services: Delhi Municipal Elections 2017*

01.00 – 02.00 pm: Lunch

02.00 – 03.30 pm:

Panel 3(A): Gender, Movements and the City

[Discussant: Kalpana Kannabiran, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad; Chair: Swati Ghosh, Rabindra Bharati University]

- Nora S. von Kitzing (Witwatersrand University, Dept. of International Development): *Gender-based Violence on less advantaged migrant women in peri-urban Johannesburg and how they respond*
- Oindrila DuttaGupta (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Centre for International Politics, Organisation, Diplomacy and Disarmament): *Gender, Migration and the City: An Alternative Perspective from the Global South*
- Mithun Som (Anveshi, City Project Team): *Migrant Women's aspirations in the city*

Panel 3(B): Revisiting the Migration Archives from the Brahmaputra Valley through an Inter-Disciplinary Perspective

[Discussant: Xonzoi Barbora, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati; Chair: Bishnu Mohapatra, Forum on Contemporary Theory]

- Murchana Roychoudhury (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, Inter-disciplinary Social Sciences): *Exploring the Environment and Migration Nexus in the Brahmaputra Valley*
- Shiladitya Ray (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, Development Studies): *Exploring Sub-National State-led Responses to Climate Change: A Case Study of Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change*
- Nabajyoti Deka (IIT Kharagpur, Dept of Economics): *Environmental Migration and the Dynamics of Labor Economics: Narratives from the Bank of River Brahmaputra in postcolonial Assam*

03.30 – 04.00 pm: Tea

04.00 – 05.30 pm: **Plenary Session 1**

Discussion on Key Texts of Urban Studies

[Chair: Ranabir Samaddar, Calcutta Research Group]

1. Samita Sen (Jadavpur University) on Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*
2. Subhoranjan Dasgupta (Eminent Literary Critic and Analyst) on Walter Benjamin, *Paris the Capital of the 19th Century and Other Writings*
3. Atig Ghosh (Visva-Bharati University) on Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space and other writing*
4. Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Mohali) on David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*

Day III: 25 August 2017

09.30 – 11.00 am:

Panel 4(A): Socio-Spatial Restructuring of Kolkata

[Discussant: Somdatta Chakraborty, Calcutta Research Group; Chair: Sibaji Pratim Basu, Vidyasagar University]

- Souvanic Roy (Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology) & Tathagata Chatterji (Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar): *Post- Industrial Urban*

Regeneration in a Transitional Metropolis: Implications for the Right to Adequate Housing and Environmental Justice in Urban Core

- Ratoola Kundu (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Dept. of Habitat Studies): *The 'invisibles' in New Town Rajarhat: The Politics of place-making by new migrants and the internally displaced refugees of urban development*

Panel 4(B): Economies of Inhabitation: Refugees at the Urban Frontier

[Discussant: Byasdeb Dasgupta, University of Kalyani; Chair: Arup Sen, Serampore College]

- Garima Dhabai (Presidency University, Dept. of Political Science): *The 'Entrepreneurial' Refugee in the Bazaars: Sindhi Migrants in Jaipur's Walled City*
- Himadri Chatterjee (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Centre for Political Studies): *Land and Labour at the 'Borders' of Kolkata: Refugee Lives in-between Town and Country*
- Rajarshi Dasgupta (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Centre for Political Studies): *Geneva Camp Mohammadpur and New Suburbs in Dhaka*

11.00 – 11.30 am: Tea

11.30 – 01.00 pm:

Panel 5(A): Vulnerable Bodies: Marginal Subjectivities in Post-Colonial Calcutta

[Discussant: Ishita Dey, Ambedkar University; Chair: Anjoo Sharan Upadhyay, Benares Hindu University]

- Samata Biswas (Bethune College, University of Calcutta): *The (Un)Sanitary City*
- Anwasha Sengupta (Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata): *The Congested City: Towards an Understanding of the Crowd in Calcutta in 1950s and 1960s*
- Supurna Banerjee (Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata): *Labour, Precarity And the City: Exploring the making of the urban labour in Calcutta*

Panel 5(B): Rent, Infrastructure and Urban Improvement in Colonial Calcutta

[Discussant: Subhash Ranjan Chakrabarti, Eminent Historian; Chair: Prasanta Ray, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata]

- Kaustubh Mani Sengupta (Bankura University, Dept. of History): *Infrastructural Development and the Issue of Compensation in Colonial Calcutta*
- Iman Mitra (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna): *The Rental Economy of a City: Calcutta Improvement Trust and the Politics of Urbanisation in the Twentieth Century*
- Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Mohali) & Ujaan Ghosh (Independent Researcher): *Class and Tenancy Question in Calcutta, 1912-1922*

01.00 – 02.00 pm: Lunch

02.00 – 03.30 pm:

Panel 6(A): Gender, Everyday Life and the Making of the Cityscape

[Discussant: Sanam Roohi, St. Joseph's College, Bangalore; Chair: Samita Sen, Jadavpur University]

- Lalitha Kamath (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance) & Radhika Raj (TISS Mumbai, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance): *The Politics of Home Making: Migrant journeys and water encounters in a New City*

- Maggie Paul (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Centre for Social and Organisational Leadership) & Yogita Naruka (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, School of Development Studies): *Jed-o-Jehad of Everyday: Two Cases of Negotiating Space Making*

- Mahuya Bandyopadhyay (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, School of Development Studies): *Paabandi, Izzat, Galat Saubat: Negotiating Public Lives and Intimate Relationships in a Working-Class Muslim Neighbourhood*

03.30 – 04.00 pm: Tea

04.00 – 05.30 pm:

Plenary Session 2

[Chair: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University]

- Screening of film *Do the Right Thing (1989)* by **Spike Lee**.

