

MAHANIRBAN CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP

Annual Report for 2007-2008

1. Action Taken Report
2. Programmes
3. Publications, Seminars, and Public Lectures
4. Website
5. Members of the staff
6. Assets
7. Network, partners, and collaboration
8. Membership
9. Tasks for 2008-2009

1. Actions Taken Report on the Resolutions passed at the 11<sup>th</sup> AGM

(Agenda Item No)

1. (i) Copies of the proceedings were sent to all members after the meeting.
- 1 (c) We are still unable to find a good avenue for publication and distribution of Bengali literature.
1. (d) Dr. Sanjay Chaturvedi did not inform anything further about the possibility of research collaboration with the IPSA. Therefore CRG could not pursue the matter.
  
2. (iii) Dr. Ranabir Samaddar attended a relevant meeting in Bangkok and CRG will explore the possibility of undertaking such relevant project.
2. (iv) We need to discuss the details of this.
2. (v) The Director is aware of the need of increasing the permanent staff strength and apprised the Governing Body of this need. Hopefully by next year assuming that the current grant base will continue, we shall be able to increase the staff strength. But the rapid turnover of research associates requires to be kept in mind in this context.
2. (vi) We are trying to secure Government fund. Efforts have been initiated (for instance – approaching ICSSR and IGNOU). However we are yet to hear from them.
2. (vii) CRG website is regularly updated.
2. (viii) CRG has organized the visiting faculty section. In this calendar year we have two Visiting Professors. However, we need to formalize guidelines towards constituting an international advisory board.
2. (ix) The Director has written to all members of the Calcutta Research Group to send their short bio-notes on the basis of work done in 2007-2008. However, very few have responded.
  
4. (b) Keya Dasgupta, Kalpana Kannabiran and Pallav Kumar Goswami became members of the Society. However Rajen Harshe did not reply.

2. Programmes of the CRG:

2.1 *Programme on Forced Migration:* The Fifth Winter Course on Forced Migration took place in 2007. The participants were from the countries of South Asia; besides there were participants from United States, Switzerland, Finland, Hungary, and Tunisia. There was also participation from the Indian National Human Rights Commission. Faculty members came from different

countries of South Asia, and from Finland, United States, and Netherlands. A new module on media and forced migration was introduced with special assistance of the Brookings Institution and PANOS South Asia. As part of that module there was a one-day workshop, a film show segment, and some other discussions. Besides the winter course, small workshops and short courses were held as part of the programme. Research output in form of publications came out of the programme, and these were referred to the participants as course material. Similarly two issues of the *Refugee Watch* were published as course material besides being circulated as journal. There were also exchange visits of junior scholars between Finland and India, visits by Indian senior scholars, and public lectures. The entire report of the Winter Course and all relevant documents are available on the CRG website and the course report has been sent to all members of the Society. A copy of the report is attached here as Annexure 1. Samir Kr. Das was the coordinator of the Course; he coordinated the activities with the help of Ishita Dey, the Programme Associate. The Government of Finland, UNHCR and the Brookings Institution supported the programme. As recognition of the programme, the scholarship, and reputation of our research, at the Cairo Conference of the AIFSM Paula Banerjee was elected as the Vice President of the AIFSM, and Ranabir Samaddar on behalf of the CRG was made the convener of the network of research institutions on forced migration. Paula Banerjee is also on the editorial advisory board of the *Forced Migration Review* (FMR). The Finland visit by the senior CRG scholars has resulted in cooperation between TAPRI and CRG, and links between Helsinki Colloquium for Advanced Studies and CRG. CRG members participated in the jointly organized two-day colloquium on globalisation, solidarity, and citizenship. It also involved the journal *Globalisations*. Ranabir Samaddar was subsequently invited to be is a member of the editorial board of the journal.

*2.2 Research and Advocacy Programme on the IDPs:* It has to be noted also that CRG's work on the IDPs continued as part of the programme on forced migration. The Brookings Institution funds the IDP segment in the programme on forced migration. Work on three important issues completed in the year under consideration. With the support of the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions CRG completed a study titled, "The Responsibility to Protect – The Role of the National and State Human Rights Institutions in Protecting the Rights of the Displaced" (Annexure 2). The work consisted of three countrywide workshops, studies, and a final report on the theme. CRG completed another assignment - again within the year under consideration – related to an evaluation of the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy (Annexure 3). The research was collective, and the research report was published. Both these documents were sent to NHRC and other human rights institutions. They have been widely circulated and appreciated. The third work under this segment was a study of the impact of conflict in Chattisgarh in form of displacement. Hindi translation of the said research publication (Annexure 4) is under consideration. The fourth component was a study produced by a visiting scholar from Sri Lanka on the theme of war and displacement in Sri Lanka with focus on the situation in Batticaloa (Annexure 5). Finally studies on the Nepal Government's IDP policy, Finland's immigration Policy, and a critical study on the outsider's gaze on the displaced population in the city of Kolkata were published in a combined volume, titled, "The Limits of the Humanitarian" (Annexure 6). All these publications and reports were sent to members duly. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury coordinated the work on the IDPs with the help of Ishita Dey, the programme and research associate. Samir Das coordinated the finalization of the study of the R&R policy.

