

MAHANIRBAN CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP
ANNUAL REPORT
2012-2013

INTRODUCTION

Last year's Annual Report (2011-2012) gave the members a detailed idea of various activities undertaken by CRG, the problems it faced and the extent to which it could overcome those problems. It also gave them an idea of the difficulties to be faced by CRG in the course of next few years. The present report follows up on the previous one.

The present report is divided into four sections.

- (a) The first part of the report deals with CRG's research and orientation activities.
- (b) The second part reports the publications, library and other assets, its website, the composition of the academic and administrative staff, and the roll of CRG's members.
- (c) The third part presents a short note on the structure of CRG, a summary of its strength and weaknesses.
- (d) The final part reports the result of a small survey of members' opinions on various aspects of CRG's work.

SECTION ONE

1.1 Tenth Orientation Course on Forced Migration

Popularly known as the Winter Course, the 10th Orientation Course was a revamped, more participatory course designed by an advisory committee that included representatives from the UNHCR, the Embassy of Finland, members of a special course committee, CRG colleagues, and former course participants. It was comprised of both distance education and a programme based in Kolkata and Darjeeling that was sub-divided into five modules: (1) Refugee Flows in South Asia: New Structures and Strategies of Protection, (2) Gendered Nature of Forced Migration, (3) Environmental crisis, Conflict, Resource and Internal Displacement, (4) Statelessness in South Asia, and (5) Media and Forced migration. The course drew 24 participants, 14 of whom were from South Asia, and involved faculty member with experience in refugee studies, studies on internal displacement, journalism, legal studies, NGOs, UN agencies such as UNHCR, human rights activism, humanitarian work, teaching, and research. Participants were evaluated on their core research assignment (50%), their participation in the Kolkata-based workshops (25%), and their involvement in the field visit to Darjeeling (25%). Some highlights from the 10th Orientation Course included a performance piece on Kalpana Chakma by Parnab Mukherjee, a public lecture on 'Forced Migration in Middle East' by Nargis Canafe, a special interactive session with the Deputy Chief of the UNHCR Mission Hans Schodder, a round table on the question "Are Women's Experiences Exceptional in Forced Migration Annals?," a round table discussing "River Erosion & Displacement.", and a closing lecture by Samir Das on the theme of a transit town, called Siliguri, The follow-up activities included a students' workshop on "Partition and Displacement in the East" in collaboration with Jadavpur University, Rabindra Bharati University and University of Calcutta that involved 20 participants. The inaugural lecture was the distinguished lecture of 2012, delivered by Professor Peter Burgess (PRIO, Oslo). A printed copy of the lecture is attached as Annexure 1. It is also available on CRG website - <http://mcrg.ac.in/DL4.pdf>. The details of the course are to be found in the course report (<http://mcrg.ac.in/winter.asp>) copies of which have been sent to the members. Dr. Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury with the help of Suha Priyadarshini Chakravarty and Dr. Atig Ghosh managed the desk work. The programme was supported by the Embassy of Finland, UNHCR, and the Brookings Institution.

In this connection, it is important to mention that the Governing Body constituted as per the recommendation made in the previous Annual General Meeting a small committee to find ways of continuing the winter course programme. The Director with the help of the President Paula Banerjee, Anasua Basu Ray Chadhury and Atig Ghosh has made various efforts to secure funding for the same. Members will be happy to know that the programme will be held this year though with an altered structure.

1.2 Media & Forced Migration Module

This special CRG module in the Orientation Programme brought leading media personalities together with young practising journalists to explore the role of the media in reporting forced migration. Presenters included Nirmalaya Banerjee from the *Times of India*, Subir Bhoumik then BBC Eastern India Correspondent, Sopan Joshi from the *Gandhu Peace Foundation*, Anirban Roy Executive Editor of the *Bengal Post*, Biswajit Roy from *The Telegraph*, well-known Bengali columnist and novelist Raghav Bandopadhyay, and an eminent journalist Rajat Roy presently associated with *Kolkata TV*. The module covered a variety of issues within the study of forced migration including conflict, inclusion/exclusion, refugee-hood, statelessness, internal displacement, climate induced displacement, and “illegal” migration with attention to cross-cutting issues relating to state formation, indigenesness, development, and labour. In some of the presentations, a historical approach was adopted while in others an engagement with new forms of social media was demonstrated. In addition to workshops and roundtables the module involved film screenings of Bengali film *Bhangan*, an American film *Hotel Rwanda*, and a field trip to Darjeeling. Throughout, the module sensitized participants to the politicization of the media, the role of the media in conflict situations, questions of identity and access to information, and issues of neutrality and objectivity in reporting. The key note in the media module workshop was given by Subir Bhaumik. Participants came from different parts of the country. Besides the Winter Course participants there were 15 other participants especially for this module. The media module resulted in creative writings, reportages, a photo-essay, analytical pieces, and most importantly an energetic group of media activists in support of CRG’s programmes. The dividend was seen clearly in the IASFM 14, which was covered in an unprecedented manner by the local media. The desk was handled by Dr. Sibaji Pratim Basu with the help of Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury and Atig Ghosh. The media programme was held in collaboration with the British Deputy High Commission. Details of the programme are to be found at CRG website - <http://mcrg.ac.in/media.asp>

