

**Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group**  
**Annual Report (2018-2019)**

Respected President and Esteemed Members,

The Annual Report of 2017-18 gave the members an idea of the activities/events undertaken by MCRG and highlighted the fact that there were various issues that needed to be addressed, particularly the problem of funding. The present report (2018-19) is divided into the following sections:

1. Research Programmes
2. Events
3. Lectures and Meetings
4. Publications
5. Report on the Distinguished Chair
6. Library, Website and Assets
7. Highlights of Members' Achievements
8. Academic and Administrative Staff
9. Concerns and Call for Collaborators
10. Roll of CRG Members

**SECTION ONE**

**RESEARCH PROGRAMMES**

**1. Social and Political Mapping of Popular Movements, Logistical Visions, Infrastructure of India**

**I. Logistics**

A Social Mapping of Infrastructure, Logistics and India's Look East Policy examined the Look and Act East Policy within the larger framework of Asian connectivity. Look East (later termed Act East) developed within multiple contexts and envisaged bridging Southeast Asian nations through Northeast India. Logistical expansion understood in this sense had three components: (a) connecting the East firmly with the Northeast; (b) opening up villages and far-flung areas through new institutions (schools, colleges, banks, offices, communication networks) in the process releasing a new set of conflicts around massive displacements, homeland demands, antimigrant measures and (c) opening up to South East Asia. Priya Singh, Anita Sengupta, Iman Mitra, Subir Bhaumik, Mithilesh Kumar, Ranabir Samaddar, Snehashish Mitra, Soma Ghoshal, Paula Banerjee, Sucharita Sengupta, Samir K. Purkayastha were associated with the project and conducted their research on the following themes:

1. Cartographies of connectivity in Asia and the Indian response
2. Interwoven Realities: Logistics and the Reshaping of Global Governance
3. Financialisation of Infrastructure and the Construction of a 'Seamless Asia'

4. The Double Look East: Bangladesh, the key to India's Act East
5. Logistical Hubs and the Look (Act) East Policy: The Case of the City of Kolkata and Its Port
6. Bridge of Spaces: East by Rear East, Ah! The Northeast
7. Frontier Towns in the Spatial Dynamics of Trade, Capital and Conflict: From Look East to Act East
8. New Capital, Emerging Conflicts and Social Governance in Nagaland and Manipur
9. Interrogating Migration: Borders, Mobility and India's Northeast

The series on special lectures in the reporting year began with the address on 'Data Centres as Logistical Infrastructure and the Geo-politics of Automation' by Brett Neilson. It took place on 1 September 2018. Nelli Kampouri delivered the second special lecture on 'On Infrastructures: The Cosco Container Terminals and the Surrounding Perama Hills' on 2 September, 2018. The international conference on 'Infrastructure across Frontiers: Logistics, Governance and Society' was organised under the project on 2 September, 2018 in Kolkata. All these events generated interests as much as helped in widening CRG's reach across the country.

The details of the three year research project is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/RLS\\_PML\\_Home.asp](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_PML/RLS_PML_Home.asp)

## II. Popular Movements in West Bengal and Bihar

Postcolonial India has witnessed many occurrences of popular movements. Both Bihar and West Bengal are known for radical peasant and student mobilisations during and after the struggle against the colonial rule. The Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung–Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group research project on Popular Movements in West Bengal and Bihar (2016-2018) highlights and explores many such differences and similarities between the forms and trajectories of some of the popular movements that had taken place between the early fifties and the early nineteen-eighties in Bihar and West Bengal. Sibaji Pratim Basu, Tista Das, Anwasha Sengupta, Kaustabh Mani Sengupta, Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal, Aniket Alam, Manish Jha, Badri Narayan Tiwari and Archana Singh worked under this project on the following themes:

1. The Defining Moments of Left Popular Politics in West Bengal: The Food Movements of 1959 & 1966
2. The Political Mobilisation of Refugees in West Bengal
3. Calcutta and the Making of a Popular Movement: The Anti-Tram Fare Increase Resistance Movement, 1953
4. People and Spaces of Insurgency: Some Reflections on Social History of the Last Fifty-years

5. Popular Resistance in Kashmir
6. Understanding an Outlier State & Society in Himachal Pradesh
7. The Spectacle of Anna Hazare Unlimited
8. Contentious Issues, People's Politics and Popular Leadership
9. Cultural Texts and Political Orality
10. (Un)-told Stories: A study of Naxal women in Bihar (1970 -90)

The International Conference on 'Who are the People? Populism and the Populist Movements' was organised under the auspices of the project in Kolkata on 31 August and 1 September, 2018. This was preceded by a collaborative workshop on 'Of Resistances and their Interfaces' on 22 June 2018. As a significant part of the programme, Bernard De Mello released the book, *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: The Naxalite Decade* on 21 December 2018 in Kolkata.