*2.3 Research and Dialogue Programme on Social Justice in India:* As reported last year, Calcutta Research Group (CRG) with the support of Ford Foundation, undertook a multi-linear, multi-dimensional and an intense engagement with the concept and realities of 'Social Justice'. In this perspective, a series of ethnographic studies, dialogues and lectures were undertaken to

investigate and analyse the actually existing notions of justice among various sections of population and to find out if any broad idea of Social Justice emerges from these inquiries. The first year marked the beginning of the research programme and the dialogues being held in different locations. It also commenced the public lecture series. Primary research reports were authored in this period. Moreover, various depositories of resources for the study on this issue were identified. In this period three dialogues were held. These dialogues were exploratory and open ended; and helped framing the research questions and methods more clearly. The first report contained the details of these.

*Research segment:* The research segment of this enquiry contained three types of research – historical, ethnographic, and analytic. In all fifteen research papers were authored. Some were published under the research paper series of the CRG, and now 4 comprehensive volumes will be published under a series on ‘Social Justice’. The drafts were submitted, CRG followed its system in place for evaluation and improvement of the draft papers through peer reviews, organised two collective discussion workshops for the papers, and completed the process of internal editing to bring the drafts to a level before they were to be put forward for publication. Hence this segment had two categories of activities: (a) two evaluation workshops; (b) finalizing an ambitious publication proposal on a four volume series on Social Justice in India.

Parts of the studies were brought out in form of research papers of CRG.

*Discussion workshops:* Two evaluation workshops were held in Kolkata where 9 research papers out of the 15 papers that reached CRG were extensively discussed. These workshops took place on 31 May 2007 and 4 July 2007 respectively. These one-day workshops were intensive, there were outside invitees who commented on the research papers, improvements and revisions were suggested for the authors, and the workshops were both evaluative and dialogic and made the research work in the full sense of the term participatory. On the basis of the evaluation and subsequent revision of papers the proposal of a series of publications on Social Justice in India evolved. Editorial work on the proposed series commenced soon. The proposed series aims at bringing out various forms of justice in reality: social claim as justice, attainment and the restoration of dignity as justice, end to discrimination as justice, retribution as justice, conciliation of claims as justice, social idea of minimal justice, positive discrimination as justice, protection of the vulnerable sections of society as justice, and finally autonomy as justice. Also in this series are essays that re-emphasise the fact that justice can and does have strong gender implications. Ranabir Samaddar will be the editor-in-chief of this 4 volume series. An editorial team worked on this work with the plan of handing over the entire mss as press ready copy by May 2008. In brief the titles of the proposed volumes are:

- Volume One will be on “Social Justice and Enlightenment: What is Happening in West Bengal?” The editors are Pradip Kr. Bose and Samir Kr Das. The contributors are: Kumar Rana, Amites Mukhopadhyay, Ratan Khasnabis, and Subhas Ranjan Chakroborty and Roshan Rai.
- Volume Two will be on “Justice and Law: The Limits of the Deliverables of Law”. The editors are Bharat Bhushan and Ashok Agrwaal. The contributors are Oishik Sircar, Bharat Bhushan, Ashok Agrwaal, Samir Kumar Das, and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury.
- Volume Three will be on “Marginalities and Justice”. The editors are: Paula Banerjee and Sanjay Chaturvedi. The contributors are Paula Banerjee, Badri Narayan, Manish Jha, Amit Prakash, and Sanjay Chaturvedi.
- Volume Four will be on “Key Texts on Justice”, edited by Sanam Roohi and Ranabir Samaddar This volume is intended in particular for students and future researchers, who can make use of the research material identified, used, or marked in this research programme.