1.3 IASFM 14

CRG successfully hosted the Fourteenth Conference of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM14) at Swabhum, Kolkata between January 6 and 9, 2013. IASFM is the apex body of researchers and research institutions throughout the world working on forced migration. This was the first time that an IASFM conference was held in South Asia. The theme for IASFM 14 was *Contested Spaces and Cartographic Challenges*. The conference was attended by nearly 200 delegates from all over the world with a strong participation from developing countries. There were representations from African countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda and Burundi and from Eastern Europe, Latin America as well as Western Europe and the United States. The significance of the conference was its multi-disciplinary nature coupled with its composition and variety in terms of the mix of scholars ranging from academics, activists, policymakers and people engaged in humanitarian protection of the victims of forced migration. Chris Dolan, Director, Refugee Law Project, Makerere University, Uganda was the President for IASFM14 and Paula Banerjee, President, CRG, India was the Vice-President for the conference. The key note speech, a Sage-CRG initiative, was delivered by Bishnu N. Mohapatra, Visiting Senior Fellow, South Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore. The programme was followed by book and journal release by Ashis Nandy, Senior Honorary Fellow, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi; Susan F. Martin, Executive Director, Institute for the Study of International Migration,

Georgetown University, United States; and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Vice-Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. The conference was divided into three broad themes namely *Borders and Displacement, Geography and Economies of Displacement, & Rights, Ethics, and Institutions*. The programme was divided into three business sessions comprising several panels. Each of the three days of the conference additionally had a distinguished plenary session, namely, Partition Experiences in South Asia: Memory, Literature, Media, Development, Conflict & Displacement & Gender, Conflict and Displacement: The Case of India's North East on January 7, 8 & 9 respectively. Eminent scholars and activists such as Anisuzzaman, Ibn Abdur Rehman, Ritu Menon, Walter Fernandez, Anuradha Talwar, Vijaylakshmi Brara, Rakhee Kalita, Khesheli Chishi and Gina Shangkham were the plenary speakers for the aforementioned Plenary Sessions. IASFM14 highlighted the salient of the new reality of forced migration by focussing on the relevant experiences of strategies of protection of victims, particularly in the postcolonial world. Deftly straddling the triadic thematic concern of borders and displacement, geography and economies of displacement and rights, ethics and institutions, the conference seemed to underline the necessity of a more dialogic relationship between different institutions, actors, and the victims. Also, it seemed that there was a need to minimise— if not doing away altogether— the hold of security-related thinking, provisions, and practices in matters of recognising and protecting the rights of the victims of forced migration. Institutions have their vested interests, their domains. To try to reduce them was felt to be the need of the hour. To do so one would have to begin with working out and formulating the consequences of the theoretical recognition that population flows are massive and mixed. The reality of these mixed and massive flows questions old polarities. They need to be recognised in their variety, plurality, and amorphous nature— and this will be possible only when we have a more federal way of looking at things, not from an institutional-pyramidal point of view from the top, but from the point of understanding how it works on the ground. We would then be able to challenge the customary distinction between refugee studies and forced migration studies, and episodic violence and structural violence in terms of protection policies and institutions. We would be able to ask, if constructing a hierarchy of victims was the appropriate way to frame protection policy. This was possible only when we would consider forced migration studies not as an isolated discipline or a subject, defined by some strange esoteric rules, but as a field marked by lines of power and flight paths of various subjectivities. To work with that awareness, the conference suggested, we required not only a sense of rights and responsibilities, but some sort of political awareness of the way in which the migrant appeared in our civilised societies as abnormal. Interrogating the production of abnormality in the figure of the migrant could become one of the principal research concerns. All these seemed additionally relevant when we recognised the contemporary age as one of the return of primitive accumulation when footloose labour had become the ubiquitous figure of abnormality in the society of the settled and the propertied. Precariousness marks and mars the present. Among the films screened over the three days were Tushar Bhattacharya's *Marichjhanpi* 1978-79, Moinak Biswas's *Sthaniya Sangbad* (Spring in the Colony) and Pramod Gupta and Nilotpal Dutta's *Amader Jomite Oder Nagari* (Their Town on Our Land). The three films focussed on the question of displacement and forced migration, precarious labour and development. The conference was reported widely by the local media. The Conference ended with the Annual General Meeting of the IASFM. Outgoing president of the IASFM, Chris Dolan, was lauded for having very successfully coordinated with the CRG in organising the conference. Later in the AGM, a new Executive Committee was elected by its members. Paula Banerjee was unanimously elected the President of the IASFM and another CRG member Nasreen Chowdhury was elected the Treasurer of the Association. The IASFM 14 desk was handled by Suha Priyadarshini Chakrabarty and Priyanca Mathur Velath (both CRG associates and members of the Winter Course alumni) with the help of Atig Ghosh, Madhurilata Basu, Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, and in particular Anwesha Sengupta. Atig Ghosh led ably an efficient rapporteur's team. The media desk was led by Rajat Roy. Paula Banerjee deserves congratulations on being the President of IASFM, also the entire desk including the media team and the rapporteurs team deserve appreciation from CRG members. Several institutions helped CRG in hosting the conference. Besides the IASFM executive committee, the other institutions were the ICSSR, IDRC, Action Aid, ICRC, PRIO, PRIA, CU, Makarere University, MAKAIAS, SAGE, OUP, RRN, WISCOMP, North Bengal University, and the Georgetown