For more details, visit: [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/RLS\\_PM\\_Researchers.asp](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_PML/RLS_PM_Researchers.asp)

## **2. International Workshop and Conference on Migration and Forced Migration Studies**

The research workshop and international conference on, The State of the Global Protection System for Refugees and Migrants, was held from 25-30 November 2018. Participants included academicians, activists, researchers and journalists from 18 countries around the world. The workshop was preceded by a few months of online interaction between workshop participants and module coordinators. Research material were shared through an online web portal on CRG's website. As part of the project, two public lectures were organised with collaborating universities. The one on the 'Afghan Refugee Question Today' delivered by Dr Paolo Novak, (Development Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London) at the Rabindra Bharati University on 26 November 2018 generated wide interest among the teachers and students at the University. Another Public Lecture on the 'The Rohingya Refugee Crisis in South Asia,' was delivered by Professor Meghna Guhahtakurta of the Research Initiatives Bangladesh, at the West Bengal State University, Barasat on 28 November 2018. There was wide participation of the students and faculty in the discussion. Apart from this, a panel discussion on the theme of 'Refugee Crisis around the Mediterranean' was organised at the School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Jadavpur University on 27 November 2018, in collaboration with CRG. The panelists were Professor David Newman, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ben-Gurion University, Israel; Professor Petar Bojanic, Centre for Ethics, Law and Applied Philosophy, Belgrade and Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade and Centre for Advanced Studies-South East Europe, University of Rijeka, Serbia and Croatia; and Dr Sanja Bojanic, Centre for Advanced Studies for South East Europe, University of Rijeka, Croatia.

Two field visits were organised to different migrant quarters as part of the research workshop on 28 November 2018. An interaction with labour migrants at a tannery at Bantala, Kolkata and an interaction with labour migrants (mostly Muslims) in the Khidirpur dock area

was organized by a platform called Know Your Neighbour in course of the field visits, who work to maintain communal harmony in Bengal. The participants of the workshop and conference interacted with the migrants. Some of the participants shared their experience of this field interaction on social media like Twitter which in turn generated wide interest (For details: [https://twitter.com/KYN\\_Bengal/status/1068041200769224704](https://twitter.com/KYN_Bengal/status/1068041200769224704)).

Building on the key ideas and arguments presented at the workshop and the conference on ‘The State of the Global Protection System for Refugees and Migrants’, the Kolkata Declaration - a resolution on the status of refugees and migrants was adopted and released on 30 November 2018 (For details: see, [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_Migration/Kolkata\\_Declaration\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration/Kolkata_Declaration_2018.pdf)).

Work on an edited volume by Professor Paula Banerjee is underway. The volume consists of the position papers on the six modules of the research workshop and a few papers presented in the international conference. Apart from this, select papers from the workshop and conference will be published in CRG’s Journal, *Refugee Watch: A South Asian Journal on Forced Migration*, Issue 53. Reports of Workshop and conference have been uploaded and shared with a worldwide audience (For details: [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_Migration/Report\\_Refugees\\_and\\_Migrants.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration/Report_Refugees_and_Migrants.pdf)).

Apart from this, project coordinators and researchers have published on the following themes:

- Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Ranabir Samaddar eds., *The Rohingya In South Asia: People Without a State*, Routledge, 2018
- Ranabir Samaddar, ‘Capitalism thrives on the immigrant labour economy (and also keeps refugee conditions precarious)’, Scroll.in, July 2018, <https://scroll.in/article/885857/capitalism-thrives-on-the-immigrant-labour-economy-and-also-keeps-refugee-conditions-precarious?fbclid=IwAR0jsxdEG88bCm1yUs05d2MYiM9-WhSw6p0vauhTGl2FI1CkqbF4bgMrxCo>

The findings of the project have widely been reported in public forums and newspapers. Following are some of the details: The event was reported in BBC Bangla (Amitabha Bhattashali, *Rohingya-Samasyar Motoi Sankat Toiri Hote Pare Bharat er Assam e: Asanka Gabeshakder*, BBC Bangla: <https://www.bbc.com/bengali/news-46411893?ocid=wsbengali.chat-apps.in-app-msg.whatsapp.trial.link1...auin&fbclid=IwAR1z0HNNWheoaHKmbnZNxPyGrs3iWTvxN6Cvd7qDc-hzp2RoC7TITmcRncQ>). The workshop and conference was reported in *The Hindu* (Suvojit Bagchi, *No possibility of Rohingya returning soon: U.N. coordinator*, *The Hindu*, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/no-possibility-of-rohingya-returning-soon-un-coordinator/article25645298.ece?fbclid=IwAR1Yow2tc09-UIng>

58BN6jL10heR5UKfcrF8EjuLNC8PwDdRSOWuQuuc). Two separate pieces on the event came out in The *Anandabazar Patrika* which is the largest circulating Bengali daily in West Bengal (*Sharanarthider Ashray Debe kara, Shahare Antorjatik Sammelan e Udbeg, Anandabazar Patrika (Sabha Samity)*)<https://www.anandabazar.com/calcutta/international-convention-in-kolkata-over-migrant-s-shelter-dgtl-1.904507?fbclid=IwAR3S9A1Hqq6i0qBGVMajQNn6Rz8rH7J7bqc5ULNgbBJM8hLsSF77kikGea0#> and *Sharanarathi, Anandabazar Patrika (Kolkata Korcha)*[https://www.anandabazar.com/calcutta/kolkata-karcha-various-cultural-events-in-the-city-1.903989?ref=calcutta-new-stry&fbclid=IwAR1blG3li5YDnOg5G4LCgliq0rdRfqbQrhZWkB7o2UdRdfey\\_v7MmfAk](https://www.anandabazar.com/calcutta/kolkata-karcha-various-cultural-events-in-the-city-1.903989?ref=calcutta-new-stry&fbclid=IwAR1blG3li5YDnOg5G4LCgliq0rdRfqbQrhZWkB7o2UdRdfey_v7MmfAk)). The event was also reported in *Aajkal*, another important Bengali daily with wide circulation (Sudipta Sengupta, *Arakan theke Assam Dur Noy, Nagorikotto Chatai er Dorshanta Ki?* *Aajkal*: [http://www.eajkaal.in/epaperdetails/index/6ca14a61-2c32c447-8b8d0271?fbclid=IwAR2P0swUeQ4CyfILOFu\\_zHXoNqXx7BgZGIXlv28EBLsdAYLiZy-FhZFTHVM](http://www.eajkaal.in/epaperdetails/index/6ca14a61-2c32c447-8b8d0271?fbclid=IwAR2P0swUeQ4CyfILOFu_zHXoNqXx7BgZGIXlv28EBLsdAYLiZy-FhZFTHVM)). A report on the event was broadcast on the national television channel Doordarshan on 26 December 2018. In addition to this, it generated wide interest among the researchers who wrote blogs on social media. A blog on the international conference was published in *Refugee Watch Online* (see <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2019/05/22/crg-conference-on-the-state-of-the-global-protection-system-for-refugees-and-migrants-2018-impressions-and-outcomes/>) Another blog was published in *Asia in Global Affairs* (see <http://www.asiainglobalaffairs.in/reflections/where-sacred-meets-profane/>.)