05.30 – 6.00 pm: Closing Remarks by Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group
Vote of Thanks by Ritam Sengupta, Research & Programme Associate, Calcutta Research Group

Brief Reports of Sixth Critical Studies Conference

- **Inaugural Session**

The conference was inaugurated with a welcome address by the Director of CRG, Professor Paula Banerjee, followed by an exposition of the conference's objectives and CRG's work in the field of urbanity, migration and labour by the Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies at CRG, Professor Ranabir Samaddar. This was followed by a statement by the Ford Foundation's Regional Director Pradeep Nair who spoke about the kind of work that the Foundation supports and emphasised how the Foundation aims to extend its support to locally based organisations in parts of the Global South. The session was chaired by the President of CRG, Prasanta Ray.

Day II: 24 August 2017

Panel 1 (A): The panel engaged in social theorist Agamben's understanding of camp, while simultaneously departing from the notion of camp as an exceptional and apolitical space, as well as the multi-layered dynamics between the colonial state and the hackney carriage drivers and palanquin bearers of nineteenth-twentieth century Calcutta and Bengal, keeping in view the overarching theme '**Crisis, violence and the Public Space**'. The issues discussed ranged from migrant communities and their rights in moments of crisis, to the culture of transgression, notions of belonging, the city as a camp, the discourse of citizenship, and the concepts of post-nationalized/ de-nationalized relationships.

Panel 1 (B): The panel entitled '**Identity and Inclusion**' saw papers that talked about migrant identities and the politics of inclusion and exclusion that infuse such identities. Through a study of various subjects, ranging from all-male organizations to the genre of films and the food vending business, we looked at how migrant identities are often manufactured and shaped by the mainstream majoritarian community, how migrant stereotypes perpetuated in films affect their social reality, and how laws regulating migrant identities guide their livelihoods and economic conditions.

Panel 2 (A): Titled '**The Urban Question and the Northeast**', this panel presented papers that discussed primarily two diverse trends associated with India's Northeast in the present – the migration of caregivers from Mizoram to the city of Kolkata, a phenomenon termed 'health migration', and the growing urbanisation of border towns in the region, the cases in hand being the towns of Champai in Mizoram, and Moreh in Manipur. Issues of rural-urban continuum affecting migration flows, logistical and infrastructural expansion influencing both the health sector in the Northeast and the very character of border towns and its effects on notions of citizenship were raised and debated in this panel.

Panel 2 (B): With '**Urban Governance**' as the broad focus on the panel, issues of migrants' access to civic amenities in Delhi, and the perpetuated marginalisation of castes employed as manual scavengers in Chennai were discussed and analyzed. The papers raised questions on how the state government's dismissal of Supreme Court orders leads to the perpetuation of caste prejudices, and whether a citizen's ability as a taxpayer should be made the marker for access to civic amenities.

Panel 3 (A): The papers in this panel engaged in an interesting debate on the conditions of women labour migrants in South Africa and in the Global South with '**Gender, Movements**

and the City' as the broad theme guiding the discussion. Female labour force migration, the intersectionality of gender-based violence and xenophobia as in the case of South Africa, the role of the State in instigating or perpetuating such violence, the aspirations of women migrants to the city as in the case of Hyderabad, the dual character of the city that emerges with it being both a space of liberation and structural violence, and the causes of female labour force migration were some of the issues and concerns that were critically studied and analyzed by the panelists.

Panel 3 (B): 'Revisiting the Migration Archives from the Brahmaputra Valley through an Inter-Disciplinary Perspective' being the overarching theme of discussion, this panel presented papers that discussed various aspects of the environment and migration nexus in the Brahmaputra valley. The concerns brought to light in this round of debate and discussion were the role of climate change in bringing about internal forced migration within Assam, the ineffectuality of state policies and initiatives such as National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) in addressing disaster mitigation and forced migration, the effect of forced migration on the economy of the region, and the need for clearer concepts and definitions of migration related to environmental and climate change.

- **Plenary Session: Theoretical Reflections: Discussion on Key Texts of Urban Studies**

Samita Sen on Friedrich Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England*