University. The Government of India kindly issued visa clearance and the Government of West Bengal lent support for transportation. CRG thanks both Government of India and the Government of West Bengal. The entire report is available at - http://mcrg.ac.in/Report_IASFM_F.pdf

1.4 Dalits and the Partition of Bengal, 1947

In collaboration with the University of Wellington CRG has undertaken a two year focused study on the theme of Dalits and Partiton of Bengal in 1947. The first year of the project was devoted mainly for material collection. The researchers collected data from the State Police Archives of West Bengal along with the National Library, the library of MAKAIAS, CSSS at kolkata and NMML at New Delhi. The researchers consulted the West Bengal Legislative Assembly Debates (1949-1964), Private Papers of Asoka Gupta, Renuka Roy, N.C. Chatterjee, M.N. Saha, B.C. Roy, Sukumar Sen, and Sibnath Banerjee. They also collected transcripts from Renuka Roy and A.P.Jain's files. The researchers also purchased books relevant for the sake of the project. The researchers have submitted all the collected material to CRG library and documentation centre. CRG organised a workshop to share the researchers' findings on the theme of the study on 14 February 2013. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, University of Wellington, New Zealand, Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, Research and Programme Associate, CRG and Anwesha Sengupta, Research Assistant, CRG, were the speakers in this session and the session was moderated by Ranabir Samaddar. The study promises to be significant and CRG hopes that it will throw new light on the allied issues of (a) the politics of relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement in West Bengal, and (b) Dalit politics in West Bengal. Anasua Basu Rau Chaudhury is working on the theme in collaboration with and under the guidance of Professor Sekhar Bandopadhyay. Anwesha Sengupta also has contributed the study and has taken the lead in collecting a large variety of relevant material.

1.5 Making Women Count for Peace: Gender, Empowerment and Conflict in South Asia

This is a three year long research project undertaken by CRG as part of a research collective initiated and led by the Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO). Two principal researchers and two associate researchers are engaged in this study. Our researchers have started collecting data with special reference to India's northeast in order to address the main question of this research: Are women emerging as separate force in peace politics? As part of this inquiry CRG has undertaken two assignments: (a) Writing a brief history of Women, governance, and peace in Tripura, and (b) Preparing a statistical profile of women in post-conflict situation in the Northeast. Paula Banerjee and Anjuman Ara Begum have done the first phase of field and archival work. They have submitted the first drafts of their respective reports. Before that CRG members attended the pilot meeting of this research programme in Shillong on 2-3 August, 2012.

Also to show-case its research related to the project CRG organised a special plenary session on *Conflict, Gender and Displacement* (With a special focus on India's Northeast and Nepal) on 9 January at Swabhumi, Kolkata as part of the IASFM 14. The speakers of the session were Rakhee Kalita, Associate Professor, Department of English, Cotton College State University, Guwahati; N Vijaylakshmi Brara, Associate Professor, Manipur Studies, Manipur University, Imphal; Khesheli Chisi, Former President, Naga Mother's Association, Nagaland; Gina Sangkham, Secretary, Naga Women's Association, Manipur, and Shiva Kumar Dhungana from Nepal Institute of Peace, Kathmandu. The session was moderated by Paula Banerjee.

1.6 Conflict, Peace, and Governance (CORE)

As reported last year (2011-12) the project CORE (role of governance in the resolution of socioeconomic and political conflict in Europe and India) is a collaborative research project, conducted jointly by Indian and European research teams. This project is funded by the European Union under the 7th Framework Programme. Launched in January 2011 and to be completed in December 2013, the CORE project aims to analyze through a combination of fieldwork, qualitative analysis and theory development, the premises