An advocacy film was prepared by a film crew for the event, which highlighted its important discussions and included glimpse of the field visits to migrant quarters. Apart from the film, two interviews of experts, Dr Paolo Novak and Dr Lucy Nusseibeh have been taken by CRG members and video recorded. They contain discussions on the Afghan refugee question and the issues facing the Palestinian refugees. A discussion on migration between Professor Jennifer Hyndman, Professor William Walters and Dr Federico Rahola has been video recorded and shared on CRG website and social media. Following are the links

- Short video on some facets of the workshop and conference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI-N1IS6Dss&feature=youtu.be>
- Video interview on the ‘Afghan question’: <https://youtu.be/ATk1CajFb94>
- Video interview on the Palestinian ‘right of return’: <https://youtu.be/K3krqp4Ir84>
- Discussion on Re-imagining 'fortress North America' and 'fortress Europe' in context of recent migrations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKJOAccP97k&feature=youtu.be>

The film and recorded interviews of experts will help disseminate information regarding the event and generate awareness on the current issues of migration.

3. The Continuing Narrative of Class-Caste Violence against Women in India's Eastern Partitions: a study of the inter connections between nation building, patriarchy and communal violence in the lives of women of Bengal

Prof. Ilena Sen conducted her fieldwork in Mana, Pakhanjur and Malkangiri under this project. Although the east Bengal refugees who came to India post 1950 were settled all across India, including Garhwal Terai and Chandrapur (Maharashtra), the Dandakaranya project and its launch pad - the Mana transit camp near Raipur - were the most significant starting points of relocation for the refugees. The Dandakaranya project as it was originally envisaged, had its centres in Paralkot (Pakhanjur, Bastar), and although these nodes were geographically not too far apart, communication to Paralkot was through Raipur and Jagdalpur, and to Malkangiri was through Araku valley and Vishakhapatnam. In all our interviews and retelling of history, the focus was on the voices of women. The final write up is going on, and the researcher 'hopes for a conclusion that will be able to take the multiple perspectives of caste, class and gender into account'.

## SECTION TWO

### EVENTS

#### 2.1 Round table discussion on the NRC published on 30 July 2018

Round table discussion on the NRC published on 30 July 2018 that deemed more than 40 lakh people to be non-citizens was hosted by RWO and CRG on 3 August 2018. Mr. Rajat Ray moderated the discussion between Prof. Ranabir Samaddar, Prof. Samir Das and Mr Subir Bhaumik. [Link is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUBmECC3g2M&feature=youtu.be>]

#### 2.2 Book Release

CRG has released two books namely - *Migrants and the Neoliberal City*, edited by Ranabir Samaddar and *Political Ecology of Survival: Life and Labour in the River Lands of East and North-East India*, edited by Madhurilata Basu, Rajat Roy and Ranabir Samaddar on 1 September, 2018 at Swabhumi, Kolkata.

The book *Migrants and the Neoliberal City* is a collection of twelve essays, based on extensive research and fieldwork, investigates the experience of migrating to three of India's populous metropolitan cities: Kolkata, Mumbai and Delhi. It focuses on the interrelations between urban policy, governance, forms of labour, migration and neoliberalism as the political ideology motivating increasing urbanisation of India while the other book *Political Ecology of the Survival: Life and Labour in the River Lands of East and North-East India* explores the relation between the man and river in its entire gamut. The need for this kind of study arises from the prevailing situation where sharing of waters of a trans-boundary river often becomes an issue of conflict. Also, it draws our attention to a much neglected but crucial issue — the one of the growing destruction of the river systems.

### **2.3 Book discussion**

Discussion on the book entitled, *The Rohingya in South Asia: People without a State* edited by Ranabir Samaddar and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury was held on 20 September 2018 at the Press Club, Kolkata. The event was scheduled on August 17, 2018 but had to be subsequently postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. The book published by Routledge is unique in the Indian perspective as it focuses on the Rohingya in the larger context of statelessness, primarily in India and Bangladesh. Given the overall significance and attention to issues relating to forced migration globally, this publication is crucial and timely.