The Condition of the Working Class in England was written by Engels when he was 24-25. In 1890, Engels wrote a new preface to the book, a much older Engels reflecting back on his experiences of the 40s where he showed considerable ambivalence about his own work. He was self-deprecating at one level, at another level he was quite satisfied to see that some of the predictions in the book had indeed come to pass. The speaker focused on four key features of the book before she moved on to other discussions. The book describes itself as the condition of the working class but it in many ways, it seen as actually a pioneering work in industrial urbanism. It is also seen as a precursor to social science as we know it. Much of the method used is ethnography, though he uses a complicated mix of documents and observations. One of the documents that are extensively used in the book is the investigation by the English health authority following the cholera epidemic of 1831-32. So in many ways, it is an in-between of what today would be a sociological and ethnographical method, and a historical method. So in that sense too, such an early effort to understand industrialization and industrial urbanism, that it is in fact one of the values of this book. It is not neutral. It makes no pretence or claim to be objective; it is a radical critique of capitalism. It seeks to make a very strong case against exploitation and indifference, both from the owners, employers and the state. It also excavates, and this, the speaker thought, was the third feature of the book, mobilizations and in that sense also provides a template for Master's scholarship on industrial workers for a later time. He devotes chapters to strikes, to efforts to improve the condition of the workers. In chapter 9, 'Working Class Movements', he focuses on resistance, but the question of resistance recurs throughout the book. In many ways, this is the book which anticipates many of the most common sense arguments about industrial urbanism. One strong critique of the book that has emerged at a later time is the way he approaches the Irish question, the question of immigrant Irish workers. So Irish workers are a very important theme of the book, and one major scholar of Engels, Tristram Hunt has argued that it is a complicated engagement because on the one hand his long-term partner is an Irish woman and it is through her that he gets access to the Irish tenements and the Irish living quarters, but at the same time, he was influenced very strongly by the idiom of the

age, in the way he describes the immigrant workers. So there is an implicit racism, many critics have argued in the way he approaches the Irish question. Engels' descriptions of working class living condition offers two things: hypothesis on urban growth and the creation of slums and ethnography of the lived experience of people who find themselves trapped in modern cities. This is a path-breaking book, but in many ways the paradigm it creates has remained relevant for us even today. It is still valuable, and it is a difficult attempt to read.

Subhoranjan Dasgupta on Walter Benjamin's *Paris, the Capital of the 19th Century*

Dedicated readers of Walter Benjamin's texts are well aware that aura and phantasmagoria form the two crucial concepts of Benjamin's aesthetic philosophy. One, aura at the very basic is opposed to the other, phantasmagoria. While aura denotes the harmonious exchange of glance between the creative subject and its desired object; phantasmagoria- this word was used repeatedly in his book on Paris celebrates the transformation of the base neuter material into objects beckoning the customer, consumer and citizens. Furthermore, the object of phantasmagoria and the ambience in which it is retained is qualitatively different from the auratic experience. Should we then regard aura as an example of the false utopia and phantasmagoria as dystopia? Walter Benjamin has not answered this question, though we can claim based on a description of the Paris capital of the 19th century, and response that he would not equate phantasmagoria with dystopia. Do aura and phantasmagoria represent two uncompromising irreconcilables? In his illustrious essay, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Benjamin emphatically stated that mechanical reproduction, say on the basis of photography, has led to a destruction of the aura. If this is hundred percent correct, how can we within the same time frame decipher the aura in Bertolt Brecht's poems or in the landscapes of Van Gogh? Benjamin did not answer this thoughtful query. Perhaps, taking a cue from Terry Eagleton, we can also claim modestly that in the Paris capital of the 19th century an impregnable wall is not raised between aura and phantasmagoria. These two remain binary opposites, though at times they intermesh and coexist.

Atig Ghosh on Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*

Lefebvre published *The Production of Space* in 1974, which was translated into English in 1991. In the meantime, having already written and published the three volumes of the *Critique of Everyday Life* and the four volumes on the state, in 1986 Lefebvre wrote a new preface to the third French edition of *The Production of Space*. At a time when the French cities were, in own words, in the throes of neo-liberal transformation, this preface was not included in the English translation of 1991. A serious omission in the speaker's opinion, for in this preface Lefebvre tries to grapple with the self-erected problems of the book's continuing relevance in those changing times and in doing so comes closest to providing a short structured, statement of purpose as he would come for any of his other works. Lefebvre approaches the problem through a discussion of the project to build reasonable capitals around Paris and for many other reasons. The official body responsible for regional development, a part of centralized organization, lacks neither resources nor ambition to produce a harmonious national space, to bring a little order to wild urban development which answers only to the pursuit of profit.

The Production of Space is a book that thematically addresses the triad of urbanism, space, everyday life which dominated the work of Lefebvre throughout his career. Lefebvre does not seek a knowledge directed towards space in itself in the form of prototypes of space as will be clear from the ongoing discussion. Rather he offers an exposition on the production of space. Space should be seen as a product, a second nature created by social practices on the first nature. Further, space as a product is not to be seen as an object or a thing but as a set of relations that intervene in production itself. Space then is not isolated as

a static concept; it is dialecticized in the dual role of product producer. One could say there are two main themes in the book. The first is a triadic conceptualization of space which includes a) spatial practice b) representations of space and c) representational spaces, representing the spatial practices of a society. This triad is creatively used to confront the power-based dominating and abstract elements of social spatial practices with the living passionate and sensual specialty in the everyday life. The second main theme is the history of space, of its production qua reality and of its forms of representation. With the concepts of again a triad, absolute space, historical space and abstract space, Lefebvre describes the history of space as a concept of space. However, it wouldn't be Lefebvre if the story did not leave room for contradiction and a utopian flavour.