and operation of governance initiatives in conflict transformation processes. It studies the cases of recent governance practices in Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, and the Northeast in India, and Bosnia, Cyprus, and Georgia. CRG is particularly involved particularly with the case studies of Bihar and Northeast India. Two major issues have emerged as a result of CRG's researches: (a) the emergence of the local as the site of contestations over justice, peace building, and peace dialogues; and (b) peace as a particular style of governance. Over the last academic year, a number of publications have been the result of the research. Among them, are: Ranabir Samaddar, "Governance Structures and the Current History of Peace Building in India's Northeast," in Janel B. Galvanek, Hans J. Giessmann and Mir Mubashir (eds.), *Norms and Premises of Peace Governance*, Berghof Occasional Paper No. 32; Mithilesh Kumar, "Governing Flood, Migration and Conflict in North Bihar," *Policies and Practices* 45, 2012; Sajal Nag, "A Gigantic Panopticon: Counter-Insurgency and Modes of Disciplining in Northeast India," *Policies and Practices* 46, 2012; Manish Jha and Pushpendra, "Governing Caste and Managing Conflicts Bihar, 1990-2011," *Policies and Practices* 48, March 2012; Samir Kumar Das, "Peace by Governance or Governing Peace? A Case Study of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)," *Policies and Practices* 50, July 2012; Paula Banerjee and Ishita Dey, "Women, Conflict, and Governance in Nagaland," *Policies and Practices* 51, July 2012; Subir Bhaumik, "Tripura: Ethnic Conflict, Militancy & Counterinsurgency," *Policies and Practices* 52, August 2012; and Ranabir Samaddar, "Government of Peace," *Policies and Practices* 53, October 2012. CRG members attended research meetings in Rome and two CRG scholars, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Ranabir Samaddar spent a seven day research residency at PRIO, Oslo in June 2012. A workshop on "Governance and Peace-Building" was organized at the Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati, Assam, on 26-27 February 2013. The report on the deliberations has been prepared, titled "Governance and Peace-building". It can be accessed at: http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Core/Guwahati_Core.pdf. Ranabir Samaddar is coordinating the work at CRG. Atig Ghosh is managing the desk. Paula Banerjee is also helping the desk work. All CORE papers along with other details of the programme are available at http://mcrg.ac.in/Core/Core_concept.asp

1.7 Statelessness in South Asia

In the year under consideration, CRG completed its three year study on statelessness in South Asia. In the final year The CRG's conducted case studies of the Lhotshampas (or the Bhutanese refugees of Nepali origin in Nepal) and the Hindu migrants from Pakistan to western India. These case studies seem to suggest so far that the "stateless person" of international legal definition is far too simply drawn to be able to accommodate the variety of status and experience that an actual stateless person in India experiences. That is to say, between the two poles of citizenship and statelessness, there exists a plethora of dispossessed and disenfranchised identities that do not conform to the gaunt strictures of international legal definition and, therefore, slips through the interstices of law. The questions addressed were: First, how are certain groups and communities rendered stateless? In the ethnically heterogeneous successor states in South Asia, why are the minorities more vulnerable to statelessness than others? Does protracted refugee-hood eventually result in statelessness? Is the distinction between refugee-hood and statelessness increasingly wearing thin? Second, is the existing legal regime adequate in dealing with the problem of statelessness? What has been the experience with case laws in different situations related to statelessness in India? Can judicial activism as evident in some cases in recent years serve as an effective guarantee? Third, do policymakers need to think beyond legal terms? Why does mere judicial activism prove ineffective? Does all this call for activating and strengthening the civil society institutions and initiatives? But how does one make the first move towards melting the ice of xenophobia against the outsiders who remain in the host country as stateless? The report on the last phase of the project can be accessed at http://www.mcrg.ac.in/Statelessness/Statelessness_Concept.asp. Furthermore, a book proposal incorporating the case studies of all the three phases is on the verge of being approved by Orient BlackSwan. The editors of the volume would be Paula Banerjee, Atig Ghosh and Anasua Basu Roy Chaudhury. The book proposal has been tentatively organized around three thematic nodes; namely, (a)

Partition, Displacement and Statelessness in South Asia; (b) Decolonization and Statelessness: Question of Citizenship Revisited; (c) Protracted Displacement and Statelessness. That situations of protracted displacement and refugee-hood can lead to statelessness is the unique upshot and argument of this volume specifically, but also of the entire project more generally. There will be in all seven papers in the proposed volume. These papers were presented in various workshops in the Orientation Courses and the IASFM 14. Atig Ghosh handled the desk work of the project. The research was done in collaboration with the UNHCR.