### **2.4 Panel discussion and Book discussion**

Panel discussions entitled, *People on the Run, People on the Move: Displacement Security and Gender in South Asia* and a discussion on the book *Rohingyas in South Asia*, edited by Ranabir Samaddar and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury was organised by Wiscomp in collaboration with CRG at IIA, New Delhi on 7 September, 2018

### **2.5 Book discussions**

Discussions on the book entitled, *Political Ecology of Survival: Life and Labour in the River Lands of East and North-East India* edited by Madhurilata Basu, Rajat Roy and Ranabir Samaddar and “Migrants and the Neoliberal City”, edited by Ranabir Samaddar was organized by CRG and South Asian University (SAU) at SAU, New Delhi on 26 September 2018.

### **2.6 Book and Report Release**

Release of the book entitled, *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: Naxalite Decade* edited by Ranabir Samaddar and the report on *A Social Mapping of Infrastructure, Logistics and India's Look East Policy* was organised by CRG in collaboration with RLS on 21 December 2018 at Hotel Sojourn in Kolkata. The book marks the culmination of a three-year long research on ‘*Popular Movements in West Bengal and Bihar*’. This is part of a larger CRG-RLS project on ‘*Social and Political Mapping of Popular Movements, Logistical Vision and Infrastructure of India*’ that began in 2016. Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/Report\\_21\\_December\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS_PML/Report_21_December_2018.pdf)

### **2.7 Krishna Memorial Lecture and Award Ceremony**

The Sixth Krishna Memorial Lecture and Award ceremony was organised on 4 January 2019 in collaboration with CRG. The programme was held at Hotel Sojourn. This year the awardees were Bhanu Bhaske working for women’s education in Bribhum district, West Bengal, Anil Mistri, working for girl child education and Shahina Javed, working for women’s Football Team and other Sports activities at Rajabazar, Kolkata. The Second Bharati Chowdhury Memorial award was conferred on Banabibi Jatra Sangstha, Balidweep, Sundarbans, West Bengal. This was followed by the Krishna Memorial lecture delivered by

Maneesha Bandhopadhyay, Educationist, Bolpur, who spoke on “Kanyashrir Meyera” (the Girls of Kanyashree)

## 2.8 Jayanta Dasgupta Memorial Lecture

Seventh Jayanta Dasgupta Memorial Lecture was organised by the Calcutta Research Group in collaboration with Sanskrit College and University and Pakistan India People’s Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD) on 29 March 2019. The Seventh Jayanta Dasgupta Memorial Lecture was delivered by Ravi Ahuja, Professor, Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Gottingen, Germany on “The Natives of the SS Egypt: Steamship Workers and Racial Management in the British Empire”.

## SECTION THREE

### Lectures and meetings

#### 3.1 Public Lectures

**Ravi Ahuja**, Professor, Centre for Modern Indian Studies, University of Gottingen, Germany, *The Natives of the S. S. Egypt: Steamship Workers and Racial Management in the British Empire*, 29 March 2019.

**Anne Feenstra**, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University, Ahmadabad (2015-2017), *Slow Architecture*, 26 October 2018.

**Anne-Marie Autissier**, The Institute of European Studies (Paris 8 University), *Policies of Diversity in Art and Cultural Organisations: A Comparison between France and India*, 27 July 2018.

**Ranabir Samaddar**, Distinguished Chair, Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group, *Karl Marx, Colonialism and India*, 6 July 2018.

**Prasanta Ray**, President of Calcutta Research Group and Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Political Science, Presidency University, *The Sociology of Greed: Runs and Ruins in Banking Crises*, 1 June 2018.

**Brian Fehler**, Associate Professor of English, Texas Women’s University, *History of Rhetoric, Religious Rhetorics, and American Literature (Colonial through Long Nineteenth Century)*, 24 May 2018.

**Brett Neilson**, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University on *Data Centres as Logistical Infrastructure and the Geopolitics of Automation* [Available online at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OScnHd\\_ZJ6g&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OScnHd_ZJ6g&feature=youtu.be)]

**Nelli Kampouri**, Centre for Gender Studies, Panteion University, Athens, *On infrastructures: The Cosco container terminals and the surrounding Perama Hills* on 3 September 2018 [Available online available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUkNB7SbB50&feature=youtu.be>]

## 3.2 Meetings

Planning meeting on *Populism and Populist Politics in South Asia with Special Reference to India* at Akashdeep Hotel, Kolkata, 12 February 2019 [Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_Populism/Report\\_Planning\\_Workshop\\_Populism\\_February19.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Populism/Report_Planning_Workshop_Populism_February19.pdf)]

Planning meeting on *Refugees and Migrants: Issues of Protection, Rights and Justice* at Akashdeep Hotel, Kolkata, 13 February 2019

Release of the report on *A Social Mapping of Infrastructure, Logistics and India's Look East Policy* under the project “A Social Mapping of Infrastructure, Logistics and India's Look East Policy”, Hotel Sojourn, Kolkata, 21 December 2018 [Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/Report\\_21\\_December\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_PML/Report_21_December_2018.pdf)]

Release of the book entitled, *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: The Naxalite Decade* under the project “Popular Movements in West Bengal and Bihar”, at Hotel Sojourn, Kolkata, on 21 December 2018 [Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/Report\\_21\\_December\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_PML/Report_21_December_2018.pdf)]

Research and Orientation Workshop and International Conference on *The State of the Global Protection System for Refugees and Migrants* at Hotel Hyatt, Kolkata, 25-30 December 2018 [Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_Migration/Report\\_Refugees\\_and\\_Migrants.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_Migration/Report_Refugees_and_Migrants.pdf)]