*Public lecture segment:* There were some public lectures held under the programme. The list is given below: In the period under consideration, the following public lectures took place under the auspices of CRG as part of the Social Justice programme. The details of these lectures are as follows:

- Carolyn Stephens, Epidemiologist and Senior Lecturer of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, “Globalisation, Inequality and Urban Health”, 18 January 2008 2007;
- Jan Breman, Professor of Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, “Coolie Migration in the Colonial Era”, 13 December 2007
- Etienne Balibar, Emeritus Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy, Paris X Nanterre and Distinguished Professor of Humanities, University of California, Irvine, “Justice and Equality - A Political Dilemma?”, 21 September 2007
- Margaret Levi, Jere L. Bacharach Professor of International Studies, Director, CHAOS (Comparative Historical Analysis of Organizations and States), and previous president of the American Political Science Association, “Provoking Preferences by Changing Beliefs”, 25 July 2007
- Ksenia Glebova, Honorary Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group, “Bangladeshi Immigration to Assam in India – The Print Media Discourse”, 20 April 2007
- Sanam Roohi, Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group, “Gender Justice and Muslim Women of Calcutta”, 20 April 2007

Some of these lectures were held in collaboration with other public institutions, and college teachers, students, and civil society activists joined these lectures and the discussions that followed these lectures. Plus, members of the CRG research group lectured and presented papers on themes related to social justice at various universities and public forums in the country and abroad.

*Dialogue and conference segment:* The three dialogues held in the first year were summarized in the second year, and published in form of a report. The report was released in Delhi on 18 April 2007 (Annexure 7) and was subsequently distributed widely among various sections of the academic community and the civil society. Participants of the dialogues and the evaluative workshops (about one hundred in number) also received copies. The year-long discussion in various circles set the theme and tone of the hugely successful and widely noted Second Critical Studies Conference on the theme of “Spheres of Justice”. The conference was organized as part of the public engagement that CRG had continued on the theme of Social Justice. It was held on 20-22 September 2007. A public organizing committee with members drawn from various institutions of the city was in charge of the conference. A section of the CRG website was dedicated to the conference. Abstracts, full papers, comments, lectures, and details of the participants were put up there. On-line registration was encouraged.

A Two-day Indo-French seminar on *State Formation, Citizenship and Gender* was organized on 13 and 14 March 2008 in collaboration with ICSSR (Eastern Regional Centre) at Hotel Akashdeep and Calcutta University respectively. Prof. Sonia Deayan Herzbrun and Prof. Dominique Fougeyrollas from University of Paris VII joined the programme and delivered talks. Distinguished scholars from Kolkata and other parts of India also joined the seminar.

*2.4 Second Critical Studies Conference:* The three-day conference, held under the social justice programme, requires special mention. There were nine panels under which twenty-four papers were presented. They dealt with various aspects of justice, namely the philosophical and moral dimensions, feminist ideas and practices, cultural representations, marginalities and the issue of

justice, the juridical discourses on justice, the discourses of collective claim makings, violence, and the issue of responsibility. The aim was to assemble various views on justice, relevant ethnographic studies, gendered analysis of issues of justice, the aesthetic dimensions of justice, and various concerned legal and political theories and practices. The Conference achieved a high academic standard and scholars and intellectuals from across India, South Asia, Australia, both eastern and western parts of Europe, and South America were present during the Conference to present their views. Their presence led to an intense exchange of views and greater understanding of the commonalities and the variety of situations. The exchange led to the setting up of a network to continue the collective engagement in form of critical thinking on issues of democracy and justice, and an international editorial board to publish the papers in various forms. One of the appreciated features of the conference consisted of the papers by young scholars. The presence of college teachers on a notable scale throughout the conference was another feature that was appreciated. This Conference had a special feature. Just after the conference there was “A One-Day Workshop with the noted philosopher Etienne Balibar” (who had delivered the public lecture of the conference on 21 September, and the text was subsequently published - Annexure 8) on 24 September 2007. A select group of participants was invited to join the workshop. In the first half of the day, Etienne Balibar spoke on his recent research interest, current research work and reflections on his past work; and in the second half five commentators took up five important topics of Balibar’s work for discussion, and commented on it. The presentations were followed by interjections from the participants and created thought provoking dialogue. Giorgio Grappi, a participant from Bologna, Italy, was the chief rapporteur of the conference. The full report of the conference prepared by him is now on the CRG website. The conference was also a part of the ongoing collaboration with CIPh, Paris. The MSH, Paris, the Prince Claus Fund, Amsterdam, and the French Embassy in Delhi helped the conference, while the bulk of the support was from the Ford Foundation.

*2.5 Research and Advocacy on “Regional Initiative of the Rights to Sustainable Livelihood and the Enabling of Social and Political Participation”:* This work reported in details in the previous year completed in the year under review with the publication of the toolkit on human rights training programme in both electronic and print form (Annexure 9). Similarly mapping minority rights in India in collaboration with the ICES, Colombo, was also completed. Out of our work on minority rights, a study paper containing three writings was published. The notice of this is also now on our website.