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay on David Harvey's *Social Justice and the City*

The product of Harvey's first encounter with Marx was the 1973 book *Social Justice and the City*. In *Social Justice*, he formulates a relevant question on the relationship between capitalism and urbanization. He asks: "Can we derive a theoretical and historical understanding of the urban process under capitalism out of a study of the supposed law of motion of a capitalist mode of production?" The question gets changed within a decade when he publishes *Limits to Capital* which is his seminal text on Marxist geography, in 1982. The transformed question is as follows: "How does capital become urbanized? And what are the consequences of the urbanization of capital?" In *Limits to Capital*, Harvey had successfully indicated the problems of space in Marxist theory of crisis, and integrated different models of accumulating capital that Marx left separate. Using Marx's trinity of accumulation for the sake of accumulation, competition and technological progress and production process and products, Harvey elaborated how capitalism periodically develops major crisis of over-accumulation in which the reserve of unutilized workers and commodities fail to find productive use and investment. Harvey says that cities are integral to the creative destruction that is endemic to capitalism. Investment in urban space-making, urban structure and renewal syncs the excess with delayed and long-term returns. However, after a point, these physical installations turn out to be major barriers to further accumulation because they are very hard to sequence. Spaces in *Rebel Cities* are animated by this profound understanding. Harvey writes in *Rebel Cities*, "This means that capitalism perpetually produces surplus products that urbanization requires. The reverse relation also holds. Capitalism also needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces." The book does something more. Here he proposes how cities can become nodes of anti-capitalist struggle. He talks about a two-prompt connection a) bridging across work space and the communal space b) localized resistances have to be scaled up and connected to compete with larger neo-liberal revolutions. He writes, "Any anti-capitalist drive mobilized through successive urban rebellions has to be consolidated at some point at a far higher scale of generality lest it all lapse back at state-level, into parliamentary and constitutional reformism that can little more than reconstitute neo-liberalism within the interstices of continuity and imperial domination."

Day III: 25 August 2017

Panel 4 (A): Titled 'Socio-Spatial Restructuring of Kolkata', the panel saw papers that explored issues of urban development and place-making within a transitional metropolis, through case-studies of Howrah and Rajarhat, both regions within West Bengal. Questions regarding rights of migrants to public services like water, proper sewage services, the nature of composition of migrant population (heterogenous/ homogenous), the effects on migrants of changes in the government and confrontation with local political henchmen and the role

of the state in terms of intervention and violence against the migrants were raised and debated.

Panel 4 (B): This panel discussion centred on **'Economies of Inhabitation: Refugees at the Urban Frontier'**. Sindhi migrants in Jaipur, refugee inhabitants of Netajipally, a peri-urban settlement in Kolkata, and the refugee settlement Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh were the three cases under study. The debate looked into the notions of spatial politics, urban transformation and the formation and erasure of hinterlands associated with the influx of migrants.

Panel 5 (A): The papers in this panel looked at **'Vulnerable Bodies: Marginal Subjectivities in Post-colonial Calcutta'**, through a study of the nature of governance regarding the refugee 'congestion' in 1950s and 1960s' Calcutta, an examination of migrant women labour and their experiences of precarity in Kolkata, and explored questions of access and gendered marginalisation in Kolkata through the lens of sanitation. Issues such as the congestion and de-congestion binary, the relationship between infrastructure, power and construction work, the connections between sanitation infrastructure and urban ecology, and the study of the city as an entity in itself were discussed and debated in this session.

Panel 5 (B): This panel was titled **'Rent, Infrastructure and Urban Improvement in Colonial Calcutta'**. The panel discussion focussed on issues of compensation with relation to the infrastructural development of colonial Calcutta, of institutional politics of spatial organisation and everyday practices of rent extraction following Calcutta Improvement Trust's commencement in 1912, and of "primitive accumulation of capital" in the central part of Calcutta in the second decade of the 20th century that led to an urban transformation.

Panel 6 (A): With **'Gender, Everyday Life and the Making of the Cityscape'** as the backdrop for discussion and debates, the panel explored the trajectory of women's migration through a closer analysis of home and place making by the women of Makrandnagar in Mumbai, and the experiences of women migrants in the Bainganwadi slum community in Mumbai and Bawana resettlement colony in Delhi. The panel further probed into the varied re-makings of urban public space and the multi-layered nature of gendered belonging in the city through a study of the notion of *izzet* (honour) as a basic organising principle in the public and intimate spheres of women's lives, in the context of a Muslim working class slum in Kolkata.

- **Closing Session**

Spike Lee's 1989 film *Do the Right Thing* was screened for the audience. The conference closed with Professor Ranabir Samaddar's remarks who proposed that there could be a publication volume (journal special issue or book) from selected papers of the conference. It was decided that there would be an editorial committee to deliberate upon the possibility of publication of a volume.

Public Lecture II

The Generic City: Meta-political Remarks on the Future of the City at the Time of Absolute Capitalism

by Livio Boni

On 26 December 2017, Calcutta Research Group organised for a public lecture by Livio Boni of Université de Toulouse Jean Jaurès on “The Generic City: Meta-political Remarks on the Future of the City at the Time of Absolute Capitalism”. Dr. Boni, in his paper, discusses metapolitical considerations (the aesthetic combined with the political) about the generic city, described as a city with no stable forms and no centre, in tandem with his analysis of Koolhaas’s 1995 pamphlet, *The Generic City*. He explores such questions as is there a form, or a pattern of forms, which regulates the evolution of the city at the time of “absolute capitalism”, can we understand the contemporary economy of the urban space in a way that is able to include its imaginary and fantastical production, without reducing it to a simple dystopia, and without falling back into a nostalgia for a “sufficiently-good” city which, in all probability, never existed, in an attempt to understand the aesthetical production or overproduction of the city. He thus looks into the creation of the city (through a study of such sites as the elevator or the shopping centre) using the lens of urban plasticity, wherein the city undergoes what Mike Davies calls “urbanization without industrialization”. This happens through the sudden abolition of all established forms and through the erasure of the social and economic organization of space prompted by capital’s occupation of the city as a crucial site of accumulation.