International Conference on *Infrastructure across Frontiers: Logistics, Governance and Society* under the project “A Social Mapping of Infrastructure Logistics, and India's Look East Policy”, Swabhumi, Kolkata, 2 September and 3 September 2018 [Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/RLS\\_L/International\\_Conference\\_Logistics\\_Report\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_PML/RLS_L/International_Conference_Logistics_Report_2018.pdf)]

International Conference on *Who are the People? Populism and the Populist Movements* under the project “Popular Movement in West Bengal and Bihar”, at Swabhumi, Kolkata on 31 August to 1 September 2018 [Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/RLS\\_PM/International\\_Conference\\_Popular\\_Movement\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_PML/RLS_PM/International_Conference_Popular_Movement_2018.pdf)]

Collaborative Workshop for dissemination on *Popular Movement in West Bengal and Bihar* on 22 June 2018 at West Bengal State University, Barasat [Detailed report is available at [http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/RLS\\_PM/Report\\_Collaborative\\_Workshop\\_Programme\\_Popular\\_Movement\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrg.ac.in/RLS_PML/RLS_PM/Report_Collaborative_Workshop_Programme_Popular_Movement_2018.pdf)]

## SECTION FOUR

### Publications

#### 4.1 Journal: *Refugee Watch*

CRG's journal *Refugee Watch* founded in 1998 continues to provide an important space for the discussion of displacement and forced migration. Issues 51 & 52 with the theme ‘Migrants,

Communities and Political Ecology’ edited by Paula Banerjee was published in December 2018.

#### 4.2 Online Journal: *Refugee Watch Online*

CRG maintains an online co-publication of *Refugee Watch*, which presents brief news, reports, views, and comments while drawing political and social attention to the human rights of the forcibly displaced persons.

#### 4.3 Research Papers: *Policies and Practices*

CRG publishes a series of research papers with the aim of disseminating important works and findings for discussion among scholars, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and activists. The following were published during the reporting year.

SL No	Title	Author	Date of Publications	Link
105	Reflections on the Mediterranean Refugee Crisis	Federico Rahola & Priya Singh	December 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP105.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP105.pdf</a>
104	Global Capitalism, Informal Economy and the Question of Labour	Byasdeb Dasgupta & Ilena Sen	December 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP104.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP104.pdf</a>
103	Migrants and Movements across Asia: Mobility, Global Migration Governance and the European Response	Anita Sengupta	December 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP103.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP103.pdf</a>
102	Migration & Governance Statelessness, International Conventions and the Need for New Initiatives? Addressing the New Frontiers of Statelessness	Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury	December 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP102.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP102.pdf</a>
101	Migration and Governance IV:	Ranabir Samaddar &	December	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP101.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP101.pdf</a>

	Global Capitalism and Refugee and Migrant Labour	Samita Sen	2018	
100	Migration and Governance III: Population Flows, Refugees, and the Responsibility to Protect in the Global Protection System	Shibashis Chatterjee	December 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP100.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP100.pdf</a>
99	Migration and Governance II: Responsibility to Protect Questions of Race, Religion, Resource and the Unspoken Fourth	Paula Banerjee	December 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP99.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP99.pdf</a>
98	Migration and Governance I: Promises and Paradoxes of a Global Gaze	Ranabir Samaddar	December 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP98.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP98.pdf</a>
97	Peasants, Students, Insurgents and Popular Movements in Contemporary Assam	Sanjay Barbora	November 2018	<a href="http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP97.pdf">http://www.mcrg.ac.in/PP97.pdf</a>

#### 4.4 Books

Ranabir Samaddar and Anita Sengupta (eds.,) *Global Governance and India's North-East, Logistics, Infrastructure and Society* (Global edition has been published)

Ranabir Samaddar (ed.) *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: The Naxalite Decade*

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Ranabir Samaddar (eds.) *The Rohingya in South Asia: People Without a State*

Madhurilata Basu, Rajat Roy and Ranabir Samaddar (eds.) *Political Ecology of Survival: Life and Labour in the River Lands of East and North East India*

Ranabir Samaddar (ed.) *Migrants and the Neoliberal City*

## 4.5 Reports

- a. Report on *The State of the Global Protection System for Refugees and Migrants* is available at [http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS\\_Migration/Report\\_Refugees\\_and\\_Migrants.pdf](http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS_Migration/Report_Refugees_and_Migrants.pdf)
- b. Report on *Popular Movement in West Bengal and Bihar of Popular Movements* is available at [http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/RLS\\_PM/POPULAR\\_MOVEMENTS\\_REPORT\\_2016-18.pdf](http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS_PML/RLS_PM/POPULAR_MOVEMENTS_REPORT_2016-18.pdf)
- c. Report on *A Social Mapping of Infrastructure, Logistics and India's Look East Policy* is available at [http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS\\_PML/Final\\_Report\\_Logistic\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mcrgh.ac.in/RLS_PML/Final_Report_Logistic_2018.pdf)

