

Final Report of the 6th Critical Studies Conference

# Refugees, Migrants, Violence and the Transformation of Cities

*This Sixth Critical Studies Conference is a part of the research and dialogue programme on Cities, Rural Migrants and the Urban Poor: Issues of Violence and Social Justice. The support of the **Ford Foundation** is kindly acknowledged.*

The 6<sup>th</sup> Critical Studies Conference was held over the **23<sup>rd</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017** and was organised the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (**MCRG**) in collaboration with the **Ford Foundation**. The theme of the conference was ‘**Refugees, Migrants, Violence and the Transformation of Cities**’ and it featured a keynote address, a plenary session discussing key texts of urban studies, a film screening and eleven panels of presentation.

What follows here is a comprehensive description of the proceedings of the conference in terms of the papers presented and the discussions that took place after the presentations divided according to the respective panels.

It was decided in the concluding session of the conference on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August to form an editorial committee to coordinate and deliberate over the publication of select papers of the conference. The committee is now proceeding to read all the papers and consider a suitable medium of publication. The editorial committee consists of:

- **Rajarshi Dasgupta, JNU, New Delhi**
- **Samata Biswas, Bethune College, Kolkata**
- **Iman Mitra, TISS, Patna**
- **Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, IISER, Mohali**
- **Anita Sengupta, MCRG, Kolkata**

## **Day 1: 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2017**

- **Inaugural Session**

The conference was inaugurated with a welcome address by the Director of MCRG, Paula Banerjee. This was followed by an exposition of the conference's objectives and MCRG's work in the field of urbanity, migration and labour by the Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies at MCRG, Ranabir Samaddar. This was followed by a statement by the Ford Foundation's Regional Director Pradeep Nair who spoke about the kind of work that the Foundation supports and emphasised how the Foundation aims to extend its support to locally based organisations in parts of the Global South. The session was chaired by the President of MCRG, Prasanta Ray.

- **Keynote Address**

### ***Subir Sinha - Separation, Mobility and the Ordinary City: On Migrants' Subjection and Subjectivity***

The keynote address centered on what was categorized as a paradigmatic city, an archetype; colonial and postcolonial notions of citiness; and the postcolonial city that was an exemplary to cities that were removed from the administrative centers of state and capitalist power, in other words, the ordinary city.

Subir Sinha in his keynote address offered a critique of the existent paradigms of urbanism and what was perceived as constituting 'citiness' in the postcolonial context be it Latin American or the Indian context. Sinha contended that the 'paradigmatic city' was a myth, an artificial construct, a fabrication, or at the most a 'fleeting reality'. It served as a flawed model for deconstructing post-colonial cities. Its creation and continuance were the consequences of a connivance of social theory, comprising radical social theory and its postcolonial variations. The paradigmatic city was entrenched in 'separations', 'segregations', 'flows' and mobilities', which were consciously preserved by urban planning and was not an epitome of the attributes of universalism and modernity as advocated by social theory. On the contrary it encompassed aspects of exclusion and violence. The radical variations of social theory perceived the city as a 'generalized condition of sociality', a platform to insert a series of radical transformations suggesting that in its absence there would be "no civil society, no intellectuals and masses, no public spaces or spheres, no working class, no mass political party, no revolution". In reality, Sinha contends that cities have always been sites of segregation or separation either by way of erected walls, gates and armed fortifications, in terms of racial and class segregations and even more pronounced in the form of settlements and in colonies. It was only since the 1960s with its pronounced racial eruptions that the fascination with the paradigmatic city began to wane.

The other focal point of the keynote address was what Sinha refers to as the concept of ordinariness or the 'ordinary' city connoting in his words, 'the new outsides of old cities, and of other, more remote centre of inhabitation'. The characteristic features of ordinariness (following as Sinha observes, Sanyal and Bhattacharya) being the dominance of the

information sector, self-employment, partial integration of the informal sector with national and global capital though predominantly non-capital, inadequate international financing and banking facilities, a lack of basic utilities and the preponderance of adhocism or “jugaad”, the informality perhaps accruing out of exclusion or adverse incorporation. Beset by contradictions, marked by natural calamities, violence and incessant civil war are prevalent both inside and outside the paradigmatic city wherein securitization is institutionalized. Separation in the ordinary city is discernible by way of ‘lifestyle choices’ and ‘aesthetic demands’. It is marked by an absence of the politics of the street and quiet encroachment as well as the aspect of anonymity that is manifestly missing. It is distinguished by the virtual nonexistence of civil and political society. The ordinary city is characterized by inequality of power and the concentration of power is in the hands of a strongman rather than the state. However ordinary cities can be transnational as well as translocal and the concepts of separation and restrictions within these cities demand consideration. The ordinary city is projected as the future of the postcolonial metropolis, the result of the migrations of the decades of 1990s and 2000s, the upshot of private accumulation and advance of capitalism, a situation ripe for the contestations and protests by the new entrants and the subalterns.

Sinha concluded with the observation that the perfect/paradigmatic city, worthy of emulation is a misnomer. The fact of the matter is that in contemporary circumstances where mass migrations and the war on terror are the norm, the concept of a universal citizen is incongruous and it is the paradigmatic city that becomes a post-colonial one and not the other way round. Similarly the ordinary city will never really graduate into a post-colonial metropolis but it is the latter that will be converted into a larger version of the ordinary city. The starting point for any construction should be the ordinary city with an emphasis on commonism and heterogeneity.

- **Vote of thanks:** Offered by Anita Sengupta, Senior Researcher and Programme Coordinator, Calcutta Research Group

## **Day 2: 24<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017**

- **Panel 1(A) [Venue: Rang Durbar, Swabhumii] Crisis, Violence and the Public Space (Discussant: Pushpendra Kr. Singh, TISS, Patna; Chair: Sanjeeb Mukherjee, University of Calcutta)**

### **Nasreen Chowdhory (University of Delhi, Dept. of Political Science): *Camps and Cities: The Making of Citizens at the Margins***

Dr. Chowdhory's paper engaged with social theorist Agamben's understanding of camp, while simultaneously departing from the notion of camp as an exceptional and apolitical space. It argued that camp for refugees is no longer an exceptional space; rather, it is an active political space for refugees to engage with ideas of belonging and to assert claims of citizenship. Exemplifying this argument, the paper went on to talk about the case of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka to India. Furthermore, the paper drew on the discourse of citizenship to assert that rights-based analysis has attempted to engage with non-citizens, leading to a discussion about post-nationalized/ de-nationalized citizenships.

### **Somdatta Chakraborty (MCRG): *Criminalizing the Migrant: Street carriers and the Colonial State in 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century Calcutta and Bengal***

Dr. Chakraborty's paper unpacked the multi-layered dynamics between the colonial state and the hackney carriage drivers and palanquin bearers of nineteenth-twentieth century Calcutta and Bengal, with a specific aim of decoding the 'culture of transgression' that the government espoused vis-à-vis such marginal people as also to review the ways in which such carriage men resisted. It delineated how British imperial authority viewed mobility through the lens of criminality, and consequently sought in multiple ways to discipline these communities on the periphery of colonial society.

### **Comments:**

Pushpendra Kr. Singh from TISS, Patna, was the discussant for this session, and he had some discerning remarks to share. He found the departure that Dr. Chowdhory had made from Agamben's 'state of exception' remarkable which he thinks is important in the context of India and South Asia. Agamben talks of both literal camps such as the concentration camps in Nazi Germany and detention centres. But there are all sorts of camps today, he says. Mostly refugee camps are outside the juridical order but not necessarily external. In our context, there are many notions of camps. There are camps that started out as camps and have become localities. The paper also explores the ideas of post-national and denationalized citizenship. Citizenship has become a complex concept now, asserts Dr. Singh, citing the example of dual citizenship or post-national citizenship, used by those who are not nationals or citizens to protect their rights. This leads to the withering of the concept of the nation-state and nationality. In that case, a differentiation must be made, and the paper does this, between powerlessness and the condition of being an actor. There are these agents, active societies that try to claim their rights, but it cannot take away the fact that powerlessness still remains. The space of citizenship thus becomes a highly contested space, iterates Dr. Singh. He

narrates his experience with survivors of the tsunami in Tamil Nadu, and how only after they were rendered homeless and in danger did their sense of urgency regarding citizenship and rights grow. The idea of post-national citizenship is guided by ideas of globalization and by the notion of rights associated with national citizenships. It extends to multinational corporations, says Dr. Singh, providing rights not only to those who are on the margins without rights and citizenship, but also to corporations and others in the financial market. But the idea of post-national citizenship is viewed differently by refugees in comparison to the drivers of financial progression.

What emerges from the second paper is that the two communities of palanquin bearers and the carriage drivers are migrants, hence they are unsettled, they hail from the working class and they had certain caste and class affiliations. The British thus attempted to discipline the working class, an important point explored by the paper. The relationship of colonial powers with their caste in its state of origin, say Bihar, is something that the paper should take up further, opines Dr. Singh, since they formed the second largest working class section in Calcutta in those days. The colonial power's distrust for unsettled communities, and their relationship with the concept of caste played a major role in how they treated these people in Calcutta. The paper could also have studied what was happening with the other working classes, and the relationship between the middle class and the working class, to make the study more comprehensive.

#### **Q and A:**

Professor Samaddar directed his question to Dr. Chowdhory, inquiring of her what would happen if entire cities were taken as camps. If city spaces were used as camps, the camp would convey one unified space, irrespective of whether it is a place of exception or not. The distinction between national and post-national would become irrelevant. Nationality conveys only a sense of national identity. But citizenship conveys more than that – a claim to politics and it goes beyond voting rights. In Europe, the city is being thought of as a hospitable camp, the Derridean notion, in terms of the refugees' right to hospitality. For the refugees it is neither national nor post-national, rather sub-national. We have to discard these established categories of the last 200 years because they were invented precisely by excluding the migrant.

Dr. Chowdhory thanked Professor Samaddar for resolving the issue of post-national citizenship for her, for it is important to figure out the lens of the camp itself, she says. She also agreed with the discussant's notion of powerlessness, agreeing that it was a complex concept with different sides to it where seeming power is often exposed as powerlessness.

- **Panel 1(B) [Venue: Sabhaghar 1, Swabhumi] Identity and Inclusion**  
**(Discussant:** Sudeep Basu, Central University of Gujarat, Gandhinagar;  
**Chair:** Parivelan K.M., TISS, Mumbai)

**Radhika Raj (TISS, Mumbai, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance): *The Making of the ‘Local’: The Everyday Politics of Mitra Mandals on the Margins of the City***

The first presenter was Radhika Raj from Centre for Urban Policy and Governance, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. The title of her paper was *Theproduction of a ‘Migrant’ versus the ‘Local’: The Case of a right-wing-all-male organization on the margins of the city.* This paper attempted to study the role played by *MitraMandals* or Friends’ Associations in the carving of an urban space that in many ways excludes migrants, Dalits, religious and other minorities in present-day Mumbai, strengthening the existence of xenophobic ideologies of Shiv Sena, sponsors of many such Associations. The argument is developed by focusing on the functioning of *Jai Jawan* Mitra Mandal, located in the Jogeshwari slum area which witnessed the 1992 Bombay Riots. The important points that were highlighted are summarized here:

These Associations function as local, all-male organisations responsible for leisurely and welfare activities. Performances of festivals like *Ganeshutsav* and *DahiHandi* turn these sites into fields where political leaders wield power; they also foster an atmosphere of hypermasculinity. These *MitraMandals* incorporate in their operations a sense of welfare or *sewa* in order to broaden their support base amongst the neighbourhood and thus, creates a territory of influence. As an example, the paper shows how the *Jai Jawan* Mitra Mandal has simultaneously presented a positive image of the riot-affected Jogeshwari area and also created a gap between the Muslim and Hindu population.

### **Comments**

Sudeep Basu was the designated discussant on this panel discussion. He observes that constructs of “local/original inhabitants” and “migrant/others” are steeped in the narrative of “Sons of the Soil” movement. He opines that these binaries are continuously re-invoked, through social and/or political means, to the extent of appearing natural and original. Further, he states that the hypermasculine jingoistic language by the *MitraMandals* depicted in the festivals, social welfare activities etc. creates a certain version of urban reality along the lines of ethnonationalism and neo-liberal capital expansion and also a communalization of working-class people. He critically questions the methods and the politics of such methods in refashioning the public spaces and the curious juxtaposition of cosmopolitanism and religious orthodoxy in the metropolis. Another point that he raises is about how the various factors such as caste, *jati* etc. is negotiated under the umbrella of apparent compatibility of such associations.