*2.6 Partnership with European Institutions on Regional Instruments for the Protection of Minority Rights:* The programme just started in the year under review. The European Academy, Bolzano is the main partner. The Director attended the first planning meeting of the project in February in Brunel University, London. The programme has several components, such as study visits, research papers, policy reviews, training workshops, and publications. CRG will be involved in all these. Samir Kr. Das will coordinate the work. Next year we shall be able to report in details on this. Current information is available on the website.

### 3. Publications and Public Lectures

#### 3.1 Books

- JUSTICE AND EQUALITY: A POLITICAL DILEMMA? PASCAL, PLATO, MARX / by Etienne Balibar (published by MCRG, January 2008)

- **WOMEN BUILDING PEACE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN / Ed. by Shree Mulay & Jackie Kirk (Anthem Press, Delhi, 2007 / A joint publication with McGill University, Montreal, Canada)**
- **AUTONOMY : BEYUOND KANT AND HERMENUETICS / Ed. by Paula Banerjee and Samir Kumar Das (Anthem Press, Delhi, 2007)**
- **THE WORLD'S WORKING REGIONAL AUTONOMIES - AN INTRODUCTION AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS / by Thomas Benedikter (Anthem Press, Delhi, 2007 / A joint publication with EURAC (Bolzano, Italy)**

### 3.2 *Research Paper Series (Policies and Practices):*

- **Weapons of the Weak: Field Studies on Claims to Social Justice in Bihar & Orissa / by Amrita M Patel & Manish K. Jha (PP 13)**
- **Towards a New Consideration: Justice for the Minorities / by Samir Kumar Das, Paula Banerjee, and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury (PP 14)**
- **Conflict, War and Displacement: Accounts of Chhattisgarh and Batticaloa / by Subash Mohapatra and Chathuri Jayasoorya(PP 15)**
- **The Draft National Rehabilitation Policy: A Critique / by Walter Fernandes, Priyanca Mathur Velath, Maduresh Kumar, Ishita Dey, Sanam Roohi, and Samir Kumar Das (PP 16)**
- **Limits of the Humanitarian: Studies in Situations of Forced Migration / by Shiva K.Dhungana, Priyaca Mathur Velath & Nanda Kishor, Eeva Puumala (PP 17)**

### 3.3 *Reports*

- **Dialogues on Justice – A Report**
- **Responsibility to Protect – The Role of the National Human Rights Commission in Protecting the Rights of the Displaced**
- **Fifth Winter Course on Forced Migration (2007) – A Report**

### 3.4 *Journal: Refugee Watch*

No. 29 (June 2007) and No. 30 (December 2007)

All these publications have been sent to interested readers and society members. Copies of these enclosed herewith.

### 3.5 *Public Lectures and Staff seminars:*

Carolyn Stephens, *Epidemiologist and Senior Lecturer of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine*, "Globalisation Inequality and Urban Health ", 18 January 2008

Jan Breman, *Professor of Amsterdam School for Social Science Research* , " Coolie Migration in the Colonial Era ", 13 December 2007

Heikki Patomaki, *Professor of World Politics, University of Helsinki*," Beyond Inside/Outside? Four Political Economy Scenarios of the Future of European Union", 30 November 2007

Etienne Balibar, *Emeritus Professor of Moral and Political Philosophy, Paris X Nanterre and Distinguished Professor of Humanities, University of California, Irvine*," Justice and Equality-A Political Dilemma?", 21 September 2007

Margaret Levi, *Jere L. Bacharach Professor of International Studies, Director, CHAOS (Comparative Historical Analysis of Organizations and States)*," Provoking Preferences by Changing Beliefs", 25 July 2007

Chathuri Himeshani Jayasooriya, *Programme Officer-Advocacy, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies, Colombo, Sri Lanka*, " The Right to Return-Return of IDPs in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka", 11 July 2007

Robert Kaplan, *Professor of Political Science ,Naval Academy, Annapolis, U.S.A.*, " Environmental Security", 21 June 2007

Ksenia Glebova, *Honorary Research Associate ,Calcutta Research Group*, " Bangladeshi Immigration to Assam in India Print Media Discourse", 20 April 2007

Sanam Roohi, *Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group*," Gender Justice and Muslim Women of Calcutta", 20 April 2007

#### 4. Website:

4.1 Samaresh Guchait is looking after the website and updates the website regularly. The website has proved significant as the interactive site in the distance education phase of the Winter Curse. It has been also essential while organizing conferences, dialogues, registrations, and notifications. It contains the complete archives of all issues of Refugee Watch and has a special section called "Refugee Watch Online". Ishita Dey and Sanam Roohi have put in efforts towards improving "Refugee Watch Online". Their efforts have met with some success. The news and comments posted there are noted in various places and quarters.