## SECTION FIVE

### Report on the Distinguished Chair

#### A. Activities under the Chair

1. In this period under review, the main work done under the Chair was reviving the CRG winter workshop on migration and forced migration studies (November 2018). It was done with the help of the entire staff and members of CRG and with a grant from the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung. The Chair also advised and provided inputs whenever required by the Director and other staff members.
2. Under the guidance of the Chair two proposals were drafted in October 2018 for the research agenda of 2019: (a) the fourth research and orientation workshop on migration and forced migration and (b) populism; two preparatory workshops were accordingly planned and held in February 2019.
3. A significant part of Chair's time was spent on preparing notes towards securing further grants. Two notes require special mention: (a) a summary of its activities since its foundation along with a structured description, and (b) a note of organisational self-assessment. These notes had inputs from and were shared with Paula Banerjee and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury.
4. In this period the Chair had intense exchanges of views with several leading European scholars in migration and refugee studies. He also gained a lot from the discussions following his presentations in several European cities. These included three student gatherings. These exchanges and interactions helped the winter workshop in 2018 in a big way. It should be the same this year. It has strengthened CRG's global network.
5. Particular mention may be made of Chair's participation in the Seventeenth Conference of the IASFM conference at Thessaloniki. The intense interaction with other participants, in particular the members of the IASFM Executive Committee, there facilitated greatly the planning of the CRG winter workshop in November 2018. Nasreen Chowdhury helped the Chair in this effort.
6. As Associates of the Chair, Priya Singh (2018) and Aditi Mukherjee (2019) helped in regularly updating the Chair's page on the CRG website.

## B. Research by the Chair Occupant

1. In the period under review the Chair finished his manuscript on “The Postcolonial Age of Migration”. The work in progress was reported by the Chair last year. Routledge has accepted the manuscript for publication. The manuscript is now being revised.
2. At the same time, the Chair also started working on a manuscript on “The Populist Years in West Bengal, 2011-19”. Orient Blackswan may publish it. He prepared a research plan for the work on populism in the postcolonial context.

## C. Publications

1. In the period under review the Chair published the following edited and co-edited volumes based on CRG’s collective research:
  - (a) *Migrant and the Neoliberal City* (Orient Blackswan, 2018)
  - (b) *From Popular Movements to Rebellion: The Naxalite Decade* (Social Science Press and Routledge, 2018)
  - (c) (co-edited with Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury) *The Rohingya in South Asia: People without a State* (Routledge, 2018)
  - (d) (co-edited with Madhurilata Basu and Rajat Roy) *Political Ecology of Survival: Life and Labour in the River Lands of East and North-East of India* ((Orient Blackswan, 2018)
  - (e) (co-edited with Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter), *Logistical Asia: The Labour of Making a World Region* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2018)
2. The following papers were published by the Chair:
  - (a) “Popular Uprising in Paris and Left’s Fear of Populism”, *Alternatives*, January 2019 - <https://www.alterinter.org/?Popular-Uprising-in-Paris-and-Left-s-Fear-of-Populism> and <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article47236>
  - (b) “Occupy College Street: Student Radicalism in Kolkata in the Sixties”, *Slavic Review*, Volume 77, No 4, Winter 2018
  - (c) “You Did not Do What You Could”, review of Raghuram Rajan’s *I Do What I Do*, *Arthaniti: Journal of Economic Theory and Practice*, 30 December 2018 - <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0976747918815278>
  - (d) “Theorising Transit Labour in Informal Mineral Extraction Processes” in KuntalaLahiri-Dutta (ed.), *Between the Plough and the Pick: Informal, Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in the Contemporary World* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2018)
  - (e) “Promises and Paradoxes of a Global Gaze”, *Policies and Practices*, CRG Research Paper Series, 98
  - (f) (co-authored with Samita Sen) “Global Capitalism, Refugees and Migrant Labour”, *Policies and Practices*, CRG Research Paper Series, 101

D. Public Lectures, Seminars, and Presentations:

1. "Neoliberal Economy and Urban Transformation", Vienna Technical University, 26 March 2019
2. "Features of Postcolonial Capitalism", Discussion at Re-Work, Humboldt University, Berlin, 22 March 2019
3. "Neoliberal Capitalism and Data Centres in India", Science-Po, Paris, 18 March 2019
4. "Statelessness in South Asia", the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, 11 March 2019
5. "The Neoliberal City and the Migrant", Royal Institute of Art and Architecture, Stockholm, 7 March 2019
6. "Returning to the Histories of Immigration of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," Uppsala University, Uppsala, 6 March 2019
7. "The Postcolonial Age of Migration", London School of Economics and Political Science, 18 February 2019
8. "Neoliberal Capitalism and Refugee and Migrant Economy", Gottingen University, 31 January 2019
9. "Marx, Colonialism and India", Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, 28 January, 2019
10. "The Elusive Problematic of Transition", Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, 6 December 2018
11. Book discussion on "The Political Ecology of Survival: Life and Labour in the River Lands of East and North-East India", co-organized by CRG and South Asian University at the South Asian University, Delhi, 26 September 2018
12. Book discussion on "The Rohingya In South Asia: People without a State", organised by CRG, Press Club, Kolkata, 20 September 2019
13. Discussion on "Displacement, Security and Gender in South Asia" and book discussion on "Rohingyas in south Asia: People without a State", organized by Wiscomp and CRG, India International Centre, New Delhi, 7 September 2018
14. "Karl Marx, Colonialism and India", Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan on 16 July 2018
15. "Karl Marx, Colonialism and India", Friday Lecture Series, CRG, 6 July 2018
16. "Refugee and Migrant Labour as a Crucial Population Question of our Time", South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, 11 June 2018
17. "Transitional Justice and Victims of Forced Migration", York University, CARFMS, and the Munk School of Global Affairs, Toronto University, 6 June 2018
18. "The Urban Turn" at The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, April 24, 2018

## **SECTION SIX**

### **LIBRARY, WEBSITE AND ASSETS**

#### **6.1 Library**

The Library and Resource Centre of the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) has a vast collection of resources which includes books, documents, journals, manuscripts, research papers, working papers, thesis, census reports, audio, video and data CDs. The library contains 4867 books and 151 CDs including audio, video, data and lecture CDs relating to law, gender studies, forced migration, food, environment, urbanisation, justice, autonomy, displacement, literary works, minority rights, media, advocacy material, child right, human rights, Northeast migration, and Look East policy. [\*This is as per the last year report only, the fact-finding report is awaited.]