1.8 Development, Governance, and Democracy (with special reference to the UID Project and the Migrants)

Previous three Annual Reports (2009-10; 2010-2011; and 2011-2012) had discussed in details the project, “Development, Governance, and Democracy”. The project was completed in October 2012. The project discussed two major trends in the history of governance in post-independence India - first, our welfare discourse has changed to one of rights and claims due to popular politics, elections, and the emergence of human rights arguments and the related developments in the juridical field. Second, the legitimacy of governmental actions and consequences has become increasingly grounded in developmental claims marked by increased global linkages, foreign direct investment, farmers’ deaths in various parts of the country, uneven poverty reduction, rising expenditure on issues of defense, security, science establishment, intelligence, and techniques of crowd control. In our project, we were able to explore the following questions: (a) What are the constitutional specificities of a governing process that seeks to promote growth (of certain defined kinds) as development?’ (b) How has the change of national focus from welfare rights and equality to growth impacted democratic governance and democratic politics at large? (c) How have people responded to particular governing processes and technologies? Do these responses exceed or defy the governmental grids of power? (d) And finally, how does the developmental process impact on the dynamics of claim-making? The two volumes of governance based on our research were published in 2012 by Routledge. These volumes were co-edited by Ranabir Samaddar and Suhit Sen. A book discussion was organised by CRG on 4 May 2012. Peter Ronald DeSouza, Director, Indian Institute of Asian Studies, Shimla, released the two volumes. Yogendra Yadav gave the key note lecture on the occasion. There were two roundtable discussions. The report of the discussion can be accessed at - http://mcrg.ac.in/Development/events/Swabhoomi_Report.pdf . Also, as part of the project CRG did a special short-duration intense study on the UID project and the migrants, titled as “Digital Deliberations”. The idea was suggested by CSCS, Bangalore and the first of the two workshops as part of this research was held with their support and collaboration. Issues related to welfarist claims of UID for migrant population groups within the country were discussed at length. The fundamental question asked was, how would a unique number help a migrant group, such as a migrant labour group, dispossessed of all rights? The two workshops looked at the historical experiences of surveillance and how they had intensified over time. The role played by the introduction of digital technology in the late twentieth century was also traced. There were ethnographic reports on the possible impact of the Aadhar project on the migrants — labouring and non-labouring —not only in terms of what the state extracted or inflicted upon them but also by way of understanding how these people had negotiated with, strategized against, submitted to, and overwhelmed the UID design. Finally this focused research attempted to understand what it meant to delineate the identity of a migrant in the framework of a state that ran on fixed notions of population, territory, loyalty, citizenship, etc., while the migrant represented a situation of transit in the process of accumulation of capital. The research resulted in a volume edited by Atig Ghosh and published by Frontpage, Kolkata in 2013. The volume is titled: *Branding the Migrants: Arguments of Rights, Welfare, and Security*. The entire programme was supported by the Ford Foundation.

1.9 Transit Labour

Though the project “Transit Labour” ended last year (2011-2012 and reported in the previous AGM), however the follow up activities continued through the year under review. The manuscript, co-authored by Ishita Dey, Ranabir Samaddar, and Suhit Sen, based on the research was prepared and submitted to Routledge for consideration of publication. Routledge after due evaluation has published it. The book is titled as “Beyond Kolkata: Rajarhat and the Dystopia of Urban Imagination”. The writings of CRG researchers were also presented at the Biennial Conference of the Australian Association of Asian Studies held in 2012 in Sydney and published on various sites and journals (*The Australian Journal of Architecture*, www.transitlabour.asis.org). The project was carried out as a result of the Discovery grant received by the Western Sydney University. In Sydney four CRG researchers – Ishita Dey, Suhit Sen, Paula Banerjee, and Ranabir Samaddar spoke respectively on ethnography on transit labour, destruction of peasant labour, violence of the borderlands, and zones, corridors, routes of transit, and labour. The project may be followed up by a programme on zones, corridors, and new configurations of labour. Finally, under this project Ranabir Samaddar began a small work on the Indian railway strike of 1974. The work will take one more year to complete. Anwesha Sengupta and Rajat Kanti Sur have helped him in collecting documents. Details can be found at - http://mcrg.ac.in/TransitLabour/Transit_Concept.asp

SECTION TWO

2.1 Public Lectures and Staff Seminars

- *Anindita Ghoshal*, Rishi Bankim Chandra College, Naihati, "Changing Mentality of the Bengalee Refugees: The Story of Tripura (1946-1971)", 9 May
- *Anwesha Sengupta*, Research and Programme Assistant, CRG, "Of Men and Things: Exploring the Administrative Consequences of Partition", 9 May
- *Arani Sanyal*, research scholar, " 'Justice' Loosened? The 'Katatel' Controversy in Kolkata", 15 June
- *Samita Sen*, Director, School of Women Studies, Jadavpur University " Kulikahini and Other Stories: Gender and Nationalism in Assam Labour Recruitment, 1880-1910" (Jayanta Deasgupta Memorial Lecture), 27 July
- *J. Peter Burgess*, Professor, Peace Research Institute, Oslo, "What is Critical Migration?", Inaugural Lecture, Tenth Annual Orientation Course on Forced Migration (Fourth CRG Distinguished Lecture), 30 September
- *Samir Kr. Das*, Vice Chancellor, North Bengal University and CRG member, "Siliguri – A Transit Town", Valedictory Lecture, Tenth Annual Orientation Course on Forced Migration, 14 October
- *Arthur Cessou-Butel*, research scholar, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, "Illegal Migration in West Bengal and its Perception in Political and Public Spheres", 3 December.
- *Bishnu Mohapatra*, Visiting Senior Fellow, National University, Singapore, "Intimacy, Distance, and the Condition of Being Refugees", (Sage-CRG Lecture) 6 January
- *Sekhar Bandyopadhyay*, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, *Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury*, Research & Programme Associate, CRG, and *Anwesha Sengupta*, Research and Programme Assistant, CRG, "Dalits and Partition in the East between 1947 and 1964: A Research in Progress", 14 February

Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhry was the seminar coordinator in the year under review.

