

Annual Report 2001 – 2002

1. Refugee Watch:

- 1.1 Refugee Watch continued to be published from Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (therefore CRG) during 2001-2002 and receive international acclaim (the latest being a commendation from Sarah Green of the University of London). We have reasons to believe that the journal has reached a stage when we can feel justly proud of what I described in the last annual report as, our 'flagship publication'. In all 4 issues (Numbers 13, 14, 15, 16 published in March, June, September and December of 2001) came out in this year. The first three issues dealt with such themes as 'the displaced in the northeast', 'power, fear, ethics in refugee protection', 'displacing people, nations march ahead' respectively. The last issue was sort of a mixed bag in which such questions as relief and rehabilitation in West Bengal, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and asylum seekers in Australia were discussed. Some of the themes that have figured in the above-mentioned issues are: refugees and internally displaced persons in the northeast with special emphasis on the Chins and Reangs of the northeast, refugee problem in Africa and the Muslims of France, the Mohajirs of Pakistan, the plight of the refugee on the US-Mexico border, media and immigration in the northeast, the Burmese internal refugees, IDPs of Sri Lanka etc. While the inventory gives us a fair idea of how varied the themes could be they were effectively tied up with serious and theoretically minded papers as, 'power, fear, and ethics'. In short, RW true to its objective tried to become a combination of the academic and activist genres of writings on the subjects of its interest. Some of the experiments introduced in the last year relating to the design, layout, columns and editorial features were carried out in this year also. It is still passing through a transitional stage and the EC agrees the importance of improving it further.
- 1.2 A proposal for renewal of our annual contract for bringing out RW along with suggestions for improvement of the journal was submitted to the South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR), Kathmandu. We are thankful to SAFHR for sharing concern for improving the journal further.
- 1.3 The year 2001-2002 has to my mind, been a crucial year in the life of CRG. For it is precisely in this year that CRG took off from a small group of socially committed researchers and activists primarily based in Calcutta to a body that has spread its wings across Indian and other South Asian countries. Our South Asian Editorial Body of RW is illustrative of this. We are in constant contact with some of the finest minds of South Asia, who have agreed to become its members. We record our heart-felt thanks to all of them.

2. Projects

- 2.1 CRG undertook a project on 'Indian best practices on asylum and refugee treatment' in collaboration with the UNHCR during this period. The project has continued according to plan during this period. Preliminary meetings with researchers were held in November and December. Draft of papers will be revised according to suggestions and editorial comments. The project is expected to finish in 2002-2003. The members will be glad to know that CRG

has already entered into an agreement with Sage Publications to bring out know that CRG has already into an agreement with Sage Publications to bring out the book. Ranabir Samaddar will edit it. Samir K. Das and Paula Banerjee have been the joint coordinators of the project. Pradip K. Bose was requested to be the internal evaluator.

- 2.2 Another project on 'Internal Displacement in South Asia' was undertaken during this period in collaboration with the Brookings Institution, Washington D.C. Our coordinator of this project is Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury. The work has just began – direct discussions and discussions by mail were held in the period with several researchers. The concept of the work was finalized. CRG has proposed to Brookings a workshop to be held on receiving the studies, so that revision can take place on agreed suggestions and guidelines, and the volume can be prepared for publications. The project will be hopefully completed in 2002-2003.
- 2.3 The work of the South Asian Studies Reader under the editorship of Ranabir Samaddar is almost over. The Mss have been submitted to and accepted by the Sage Publications. It has already founded a mention in the Sage's global alert' on publications. It is expected to come out by 2002. The publication will certainly add to our prestige as a intended to serve as a ready reference for the students and researchers engaged in the filed. CRG's leadership in this regard is certainly commendable. While this is an introductory volume, the presently conceived three other volumes will deal with specific issues of peace agreements, gender, and human rights in that order.
- 2.4 The first peace and human rights dialogue programme for east and the northeast was held in Calcutta on 13-14 October in Calcutta 2001. The report has been made separately available. It was held in collaboration with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Foudation for Universal Responsibility of New Delhi. The participants of the dialogue resolved to carry forward the programme in order to create a network of peace activists of the region. CRG accordingly with its partners has been engaged in carrying out the tasks resolved in October 2001.
- 2.5 Members of the Group presented papers, participated, in and chaired various sessions of national and international seminars and workshop on migration, refugee rights, conflict and peace in the northeast, partition, displaced women, and forms of justice; they also took part in the various research programmes and planning committees. CRG became more known through these activists of its members.
3. The process of launching a website in pursuance of our earlier decision has begun in right earnest. Suggestions and proposals in this respect are always welcome from the GB members.
4. But many other things that we have decided to do remain to be done. We have still not been able to launch the Bengali Journal (Nyaya O Adhikar) that we had planned to bring out. Our monthly seminar series could not take off in spite of our commitments.

5. All of you agree will that CRG can function properly and achieve its objectives only when we have an appropriate office infrastructure. We have already started overhauling and restructuring the office. The work ethic is also important. But the task is far from being over. The importance of regular employees in this regard can hardly be exaggerated. At this stage, we are still unable to maintain regular employees. We are taking steps to improve it.

6. Plan for 2002-2003:

- 6.1 To continue the projects already under way and to complete them within the time frame.
- 6.2 In pursuance of an understanding with the International Center for Ethnic Studies, Colombo to work on a 'South Asian Regional Compendium of Institutions/ Scholars and their Scholarship and Minority Publications'.
- 6.3 To strengthen the peace dialogue process, and develop an educational and research programme on culture of peace with emphasis on women.
- 6.4 To continue publication on forced migration
- 6.5 To put emphasis on the publication of CRG's Paper Series
- 6.6 To develop website.
- 6.7 To hold monthly seminars
- 6.8 To initiate programme on refugee studies in India
- 6.9 To initiate the Bengali journal
- 6.10 And, to evolve an appropriate administrative infrastructure and culture conducive to research and other activities of CRG.

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