

Annual Report 1998- 1999

Introduction

The Calcutta Research Group was established in December 1995, with a core group of eight scholars of the city. Some of the main objectives of forming the research group were (a) to develop a group of scholar – activists to engage in policy studies particularly relating to the east and north east of India and the sub – continent, these policy matters relating to the themes of cultural studies, ethnicity, trans border and internal population flow, human rights and peace and conflict resolution, labor rights and dignity; (b) to sponsor or commission studies based on research and translation or compilation relating to the above mentioned themes of policy interest; (c) to foster academic and cultural contacts within the country and South Asia at large towards developing a research network on related policy matters; (d) to organize, undertake and promote publications, audio – visual documentations seminars, workshops, and campaigns on the said policy matters.

In these 4 years since its inception, starting as an organization named CRG and then as a registered body, the Society has made significant contribution in the field of social research, creating public opinion and information dissemination. In this period of reporting (1998- 1999) the Society has published journals and organized seminars, meetings, and has supported other groups. The Society now is an established and well-recognized institution in India and abroad.

1. *Refugee Watch*

Refugee Watch is a quarterly newsletter on the flow of refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons and potential refugees in South Asia.

The purpose of this newsletter is to study, campaign, and build a network of concerned people including academics and activists. The newsletter is edited by Ranabir Samaddar, who is supported by a team of specialists in this field.

In this period three issues have been published and circulated widely. The April 1998 issue of Refugee Watch carries reports on various aspects of the continuing civil war Sri Lanka and population displacement that it has caused. It also highlights the inadequacy of the response both at political and humanitarian levels. December 1998 issue is in the nature of a broad overview that aims at taking stock of the transborder flows in South Asia and their impact on nations, the new combined issue publish in first quarter of 1999 focuses but also the growing politicization of what otherwise in humanitarian issue.

Refugee Watch is brought out in collaboration with South Asian Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) and supported by Fredrich-Naumann Stifflung, South Asia Regional Office, New Delhi, significant contribution in the field of social research, creating public opinion and information dissemination. In this period of reporting (1998- 1999) the society has published journals and organized seminars, meetings, and has supported other groups. The society now is an established and well recognized institution in India and abroad.

2. Meetings

- i) Ranabir Samaddar, Samir Kr. Das and Sabyasachi Basu Raychaudhury participated in 'South Asian consultation on Refugee and Forced Migration: Need for National Laws and Regional Cooperation organized by SAFHR in New Delhi on 5-7 September, 1998. They also, presented a paper on "Forced Migration in India: A Critical Review" to the meeting. The paper basically focused on the problem of IDPs or Internally Displaced persons and the need for evolving appropriate legal instruments in order to address their problem.
- ii) Ranabir Samaddar attended the South Asian Consultation on "Minorities in South Asia" and was a member of the steering Group for the conference.

3. New Projects

UNHCR has committed itself to a project on "Refugee Care and Rehabilitation in West Bengal" on the basis of discussions held with Mr. Castro-Magluff, Deputy Chief of the Mission. MCRG will undertake the project under coordinatorship of Prof. Prodip Bose from May 1999. Dr. Samir Kumar Das and Dr. Sabyasachi Basu Raychaudhury will act as Senior Researchers. The project focuses on such issues as administrative culture and profile of local settlements etc. It has been decided that the projects will be conducted by a team of researchers – some of whom will be from outside MCRG.

4. Society Management

- a) MCRG applied to the Income Tax Dept. for income tax exemption under section 12(A) of IT Act '61 with effect from 1 April 1998. MCRG received the exemption certification on 17 December 1998. Similarly application was made for deduction under u/s 80G of IT Act '61. This has also been granted on 17 December 1998. The exemption is valid from 2 June 1998 to 31 March 2001.
- b) New Membership
Two new members have been enrolled in the period of reporting.
 - i) Samir Das, Teacher, Calcutta University
 - ii) Subir Bhumik, Journalist, BBC
- c) Currently the MCRG has one full time and three part time staff for carrying out necessary administrative and project work. They are Soma Ghosal for internet documentation, R. K. Mahato, Computer Operator, Ratan Chakravarty, accountants. All three are part time employees. Bhaskar Saha, full time office staff, looks after dispatch and office maintenance.

Secretary
Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group