2.2 Publications

Distinguished Lecture Series 4: *What is Critical Migration?* - By J. Peter Burgess

Research Paper Series (Policies and Practices)

- *Emerging Spaces and Labour Relations in Neo-Liberal India*– by Ishita Dey (PP 49)
- *Peace by Governance or Governing Peace? A Case Study of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)*- by Samir Kumar Das (PP 50)
- *Women, Conflict, and Governance in Nagaland*- by Paula Banerjee and Ishita Dey (PP 51)
- *Tripura : Ethnic Conflict , Militancy & Counterinsurgency*- by Subir Bhaumik (PP 52)
- *Government of Peace*- by Ranabir Samaddar (PP 53)
- *Bengal Border & Travelling Lives*–by Anwesha Sengupta & Himadri Chatterjee (PP 54)
- *Financialisation, Labour Market Flexibility, and Global Crisis*–by Byasdeb Dasgupta(PP 55)
- *The Chronicle of a Forgotten Movement: 1959 Food Movement Revisited*–by Sibaji Pratim Basu (PP 56)

Reports

- *Tenth Annual Orientation Course on Forced Migration*
- *Report of a Three Year Research and Dialogue Programme (2009-2012) on Development, Democracy, and Governance - Lessons and Policy Implications*
- *Report on Governance and Peace-Building*

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- Nos. 39 & 40 (June & December 2012)

Books

- *Branding The Migrant: Arguments of Rights, Welfare and Security*- Edited by Atig Ghosh (Frontpage, Kolkata, 2013)
- *Unstable Populations, Anxious States: Mixed and Massive Population Flows in South Asia*- Edited by Paula Banerjee (Samya, Kolkata, 2013)

Besides these, CRG researchers also published individually books and research papers.

2.3 Website

The CRG website (www.merg.ac.in) is a significant and informative site for researchers, students, teachers, media activists, and peace and human right activators. It also serves as an interactive site during the distance education phase of the Orientation Course on Forced Migration. It provides information for presenting papers, abstracts, relevant documents, online registration, notifications, and links while organizing conferences, dialogues, workshops and seminars. It has a section, “South Asia Resource Centre on Forced Migration Studies” where it has provided a basic and advance search engine for searching books, documents, such as conference papers, course reading materials, different journals, reports, research papers, theses, censuses reports audio, video and data CD. These documents are available in electronic or the print form. In most cases it has full reports of our dialogues, conferences and research projects, also all the issues of the journal, *Refugee Watch*, and our research papers. *Refugeewatchonline* is a special section of the website. It carries news, views, comments, perspectives, reports of events, announcements, and lectures, discussion notes, and book and film reviews. Samaresh Guchhait looks after

the design, development, and regular update of the website with the help of other CRG researchers. He also works as system administrator to maintain the windows 2003 server, mailing systems, and provides the technical support. Rajat Kanti Sur is a research and programme assistant for managing the resource centre and the library.

2.4 Library

The CRG library is a reference library with books, documents, journals, manuscripts, research papers, and CDs. The library is a source of various research activities of this institution. It has supported various research scholars, students, faculty members of colleges, universities, research institutes and NGOs. It contains 2479 books relating to mainly to law, gender studies, forced migration, food, environment, justice, autonomy, displacement, literary works, minority rights, media, advocacy material, child rights, and human rights. Some of the books are gifts from institutions and individuals. The documents are in the various categories, such as, Northeast, gender, child right, minority rights, human rights, forced migration, law, advocacy series, and media. It has an exclusive collection of newspaper clippings on northeast India. It has various reports of The Brooking Institution and the Oxford University on the theme of forced displacement, and copies of the *Forced Migration Review*. It subscribes to news clipping service for the Northeast. The document section has also gained from the contribution of documents and other source material procured by CRG researchers in course of their research. Some documents are on-line. CRG subscribes to JSTOR, Project MUSE, and EPW also. It has 62 Video CD/DVD, 78 data CD/DVD and 12 Audio CD/DVD on human trafficking, gender, violence, migration, displacement, ethnic conflicts, and human rights. Some of the notable CDs are on Educational Material on Sustaining Rights, Burma Human Rights Yearbook 2006, 2008, World Investment Report 2005, World Refugee Surveys of various years, Brookings Institution material on the IDPs, UN Human Rights System 1999, 2000, 2002, Nepal Human Rights Year Book 2004, Ensuring Food Secure Future, Right to Land, and Report on Human Trafficking etc. The library use is free. However users have to register themselves. They can contact the webmaster or the library assistant. CRG appeals to its members to contribute relevant resource material to the resource centre and help it to grow in all possible ways. Samaresh Guchhait and Rajat Kanti Sur manage the library work. There is no dedicated fund for the library.

