

One Day Research Planning Workshop on Long 2020

Concept Note

Long 2020 is the main focus of CRG's research agenda this year. COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown and the migrant crisis of the last year have forced us to revisit some of our concepts, theories, and policies of governance, protection, care, and justice around issues of migration and forced migration. This year's research agenda in many ways is therefore shaped by our last year's experiences. The 'long' in the 'Long 2020' helps us to think of our present as a long unfolding of historical trends and experiences of epidemiological management, a combination of several crises in the form of a pandemic, public health policies, and practices, migration realities in the wake of an epidemic, and issues of life and death raising their heads through the time of an epidemic. Yet, even though an epidemic such as this is preceded in history by other epidemics, each repetition of history is also a new beginning. The 'long' can be also thus understood in reference to the projection of a current event into the future by looking back into the past. Informed by such a paradox, the 'Long 2020' research programme will try to rethink issues of epidemiological governance, jurisprudence, public health, restructuring of labour, and the idea of 'crisis' with a special focus on refugees and migrants caught in the crisis.

Contemporary migration scholarship is still deficient in historical awareness and hence unable to bring out the political and economic truths of the crisis time. Notwithstanding the wide range of research methodologies and reflections on the diverse sites and subjects of migration, we lack the focus that can produce a compelling critique of conventional knowledge of migration. The idea of a 'long 2020' research programme is drawn from an awareness to place the migration issue in the light of epidemiological and economic governance, broad macroeconomic restructuring, and the acute crises of the time.

Such a research programme hopefully will bring back the question of the migrants' body into the academic field of studies of public health, public education, and labour. In the South Asian context, the refugee influx into India was marked by forcible pathologization of the refugee's body--from compulsory inoculation of the refugee as soon as they reached railway stations in the aftermath of the partition of British India, to the urban imagination of the 1971 refugee as the carrier of deadly diseases that needed to be contained far away from the urban metropolis. In 2020, the migrant workers walking back to their village homes after the sudden imposition of the lockdown, found their selves kneeling--to be sprayed by pesticides, to kill the virus. The trains ferrying them were the 'Corona trains', indicating their potential to infect previously untouched, uninfected villages. In this background, this will be a collective study of the some of the salient aspects of the year of 2020 in the light of long historical trends. At the same time the study will hopefully indicate a history that 2020 is creating before our eyes.

Long 2020: A Research Planning Workshop

26 March 2021, Swabhumi (Kolkata)

9.00-9.30am: *Registration, welcome and introduction to the workshop* (Byasdeb Dasgupta, University of Kalyani & President, CRG; Ranabir Samaddar, CRG)

Session 1 (9.30-10.30am): *Crisis, Economic Restructuring, and Labour*

Chair: Ranabir Samaddar, CRG

Discussant: Arup Sen, Serampore College & CRG.

Participants:

Byasdeb Dasgupta, University of Kalyani & CRG

‘Global Capitalism and Corona Pandemic – In Search for Radical Solution’

Sabir Ahamed, Pratichi (India) Trust & CRG and Madhurilata Basu, Sarojini Naidu College & CRG

‘The Long 2020 and the Informal Care Economy: Case Studies of Select Careworkers’

Tea (10.30-11.00am)

Session 2 (11.00am-1.00pm): *Templates of Epidemiological Governance*

Chair: Sibaji Pratim Basu, Vidyasagar University, Midnapore & CRG

Discussants: Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, IISER, Mohali

TBC

Participants:

Amit Prakash, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi & CRG

‘The Long 2020: State Impunity and Erasure of Rights through Logistics of Governance’

Iman Mitra, Shiv Nadar University, Noida & CRG

‘Modeling COVID-19: Notes on the Convergence of Economic and Epidemiological Reasons’

Oishik Sircar, O.P. Jindal Global University, Delhi

‘The Long 2020: An Outsider Jurisprudential Account’

Lunch (1.00-2.00pm)

Session 3 (2.00-3.30pm): *Crisis, Exodus and Literary/Histories*

Chair: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University & CRG

Discussant: Atig Ghosh, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan & CRG

Anwesha Sengupta, IDSK, Kolkata

Participants:

Paula Banerjee, University of Calcutta & CRG

‘Locating the Diseased Body’

Samata Biswas, The Sanskrit College and University & CRG

‘Epidemic, Migration and Literature: Tropes, Traces and Topographies’

Priyanka Dey, CRG

‘Public Health in Refugee Camps and Colonies of West Bengal during 1947-1958: Policies, Practices and Politics’

Session 4 (3.30-4.30pm): *The ‘Long’ of Long 2020*

Chair: Atig Ghosh, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan & CRG

Discussant: Debarati Bagchi, Max Weber Stiftung, India Branch Office, New Delhi.

Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, Asiatic Society, Kolkata & CRG
'Longue Durée', 'Conjoncture', 'Event': Notion of Plural Time in History'

Kaustubh Mani Sengupta, Bankura University, Bankura
'Contagion, Territory, Public Health: Situating 2020 in Modern South Asian Past'

Tea (4.30-5.00pm)

Concluding Session on the Organisation and Research (5.00-5.30pm)

Chair: Shyamalendu Majumdar, Shibnath Shastri College & Secretary CRG

Discussant: Ranabir Samaddar

Vote of thanks by Rituparna Datta , CRG.

Book-launch followed by discussion, *A Pandemic and the Politics of Life* by Ranabir Samaddar (5.30-6.30)

Chair: Subhas Ranjan Chakraborty, CRG

Discussant: Prasanta Ray, Emeritus Professor, Presidency University, Kolkata & CRG.

Tea & Snacks