4.2 Yet, as reported last year, for regular updating, addition (for instance, photo archive, documents archive), improvement, etc. we need more cooperation and initiative from our staff and society members. There should be an audio section to generate more interactive material; the photo archive has no policy as yet. Similarly the archives section calls for improvement. On these and various other matters more efforts (and resources) are required. CRG has to treat this problem with importance. Members may kindly advise on this significant aspect of CRG's activities.

4.3 The website is maintained by the fund available from the grant from the Ford Foundation.

#### 5. Core academic and office staff

5.1 CRG carries all these activities with the support of a small academic and office staff, though its research personnel are drawn from wide areas. In the period under review as part of the core group, CRG had three senior researchers who were in advisory capacity, and three research and programme associates. The senior researchers were: Paula Banerjee, Samir Kr. Das, and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury. The associates were: Sanam Roohi, Ishita Dey, and Debdatta Chaudhury. The individual accomplishments of some of the members of the core group and some other members of the CRG are enclosed here separately.

5.2 Office Members: The services of Ratan Chakraborty, M. Chatterji, Ashok Kumar Giri and Samaresh Guchhait were reconfirmed with a revision of their salary. The part time service of R. K. Mahato as Typist was also retained. Together they combine the work of administration, accounts, library, Internet, website, assets, and computer management.

5.3 The Director heads all academic and administrative activities.

## 6. Assets

6.1 An Asset Register is maintained by the CRG. Defective equipments and accessories beyond repair are mentioned as out of order. During this period the following assets have been added: one desktop computer with UPS; one bookshelf for library; three chairs; and three computer tables. The Asset Register is updated regularly and members can visit the Register at any time.

6.2 The CRG library is now developing as a reference library, equipped with books, documents, journals, manuscripts, research papers, and CDs. The library has been a source of support to various research activities of this institution. Also It has supported various research scholars, students, faculty members of colleges, universities, research institutes and NGOs. It contains 1157 books relating to mainly to law, gender studies, forced migration, food, environment, justice, autonomy, displacement, literary works, minority rights media, advocacy material, child right, and human rights. Some of the books are gifts from institutions and individuals.

In the document section, we keep the journals and magazines of various institutions in 10 categories. These categories are Northeast, gender, child right, minority rights, human rights, IDPs & forced migration, law, advocacy series, media and miscellaneous. We have an exclusive collection of newspaper clippings on northeast India. We have various reports of The Brooking Institution, and copies of the *Forced Migration Review*.

The CD section contains 82 CDs on human trafficking, gender, violence, migration, displacement, ethnic conflicts, and human rights. Some of the notable CDs are on Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2006, World Investment Report 2005, Ensuring Food Secure Future, etc.

CRG is now a regular subscriber of the online journal of EPW and JSTOR archives in order to reinforce the research work. Books, documents, journals, manuscripts, research papers, and CDs are regularly catalogued, and coded regularly.

## 7. Network, partners, and collaboration

7.1 As reported in last year's report CRG has several partner institutions. The list of our partners is on our website. The website also mentions the organizations providing grants for various projects. In the year under review several new partnerships were formed in India and abroad, such as in Hyderabad, Guwahati, Bhuvanewar, Mumbai, also in some other cities of Europe and Asia.



## 8. Membership

8.1 The CRG's current roll of Members is as follows:

- Pradip Kumar Bose
- Samir Kumar Das
- Jayanta Dasgupta
- Paula Banerjee
- Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury
- Subir Bhowmik
- Krishna Bhattacharya
- Krishna Banerjee
- Subhas Ranjan Chakrabarty
- Anita Sengupta
- Mushirul Hasan
- Prasanta Ray
- Sanjay Chaturvedi
- Asha Hans
- Soumitra Dastidar
- Kalpana Kannabiran
- Keya Das Gupta
- Pallav Goswami
- Ranabir Samaddar (invitee)

8.2 The AGM has to decide if the current roll is to be followed and if CRG wishes to invite new members.

## 9. Tasks for 2008-2009

9.1 Some of the tasks set out in the earlier report could not be carried out, while few were carried out partially (such as broadening the grant base and getting a wider recognition). A vision setting exercise was done, but without much concrete result. The consultation on this item in the agenda requires more participation.

9.2 The following steps require to be taken on a priority basis:

- Finalizing the vision of CRG and on the basis of that organizing CRG's work and structure
- Increase our full time research strength;
- More publicity to our research work;
- Improve the quality of our research work and publish individual research work;