2.5 Research and Administrative Staff

During this period Suha Priyadarshini Chakraborty, Research and Programme Associate and Anwesha Sengupta, Research and Programme Assistant left CRG after completing their respective one year terms. Suit Sen, Senior Researcher, also left CRG in September 2012 after nearly completing his second year. Atig Ghosh and Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, both Research and Programme Associates, continued during this period. The honorary Senior Researcher is now Paula Banerjee, as the other two honorary senior researchers, Samir Kumar Das and Sabyaschi Basu Ray Chaudhury, became Vice Chancellors, and CRG could not avail of their services any more. However they have helped CRG with their advice whenever sought.

As in previous years the services of Ratan Chakraborty, M. Chatterji, Asok Kumar Giri and Samaresh Guchhait were reconfirmed. The part-time service of R. K. Mahato as typist was retained. Rajat Kumar Sur is also continuing his work on part-time basis for the Resource Centre and Library of CRG.

CRG continued with the policy of annual ten percent rise in pay. Other social security provisions continue. In the year under review CRG paid as extra benefit in form of social security provision twelve thousand rupees each to the members of the staff drawing as monthly salary Rs. 20,000/ or below.

Ranabir Samaddar continued as the Director in the year under review. He was helped by the advice of a finance committee and the research advisory body – both constituted by the Governing Body. His term will end on 31 October 2015.

2.6 Assets

During this period under report one UPS and one hard-disk were bought to replace one UPS in the Accounts Section and the hard disk for one of the Senior Researchers. One Scanner was bought for the secretarial desk to speed up the work. One Web Camera and one Head Phone were purchased to enable the Director to discuss important matters with other institutions through Skype. Also two four shutter iron bookshelves and three one shutter iron bookshelves were purchased for library and Resource Centre.

2.7 Roll of Members

The following members became new members of the society as per the decision of the Governing Body and confirmed by the Annual General Meeting held on 27 July 2012

- Nirmalya Banerjee
- Sahana Basavapatna
- Anjuman Ara Begum
- Khesheli Chishi
- Amit Prakash

The present Roll of the Members of MCRG is given below:

1. Paula Banerjee (President)
2. Krishna Banerjee
3. Nirmalya Banerjee
4. Sahana Basavapatna,
5. Sibaji Pratim Basu (Treasurer)
6. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury
7. Anjuman Ara Begum
8. Subir Bhaumik
9. Bharat Bhusan
10. Pradip Kumar Bose
11. Subhas Ranjan Chakrabarty
12. Sanjay Chaturvedi
13. Nasreen Chowdhory
14. Kheshelie Chishi
15. Samir Kumar Das
16. Sumona Dasgupta
17. Keya Das Gupta
18. Dipankar Dasgupta (did not attend three consecutive AGMs)
19. Byasdeb Dasgupta
20. Soumitra Dastidar
21. Ishita Dey
22. Ruchira Goswami
23. Pallav Goswami
24. Asha Hans
25. Manish Kumar Jha
26. Kalpana Kannabiran (Vice-President)
27. Rajesh Kharat
28. Madhuresh Kumar
29. Manabi Majumdar
30. Shyamalendu Majumdar

31. Ritu Menon
32. Amit Prakash,
33. V. Ramaswamy
34. Kumar Rana
35. Prasanta Ray (Secretary)
36. Arup Sen
37. Mandira Sen
38. Anita Sengupta
39. Samita Sen
40. Ranabir Samaddar (Director, invitee)

SECTION THREE

3.1 Structure

- 3.1.1 There are certain features of the structure of the Calcutta Research Group (CRG). It is a research institution but membership based.
- 3.1.2 The CRG has three bodies – Society, Governing Body and an Advisory Board. It is guided by the Societies West Bengal Act No XXVI of 1961.
- 3.1.3 CRG also has a small research core consisting of few full-time and few part-time researchers (research assistants, research associates, and senior researchers).
- 3.1.4 CRG gets its research strength from its members when it undertakes a large scale research programme. Some of CRG's well-known programmes such as the Winter Course on Forced Migration depend on collaboration with other institutions. CRG's publication activities both online and in print also rely on involvement of members who are not on CRG's pay roll.
- 3.1.5 CRG is thus both a research centre as well as a platform of several like-minded people who participate in and represent a network of researchers.
- 3.1.6 Junior researchers and research associates have been CRG's strength. Almost all were trained well and are doing well in their professional careers.