Public Lecture III

The Urban Turn

by Ranabir Samaddar

The public lecture by Livio Boni was followed by a second public lecture by Ranabir Samaddar, Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies at Calcutta Research Group on “The Urban Turn”. Professor Samaddar, in his turn, talks about how the urban turn begins with agrarian crisis. He looks at cities as sites of better investment, with cities becoming the destination points of millions of migrants, and camps increasingly looking like cities and vice-versa. Consequently, cities are also emerging as contentious spaces and as sites of violence. Studies of capitalism have had to engage with analyses of the urban turn, with Harvey describing the city as having the ‘rights’ dimension. In his paper, Prof. Samaddar also discusses the increasing disassociation of the city – as a site of production and circulation – from notions of class, and therein lies the central contradiction in the notion of the urban turn. The focus should be on the migrant figure as an outsider, suggests Prof. Samaddar, as the migrant brings to the fore the class question in terms of urban thinking. Two other factors that require thinking on are urban employment as a social question, and whether the city is synonymous with the urban. The two public lectures were part of a two-hour long programme and preceded the Workshop on Towns and Migrants: Explorations of an Urban Future. The programme schedule of the public lectures is provided hereafter:

Workshop

Towns and Migrants: Explorations of an Urban Future (27 December 2017)

This was the last in the series of workshops held by the Calcutta Research Group under the research and dialogue programme on “Cities, Migrants, Violence, and Issues of Social Justice” conducted in partnership with the Ford Foundation. The workshop was held in Kolkata on 27 December, 2017.

The purpose of the workshop was threefold:

(a) In the background of the research done in the last three years by us and other researchers on similar themes, the workshop attempted to make sense of what can termed as the “urban turn” in our thinking, governmental reasoning, and the policy regime in the last twenty five years

(b) The workshop reflected on the future of this urban turn, and

(c) Finally reflected on the future of urban struggles, resistance, and in general urban politics.

Our research over time has located the migrant as a key figure in the dynamics of present urban development. The migrant then featured as a key figure in the reflections in the workshop.

The workshop specifically addressed three themes:

(i) frontier cities and towns

(ii) small towns and census towns and

(iii) changing forms of urban struggles and politics.

Through discussion on these themes, the workshop aimed to conceive of a new research proposal on urban governance and justice that will continue with the insights gained from the previous research programme and then try to move on to an analysis of the dynamics of non-metropolitan urban existence. The knowledge will be as crucial as that of the knowledge of urban dynamics in metropolitan cities, on which our preceding research focused.

Following are the programme schedule and the brief reports of the workshop proceedings:

Programme

Day I: 26 December 2017

05.00–05.25 pm: Tea & Registration

05.25–05.30 pm: Welcome Address by Anita Sengupta, Director, Calcutta Research Group

05.30–07.00 pm: [Chair: Paula Banerjee, Vice-Chancellor, Sanskrit University]

- Public Lecture by Livio Boni, Université de Toulouse Jean Jaurès on *The Generic City: meta-political remarks on the future of the city at the time of absolute capitalism*
- Public Lecture by Ranabir Samaddar, Calcutta Research Group on *The Urban Turn*

07.00–07.05 pm: Vote of Thanks by Ritam Sengupta, Calcutta Research Group

Day II: 27 December 2017

- 10.00 -10.25 am: Tea and Registration
- 10.25 - 10.30 am: Welcome address by Anita Sengupta, Director, Calcutta Research Group
- 10.30 -01.00 pm: **Session I: Frontier Towns as the Edge of a Complex Urbanity**
[Chair: Pushendra Kumar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna]
- 10.30-10.55 am: Lead note/paper by Mithilesh Kumar (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna) – *Raxaul as a Frontier Town at the Intersection of the New Silk Road*
- 10.55–11.50 am: Lead note/paper by Snehashish Mitra (National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore) – *Knowing the Frontier City: New Urbanization in Northeast India*
- 11.50 -12.15 pm: Lead note/paper by Subir Bhaumik (Eminent Journalist) – *Agartala as a Frontier Town*
- 12.15-0.00 pm: Discussants - Pradip Phanjoubam (Eminent Journalist), Monirul Hussain (Gauhati University), Anita Sengupta (Calcutta Research Group), and Priya Singh (Calcutta Research Group)
- 01.00-02.00 pm: Lunch
- 02.00-03.30 pm: **Session II: Small Towns: The Neglected Dimension of Indian Urbanisation**
[Chair: Atig Ghosh, Visva-Bharati University]
- 02.00-02.30 pm: Lead note/paper by Ritam Sengupta (Calcutta Research Group) - *The Small Town in India: 'Subaltern Urbanisation' and beyond*
- 02.30-03.30 pm: Discussants - Manish Jha (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai), Pushendra Kumar (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna), Iman Mitra (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna) and Mahalaya Chatterji (University of Calcutta)
- 03.30-04.00 pm: Tea
- 04.00-06.00 pm: **Session III: Urban Activism: City and the Changing Face of Revolt**
[Chair: Sibaji Pratim Basu, Vidyasagar University]
- 04.00-04.30 pm: Lead note/paper by Ishita Dey (Ambedkar University) - *Resilient cities and cities of resistance*
- 04.30-06.00 pm: Discussion: Kaustubh Mani Sengupta (Bankura University), Samata Biswas (Bethune College), Nasreen Chowdhory (University of Delhi)
- 06.00-06.15 pm: Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks by Somdatta Chakraborty, Calcutta Research Group)

Brief Reports of Sessions

Welcome Address

Anita Sengupta, Director, Calcutta Research Group inaugurated the workshop with a brief exposition on the objectives of the workshop and the trajectory that the larger project will take in the future.