CRG has an exclusive collection of newspaper clippings on Northeast India and archival materials on forced migration. CRG is a regular subscriber to e-journals like JSTOR, and *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*. The CRG library is digital, allowing research scholars, students, faculty members of 9 colleges, universities, research institutes and NGOs to avail the online catalogue.

#### **6.2 Website**

The website of the Calcutta Research Group ([www.merg.ac.in](http://www.merg.ac.in)) is a significant and informative site. It has a collection of information, resources and publications which helps researcher, teachers, media peoples, scholars, and human rights activists. It is designed for presenting papers, abstracts, relevant documents, online registration, notifications, and links while organising conferences, dialogues, workshops and seminars, and promoting different upcoming programmes as well as advertising past ones. It is significant as an online distance education system. It hosts an e-source centre with basic and advanced search engines by which registered researchers, teachers, media peoples, scholars, and human right activists can access relevant documents, books, links etc. It also hosts the online co-publication of Refugee Watch “Refugee Watch Online”. RW Online is updated and maintained by Samata Biswas. Samaresh Guchhait looks after the designing, development, and regular updating of the website with the help of Research & Programme Associates / Assistant. He also works as system administrator to maintain the windows server, mailing server, and provides technical support. A more enhanced and upgraded version of the website was uploaded by CRG in March 2018. It remains a work in progress given the large amount of data that had to be transferred from the old version of the website. We will be happy for inputs from members about broadening the utility of and access to the website.

#### **6.3 Assets**

Two new printers were purchased. Two monitors were purchased and one folding ladder was purchased for the library. For further information, CRG’s Assets Register may be checked. It is updated regularly.

## 6.4 New Initiatives

6.4.1 A letter dated 1 July 2019 seeking suggestions for the improvement of the CRG was sent to all the members from the CRG Office. Although the deadline is now over, we appeal to the respected members to dwell on this in course of the discussion.

6.4.2 A meeting of the Library Committee Library Committee consisting of Ranabir Samaddar, K K Bannerjee, V Ramaswamy, Purna Banerjee and the Director was held on 18 June 2019 with the twin objective of (a) enhancing the readership of the library by making it more reader-friendly and (b) streamlining and rationalizing the accession and cataloguing. Some suggestions were also made. Meanwhile, a roster has been prepared for the researchers in order to encourage them to spend some time in the library by way of accessing the reading material, archive etc.

6.4.3 A committee has been set up with students-volunteers to take stock of the library holdings and make suggestion for improving the library. While they commenced their work on 15 June 2019, they have already completed their work. We are expecting to receive the report soon.

## SECTION SEVEN

### Highlights of Members' Achievements

**Prof. Mahalaya Chatterjee** was appointed as a member of the editorial board of *Urban India* - a bi-annual journal published by National Institute for Urban Affairs, New Delhi and her paper was conferred 'best paper award' in the 'mainstreaming Disaster Management' category in the International Conference on Disaster Management, organised by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology in Dhaka in January 2019. **Anjuman Ara Begum** remained involved in assisting journalists and human rights workers in South Asia to enhance their protection during emergency security situation. **Mandira Sen** draws attention to the following significant publications coming out of Stree-Samya in collaboration with Sage on counter-hegemonic narratives and memoirs:

Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd, *From a Shepherd Boy to an Intellectual*, 2018,

Manoranjan Byapari, *Interrogating My Chandal Life* [won the first Hindu Literary Nonfiction Prize, January 2019].

Reprints of Kancha Ilaiah's *Why I Am Not a Hindu; Buffalo Nationalism; and God as Political Philosopher* and Uma Chakravarti's *Gendering Caste*

**Ananya Chatterjee** was awarded Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Calcutta in March, 2019. **Dr Nirmal Kumar Mahato** was awarded Charles Wallace Fellowship, 2019-20, for short research in British Library, University of East Anglia and University of Sussex. He has been working on the following projects: 'The Status of Tribal Medical System and Practices in the Jungle Mahals, Eastern India, 1947-2000' sponsored by Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi and 'Adivasi-Nature Interactions in the Jungle Mahals in the

Anthropocene, Eastern India' sponsored by Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi.

[N. B. Prepared on the basis of inputs received from the respective members. The appearance of the names in the above sequence is random, for, it reflects neither any statement on their merit, nor alphabetical order.]