Lalitha Kamath posed the question regarding the impact of a shift in the power structure with the arrival of *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) on the production of categories such as “local” and “migrants”. Radhika, in her answer, states that with the rise in power of BJP, there have been changes in the rules and regulations that have adversely affected the members of the

*Mitra Mandals*. The effect on the migrants' was unknown to her. A gentleman posed the question of how far are these associations responsible for instilling a sense of security and responsibility in the young boys and men. In reply, Radhika states that the activities that these members undertake are framed in a narrative of sporting culture and not a dominant Marathi culture. The rise of a phenomenon named "Global Handi", invitation to Spanish players, selling of merchandise etc. have all contributed towards the growth of an identity of being more than just a common man. Mahuya Bandyopadhyay observed that the paper could look at how the *Mitra Mandals* dealt with this shift that occurred with the arrival of BJP. She further mentioned that in discussions on performativity, there is also the notion of accountability and the study could do well to look into these changing patterns of accountability and performances of sociality that is located within the politics of inclusion and exclusion.

**Prasad R (Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum, University of Kerala):**  
***Interstate Migrant Labourers in Malayalam Films: A Critical Review***

The next paper titled *Interstate Migrant Workers and Social Identity: A Case Study on Malayalam Films*, presented by Prasad R of Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum, University of Kerala, argues how labourers from different parts of India (Interstate Migrant Workers) are perceived as a homogenous category and stereotyped in Malayalam movies. As case studies, Prasad takes up separate movies and analyses the characters of migrant labourers and their portrayal in these movies. *Masala Republic*, *Bhaiyya Bhaiyya*, *Amar Akbar Antony* are some of the movies explored in the course of this paper.

The migrant labourers, as Prasad argues, form a part of an unorganised labour category and is already vulnerable; the film industry, in their portrayal as either criminals or suspected criminals, further exacerbates such stereotypical notions of identity. As example, he cites the clubbing of a diverse population under the homogenous category of "Bengalis". He further argues that a recent shift in the perception of ISMs as having positive traits such as honesty etc. and/or their portrayal as a source of laughter has to move towards a more humane depiction of different individuals and groups of people.

**Comments**

The discussant begins with the notion of how cinema mirrors social reality that is already in existence. In light of this statement, he asks as to how the characterisation of the protagonists in the movie *Masala Republic*, two ISMs who are categorised as "Bengalis" occurs, both realistically and cinematically. Is this categorisation a result of deliberations or does it happen by default? He further states that these stereotypes are of a varied nature, ranging from criminals to domestic workers. How then, he poses, these transformations of the migrants' occur in the cinematic course? What are the factors left out of the cinematic discourse? He also raised the important point of application of such films in addressing the structural issues of caste, gender and equality. He suggested that one way of studying the films as texts would be to locate them within the larger discourse of social and historical migration in Kerala; this would, he states, help in assessing their level of integration.



The first set of questions posed to Prasad was by Iman Mitra:

(i) How do these films feature in the larger history of Malayali Cinema? Are these movies commercial ventures or arthouse films?

(ii) Kerala is a transit point. People arrive from other states such as West Bengal, Bihar etc. and move further on to the Gulf countries in search of better opportunities. Is this a factor that contributes towards lesser integration with the Malayali society?

V. Srinivasan enquired into the identity of the people behind the making of these movies. He pointed out the presence and active participation of Gulf Malayalis in the production business. Could that, he enquired, be a reason behind the divide between the locals and the migrants?

In response to Iman's queries, Prasad said that all or most of the movies belong to the genre of popular movies. There are no such parallel movies ("art movies") dealing with Inter State Migrants (ISM). Although the transitory nature of migration is a fact in reality, the movies that are analysed do not make any such references.

Prasad stated that he mainly focussed on the stereotypical portrayal of these migrant labourers and not on the production business or the politics thereof.

**Annapurna Neti (APU, Bangalore) & Puja Guha (APU, Bangalore): *Street-food Vending: From Precarious Existence to Social Inclusion – Case Stories from Bangalore***

The third and the final paper on this panel was presented jointly by Annapurna Neti and Puja Guha, Assistant Professor, Azim Premji University, Bangalore. It was titled *Street Food Vending: From Precarious Existence to Social Inclusion*. This paper explores the street food vending business in Bangalore and deals with issues of migration, inclusion and dignity of work associated therewith. The paper, as part of a larger project on Bangalore, interviews four Street food Vendors, two locals and two migrants. The important points raised in the course of this paper are:

(i) The importance of food as a signifier of culture and also of respect. The street food vendors feel a sense of dignity in serving good food to their customers.

(ii) The important role played by social networks in the inclusion of these people is also explored; the gaining of place or job through contacts like friends or relatives and the labour of an entire family is an important feature of this informal sector.

(iii) The precarious nature of their existence lies in the fact that most of them entered into this business of vending food in order to escape exploitations at the hands of owners in previous jobs and in search of security and personal freedom. There are, however, factors like harassment by police and other authorities that plague this sector. The migrants face the additional burden of being an "outsider" and is thus, challenged by both the authority and other "local" street food vendors.

(iv)The paper, very briefly, comments on the Street Vending Act, 2014 (SVA) and how it both provides the street vendors an identity and right to the street but also by including representations of local vendors, excludes the migrants. The street, as an urban regularised space, becomes the site of both social inclusion and political exclusion.

### **Comments**

After a brief summary of the paper, the discussant raises the pertinent question of the sustainability of such a livelihood, given that in many cases it is a single livelihood of the entire family. He acknowledges that the findings of this paper is still at an early stage and thus has issues that requires attention. Questioning the concept of inclusion through the act of street food vending, he probes whether the inclusion presupposes integration. The leap made by the paper in going beyond the vendors' vulnerability toward social inclusion is challenged. How is this leap possible since, as he says, that vulnerability is an existential dilemma of human lives? He stresses on the degree of inclusion for understanding the effects of law on individuals, communities and their claim to social spaces. Further remarks are made as to how through such activities, public spaces are appropriated for private purposes and thus, can be seen as a physical asset or capital. In the context of negotiations between the various actors, he enquires as to who has the greater advantage and how? How, he asks, does the law actin perpetuating the political exclusion of the migrants and the sanitisation of the streets? In the juxtaposition between mobility and fixity, between the vendors and the pedestrians, how can the legal framework intermediate? He ends the discussion with these important questions that the study is attempting to find answers to.

Arup Sen comments that the importance of the paper lies in how it shows the migration of people from places like Bihar etc. but keeping in mind the segmented nature of the population, what exactly are these migrants? There are migrants from Allahabad and the place has a significant Muslim population. Does the study trace the presence of the Muslim population in the street food-vending business in Bangalore? The second point of intervention is the degree of cosmopolitanism in the street food culture of Bangalore. V.Srinivasan observes that in the bid to provide cheap and healthy food to all classes, how far is the migrant population able to sustain themselves?

In their answer to the first question, Puja and Annapurna mentioned that out of 18 people, there was one Muslim vendor and he was not the owner. People from different religion are present and they do sell different kinds of food. On the question on sustainability, they pointed out that many vendors have been engaged in the business for 10 or more years and thus, view this as a permanent activity. Many owners of such ventures sell seasonal food and/or food in various locations and thus has a broad base of doing business. Others engage temporarily before moving on to better opportunities and view this as a stop-gap activity. The Street Food Vending Act, 2014, according to them, fails to accommodate these patterns of the informal sector. As far as hygiene is concerned, they observe that the vendors are extremely conscious of the cleanliness of their food and the immediate locality but there is the potential in the street food to contribute towards a development in the nutritional status and quality.

- **Panel 2(A)** [Venue: Rang Durbar, Swabhumii] **The Urban Question and the North-East (Discussant:** Paula Banerjee, University of Calcutta; **Chair:** Xonzoi Barbora, TISS, Guwahati)

**Anup Shekhar Chakraborty (NIAS, Kolkata, Dept. of Political Science and Political Studies): *Social Imaginaries and Medical Dystopia: ‘Health Migrations and Care-givers’ in Kolkata City from Mizoram***

In this presentation, Anup Shekhar drew attention to the phenomenon of health migration from the north-eastern state of Mizoram to the city of Kolkata. What made the presentation interesting was narration of his personal anecdotes which he shared from his experience of having stayed in Mizoram for quite some years in his boyhood. His presentation revolved round certain specific concerns as: What are the social imaginaries of health at play? What is the mark left by the colonial experience in this construction and perception of health, medicalization, sanitation and well-being? Why do people move at the first place and what compels them to move and become health migrators? What are the marked signposts in health migrations? What and which group resort to such practices for treatment to become ‘health migrants’ and does such mobility cut across gender? Is the trend in health seeking behaviour on the rise? What are the specializations and health problems that attract such movements? What is the effect of media and advertisement on the same? What are the finance implications of such movement of people? Does it entail out of pocket expenses or health investment/ medical insurances or both? How have the trends in health migrations affectedly transformed the spaces in terms of logistics/infrastructure and civic amenities etc., where such facilities/expertise are located? associated people with health practices and support systems negotiated their role/spaces within the same? What is the nature of the economics at play in such health townships (service towns/cities/spaces) and its relation to health trends and practices? Dr. Chakraborty however extended the scope of his paper by turning his lens also on the care-givers or ‘trained’ nurses’ which in recent years have been regularly flowing into Kolkata. He attempted to look at a binary in terms of spaces as well since the ‘nurses’ usually come from the fringe backward (therefore unhealthy/unclean) spaces of North East of India that are popularly known to lack medical infrastructure to the ‘city of health’ which is Kolkata. Based on this, Dr. Chakraborty discussed how different zones and spaces in Kolkata actually reconfigure themselves and can be seen as representing binary zones of ‘health givers/providers’ and ‘care givers/providers’. His paper also discussed in detail about the rural-urban continuum in these flows of populations and gleaned the urban dystopia in operation in terms of real estates boom, guest houses, rental cars, part time ayahs, maids etc., for patients from the North East and North Bengal and elsewhere. In this context, he talked at length on how the urban transformations and the medical dystopia could be understood through a webbed network of formal, informal channels of negotiations, person to person contact, agents at multiple sites, middlemen, touts, organ traffickers etc. In this article, Anup Sekhar also discussed in detail the traditional practices of healing, medication and care givers among the Zo hnahtlak( Children of Zo) in Mizoram and in this context took us on a journey through the pre-colonial, colonial and finally the post-colonial times in Mizoram. Here he enlightened the audience on the Zo traditional concept of illness

and afflictions and their own system of treatment so as to accord a keener insight into how their society's attitude towards modern health care system has changed over time. By quoting several authorities on North East, Chakraborty points out how there were no doctors, not even quacks among the Zo in the pre-colonial times. For tracing the impact of colonial rule on the Zo healthcare system, Chakraborty mentioned several records of the times which revealed how mainly two different agencies introduced health care facilities on modern scientific lines in Mizoram namely the British Indian Administration (the Government) and the Christian Missionaries respectively. He quite fascinatingly discussed how western medicine and healing came to be associated with the imageries of healing through magic in the traditional Zo mind as through western healing methods especially surgical, they got relieved from pain much more quickly than when treated through their traditional ritualized healing process. Interaction of the Zos with health and medicine took a fresh turn after India's independence and in this presentation, Chakraborty furnished various details of upcoming health facilities which nonetheless lacked trained practitioners for the sheer reason of Mizoram being absorbed as yet another district of Assam. Later of course there was a tangible shift as Mizoram became recognized as one of the eight north-eastern states. This part has been dwelled in at length by Chakraborty as in the last lap of his presentation, he discussed the current issues in Mizoram relating to health and healthcare. His argument was that due to corruption, the healthcare system in that state is presently in an extremely poor condition. He held corruption to be the prime culprit. Aizwal centric health facilities was also, as Chakraborty aptly pointed out, yet another reason behind the capital fixation or what he terms as the Aizwal Syndrome of the health policy makers. In yet another segment of his presentation Anup Sekhar focuses on Calcutta's Mukundapur where a number of top hospitals of the city are located. Through a case study of Mukundapur, Chakraborty tried to bring to the fore this entire concept of urban dystopia as it becomes evident in course of his presentation, how due to health migration from Mizoram to Mukundapur hospitals, pockets of Mizo neighborhood have grown up around that place that has considerably changed the face of Kolkata. An interesting thing about the scope of the paper was that by connecting various sources and moving across methodological divides, it attempted to bring to the fore not just inter-state health migration practices, from the state of Mizoram to Kolkata, but also the practice of 'crossing over' the international borders and negotiating the border spaces in seeking 'good health' and the medical dystopia in operation. In fact it was by focusing on the widened scope of health migration that Anup Sekhar concluded his paper.