Session I: Frontier Towns as the Edge of a Complex Urbanity [Chair: Pushpendra Kumar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna]

Mithilesh Kumar - *Raxaul as a Frontier Town at the Intersection of the New Silk Road*

Mithilesh Kumar began by briefly speaking about the history of the Bihar-Nepal border and then moved on to discuss his current research. Kumar referred to the porous character of the border since colonial times enabling free movement of people. It also served as an escape route from governmental persecution and at the same time facilitated the continued flow of opium trade and had a strategic significance too as it was used for military surveillance. Till date illegal trade in the form of currency and bullion trade continue as does the strategic relevance of the border. Both the Chinese One Belt One Road Initiative and the Indo-Japanese Tea Corridor rely on passage through the Bihar-Nepal border. While the logistical set up has further helped bilateral trade in the region, trains which continue to be the lifeline of cargo based trade often pose a risk for traders involved in the process of unloading. For Kumar, the precarious existence of people living on both sides of the border is a given primarily due the unstable character of capitalism.

Snehashish Mitra - *Knowing the Frontier City: New Urbanization in Northeast India*

Snehashish Mitra while speaking about the frontier regions and urbanisation in North East India points out that while India erected physical borders with China, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the borders that separate India from Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar have largely been left open with mobility remaining unhindered. For four decades after independence, the Indian State did not think of the North East as resourceful, the already established cities such as Shillong and Guwahati continued to be the sole centres of urbanisation policies. However after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, India's policy of "Look East" had impact on the North East region as it was now considered as the "resource frontier". Industrialisation and urbanisation have taken their roots in North East India, though there remains the question whether the capital invested in the region would flow inwards or remain constricted to the already urbanised cities.

Subir Bhaumik - *Agartala as a Frontier Town*

The third speaker, Subir Bhaumik began by speaking about the different ways in which borders have been interpreted by people. While some view the borders as an opportunity for some it's a potential threat. These conceptions of borders are mainly based on the relations that the two adjoining nations share, whether they are cordial or in a state of tension. He went on to discuss the aesthetically developed city of Agartala and its role as a "frontier city". He speaks about how Agartala due to its location on the Indo-Bangladesh border was the centre of support for the Bangladesh Liberation Movement. The border in this region is porous and therefore Agartala often experiences inflow of people and commodities from Bangladesh. He focuses on Agartala as the "smuggling and intelligence hub" of North East India where smugglers live a luxurious life. It is an intelligence hub due to its proximity with four main towns of Bangladesh. The special role of Agartala also lies in the fact that it is the only city which could help in providing access to the sea for the North East region.

Discussants:

Pradip Phanjoubam: Pradip Phanjoubam made observations on each of the papers. He observed that while most cities came into existence due to the increase in population, some cities are made with the hope that people would settle there. He noted that borders between states are the result as well as the cause of political sentiments of the ruling class as well the common citizens. The apparent failure of the “Look East/Act East” policy in the development of the North East has been largely due to the fact that the volume of trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh has decreased and the focus is mainly on the small ASEAN countries while a number of regions within Myanmar have been ignored.

Monirul Hassan: Monirul Hassan observed that the substantive migration of people from the state of Assam to various parts of India has been primarily due to the non-existence of jobs in the area. It is the politics of underdevelopment which has driven people outside the state. Another crisis in Assam is that of the Muslim peasants which began with riots immediately after the partition but the feeling of being “unwanted” has yet not faded away even today. At the same time various other ethnic reasons have led to low productivity in the area.

Anita Sengupta: Anita Sengupta expanded the discussion to include frontier towns in other parts of Asia. She spoke about the town of Osh in Central Asia which was in the news twice in recent times (in 1999 and 2010), mainly due to ethnic violence. Osh is the second largest city of Kyrgyzstan located in the Fergana Valley. The region being more fertile than the rest is densely populated with an ethnically diverse population. The Fergana valley was home to both sedentary as well as nomadic people and this constituted a source of tension amongst the people. However during the Soviet period, there was settlement of both people in the valley. The ethnic violence arising due to the inability to determine the borders and demarcate which region belonged to which group, the Kyrgyz, Uzbek or Tajik was elaborated upon by Sengupta.

Priya Singh: Priya Singh spoke about Jerusalem as a contested frontier city. A multi bordered city, Jerusalem exemplifies a complex interplay of historical, geographical and religious factors that contributes to and enhances contestations. The multi bordered character of the city makes it imperative to adopt a nuanced methodology to disentangle the political, social, economic and functional borders. Singh emphasised upon the enduring contested nature of the city that incites and encourages the construction and deconstruction of borders, which in turn provides for the creation of frontiers on an almost every day basis.