## **SECTION EIGHT**

### **Academic and Administrative Staff**

During the period under report, Anita Sengupta who had held the post of Director resigned from January 2019. CRG thanks her for the work she did as the Director. CRG also takes the opportunity of expressing its gratitude to Prof. Sibaji Pratim Basu for having officiated as the Director till Prof. Samir Das took the charge as the Honorary Director 1 June 2019. On February 2019 Ria De has joined CRG as Research and Programme Associate for the CRG-RLS project *Populism and Populist Politics in South Asia with Special Reference to India*, Aditi Mukherjee was retained for the CRG- RLS project *Refugees and Migrants: Issues of Protection, Rights and Justice* as Research and Programme Associate and Shatabdi Das was also retained. She has been working with CRG as a researcher for the project 'Refugees and Migrants: Issues of Protection, Rights and Justice' since March 1, 2019. She is entrusted with keeping minutes of meetings. She handles the forced migration desk for the Fourth Annual Research and Orientation Workshop and International Conference to be held in November 2019 in Kolkata. She has conducted field work in the district of North 24 Parganas in West Bengal and is working on her research paper titled 'Labour in Borderland: Icchamati River in North 24 Parganas'. Shatabdi has worked on translation of vernacular research articles and a few editorial assignments for book publication and proofreading of CRG journal issues. She is also conducting research on a project of SANDD titled 'Building an Inter-disciplinary Research Network on Migration, Displacement and Resilience'.

Ankita Manna left CRG two month before the completion of her project. Priya Singh and Apala Kundu left on completion of their projects.

Like the previous year, the services of Ratan Chakraborty, Samaresh Guchhait and Ashok Kumar Giri were retained. The part-time service of R. K. Mahato was also retained and he joined as part-time Library Assistant. Subhashree Rout has been appointed as new Office Secretary from 1 August 2018.

## **SECTION NINE**

### **Concerns and Call for Collaborators**

9.1 Suggestions were sought in a couple of meetings mainly with the Kolkata-based members in a bid to chart out the road ahead by way of overcoming the roadblocks. In a meeting held on 2 August, 2019 the Honorary Director explained the rationale

behind organisation of the session. According to him, the session is intended (a) to find out ways of strengthening members' participation in research and other CRG works; (b) discover new and frontier areas in which CRG should carry out its research regardless of funding opportunities; (c) explore ways of doing research with minimum or no funding (in line with some of CRG's previous works) and collaboration and (d) explore new ways of funding opportunities. He also referred to the necessity of being self-critical and cited the example of the last survey conducted in 2015. The need for regularity of visits by the members was underlined so that there develops camaraderie amongst the members. More than bringing in the corporate culture, the warmth in human relations is the necessity of the hour. CRG must offer to its members a forum for interaction which may serve as the incubator of new ideas for future research. Friday could be the day when the interested members might come and hold discussions.

- 9.2 Low or no-funding research involving mainly the doctoral students of CRG members may be encouraged. These researchers do not necessarily have to be paid.
- 9.3 The funding sources are going to dry up further in future. CRG must explore alternative sources of funding and aim at diversifying its sources of funding.
- 9.4 Parallel to the high-level research publications, CRG should introduce a new genre of slightly informal publications preferably in Bengali emerging from out of these interactive sessions.
- 9.5 The address of CRG has shifted from GC 45, First Floor, Salt Lake City, Sector III, Kolkata – 700106 to IA 48, Ground Floor, Sector III, Salt Lake City, Kolkata – 700097. The Honorary Director and the Office are now engaged in completing official formalities in this regard.

## **SECTION TEN**

### **Roll of CRG Members**

Last year Mahalaya Chatterjee, Ilena Sen and Manjuri Chatterji were invited to be members of the Society. All of them accepted the invitations. CRG welcomes them to the Society. During this period, Rajat Roy tendered his resignation from CRG in December 2018 and joined as the coordinator of the project on Populism.

Mithilesh Kumar and Pushpendra Kumar, members of CRG had sent in their letters of resignation on 7 August 2018. The Governing Body after taking into consideration all aspects of their actions accepted their resignations - primarily on the ground of conflict of interest which would prove detrimental to the society's ethos of transparency and mutuality

The present roll of members stands as follows. It will be subject to revision after the AGM to be held on 31 August 2019.

1. Amit Prakash
2. Amrita Patel
3. Ananya Chakraborty
4. Anjoo Sharan Upadhyaya
5. Anjuman Ara Begum
6. Anup Shekhar Chakraborty
7. Arup Kumar Sen
8. Asha Hans
9. Atig Ghosh
10. Bharat Bhushan
11. Bishnu Mohapatra
12. Byasdeb Dasgupta
13. Dulali Nag
14. Ilena Sen
15. Iman Mitra
16. Ishita Dey
17. Jishnu Dasgupta
18. K. M. Parivelan
19. Kalpana Kannabiran
20. Khesheli Chishi
21. Krishna Bandyopadhyay
22. Kumar Rana
23. Madhuresh Kumar
24. Mahalaya Chatterjee
25. Manabi Majumdar
26. Mandira Sen
27. Manish K. Jha
28. Manjuri Chatterji
29. Mouleshri Vyas
30. Nasreen Chowdhory
31. Nirmal Kumar Mahato
32. Nirmalya Banerjee
33. Pallav Kumar Goswami
34. Paula Banerjee
35. Pradip Kumar Bose
36. Prasanta Ray
37. Rajesh Kharat
38. Ranabir Samaddar
39. Ritu Menon

40. Ruchira Goswami
41. Sabir Ahamed
42. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury
43. Sahana Basavapatna
44. Samata Biswas
45. Samir Kumar Das
46. Samita Sen
47. Sanam Roohi
48. Sanjay Barbora
49. Sanjay Chaturvedi
50. Shyamalendu Majumdar
51. Sibaji Pratim Basu
52. Simpreet Singh
53. Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty
54. Subir Bhaumik
55. Sudeep Basu
56. Sumona Dasgupta
57. Suthirtha Bedajna
58. Uttam Kumar Ray
59. V. Ramaswamy