**Snehashish Mitra (NIAS, IISC, Bangalore): *Urbanisation by the Border: Refreshing the frontier space in Northeast India***

Snehashish talked about how over the last few years Northeast India has witnessed an emphasis on developing the infrastructure through widening roads, expanding air connectivity, extending railway networks, opening new and reactivating old dormant trade routes, and facilitating border trade and transit points. In this light Mitra discussed at length with empirical data and maps the myriad ways in which this infrastructural and logistical expansion has infused a new lease of life into the towns and cities of the region, which were mostly serving as administrative centers. In his presentation, he concentrated principally on

the town of Champhai in Mizoram which is located within 28 km of the Zokawthar border and 192 km from Aizawl, capital of Mizoram and not on the border town of Moreh in Manipur which according to Mitra has received ample academic attention in current years. In this light he drew attention to Champhai's history and Mizoram's urbanization pattern that helped the audience to situate his arguments well. A significant point that he made in the course of his description was how the towns and cities of Northeast India received a new impetus to expand and consolidate the role of Aizawl as an urban centre due to India's Look East and Act East Policy. After dwelling at length on the geopolitical and historical significance of Champhai, Mitra moved on to elaborate on the multiple transactions across the borders and attempts of the Indian state to formalize the same. Here he discussed the findings of a Government Report that elaborates the current status of infrastructure in the LCS or Land Custom Station that was shifted after 2004 from Champhai to Zokawthar. In the light of the mentioned Report, Mitra drew attention to the three trading systems operating in Zokawthar LCS namely Traditional/Free Exchange Mechanisms, Barter Mechanism and Normal/ Regular Trade Mechanism. He explained how among the three trade mechanisms, the first two have been taking place through indigenous market mechanisms prior to the setting up of the LCS. He also pointed out that according to the same Report, the Normal/ Regular Trade Mechanism that was maintaining a healthy momentum for quite sometime, suffered a major setback after the basic duty of Areca (betel) nuts was increased from 0% to 40% by the Customs department and as a result, the existing importers stopped importing areca nuts speculating no profit in the venture. Mitra shared his field experiences and how interviews with the government and security officials collectively suggested the multiple challenges of governing the borderland due to incessant population movement. Mitra is of the opinion that they mostly held the Chins of Myanmar responsible for illegally crossing the border mainly for the purpose of smuggling. Putting stress on the challenges of guarding such an uneven border, Mitra discussed how one of the policemen at the Superintendent of Police office opined that only by replicating the surveillance methods across the USA-Mexico border, the Indo-Myanmar border can be secured in Mizoram. Smuggling is apparently rampant in the borders as cases have been recorded where the narcotics department have confiscated arms while looking for drugs. In this context, to elaborate, Mitra shared an interesting first hand experience of witnessing smuggled items. It was during an interview at the Customs Office in Champhai, on 13 March 2017, that he witnessed a seized consignment of 220 kg pangolin scale which was apprehended at the Champhai police outstation the night before. According to an official posted at the Customs Office the consignment was on its way to Myanmar where it would be sold for Rs 70,000/kg (\$1100 approx/kg), which would eventually make way to China where it's likely to be sold at Rs 1,00,000/kg (\$1550 approx/kg). Two peddlers were arrested in relation to the confiscation and both of them were Chins from Myanmar. Pangolin scale is apparently a popular aphrodisiac and that explains the incident. Thus while discussing the status of such crimes in the eyes of law and custom, Mitra made two important points. To begin with, he drew attention to an unmanageable expansion of the population of Champhai and secondly, he talked about a fault line among the Mizos on the basis of citizenship. To elaborate his first contention, Mitra cites monthly revenue data from April 2012 –February, 2017 in the Champhai Zone as furnished by the Office of the Assistant Commissioner of Taxes, Champhai. Analyzing it, he held that from the figures it

can be deduced that tax collection has been increasing over the years, with the exception in 2015-16, which can be considered as an indication of increased economic activities in Champhai district. The increasing prominence of Champhai in Mizoram is also noted by the fact that it now functions as a municipality with the town segregated into 15 municipal wards and elections are held regularly. It is in the context of increasing economic activities and prominence of the place that Mitra credits to the increasing population of Champhai, he also tried to draw attention to the presence of a fault line and a possibility of a deepening fault line in future. Further explaining, he talked about existing tensions between the residents of Champhai and their Chin brethren settled elsewhere in Mizoram and discussed how incidents such as eviction drives against the Chins by the Young Mizo Association (YMA) in 2003, on the basis of an allegation of rape against a Chin, show the level of antagonism enshrined on the question of citizenship. Thus while citizenship is a major divider among the Mizo and Chins, perception of involvement in crimes creates an unfavourable attitude towards the Chins of Myanmar. Mitra noted how smuggling being a common accusation, crimes under the purview of 'Protection of Child from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act 2012' is often attributed to the Chins due to low level of literacy among them. Mitra in the concluding part of his presentation noted that though his paper began with the agenda of interrogating the urbanism of Champhai across the borders, the preceding sections pointed out that the connotations of being situated in a borderland doesn't restrict itself to Champhai and instead expands across the whole of Mizoram. He was of the opinion that management of the flow of people and immigrants across the across border will shape Champhai's future and will be crucial to the Mizo identity project. Here it is interesting how Mitra pointed out that the national borders don't always coincide with the borders of ethnic solidarity and imagination and they often create the notion of citizenship which at times undermines the communitarian linkages.

- **Panel 2(B) [Venue: Sabhaghar 1, Swabhumi] Urban Governance**  
(Discussant: Amit Prakash, J.N.U.; Chair: Atig Ghosh, Visva-Bharati University)

**V. Ramaswamy (MCRG) & V. Srinivasan (Chennai Metro Union for Construction and Unorganized Workers): *The State and Urban Violence against Marginalized Castes: Manual Scavenging in India today***

In their presentation, the authors shared their findings on some of the reasons why an act as derogatory as manual scavenging continues to exist in India even today. The authors argued that the very existence of manual scavenging is something that ought to be seen as an expression of State violence especially in the light of numerous Supreme Court orders and decisions on this matter. According to the authors it is the State that is responsible for the criminal neglect that leads to preventable deaths of individuals, most of who hail from vulnerable sections of society. The authors argued explicitly that it is the state which is directly responsible through its acts and through its failure to act and that it is the state that

also indirectly supports the social practices and attitudes stemming from caste as well as untouchability.

**Rumki Basu (Jamia Milia Islamia, Dept. of Political Science, Delhi) & Moitri De (Matasundari College for Women, University of Delhi): *Citizenship, Urban Governance and Access to Civic Services: Delhi Municipal Elections 2017***

The second paper of the panel focused on “Citizenship, Urban Governance and Access to Civic Services: Delhi Municipal Elections 2017” and was presented by Rumki Basu, a professor of public administration at Jamia Milia Islamia University in New Delhi. Her paper looked at both the Universal and Differentiated models of citizen’s access to basic urban services. In doing so, the paper tried to offer some rationale for selecting either one or the other when analyzing the case of a city like Delhi. According to her, Delhi’s urban population is one that is mostly comprised of floating migrants who have no clear or defined rights to the urban spaces in the city or any of its civic services. She raised the question in the course of her presentation as to whether one should hope for the establishment of a universal entitlement policy regarding basic civic services for all city dwellers or should all basic amenities be given access to, based on the capacity or the ability of a citizen to pay mandatory taxes?

**Comments:**

The first paper was criticized by the discussant Amit Prakash as having been one that focused a bit too much on basic details pertaining to manual scavenging and that it could have been far more critical in its content. Regarding the second paper, the discussant pointed out that floating migrants in Delhi do indeed pay taxes at some or the other point and are therefore indirectly entitled to the basic amenities otherwise made available to the so called regular tax-paying citizens of Delhi.

**Panel 3(A) [Venue: Rang Durbar, Swabhumi] Gender, Movements and the City**

**(Discussant:** Kalpana Kannabiran, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad; **Chair:** Swati Ghosh, Rabindra Bharati University)

**Nora S. von Kitzing (African Centre for Migration and Society): *Gender-based Violence on less advantaged migrant women in peri-urban Johannesburg and how they respond***

The first paper examines how vulnerable migrant women navigate through intersectionality in Johannesburg in light of recent gender-based violence incidences and xenophobic attacks by the police, taxi drivers and the broader society. It demonstrates how vulnerable migrant women experience, negotiate and respond to xenophobic treatment and especially gender-based violence. Moreover the intersectionality of their ‘illegality’ and ‘womanhood’ is explored, to highlight their particular vulnerability and showcase the fluidity of xenophobic and gender-based violence. The essay draws out how due to their intersectionality, migrant

women's rights are diminished in urban spaces. It further explores how vulnerable migrant women navigate their intersectionality and what strategies they employ to address one or several political identities: with the politics of invisibility, remain in abusive relationships to avoid other more violent public spaces, as well as participate in the political 'protest' culture to strive for human, gender and social rights.

**Oindrila DattaGupta (J.N.U., Centre for International Politics, Organisation, Diplomacy and Disarmament): *Gender, Migration and the City: An Alternative Perspective from the Global South***

The second paper looks into the narratives of women who are migrating to the city of Hyderabad for myriad reasons and attempts to determine the aspirations of these women, the reasons behind migration, and whether their aspirations are fulfilled. Through an exploration of the narratives of two women employed in low-paying jobs, Lipika and Vijetha, the paper investigates the nexus of the city, gender and migration, inquiring into what the city means for migrant women and how do they by their presence bring about small changes in the city. Moreover, in engaging with the issue of female migration to Hyderabad, it questions and challenges the mainstream narrative of male migration, and discusses how women's entry into the city affects and is in turn, affected by the structuring and functioning of the city.

**Mithun Som (Anveshi, City Project Team): *Migrant Women's aspirations in the city***

The third paper attempted to deconstruct the traditional understanding of migration (with a male bias) and will study the theoretical underpinnings of female migration in the cities while understanding the circumstances under which they migrate, the conditions, experiences as well as responses from the host city and the state in context of globalisation, acceleration, differentiation, politicisation and feminisation. It looks at the migration of women in the cities for definite work especially in domestic roles and examines whether the migration of women in contemporary world is re-inscribing the histories of migration and exploitation or generating new ones in the process. The paper while looking into theoretical aspects also investigates the issues and challenges faced by the women migrants in the global south (developing countries) mainly in Indian mega cities, such as Kolkata, Delhi, and Mumbai and analyses the legal framework for the women refugees and migrants who are stationed here.



## Comments:

Dr. Kalpana Kannibaran, the discussant for this session, raised a series of discerning questions with regard to each of the papers. The questions revolved around literature, methodological issues and conceptual categories. She opined that each of the papers seemed to her not only a work-in-progress, but also work that had just commenced and has a long way to go.