Session II: Small Towns: The Neglected Dimension of Indian Urbanisation [Chair: Atig Ghosh, Visva-Bharati University]

Ritam Sengupta - *The Small Town in India: 'Subaltern Urbanisation' and beyond*

Ritam Sengupta, in his paper, sets out to qualify a distinctive mode of enquiry with respect to questions of the urban and urbanisation as might be founded on the relatively recent epistemic interest in the ‘small town’ as not merely an intermediary, but an essential element in/of India’s emerging urbanities. His paper questions the absence of research and thinking about towns and urban areas outside ‘metros’ or metropolitan urban areas. His paper understands the term ‘small town’ to negatively encompass the entirety of non-metropolitan phenomena, and urbanisation as a process following from metropolitan concerns and developments. The primary objective of his paper, in addition to enquiring into the dearth of research on ‘small towns’ is to question this conceptualisation of the phenomenon of urbanisation as driven entirely by metropolitan inducements.

Discussants:

Manish Jha: Citing his own case, Manish Jha talked about how the engagement with the small town comes from the experiences of growing up in one. The politics of the making of the town, the changing contours of the town, and the influence of local politics is something which we'd probably like to bring in through our discussions on small towns, he suggested. The attempt to recognize non-metropolitan urbanization and filling the research gap is essential. The discursive engagedness of the small town lends itself as a space of sustenance, and multiplication of commercial production and capital.

Pushpendra Kumar: Pushpendra Kumar too shared his experience of witnessing the transformation of a block town to a district town happen through a set of influential people, usually involved in some kind of industry at the location, who can constantly fight to upgrade the status of the town. In small towns, there is a different kind of a worker's organization and a different kind of utilization of that space. Going beyond the demographic data used for classifying towns, one should bring into question the terms in themselves and reflect upon the roles they perform in research.

Iman Mitra: One of the points that Ritam Sengupta emphatically makes in the paper is an attempt to critically understand the small town as a hyphen between the rural and urban within the linear history of urbanization in India, said Iman Mitra. He pointed out some of the difficulties of positing the problematic of the small town into the larger discourse of urban development in India. The first difficulty arises with the wish to study the small town in isolation to the metropolitan, which he thinks is a major fault with subaltern urbanism. Secondly, as is known, towns are classified in India based on the population of a certain region. One must find newer, different markers other than that of population for the classification of towns. Moreover, for example, places like Naihati, Chandannagar were important urban centres under the colonial rule and show an urbanism that does not function as an in-between space, and a different method has to be followed in order to account for them.

Mahalaya Chatterjee: Mahalaya Chatterjee started with the basic question: what is urban? Each country has its own definition of urban. Is urban at all comparable? Similarly, when we talk about small towns, what do we mean when we say small, she questioned. Is it a small region? Is it the population? Or is it the political concentration that is small? Going by the census, the study of small towns based on population can be a starting point to understand how these towns were and how they are changing. Secondly, the metropolis is a term for a big city but the metropolitan is a term for planning and it is also important to distinguish this.

Session III: Urban Activism: City and the Changing Face of Revolt [Chair: Sibaji Pratim Basu, Vidyasagar University]

Ishita Dey - *Resilient Cities and cities of resistance*

Ishita Dey, in her paper, addressed the issue of urban activism in terms of gendered resistance and resilience from the perspective of the stranger, that is, the migrant. Her exposition drew on her own gendered experiences as a migrant in a metropolitan urban area. She talked about shrinking spaces of dissent, and the need for migrants to reclaim public spaces for the expression of resistance and dissent. She also proposed a shift of understanding collateral risks associated with the migrant, and offered a reading of the 'biography of objects' drawing upon Brian Larkin's essay 'The politics and poetics of Infrastructure' wherein infrastructure is understood in terms of the study of technopolitics.

The material operation of technologies and things require study, as they have implications on political processes, and operate as systems that lay bare the politics of urban activism.

Kaustabh Mani Sengupta: He started with a few observations. One was the spatial aspect of Ishita Dey's project, how people are trying to claim their city space and the State is always trying to curb those city spaces. It is the space of the city that provides the space of and for protest. And from there, he came to the idea of collective action. What Ishita brings into this discussion is specifically the gendered state of collective action, Sengupta pointed out

Samata Biswas: Biswas began with some questions - is resilience a good thing? Don't we say that people are so resilient, there's so much trouble but at the same time, admire their resilience? We do not expect them to die because there's so much trouble. Resilience then is a flexibility of nature, the ability to retain/ return to its original shape. Now when we think of resistance, why do we resist, she asks. If resistance is a result of intolerance then is that a good kind of intolerance? If that is the case, then who resists? What do they resist? Where do they resist? And it is with this *where* that we come to the city, she posits. To be resistant is to be intolerant, breaking the culture of tolerance.

Nasreen Chowdhory: What Chowdhory gathered from Ishita Dey's paper was that it attempted to bring out the idea of urban activism. We have been talking about the city, the making of the city and whether or not migrants should have any aspirational understanding towards the city, she says. This urban activism in her view is very much tied to the notion of rights to the city which came about in the '70s, in a different context in France. And if we are talking about claiming of the city, then we must ask by whom, and what is it that you have lost? The migrant is a citizen too but carries the baggage of illegality with it because citizenship is also concerned with domicile. However, what is missing here, she rues, is a discussion on class: is there a class component to this urban activism, she asks.

The vote of thanks was delivered by **Somdatta Chakraborty** of Calcutta Research Group.