3.2 Main Activities

- 3.2.1 CRG's research, advocacy, publication, orientation and dialogue programmes depend overwhelmingly on projects. CRG gets no core grant to maintain basic office and administration services, and the minimum core group of researchers. Some of its activities are entirely voluntary, such as continuing the journal REFUGEE WATCH, publishing Refugeewatchonline (a separate publication), hosting critical studies conferences, etc. Besides, some of the research work undertaken by CRG researchers is not backed by any funding; however it gets infrastructural support from CRG.
- 3.2.2 Thus in many ways CRG is a precarious organisation.
- 3.2.3 Below we present the activities of CRG:
 - (a) Forced Migration Studies and linked to that the Orientation Programme, Refugee Watch and Refugeewatchonline publication;

(b) Research Projects (aspects of post-colonial such as democracy, governance and development, autonomy, and social justice; peace and conflict studies; transit labour; citizenship and statelessness studies; media studies; hunger, right to food, right to information, and minority rights; partitions, borders and borderlands; etc.)

(c) Publications (research paper series, Refugee Watch, Refugee Watch Online, books, reports, etc.)

(d) Other activities - campaigns, public lectures, study circle, website maintenance, library and documentation, dialogues and critical studies conferences.

(e) The Director coordinates of these activities with the help of few close colleagues (earlier there were three honorary senior researchers, now there is only one who along with two/three Senior members of Governing Body helps the Director). The staff members also help.

3.3 Precarious nature of CRG

- 3.3.1 CRG's fund situation has never been certain. From 2003-2004 to 2010-2011 CRG had keeping in mind its size and strength comfortable fund situation, though funding was never assured as most of the assignments were either annually contracted or were in the nature of small grants. However, from 1998-2002 the fund situation had been meagre, and now from 2011-2012 till date the situation remains unsatisfactory. In 1998-2002 with the help of vary small fund CRG began its work. Research projects were also small. For the last 1½ year the situation has been similar. In such circumstances an emphasis on small research projects on the basis of small grants, web-based activities, greater visibility, and greater involvement of members may be some of the important ways with which CRG can survive.
- 3.3.2 Some also suggest that focus on themes such as migration, peace and conflict studies, and labour studies should be the way to continue. Some suggest greater variety of themes to attract visibility and funds and visibility. Some suggest that we should take up global themes. Some suggest that we should focus on themes related to West Bengal and the Northeast, and in particular themes of current interest. All these are views of various CRG's members. Some suggest that we should hold some programmes in Delhi.
- 3.3.3 Some also suggest that there should be policy relevant research by which they mean more discussion on policies, policy critiques and investigation, and clearer articulation of the implications of CRG's research in terms of policies – global, national, state, community, local, etc.
- 3.3.4 In terms of finding strategy CRG till date has not been able to properly devise one. The reason is two-fold: (a) First, CRG is so dependent on circumstances that it is rarely in a position to strategise its policy to secure funds. (b) Second, only two members could fully involve themselves in fund raising. Others have occasionally helped in drawing proposals. This can be a big help, but this help has been inadequate and at a primary level. Therefore the funding possibilities, explored by one or two persons, have been exhausted or will exhaust soon. This remains one of the most important drawbacks or difficulties for CRG.
- 3.3.5 The category of honorary senior researcher served CRG effectively for quite some years. However, the value of having honorary senior researchers has diminished over time, with most of the concerned persons getting increasingly involved in their respective professional areas. One of the qualifications of the new honorary senior researchers perhaps can be the interest and ability to

raise fund, finding out opportunities of collaboration, and guiding CRG's junior researchers actively. In any case we need to decide norms and qualifications for honorary senior researchers. This is important at a time when CRG does not have the financial capacity to engage senior researchers on full time basis.

- 3.3.6 The present director is the founder director. He was offered a term of three years as Director from November 2003. After that he has completed two more terms (each term for three years) as Director. This is the fourth and last term. CRG has to think of some way to find out the next Director keeping in view the salient features of the organisation as listed above. CRG should form a small Committee to discuss and suggest in this regard as was suggested by the present Secretary one year ago.
- 3.3.7 CRG has received opinions from its members regarding various aspects of its functioning. These should be considered in details in order to make a proper plan for the growth of CRG in the next 4/5 years.

3.4 Recommendations

- 3.4.1 In short the main tasks are:
- (a) Devising funding strategy, and as part of that forming a fund-raising team consisting of willing members
 - (b) Setting research themes for next 4/5 years – focus/variety
 - (c) Ensuring greater involvement of members
 - (d) Devising ways to attain greater visibility
 - (e) Appointing new honorary senior researchers
 - (f) Forming a search committee to have a new Director in December 2015
- 3.4.2 Involving our members and advisers we can have six sub-committees to frame proper policies on these six tasks. In two months the committees can give their respective reports on the basis of which the Governing Body and the Director can take appropriate measures.

SECTION FOUR

CRG conducted a small survey of members' views of various aspects of its structure, activities, and performance. Of the 39 members (40 in all – the Director is an invitee member) 32 responded. The results are attached. Members may discuss the findings to suggest appropriate steps.