Beginning with the first paper by Nora, she remarks that its dealings with the triad of xenophobia, gender and/or class and the State seemed particularly interesting to her, and she wonders why the issue of the State, despite its prominent presence in the paper, was not addressed more adequately in understanding issues of gender and gender-based violence in the South African context. Dr. Kannibaran commends Nora for extending the concept of intersectionality to look at intersectional vulnerability in her paper, and recommends an early piece by Kimberle Crenshaw for a greater understanding of the concept. Crenshaw looks at intersectionality and intersectional vulnerability through the lens of violence against women. Dr. Kannibaran reminds us that the origins of theory on intersectionality lie in intersectional vulnerability. Vulnerability is the dividing mark of the idea of intersectionality. When looking at intersectional vulnerability with regard to migration and relations of domination and oppression, she further suggests reading up the body of work by N. Davies to understand the concept of situatedness in context, since he looks at intersection through the lens of belonging and gender. Dr. Kannibaran states that to her, intersectionality *is* intersectional vulnerability, but it is possible to look at them separately. She mentions a recent text that extends the argument on intersectionality way beyond the North American experience that Crenshaw holds as the illustration of her ideas. There is another book by Patricia Williams and Selma Willgaye (?) titled *Intersectionality* in the first few pages of which, interestingly, the first person cited as an icon of intersectionality is Savitri Bai Phule. The book traces the intellectual history of the idea of intersectionality and discusses many more such people from different parts of the world who have combated against gendered racism and xenophobia as being the architects of this concept. With the long history of apartheid in South Africa, Dr. Kannibaran deems it necessary to look into the history of the concept of intersectionality. Drawing on the issue of apartheid, Dr. Kannibaran questions why, despite talking about legal regimes in post-apartheid South Africa under a new Constitution, the paper does not enquire into how apartheid might inflect on experiences of gender violence and xenophobia. This is a productive lens through which one may explore the connected notions of criminality and the

role of the State which the paper engages in. How has policing transformed/ not transformed in post-apartheid South Africa? Does it operate on migrant women in the same way as it did viz-a-viz black and coloured people in apartheid South Africa? These are questions that the paper needs to address, and one may refer to Agozino's *Counter-Colonial Criminology* for an understanding of how to look at penal codes in the post-colonial context. She points out how India and Africa having had similar colonial experiences can be understood to have undergone drastic changes in terms of interpretation of changing penal codes and Constitutions. These would have had particular implications for the issue of gender that the paper needs to look into. Dr. Kannibaran's final query is directed towards what she calls a drawback of the paper. It does not sufficiently interrogate what actions by which of the three main agents – dominant community, migrant women and State agents, i.e., the police – is defined as criminality, violence, legitimate force or control. It is in these fuzzy areas that migrant women get trapped inescapably, comments Dr. Kannibaran, further adding how the productivity of migrant women is a presumption. What is required is the linkage of their productivity to their condition and their implication in the webs of criminality and violence.

The paper by Oindrila DattaGupta while giving a broad overview of gendered migration from the perspective of the global South, fails to address specific theoretical/empirical questions, observed Dr. Kannibaran. There is a huge literature on South-South migration already in place as is empirical evidence of women forming a large section of migrant labour. The paper however, lacked references to theoretical formulations on migrant female labour force and work done on the same in India by labour economists have not been acknowledged either. Additionally the paper marks no departure from work already done on the issue of female migrant labour. Dr. Kannibaran talks of Praveena Korat's (?) considerable body of work on female labour migration, not just in Kerala, but also in India in general. There is also a large group of academicians across India, particularly Kolkata, who are feminist labour economists focussing on migrant labour, whose work needs to be referred to in the paper. Dr. Kannibaran here stresses the need to signpost the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical development in a field and mark one's point of departure from there. If this departure is not undertaken, then methodologically one is simply reiterating work already undertaken in the decade of the 70s. Feminist economists like Devaki Jain, Mridula Banerjee and Beena Majumdar have said that women are not admixtures. By now, it has been accepted that the admixture approach towards female migration can no longer be taken. Dr. Kannibaran mentions an article from the 1980s engaging in labour, gender and migration in the Caribbean, which looks at

migration for indentureship, and consequently, at South-South migration in a particular historical moment. Indians figured a great deal in this migratory process for reasons of forced marriage, for reasons of being vulnerable to *sati*, for reasons of starvation. On trafficking and sex workers, Dr. Kannibaran suggests looking up the Sydow process and alternate Sydow reports as well as the Office of the UN's Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. She is of the opinion that these references would surely add to the research a great deal.

In her opening remarks on the paper presented by Mithun Som, Dr. Kannibaran claims that it is difficult for her to comment on it, owing to its engagement with a city that she has been immersed in for a lifetime. The stated objective of the paper was to look at the experiences and aspirations of single women migrating to the city of Hyderabad and also address questions of sexuality. The first question Dr. Kannibaran raises is a methodological one. What is done with the interviews of the single women who are chosen by whichever technique is deemed appropriate? What is the overall theoretical framework within which these interviews are situated? How does Lipika's interview situate her in terms of gender within the city? What is being brought to the interview by the researcher in terms of theoretically providing a framework within which one can understand Lipika's experience, questions Dr. Kannibaran. The middle class that the paper talks about is only a part of the larger group – the highly educated middle class working menial jobs, which is the product of a particular economic order, a phenomenon that the paper does not comment on at all, observes Dr. Kannibaran. Why does Lipika earn only rupees 12,000 in a month despite having an engineering degree and working in Hyderabad? The paper talks of women migrating to Hyderabad from coastal Andhra at the time of the popular struggle for the formation of Telangana, a movement that viewed migration from coastal Andhra as a major problem. Dr. Kannibaran views the lack of engagement with this issue as a major deficit in the paper, since the struggle for a separate state was essentially a struggle against a particular form of migration. The other concern raised by Dr. Kannibaran with regard to this paper concerned the burgeoning growth of educational institutions in Hyderabad, which she declares, is a bane for the city. The paper had asserted that people from dominant communities in coastal Andhra had benefitted from the Green Revolution and had invested their profits in the educational sector and later, in the IT sector. Further investigation is required into the political economy of education and employment in the light of this assertion, and the bearing it has on female migration, the devaluation of female labour in the city. The huge investment in education made by those who benefitted from the Green

Revolution, has destroyed education in both states, rues Dr. Kannibaran. Finally, for two women who supposedly viewed the city as a liberatory space, a space for freedom, she remarks that the city and freedom in the city emerge as transient entities, since they seem to be residing in the city as guests whose stay here will be curtailed by marriage. These are the problems that are at the core of women's experience of migration to Hyderabad, concludes Dr. Kannibaran.

### **Q and A:**

In the Q&A session, Dr. Paula Banerjee commended every presenter for looking at migration through the lens of gender, simultaneously critiquing them for not pushing their research beyond engagement with narratives. The need to proceed beyond narratives is imperative, Dr. Banerjee stresses. Dr. Banerjee also had a few comments and observations to share, which she addressed to each of the presenters separately.

With regard to Nora's paper, Dr. Banerjee questions whether transition is a factor that requires engagement in the context of gendered violence being studied in the paper. Migrant groups are groups in transition. Additionally, in South Africa, transition is considered a very problematic issue. There is enormous violence perpetrated against sexually transient people, those who are experimenting with alternative modes of sexuality. So could transition be used as a lens to look at the question of gendered violence against female migrants in Johannesburg?

In case of Oindrila DattaGupta's paper, Br. Banerjee states that the issue of forced migration is extraneous to the paper. There is no reason to make the distinction from migration since most migrations are forced migrations. If the distinction must be made, it needs to be made more boldly and clearly. Also, Dr. Banerjee found the use of the word 'mainstreaming' problematic. There is a huge literature critiquing this notion of mainstreaming with regard to migration, and Dr. Banerjee suggests that the presenter consult it to improve her paper, since one cannot understand from the paper itself whether the presenter supports the notion or is critiquing it. With regard to work on trafficking, Dr. Banerjee recommends a piece by Samita Sen on trafficking and marriage that she believes would greatly enrich the paper.

In case of Mithun Som's paper, Dr. Banerjee draw our attention to the interesting phenomenon at work - the city as a space both of liberation and violence. To merely deal with narratives is not enough. The following are some of the questions that need to be explored to

better understand the irony associated with the dual role of the city, says Dr. Banerjee – How does this dual role of the city shape people living in it? How do they relate to both these facets to the city? Why do they feel that the city is a space of liberation even though they are facing structural violence right from the beginning of life in the city? Engaging in these questions will provide a more comprehensive picture of the aspirations of migrant women living in the city of Hyderabad.

Nora responds to both Dr. Kannibaran's and Dr. Banerjee's comments. She admits having read up on the colonial and historical context of xenophobia in South Africa. Racial and sexual violence is deeply embedded in the colonial and migrant histories of the place. Racial and sexual violence were used as forms of suppression there. If one looks at the urban infrastructure there, it is one of the most dispersed spaces in the world, partly because while the black migrant workers were not allowed in the luxurious places, they were nonetheless required to be close enough so that they can render services. Policing was aimed at black subjects to keep them out of the white spaces. The same narrative now continues with the migrants. So there is a strong relation between the colonial and post-colonial history of South Africa, states Nora. She also explains how the act of policing in the state leads to emasculation of black males, and the LGBTQ community have been subjected to conversion rapes. Queer migrants who are responsible for the lives of others, who have other people dependent on them economically are specially affected by this kind of violence.

- **Panel 3(B) [Venue: Sabhaghar 1, Swabhumi] Revisiting the Migration Archives from the Brahmaputra Valley through an Inter-Disciplinary Perspective**  
(Discussant: Xonzoi Barbora, TISS Guwahati; Chair: Bishnu Mohapatra, FCT, Baroda)

**Murchana Roychoudhury (TISS, Hyderabad, Inter-disciplinary Social Sciences):**  
*Exploring the Environment and Migration Nexus in the Brahmaputra Valley*

The first paper was presented by Murchana Roychoudhury (TISS, Hyderabad, Inter-disciplinary Social Sciences) and was titled *Exploring the Environment and Migration Nexus in the Brahmaputra Valley*. Her paper, situated in the districts of lower Assam, focuses on the forced internal migration due to climate change in Assam. It deals with the lack of universal definitions of migration related to climate change, with no clear understanding of who a climate change refugee, a disaster refugee, a forced environmental migrant, etc. are. Based on secondary sources such as journals and Government Reports, the paper discusses State plans such as National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), State Action Plan on Climate

Change (SAPCC) and how the policies are aimed at disaster mitigation but does not create sustainable infrastructures to reduce forced migration. The paper emphasizes on the use of local knowledgebase in order to counter and mitigate the environment challenge. Linking such migration with violence along ethnic lines, Murchana stresses on such activities by the State such as capacity-building, effective local institutions and raising of social awareness to make urban spaces more accommodative to forced migrants.

**Shiladitya Ray (TISS, Hyderabad, Development Studies): *Exploring Sub-National State-led Responses to Climate Change: A Case Study of Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change***

The second paper was presented by Shiladitya Ray (TISS, Hyderabad, Development Studies) and was titled *Exploring Sub-National State-led Responses to Climate Change: A Case Study of Assam State Action Plan on Climate Change*. The study, tracing the creation of the NAPCC and SAPCCs to a shift in India's stance towards Climate Change, begins the discussion by referencing to the "Vulnerability of the State" portion of Assam SAPCC. It problematizes the SAPCC on two grounds: (i) conceptualisation in terms of maintaining economic growth and thus, leaving the impact of climate change on the residents out of its purview and (ii) lack of planning that would help improve the conditions of living of those who are effected negatively and face displacement or forced migration. It also points out to lacks in provisions for failure of preventive measures. Shiladitya argues that such a policy reflects both positively and negatively on the role of the State and brings to the foreground the clash between economic gains of a developing economy on one hand and concerns regarding social justice, responsibility to the citizen etc. on the other.

**Nabajyoti Deka (IIT Kharagpur, Dept of Economics): *Environmental Migration and the Dynamics of Labor Market: Narratives from the Bank of River Brahmaputra in Post-Colonial Assam***

The third and the final paper, titled *Environmental Migration and the Dynamics of Labor Economics: Narratives from the Bank of River Brahmaputra in post-colonial Assam*, was presented by Nabajyoti Deka (IIT Kharagpur, Dept. of Economics). Nabajyoti shows that how there has been a shift in the migration pattern from the colonial to the post-colonial era, with a change in the geo-political definition of the region. An important point that the paper makes is how migration leads to the development and growth of both old and new industries in the region.

In 1981, the paper states, a list of reasons for migration was introduced and natural calamity was listed amongst many but it was dropped in 2001. It is, however, argued that environmental factors have been key drivers in both international (e.g. Bangladesh) and internal migration. It also argues that with the arrival of immigrants, there was increase in agricultural productivity and supply of cheap labor in the informal market which provided economic gains but was gradually seen as threatening by the host community. Majuli is cited as an example to point out the in-migration from rural to urban areas and thus, a decrease in available workforce for agricultural activities. It also argues that migration leads to

restructuring in wages. The paper concludes with the point that while the migrants make the market more competitive and bring in new skill-set, they also put pressure on land and other resources.