Section III

TRANSLATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

List of Translations & Publications (2017)

Translations

- “Cities, Migrants and the Urban Poor” has been translated into Bengali and Hindi. The Bengali volume is in circulation; the Hindi volume is in press.
- Research papers translated into Bengali –
 - (a) *Ponchaser Sealdah Station Station O Udbastu Jiboner Rojnamcha* by Anwesha Sengupta
 - (b) *Haldia Bondor/Shohor: Ponyosambhar Ebong Prantik Janajibon* by Samata Biswas
 - (c) *Shomoy Chaka: Nobyoudarnitibari Parikalponar Biborte Samakalin Siliguri* by Atig Ghosh

These are translations of relevant research papers published under the series *Policies and Practices* and will be published.

Publications

- *Migrant and the Neo-liberal City* (Forthcoming, Orient Blackswan, 2018)
- *Ecology, Precarity and Migration in the Riverlands of Bihar, Bengal and the Northeast* (also, forthcoming, Orient Blackswan, 2018)
- A special issue of the journal *Refugee Watch* (No. 50) was published with papers addressing the theme of ‘Refugees, Migrants, Violence and The Transformation of Cities’ with articles by:
 - (a) Ranabir Samaddar – *Borders of Labour and Refugee Economies*,
 - (b) Ritam Sengupta – *The Small Town in India: ‘Subaltern Urbanisation’ and Beyond*,
 - (c) Somdatta Chakraborty – *Criminalizing the Migrant: Street Carriers and the Colonial State in 19th – 20th Century Calcutta and Bengal*
- The following lead papers presented at the Workshop on Towns and Migrants: Explorations of an Urban Future will be published under the research paper series *Policies and Practices*:
 - (a) Mithilesh Kumar - *Raxaul as a Frontier Town at the Intersection of the New Silk Road*,
 - (b) Snehashish Mitra - *Knowing the Frontier City: New Urbanization in Northeast*
 - (c) Subir Bhaumik – *Agartala as a Frontier Town*
- An integrated volume consisting of select papers from the Sixth Critical Studies Conference and the Workshop will be published. The papers selected shall address two broad themes: (a) The Ordinary City: Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity, and (b) Towns, Migrants, and Transformation of Cities: Explorations of an Urban Future.

Section IV

**THE RESEARCH COLLECTIVE:
RESEARCHERS,
DISCUSSANTS AND CHAIRS**

Researchers, Discussants and Chairs

List of Researchers, Discussants and Chairs:

Amit Prakash, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Anita Sengupta, Calcutta Research Group

Anjoo Sharan Upadhyay, Benares Hindu University

Annapurna Neti, Azim Premji University

Anup Shekhar Chakraborty, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Kolkata

Anwesha Sengupta, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata

Arup Sen, Serampore College

Atig Ghosh, Visva Bharati University

Bishnu Mohapatra, Forum of Contemporary Theory

Byasdeb Dasgupta, University of Kalyani

Garima Dhabai, Presidency University

Himadri Chatterjee, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Iman Mitra, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna

Ishita Dey, Ambedkar University

Kalpana Kannabiran, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad

Kaustubh Mani Sengupta, Bankura University

Lalitha Kamath, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Livio Boni, Université de Toulouse Jean Jaurès

Maggie Paul, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Mahalaya Chatterjee, University of Calcutta

Mahuya Bandyopadhyay, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Manish Jha, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Mithilesh Kumar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna

Mithun Som, Anveshi, City Project Team

Moitree Dey, Matasundari College for Women

Monirul Hussain, Gauhati University

Murchana Roychoudhury, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad

Nabajyoti Deka, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Nasreen Chowdhory, University of Delhi

Nora S. von Kitzing, Witwatersrand University

Oindrila Dutta Gupta, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Parivelan K.M., Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Paula Banerjee, Sanskrit University

Pradip Phanjoubam, Eminent journalist

Prasad R, Loyola College of Social Sciences

Prasanta Ray, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata

Priya Singh, Calcutta Research Group

Puja Guha, Azim Premji University

Pushpendra Kumar Singh, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna

Radhika Raj, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Rajarshi Dasgupta, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Ranabir Samaddar, Calcutta Research Group

Ratoola Kundu, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Mohali

Ritam Sengupta, Calcutta Research Group

Rumki Basu, Jamia Milia Islamia

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University

Samata Biswas, Bethune College

Samita Sen, Jadavpur University

Sanam Roohi, St. Joseph's College, Bangalore

Sanjeeb Mukherjee, University of Calcutta

Shiladitya Ray, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad

Sibaji Pratim Basu, Vidyasagar University

Snehashish Mitra, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore

Somdatta Chakraborty, Calcutta Research Group

Souvanic Roy, Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology

Subhash Ranjan Chakrabarti, Eminent historian

Subhoranjan Dasgupta, Eminent literary critic and analyst

Subir Bhaumik, Eminent journalist

Subir Sinha, School of Oriental and African Studies

Sudeep Basu, Central University of Gujarat

Supurna Banerjee, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata

Swati Ghosh, Rabindra Bharati University

Tathagata Chatterji, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar

Ujaan Ghosh, Independent Researcher

V. Ramaswamy, Calcutta Research Group

V. Srinivasan, Chennai Metro Union for Construction and Unorganized Workers

Xonzoi Barbora, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati

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