## Comments

Xonzoi Barbora commences the discussion by commenting on how all the three papers are interconnected due to their location but how it also leaves a space to clarify why the need for this specific location which is Assam and in what manner can Social Sciences help in dealing with such issues and questions. Does Assam provide any exception? He also mentions the concept of “transformative cities” as one of the universals and in this context, he mentions the literary work of Bruce Chatwin and his idea of “nomadic alternative” which states that evolution of cities is brought through travelling. Individually, his suggestions were:

Paper I could benefit by the absence of old literature as the framework can be based differently. The arguments of vulnerability, of city and the migrant required more fleshing out, as it were. He pointed out the existence of novels by writers like Arun Karma which talks about the beginnings of the identity movement.

Paper II talks about the vulnerability of the State but he further probed into the issue. Where from, he asked, is this vulnerability originating? Shiladitya replied by placing the State in the context of Globalisation and the dangers posed due to a global change in climate.

Paper III falls into the rhetoric of qualifying the phenomenon of migration with ethnic and historical timeline. It would be beneficial to move beyond these factors and question the events that are unfolding in current times.

The first comment was regarding the seeming lack of interface between disaster management and climate change in Assam. It is one-sided in nature as there is not much policy or planning regarding protection and only short-term measures to mitigate the effects of climate change. The second question was, what are these pre-existing archives that is mentioned in the title? The paper, the question continues, talks about universal narratives of migration. How do these universal narratives come to be? The two possibilities, as the commentator locates, are in the grand narratives and/or specific narrative of macro-economy. What is the possible relationship that can be envisaged between the grand narrative and the specific narrative?

The third question was since Assam has already been classified as a “vulnerable” state, why such a huge rate of migration to Assam then exists? To this Nabajyoti answered that Assam’s geographical location, land fertility, resources and shortage of manpower due to less population make it a favourable destination for migration.

Bishnu Mohapatra, Chair of the panel, observed that an interesting point is the understanding of what can be defined as climate change and how there are events that can be little understood by this global umbrella term. He also brought to the table’s attention the existence of local narratives which are not insulated in nature from the global or the universal. The discussion came to an end with Murchana stating that there are local testimonies which can be used as evidence for climate change and also, the host nations need to change their

perception regarding climate change and associated issues in order to better tackle the challenge.

- **Plenary Session 1 [Venue: Rang Durbar, Swabhumi] - Discussion on Key Texts of Urban Studies**  
(Chair: Ranabir Samaddar, MCRG)

1. Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*: Samita Sen (Jadavpur University)
2. David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*: Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (IISER, Mohali)
3. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space and other writings*: Atig Ghosh (Visva-Bharati University)
4. Walter Benjamin, *Paris the Capital of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and other writings*: Subhoranjan Dasgupta (Eminent Literary Critic and Analyst)

**Samita Sen (Friedrich Engels):** ‘The Condition of the Working Class in England’ was written by Engels when he was 24-25. He lived and worked in Manchester between 1842 and 1844. When he returned home to Germany, in 1844, he wrote the book there. It was published in Leipzig in 1845. The initial response to the book was very subdued, very lukewarm. The first English translation of the book came considerably later in 1886, and it came out in the US. It came a little later in English in 1892. Before this in 1863, Marx wrote glowingly about this book, focusing particularly on the fashion with which Engels had connected the material. In 1890, Engels wrote a new preface to the book, a much older Engels reflecting back on his experiences of the 40s where he showed considerable ambivalence about his own work. He was self-deprecating at one level, at another level he was quite satisfied to see that some of the predictions in the book had indeed come to pass. Much has been said in discussing this book about the fact that this book was written prior to his collaboration with Marx. And the fact that the creative genius of this book shows in many ways Engels’ own significance as a philosopher prior to the work he did with Marx. The context of this book, the context of his journey to England in 1842 was that as a young man, he was inspired by his father who was factory-owner and he had got influenced by young Hegelians in Berlin and his father thought it best to remove from the atmosphere of influence, so he sent him to Manchester to look after some of his business interest there. This obviously didn’t work. In the meantime, Engels had met Martin Hass and was very strongly influenced by utopian socialism. The framework of this book is somewhere in between. Martin Hass has written that after meeting with Engels, Engels had become a communist from a socialist. There is a very strong socialist framework in the book, but that transition is not clearly articulated at this point. I will focus four keys features of the book before I move on to other



discussions. The book describes itself as *The Condition of the Working Class* but it in many ways, it seen as actually a pioneering work in industrial urbanism. It is also seen as a precursor to social science as we know it. Much of the method used is ethnography, though he uses a complicated mix of documents and observations. One of the documents that are extensively used in the book is the investigation by the English health authority following the cholera epidemic of 1831-32. So in many ways, it is an in-between of what today would be a sociological and ethnographical method, and a historical method. So in that sense too, such an early effort to understand industrialization and industrial urbanism, that it is in fact one of the values of this book. It is not neutral. It makes no pretence or claim to be objective; it is a radical critique of capitalism. It seeks to make a very strong case against exploitation and indifference, both from the owners, employers and the state. It also excavates, and this is I think the third feature of the book, mobilizations and in that sense also provides a template for Master's scholarship on industrial workers for a later time. He devotes chapters to strikes, to efforts to improve the condition of the workers. In chapter 9, "Working Class Movements", he focuses on resistance, but the question of resistance recurs throughout the book. In many ways, this is the book which anticipates many of the most common sense arguments about industrial urbanism. It is very minutely describing living conditions, but along with that the environment of that living condition. So, it looks at environment, it looks at river, waterways, construction, bridges, roads, building layout of cities, and layout of streets, and looks at how in fact the working class is located and figured within the city space. In this book we also see an effort at sociological classification. Although Engel's classifications have not lasted, he does an effort to classify several groups of proletarian; industrial workers, miners, farm labourers. One strong critique of the book that has emerged at a later time is the way he approaches the Irish question, the question of immigrant Irish workers. So Irish workers are a very important theme of the book, and one major scholar of Engels, Tristram Hunt has argued that it is a complicated engagement because on the one hand his long-term partner is an Irish woman and it is through her that he gets access to the Irish tenements and the Irish living quarters, but at the same time, he was influenced very strongly by the idiom of the age, in the way he describes the immigrant workers. So there is an implicit racism, many critiques have argued in the way he approaches the Irish question. The books put forth an account of the dynamics of class formations to the development of the industrial system. The process of centralization and increase in the scale of production leading to the consolidation of a class of owners and a large part of proletarians, but the book also advances an analysis of urbanization and growth of towns and cities, based on the

dynamics of factory production and the need for large volumes of labour. “Industrial commerce attained the highest level of development in the big town so that it is here that the effects of industrialization on the wage-earners can be most clearly seen”, argued Engels. And this best works out in descriptions of London; in fact, in that time London was not a leading industrial city. His descriptions of working class living condition offers two things: hypothesis on urban growth and the creation of slums and ethnography of the lived experience of people who find themselves trapped in modern cities. And the latter, his descriptions of the latter are remarkably similar to what Marx later on writes. So in many ways, this whole question of this book being written prior to the collaboration of Engels and Marx, actually this book is a very important lever in considering how Engels and Marx’s thought developed and later converged. So it seems to me from the urbanization part of the argument in the book that what he’s doing is, in a very preliminary way, scripting class into the industrial city, which is now common sense about urbanism. So he’s describing in great detail in the context of Manchester how slums are hidden from the public eye, how a bourgeois person who lives and works in the city need not be in a slum ever in his life; how a visitor to Manchester need not see a slum. So how an industrial bourgeois city configures and enables slums to remain in a serviceable role, a critical servicing role, and yet not be there. These are arguments we often make today about globalization and the city are in part anticipated in this book. Tristram Hunt in a recent preface to the book argues that the whole question of industrialization in our time has also reechoed many of the tropes that Engels has used: “In one of the largest mass migrations in history, some hundred and twenty million Chinese peasants have since 1980 made their way from the country to the city. And read an account of contemporary urban China is to be thrown straight back into the cityscape of Engels.” So he’s making points about health, about environmental degradation. The emergence of China as the workshop of the world echoes in so many the England that was workshop of the world in mid-nineteenth century. This is a path-breaking book, but in many ways the paradigm it creates has remained relevant for us even today. It is still valuable, and it is a difficult to attempt to read. Thank you.

**Ritajyoti Bandopadhyay (David Harvey):** For many students of my generation, introduction to Marx’s thought on political economy happened via David Harvey’s numerous lectures and books. In this review, I will try to make two points about Harvey’s work. I will first try to explain the fact that unlike many in this conference who turned Marxists almost as soon as they entered college, David Harvey was not born but became a Marxist. I will a bit of

his autobiography to make this point. This will hopefully take me to a more substantial and critical second point, which in turn will try to explore the nature of his unmediated conversation with Karl Marx. In what follows, I will follow his volume of work and build a narrative around his more recent book. To begin with the first point, so in mid-50s, Harvey goes to Cambridge to study Geography. In the mid-50s, the Geography department at Cambridge was a traditional department dealing mostly with bio-physical and human differences across regions. And you'd be surprised to know that his undergrad thesis was on food cultivation in mid Kent, and his PhD thesis was on hogg cultivation in the same region. His first book, "Exclamations in Geography" is a positivist methodological expedition to understand space, as he said, objectively. The book was sent to the publisher in May 1968. Then in 1969, he lands up at Johns Hopkins University, where the city itself was deep in class struggles at that point, and also inter-racial conflict, and the department was quite radical and during his tenure at JHU, his first encounter with Marx takes place. And the product of that first encounter with Marx is the 1973 book "Social Justice and the City". In this Harvey describes himself as a Marxist of sorts, still trying to mix Marx with thinkers like Karl Polanyi. I quote Harvey from a later interview, "What I realized after Social Justice was that I didn't understand Marx and needed to straighten this out, which I tried to do without too much assistance from elsewhere."

In Social Justice, he formulates a relevant question on the relationship between capitalism and urbanization. He asks: "Can we derive a theoretical and historical understanding of the urban process under capitalism out of a study of the supposed law of motion of a capitalist mode of production?" His answer was in the affirmative, but he said that one has to specify and contextualize those laws factoring in their spatial and temporal dynamics. The question gets changed within a decade when he publishes "Limits to Capital" which is his seminal text on Marxist geography, in 1982. The transformed question is as follows: "How does capital become urbanized? And what are the consequences of the urbanization of capital?" In "Limits to Capital", Harvey had successfully indicated the problems of space in Marxist theory of crisis, and integrated different models of accumulating capital that Marx left separate. Using Marx's trinity of accumulation for the sake of accumulation, competition and technological progress and production process and products, Harvey elaborated how capitalism periodically develops major crisis of over-accumulation in which the reserve of unutilized workers and commodities fail to find productive use and investment. Harvey says that cities are integral to the creative destruction that is endemic to capitalism. Investment in urban space-making, urban structure and renewal syncs the excess with delayed and long-

term returns. However, after a point, these physical installations turn out to be major barriers to further accumulation because they are very hard to sequence. Spaces in “Rebel Cities” are animated by this profound understanding. Harvey writes in “Rebel Cities”, “This means that capitalism perpetually produces surplus products that urbanization requires. The reverse relation also holds. Capitalism also needs urbanization to absorb the surplus products it perpetually produces.” The book does something more. Here he proposes how cities can become nodes of anti-capitalist struggle. He talks about a two-pronged connection a) bridging across work space and the communal space b) localized resistances have to be scaled up and connected to compete with larger neo-liberal revolutions. He writes, “Any anti-capitalist drive mobilized through successive urban rebellions has to be consolidated at some point at a far higher scale of generality lest it all lapse back at state-level, into parliamentary and constitutional reformism that can little more than reconstitute neo-liberalism within the interstices of continuity and imperial domination.” Relatively less attention has been paid to understand Harvey’s central thesis, which is on that of the concept of over-accumulation in the Marxian tradition. This is my second point. Interestingly, if one studies the indexes of Harvey’s books after *Limits to Capital*, that was published in 1982, one cannot help but notice the progressive disappearance of value. And more importantly Marx’s theorizations around the law of the tendential fall in the rate of profit in those works. It appears that Harvey’s theory of over-accumulation is formulated on a progressive disavowal of some of the basic tenets of Marxist contribution to political economy. Here I wish to refer to an ongoing debate between Michael Roberts, David Harvey and Andric Tilmann on the life of LTFRP that is the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Marx argues, “The law, and it is the most important law of political economy is that the rate of profit has a tendency to fall with the progress of capitalist production.” Until his essay on accumulation by dispossession, which was published in 2004, Harvey used to recognize the roots of his theory of over-accumulation to LTFRP. Recently, he appears to review the stand. He uses statistics to say that between 1980 and 2005, employment has increased by 1.1 billion workers. He uses this against the idea that globally LTFRP has fallen. The data that Harvey cites do suggest the absolute amount of surplus value or profit has increased; there is no doubt about it, but what about the rate of profit? Rate of profit means the amount of surplus value or profit at a percentage of the volume of invested capital. Does an increase in the numerical ratio always automatically translate into an increase in the ratio? Marx writes, “The law of progressive fall in the rate of profit in no way prevents the absolute mass of labours” take in motion and exploited by the social capital from growing. And with it the absolute mass of labour it

appropriates. The fall of the rate of profit does not arise from an absolute decline in the variable component of the total capital but simply from a relative decline from a decrease in comparison with the constant component. The absolute magnitude of profit, its total mass, could thus have grown by 50 percent, despite the enormous decline in the general rate of profit. The number of workers employed by capital, i.e., the absolute mass of labour it sets in motion and hence the absolute mass of surplus labour it absorbs, the mass of surplus value it produces and the absolute mass of profit it produces, can therefore grow and progressively so, despite the progressive fall in the rate of profit. This not only can but must be the case.” In addition, Tillmans says that Marx never says that LTFRP is the cause of financial and economic crisis. In short, Marx recognizes a number of intermediate links between the fall in the rate of profit and the outbreak of a crisis. Over-accumulation seems to be just a symptom of the falling rate. Harvey dissociates over-accumulation from this theoretical corpus and seeks to explain everything from the angle of over-accumulation. Over-accumulation thus loses its theoretical specificity. In the absence of its roots LTFRP, it comes very close to various explanations of the problem of under-consumption which sounds more welfarist than Marxist. Harvey becomes a vocal observer of an intelligent system called capitalism that translates all its limits into limitations, which he eventually overcomes. The process of overcoming the crisis of over-accumulation makes it an invincible and ever-expanding economic force. Over-accumulation becomes its own cause and effect. Professor Harvey, when and where does capital mix its limits? That’s where I end.

**Atig Ghosh (Henri Lefebvre):** In trying to understand Henri Lefebvre’s *Production of Space*, I’m really punching above my weight here. I say this because I’m not familiar with all of his writings, which are numerous in fact, and to my mind the *Production of Space* forms only one corner of what maybe called the Lefebvreian triadic magna opera, the other end of which are the three volumes of *Critique de la vie quotidienne* published in 1947, 1951 and 1971 and the four volumes of \_\_\_\_\_. Now this is a problem compounded by the fact that spanning six decades is highly integrated and cumulative in nature and any single text difficult to understand in isolation. The thinkers often use the reader’s familiarity with the rest of his work. Working with this disadvantage, I’ll try to flag the chief components of the production of space and contextualize them in Lefebvre’s larger body of work.

Lefebvre entered the CNRS in 1948 to undertake research on rural sociology. Questions concerning agrarian reform and peasantry had interested him since the 1930s. He submitted his doctoral thesis in rural sociology and his book \_\_\_\_\_ based on research carried out

from 1941 to 1952 focused on valley from western Pyrenees. It is in these articles from rural sociology that we find him perfecting his methodological three stage approach of regression-progression which he would frequently deploy later as in the case of productions of space too. A method of returning to the past before moving back to the present in order to progress through to the future; a method used also by Sartre in his Critique of Dialectical Reason and by Freud much earlier in his analysis of the unconscious. By the late 1950s, Lefebvre saw that the most relevant issues concerning the relationship of philosophy and the non-philosophical world had moved on to its use of everydayness, everyday life and modernity, especially in the urban arena. Near Navarrenx, the new town of Lachmourrenx had emerged from green fields in the early 1960s to house workers in a major energy development. Lefebvre himself examines the problems of the working class people of the new town, urbanization raised all kinds of new questions about historical periodization, conflicts of development, conflicts of integration and segregation and the relationship between the urban and the state. One of his principle preoccupations was the fluctuating dialectical relationship between desire and need in a period of rapid modernization and expansion of consumption in France in the 1960s after the resolution of two major colonial wars and a period of political instability. He had coined the term “the bureaucratic society of consumption” which was to be taken up by the students during the events of 1968. During the 1960s and the early 1970s, he was heavily involved in architectural and neighbourhood development projects. Towards the end of 1960s and just before the events of 1968, he devoted his attention to new urbanism and the rise to the city. He felt that he could no longer contemplate a new urbanism. “Right to the City” was extremely influential in France among a wide range of disciplines and professionals. One can see its impact in subsequent slogans: “Change the city, change the life!”. In 1970, Lefebvre published the “Urban Revolution”, that influenced David Harvey for instance, and swept through radical urban geography and sociology. This text “The Urban Revolution” asserts the privity of habitation in relation to the urban and the state, thereby laying the foundation for the subsequent “The Production of Space”. Lefebvre published “The Production of Space” in 1974, which was translated into English in 1991. In the meantime, having already written and published the three volumes of the Critique of Everyday Life and the four volumes on the state, in 1986 Lefebvre wrote a new preface to the third French edition of “The Production of Space”. At a time when the French cities were, in his own words, in the throws of neo-liberal transformation, this preface was not included in the English translation of 1991. A serious omission in my opinion, for in this preface Lefebvre tries to grapple with the self-erected problems of the book’s continuing relevance in

those changing times and in doing so comes closest to providing a short structured, statement of purpose if you will, as he would come for any of his other works. In what follows, I will try to provide to the best of my abilities, a gistic translation of what Lefebvre says before I move on to fleshing out the points he raises. Lefebvre approaches the problem through a discussion of the project to build reasonable capitals around Paris and for many other reasons. The official body responsible for regional development, a part of centralized organization, lacks neither resources nor ambition to produce a harmonious national space, to bring a little order to wild urban development which answers only to the pursuit of profit. He describes this as an innovative planning initiative which was consistent with neither input-output analysis nor state control over capital spending, i.e., planning by financial criteria. "Hence a remarkable but nevertheless little-noticed contradiction between theories of space and spatial practice", writes Lefebvre, "a contradiction concealed by the ideologies that threw into confusion debates of space, jumping from the cosmological to the human; from the macro to the micro; from functions to structures without being thought out conceptually or methodologically." The ideology of spatiality, which is very confused, collapsed into a single whole rational knowledge, effective but authoritarian planning, and trite commonplace representation. Hence the effort to escape conclusion by no longer considering social space and social time as facts of nature, modified into something new not as acts of culture but as products. That brought about a change in the use and meaning of that word. The production of space and time did not see them as any kind of object or thing created by hands or machines but as a principle feature of second nature.

The Production of Space is a book that thematically addresses the triad of urbanism, space, everyday life which dominated the work of Lefebvre throughout his career. Lefebvre does not seek a knowledge directed towards space in itself in the form of prototypes of space as will be clear from the ongoing discussion. Rather he offers an exposition on the production of space. Space should be seen as a product, a second nature created by social practices on the first nature. Further, space as a product is not to be seen as an object or a thing but as a set of relations that intervene in production itself. Space then is not isolated as a static concept; it is dialecticized in the dual role of product producer. One could say there are two main themes penetrated in the book. The first is a triadic conceptualization of space which includes a) spatial practice b) representations of space and c) representational spaces, representing the spatial practices of a society. This triad is creatively used to confront the power-based dominating and abstract elements of social spatial practices with the living passionate and sensual specialty in the everyday life. The second main theme is the history of space, of its

production qua reality and of its forms of representation. With the concepts of again a triad, absolute space, historical space and abstract space, Lefebvre describes the history of space as a concept of space. However, it wouldn't be Lefebvre if the story did not leave room for contradiction and a utopian flavor.

**Subhoranjan Dasgupta (Walter Benjamin):** Dedicated readers of Walter Benjamin's texts are well aware that aura and phantasmagoria form the two crucial concepts of Benjamin's aesthetic philosophy. One, aura at the very basic is opposed to the other, phantasmagoria. While aura denotes the harmonious exchange of glance between the creative subject and its desired object; phantasmagoria- this word was used repeatedly in his book on Paris- celebrates the transformation of the base neuter material into objects beckoning the customer, consumer and citizens. Furthermore, the object of phantasmagoria and the ambience in which it is retained is qualitatively different from the auratic experience. Should we then regard aura as an example of the false utopia and phantasmagoria as dystopia? Walter Benjamin has not answered this question, though we can claim based on a description of the Paris capital of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and response that he would not equate phantasmagoria with dystopia. Do aura and phantasmagoria represent two uncompromising irreconcilables? In his illustrious essay, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Benjamin emphatically stated that mechanical reproduction, say on the basis of photography, has led to a destruction of the aura. If this is hundred percent correct, how can we within the same time frame decipher the aura in Bertolt Brecht's poems or in the landscapes of Van Gogh? Benjamin did not answer this thoughtful query. Perhaps, taking a cue from Terry Eagleton, we can also claim modestly that in the Paris capital of the 19<sup>th</sup> century an impregnable wall is not raised between aura and phantasmagoria. These two remain binary opposites, though at times they intermesh and coexist.

## **Q and A**

Iman Mitra: Thanks to all the panelists. It's a great discussion, and the texts are so heavy, the discussions also did justice to the texts, so it is very difficult to think clearly and what I'm trying to do is basically- I'm also confused by some of the things which you said and I'd like to share one conclusive point and that is to Ritajyoti's discussion of Harvey. And as always this was a very exciting proposition, what Ritajyoti offered, but I'm a bit confused about something-your point about over-accumulation is well-taken. When Marx was talking about the falling rate of profit, he was basically talking about the manufacturing sector. Now when



we talk about investment in space, it's basically durable, so it remains the same for at least a generation, maybe, two, so the denominator remains fixed for a long time. So I was wondering, maybe, you know this argument about over-accumulation that numerator is changing and the denominator remains fixed, if there are chances of over-accumulation in the absence of falling rate of profit. So, maybe, Harvey was right about the point, perhaps, unknowingly.

Paula Banerjee: I have a very short comment. And that is, I mean, it flows from Engels to Harvey and then Lefebvre, wouldn't the fourth be obviously Castells and not Walter Benjamin? I'm a bit surprised as to why Castells is not brought into it because it's sort of a very close fit in this discussion.

Ranabir Samaddar: As I said, maybe, the responsibility is mine. And Walter Benjamin, in a chronological sense, should have come after Engels. Yes, you're right, Manuel Castell could be brought into the discussion. Perhaps one way of facing this problem would be to-partly also because Castells also talks about the Latin American cities. But on the other hand I think in terms of significant and deep mark of how we think of the city, possibly, and I may be quite wrong, we at least chose these four texts.

PB: Isn't there overkill on France?

RS: But, no, never in our minds because Benjamin was writing on Paris but he wasn't French...but something much more interesting, as you raise this question, is that people are now going back to his writings on Berlin, the memory of the Berlin of his childhood. But, no, France was not on our minds, we have Manchester too.

Kastubh Mani Sengupta: Thank you for your presentations. I was wondering after the texts of Engels, Harvey and Lefebvre, all of them see the city as something which has come out of the rural. There's a division between the village and city, the town and the country, the rural and the urban. But, in case of South Asian cities, or ordinary cities that are now coming up, can we think of this disjoint?-there was no clear-cut division in the context of South Asian cities

Anushyama Mukherjee: If you were to do this panel in the context of books written on Indian cities, which four books would you identify? This is a question for each of the panelists, so we'll get 4x4, that is, sixteen books

Vishnu Mahapatra: I have quite a lot of thing to say about why some of these texts actually are hugely overlaid on the cities, or sometimes, actually plots the way we can think about cities in India and South Asia. This is a very serious submission, but that is not the question that I want to ask. The question that I want the panelists to reflect upon is methodological. You know, they are written at different points of time, when Samita talks about Engels, I

remember many years ago my graduate students at JNU, I gave them two texts: one is *The Condition of the Working Class* by Engels and the other one is *The Road to Wigan Pier* by George Orwell, written almost a hundred years later. But these two texts are very different, and some of these are huge for methodological implications. I'd like the panelists to tell a little bit about the methodological implications underlying this text.

Rajarshi Dasgupta: I just want to add something to what Kaustabh Mani has raised here in terms of the question, you know, there's more than some like the exceptionalism of South Asian cities. There's a way in which urban studies is going back to looking at the rural, and it's no longer looking at the rural as an incursion on the urban, or something that needs to be transformed into the urban. But there is some kind of a contested coexistence that we're looking into, so keeping that in mind if you could suggest some texts, classic or otherwise, that look at these questions no longer in terms of radical transformation from one kind of temporal space to another kind of temporal space.

RS: Rajarshi, one way of looking at it would be, since Vishnu raised the question of method and methodology, that these four texts, they offer four ways of looking at, but also raise important concepts. Now I think at an empirical level, we can always, you know, discuss "social features" of city in particular but on the other hand we need to think of what is the concept that is breaking out in that study? One of the things that we'd probably have to address and possibly cannot expect in Engels' writings is that it's true that the city and the village are seen as antinomies. In India, you may find what is being called the ruralization of the city. So it is not so much that the village contexts are there but much more that the city, if you allow me to use it, relapses back into being a village. And I think I had mentioned this to Iman. Think some of the plains, on the labour that was brought to Calcutta in the early years of the metro rail construction. Bijon Bhattacharjee had spent the last few years of his life on Hanskhali, now Bijon Bhattacharjee was heading a precisely opposite, or a different kind of sensibility as Subhoranjan da was mentioning when the city creates before you a whole aura, a range of commodities. So I think, therefore, more than bringing up sociological features, which is one way, but clearly the purpose was not so much that these are social features of the city but exactly how we think of a city, what is the conceptual way in which you can think of the city. That is where there's a challenge, and I think it's a challenge worth struggling with. If there's no other question I will add only one thing to the methodology point before we can begin with Samita. The point, Samita, that I want you to reflect on is Engels' use of the word *condition*. Now, as we know, that in theoretical literature, rather in social theory, this word *condition* has two-three very important milestones. One, let's say, is Engels' own

use of the word “Condition of the Working Class in England” in 1844, but then we have Hannah Arendt’s “The Human Condition”, and then we have Lyotard’s “The Postmodern Condition”. Now Hannah Arendt in fact explains why she uses the word ‘condition’. Now my understanding and this is where I’d like Samita to reflect on, that condition, the use of the word. On the one hand, condition is a status. On the other hand, it is a determination. You’re conditioning something that is conditioned by something.

Samita Sen: I think Ranabir da’s question is central to the configuration of the talk and I’d say that Engels uses the word ‘condition’ with a very strong sense of transition. Because his descriptions are the emergence of an industrial society and industrial city and a new class, the emergence of a new class, a new social group, new social relations, emergence of a new space. All these things he self-consciously perceives as an emergence, and he sees it as- if you want to say reporting, then he’s reporting on something new that’s happening. So in many ways, ‘condition’ is the problematization of condition that is built into the word.

But if I were to think of a book on India like Engels’ book, then I’d invoke Raj B. Gupta’s ‘Labour and Housing in Bombay’ because I think it’s the only book on an India city in its early years of industrialization. A lot has been written on an earlier period of industrialization, both for Bombay and Calcutta, but not in the scale of this book. I’d cite Janaki Nair, Chitra Joshi, and Ananya Roy. Those would be my four books. About South Asian cities, village and towns, I think it is absolutely fascinating. And I will require much more than 5 minutes to address that in any serious way, but two points that one can quickly make. One is that this whole sort of unilinearity, it’s not just village to city as a binary. It’s again a transition, it’s a unilinear transition, the way the English industrialization was conceived was a set of unilinear trajectories, one of which was from the village to the city. And the gradual urbanification of the rural. So the term “rurban” that came into existence was to describe this. But there has been major questions raised about that description. While we do understand South Asia as somewhat exceptional in the sense of incomplete proletarianization, or the circular movement of labour between village and city, it is a contrast drawn on an oval conceptualization of unilinear trajectories in the west. So new work shows that even in the US, UK, even in many other countries, you have circular flows till the middle of the nineteenth century. Two more things I think I’d like to raise. One is that a lot of these questions-Engels got caught up in the Irish question. So his focus really is Irish immigration rather than English countryside, sort of an internal migration. So race emerges as a very critical category. And it’s very interesting that in this book, he refers in one major section, to

slavery in the United States; the relation between the North and South, the transportation of slaves, and other related issues.

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay: To answer Iman's question, see, what Harvey is saying is simple. He's saying profit is creasing and then he's saying over-accumulation is happening. So then you think of it in mass terms, absolute terms. And I'm saying that he's glossing between absolute and relative mass and ratio. Now, what happens, there is no direct connection between the aggrieved profit and over-accumulation if you don't address rate of profit to fall. Tendency- Marx is very clear- he says tendency, it's nothing but tendency. So now the question that you raised that you know in urban spaces, things are very different. Because return takes place over a period of time. Now the moment that Harvey is getting at is basically the connection between urbanization and infrastructural investments and financialization. So the connection is between speculative finance and speculative investment in the materiality of infrastructure, which makes infrastructure speculative, fragile, they go into blight very soon and they give very quick returns. And they get valorized very quickly as well. So this quickness is built into Harvey's thesis and that's how I'm going to answer your question.

Now about the four books that you asked me to name, I will probably go with Samita di on "Labour and Housing on Bombay" but the rest of the books might not be very relevant in the context of this discussion because there's a burden a classic and there's a burden of Marxism. But on a more serious note, if you really ask me to read some of it to understand the Indian condition, I'd say rigorous colonial and post-colonial socio-economic reports on cities and on city-country relationship etcetera. Might be of some use to us to theorize the moment. We did empirical things, and they did theory; they published books and we published reports, so we probably have to hark back to reports.

About Professor Vishnu's question, about the method, I really need to think. I use Harvey in my work, I use a bit of Lefebvre in my work although I don't understand much of him, in use others but I- if I read a paper, I could tell you how I use them in my work but to have a general understanding of their stakes and their life in the context of South Asian context, that Mani also asked, I think is a very difficult question to handle right now in terms of generality.

Atig Ghosh: I'll be very brief. About Rarjarshi da's concern, when writing about the city, Lefebvre's idea of the political is derived from the Greek idea of the political, which is related to the idea of the polis, of which political is a derivative. But as you know polis is

never the intramural structure, it cannot be understood ever as an exclusive intramural urban phenomenon. It has to be understood in terms of the extramural. So we should not fall into the kind of violence that David Harvey or Edward Soja has done to Lefebvre in terms of their completely wrong understanding of Lefebvre's meaning in terms of political. They understood it as this seamless transition which might be painful from the village to the city. Lefebvre never made this distinction. For Lefebvre the urban political is always polis, the urban political. If we cannot admit this, then we cannot begin to understand why he's talking about the right to the city. The city is a self-contained, obtained, pre-thought existence, then there's no question of the right to the city which takes us to my third point; to the idea of the right to difference; the right to the city must produce the right to difference, and as I told you, his journey was with the migrant workers at the energy projects. That takes us to a methodological point about this triadic social production of space, basically how the space is being organized by planners, technocrats, sometimes plutocrats. And the dialectical understanding of how people live lives understand spatiality, so while there's a triadic organization which is authoritarian, there's always this dialectical lived experience of spatiality. This is the difference which produces resistance in Lefebvre. This is the differential space which does not allow the idea of the urban to become a totalized concept. It's much condensed version of what I'm trying to say. Professor Anushyama's question quickly, I can mention classics. Such as 'Hutum Pyanchar Noksha', 'The City of Dangerous Nights'.

Subhoranjan Dasgupta: My friends and other speakers have already suggested quite a few titles. I'd like to consider an exceptionally talented writer, Gunter Grass's reaction to Calcutta, 'Show Your Tongue'. It is how a western author, a socialist and a social democrat responds to poverty here and compares it to what he had seen in Frankfurt.

### Day 3: 25<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017

- **Panel 4(A) [Venue: Rang Durbar, Swabhumi] Socio-Spatial Restructuring of Kolkata**  
Sibaji Pratim Basu, (Discussant: Somdatta Chakraborty, MCRG; Chair: Vidyasagar University)

#### **Souvanic Roy (IEST, Shibpur) & Tathagata Chatterji (XIMB, Bhubaneswar): *Post-Industrial Urban Transformation in a Transitional Metropolis: Implications for Housing Rights and Environmental Justice in Industrial Slum Tenements in Urban Core***

The first paper was jointly presented by Souvanic Roy (IEST, Shibpur) and Tathagata Chatterji (XIMB, Bhubaneswar) with the latter *in absentia*. It was titled *Post-Industrial Urban Regeneration in a Transitional Metropolis: Implications for the Right to Adequate Housing and Environmental Justice in Urban Core*. Tracing the genesis of Howrah town as a modern industrial centre, the study focuses on the current state of conflicts using land change and reuse and management of closed factory premises and colonies of migrant workers. Taking two slum settlements in Howrah as case studies, the paper explores the informal structure of residence in the slums and the effect that this has on the housing and basic services of the migrants. Few of the points and questions raised by the paper are:

- The three-tiered tenancy structure comprising of the landlord, the hut owner (*thika* tenant) and the subtenants or the actual tenants.
- As a result of de-industrialisation and economic restructuring, there is a gradual informalisation associated with consumption economy and as such, the process is mediated by informal agents. This, the paper argues, has created unhealthy and environmentally dangerous living conditions for the migrants.
- It questions the role of the State and criticises its apathetic administration and opaque land holding patterns.
- It suggests for a contextual, city-specific land regulation and for the state planning agencies to formulate a proactive urban renewal plan.

### **Comments**

Somdatta Chakraborty, the discussant of the panel, started with probing into the nature of transition that the title posits. Is the transition a definition of slums across decades? She also opines that the concentration is on Howrah and Kolkata which are on either sides of the River Ganges, a map would have helped in making sense of the geography. She further questions the composition of the slum-dwellers of Howrah – (i) Is it same or different from that of Kolkata? (ii) Despite homogenisation, the population of Howrah is fragmented. How does that factor into consideration? Pointing to the fact that the BJP is on the rise in West Bengal, Somdatta enquires into the manner or if they are at all manipulated as vote-banks for political gains. Lastly, citing examples of construction of new malls and residential complexes from the paper, she asks about the nature of relationship between the new middle/upper middle residents and the migrant and working-class people. Roy answered that according to the survey studies, differences exist between Howrah and Kolkata. The community of slum-

dwellers in Howrah, he posits, is heterogeneous in nature; people have come from different states and thus, the level of exploitation is more. He also stated that there exists a patronized exploitation in Kolkata where there is still a scope for dialogue, unlike Delhi or Mumbai which are characterised by sharp distinctions and absolute exclusions of slum-dwellers. With regard to the mill-lands, he opined that there are possibilities for sharing of land between different classes and putting it to varied uses and the benefits of City Corp towards realising such ends.

Lalitha Kamath with regard to the role of the State in such *thika* tenancy as the paper discusses, asked if there is a way to move beyond the trope of violence often associated with State intervention. In his reply, Roy stated that according to an Act for Thika tenants, the land belongs to the State. As there are many stakeholders, there is still a chance of community development the like of which exists in Thailand. He also suggested that a move towards demand driven economy from a supply driven economy would be beneficial.

**Ratoola Kundu (TISS, Mumbai, Dept of Habitat Studies): *The “invisibles” in New Town Rajarhat: The Politics of place-making by new migrants and the internally displaced refugees of urban development***

The second paper was presented by Dr. Ratoola Kundu (TISS, Mumbai, Dept. of Habitat Studies) and was titled *The ‘invisibles’ in New Town, Rajarhat: The Politics of place-making by new migrants and the internally displaced refugees of urban development*. Dr. Kundu, in her paper argues that the process of transformation from an agrarian society in the fringe township of Rajarhat is informed by a deliberate and calculated informality. This has led to the creation of “invisible” villages that are pushed behind in the process of urbanisation but are very much at the center of social, spatial and economic inequalities; using case studies, she shows how the erstwhile large landowners gain in this process whereas small owners are left to struggle.

The other point that the paper raises is the lack of public infrastructure such as water, sewage lines etc. that has resulted in the formation of a complex combination of people, objects and practices. Against this backdrop, the study points out the differential treatment meted out to the displaced villagers and new migrants, thus stressing on the uneven nature of spatial reconfiguration. Also, the change in State Government, i.e. CPI (M) to TMC in 2011, the paper argues, formed “blockades” to future development of New Town and formation of extra-legal mechanisms like Land Procurement Committee, rise of Syndicate Raj and the role of “big men/women”.

**Comments**

With regard to the violent process of spatial transformation in Rajarhat, Somdatta asked whether the State Government is fully applying its power to control and abate such violence. Or is it responsible for perpetuating such conditions? The second question she asked was if Rajarhat can be called a “city within a city”? Since it has features that are in many

ways unlike Kolkata, should it be considered a part of the city at all? The third and the last point raised was with regard to the dynamics of class relations in the New Town of Rajarhat. With reference to the “Atharotola Market” which caters to the local residents, she asked if there is a positive shift in the relationship between newcomers and displaced people.

V.Ramaswamy commented on the notion of a wholesome city, its development and how both the papers converge in order to show the gap that exists between plans of development and the reality. He also stressed on the need for infrastructural growth to facilitate a holistic development of the city. Next, he pointed out to a developmental prototype of such townships that were set in motion by the Left Front and how the TMC is responsible for its continuity

Sudeep Basu enquired whether after so much violence and shift in political dynamics, there are any sources left for social de-articulation. Has the research made any attempt to tap into the collective memory that might lead to social de-articulation? Dr.Kundu replied that memory plays an important role and it is a contextual concept, varying from people to people, from class to class. Lalitha and Radhika’s questions were: (i) To what extent is the emergence of strongmen/women based on pre-existing social hierarchies? (ii) Apart from social hierarchies, what other skills/factors enable them to occupy such position? In reply, Dr.Kundu gave details of the rise to prominence of Jahanara Begum (as discussed in her paper). She also explained the roles played by *mastaans*(strongmen) in local politics who enjoy political patronage and are at times, themselves pitted as political leaders. She concludes by saying that the geography of local leaders, at the moment, is very fragmented with these strongmen/women sometimes resisting urbanisation, and requires greater exploration.

**Panel 4(B) [Venue: Sabhaghar 1, Swabhumii] Economies of Inhabitation: Refugees at the Urban Frontier (Discussant: Byasdeb Dasgupta, University of Kalyani; Chair: Arup Sen, Serampore College)**

**Garima Dhabai (Presidency University, Dept. of Political Science): *The ‘Entrepreneurial’ Refugee in the Bazaars: Sindhi Migrants in Jaipur’s Walled City***

Jaipur, located well within the North Indian heartland and the capital of a Rajput princely state was never the frontier city for transient migrant populations, who trickled into India after partition. However, the influx of Sindhi Hindu refugees to the city in the 1940s and 50s transformed it politically, culturally and materially. Jaipur is predominantly enframed within another post-colonial moment- that of princely states’ merger with the Indian state and subsequent modernization of the city in the 1940s under Mirza Ismail and its ‘modern’ ruler Man Singh II. This paper will braid these two frames of history (partition and merger) to understand the fashioning of Jaipur as a postcolonial capital city and subsequent infrastructural developments there. The Sindhi refugees were rehabilitated within the older precincts of Jaipur in newly created bazaars running parallel to the southern wall of the city. Over time, the wall has been declared a ‘heritage’ structure unleashing a legal battle over spaces claimed by the Sindhi traders of these markets.



The paper will delve into the spatial politics in the walled city of Jaipur that had originally been dominated by Hindu and Jain merchants. The uneasy relation between old traders and new entrants into the bazaar economy was also intensified by diverse social and cultural practices of these communities. The spatial and physical mapping of competing communities, like the Sindhis, Muslims and *baniya* Hindus in the walled city were undergirded by contending claims to 'authenticity' and 'purusharth' (entrepreneurialism). The 'entrepreneur' refugee became the focal point of political enunciations in post colonial Jaipur as also the economies around *capitalization* of the city.

**Himadri Chatterjee (JNU, Centre for Political Studies): *Land and Labour at the 'Borders' of Kolkata: Refugee Lives in-between Town and Country***

The paper presents an ethnographic snapshot of a peri-urban settlement (*Netajipally*) at the north-eastern border of Kolkata city. Drawing on field-based research, the paper attempts to piece together a historically grounded montage of life narratives that speak of journeys spanning several refugee camps and agriculturist colonies. Kolkata received a significant number of refugees from Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) during the 1947 'Partition', the communal riots of late 1950s and 60s and during the *Bangladesh liberation war* of 1971. A significant number of these refugees were from artisanal and peasant castes (scheduled castes) of the *Namasudra* community. This population; categorised as Rural/Agriculturist refugees; were '*dispersed*' from the refugee camps in the city to agrarian colonies and work-site camps in the immediate hinterland. Simultaneously, urban planners were attempting large scale transformation of the agrarian hinterland of the city through planned transformation of land use. These attempts at spatial transformation and *emplacement* of the refugees in the agrarian hinterlands of Kolkata offer a rich context to evaluate the historical and political centrality of *Land* as a source of livelihood and shelter in the peri-urbanization process. The paper attempts to investigate the erasure of the urban hinterland from land and settlement documentation, which Ananya Roy has argued, was *unmapped* by the state apparatus; by focusing on the question of land and (informal) labor. It describes an entanglement of two rather contradictory governmental purposes of housing 'agriculturist' refugee populations in the urban periphery while planning substantial urban transformation of the same spaces. The paper attempts to turn the lens of *quiet politics* proposed by Solomon Benjamin from the population to the state in order to follow spatial transformations and *emplacement* affected by government agencies through myriad acts of *de-peasantization* and *de-agrarianization*.

**Rajarshi Dasgupta (JNU, Centre for Political Studies): *Geneva Camp Mohammadpur and New Suburbs in Dhaka***

This paper studies the making of suburban settlements at the peripheries of postcolonial Dhaka, focusing on the case study of a large refugee settlement known as the Geneva Camp in the Mohammadpur locality. Formerly the western border of Dhaka, an area dotted with marshland and water bodies, Mohammadpur became home to a population of Urdu speaking refugees from India, following widespread violence as Bangladesh came into being. Held at the social and physical margins of Dhaka, however, this population has proved instrumental in the development of elite localities and suburbs in and around the area. Identified for long with the architecture of squatters in south Asia, Geneva camp has of late turned into prime real estate

property. It has over the recent years witnessed a curious coexistence of slums and up-market housing projects driven by a large share of foreign investments. The hybrid topography is made more complex and intense by the juxtaposition of civil society associations and a population denied of citizenship. It provides a wide pool of casual and informal though often skilled workforce, willing and amenable to extreme surplus extraction. As a result, the culturally more homogeneous and traditional localities of the capital of Bangladesh are being displaced by these new kinds of suburbs emerging at the border, which offer cheap accommodation to migrant urban professionals arriving every day. Much of the capital, labor and actors fueling the current growth of Dhaka are being drawn from such new suburbs, which paradoxically play a central role from a peripheral location. The paper will try to generalize certain tendencies from this case study about the wider phenomena of the role of refugees in the urbanization of south Asia.

- **Panel 5(A) [Venue: Rang Durbar, Swabhumij] Vulnerable Bodies: Marginal Subjectivities in Post-Colonial Calcutta (Discussant: Ishita Dey, Ambedkar University; Chair: Anjoo Sharan Upadhyay, Benares Hindu University)**

**Anwasha Sengupta (IDSK): *Refugees and the City: Calcutta in the 1950s***

The first paper looks at the nature of governance regarding the refugee ‘congestion’ in 1950s and 1960s’ Calcutta and how they were located within the city. Through an examination of the ‘refugee problem’ in the case of Calcutta, it provides an insight into who was to remain an outsider and who was allowed to be an insider, who would have an access to the city and who was to remain in the railway station before being sent off to some distant province.

**Supurna Banerjee (IDSK): *Making Cities making labour: Understanding Kolkata through the perception of the construction workers***

The second paper of the panel examines migrant women labour and their experiences of precarity in Kolkata. The implications of their gender and class identity are shaped by their everyday negotiations with the city which also in turn shapes their ideas of belonging, home and migration.

**Samata Biswas (Bethune College, University of Calcutta): *The (Un)Sanitary City: Infrastructure and the Body in Kolkata***

The third paper locates the question of access and how that shapes marginalisation in Calcutta. Through the lens of sanitation, the paper looks to provide clues to understand how through controls on access to basic sanitation (like toilets), gendered marginalisation is shaped thus providing an insight into the human sanitary practices around which the city is structured.

## Comments:

Dr. Ishita Dey acted as the discussant for this session and had some enlightening comments and suggestions to share. The three papers stand out because of their exploration of the body of the labouring migrant and its relationship with the body of the city, comments Dr. Dey.

With regard to the first paper, she remarks that though the presenter had deleted the term congestion from the title, the concept of congestion does apply to the paper and needs exploration. The subaltern refugees contributed to the congestion as evidenced by the government schemes that we hear and the narratives that are presented to us from the archives. The problem of congestion was met with dispersal which had two outcomes – rehabilitation and desertion. Attention is drawn to how they negotiated in this congested city as providing cheap labour. We are given snippets into how congestion was seen as detrimental to the well-being of the city's residents. In this light the issue of congestion would allow Anwasha to explore the complexities of belonging to the urban streets of Calcutta, iterates Dr. Dey. Congestion and de-congestion is a new sway of unpacking urban aesthetics. Creating walls, boundaries, parks and barriers are a set of logistical networks to decongest. It is suggested in the paper that trains were used to decongest the people arriving in the city. But the paper has the scope to explore what happens to the body of the city in itself, asserts Dr. Dey. Can we move from a study on congestion to a study on the congested city, and from a study on cities, particularly specific cities like Calcutta and Delhi, to studying the city itself, she asks.

With regard to the second paper, Dr. Dey narrates the incident of Siraju, an important factor that she felt was missing from the paper. A mason was denied entry into a mall that his labouring body had helped to construct by the security guard who accused him of trying to act like genteel folk. The presenter rightly points out that the city recognised the migrant worker as the labouring body but not as an inhabitant. This paper explores a struggle for belonging. Through labouring, in the making of a city one has belonged, yet that belonging has to be temporary, transitory and perpetually in transit, an idea worth further discussion in the paper's exploration of labour *haats*. Labour haats are not permanent fixtures, but transit markets that cities wake up to everyday. Dr. Dey appeals to the presenter to restrict her women to the discussion of labour *haats*. It will be worth exploring the spatial arrangements of labour *haats* as they encourage and inhabit a temporal sense of belonging. Labour *haats* are spaces that people like Siraju would be encouraged to inhabit as opposed to a mall. The

notion of negotiated belonging in a city is thus stems from an understanding of infrastructure and power which cannot be overlooked, iterates Dr. Dey. She suggests three question that would be worthy of exploration in the context of labour *haats* – what possibilities can labour haats contribute to a city in construction? What is the relationship between infrastructure, power and construction work? How can we think of ethnographic possibilities to study cities rather than to study incidents?

The third paper makes a departure from who constitutes the body of the city to a very interesting exploration of relationship between cities and bodies. Dr. Dey congratulates the presenter for unwhispering the everyday metabolic realities but suggests outlining the sites of field work as each of the sites has a deeply unsanitary connection in the urban geography of Calcutta. Details of the wards where the field work was conducted would have been interesting. A discussion of infrastructural facilities for sanitation could incorporate questions of urban ecology, particularly designs of toilets and slums, use of water and sewage facilities. A discussion of sanitation is deeply embedded in notions of hygiene, a disguise that is also shaped by notions of the polluting body, and which finds mention in the paper in the discussion of entrenched identities, touching upon important questions of caste. The question that Dr. Dey finally raises is whether it is possible to understand and relate how a new kind of sanitary body is being perpetuated through an industry that has almost settled its battle with a bacteria to a new obsession around microbes, hand sanitisers, toilet wipes in contrast to negotiations of everyday metabolic realities.

### **Q and A:**

This session brought forth several questions and comments.

One of the members of the audience commented that the paper on construction workers particularly interested him since he had done a study on metro workers in Calcutta in the 1980s. There used to be an adivasi village called Patal Tila at the mouth of present-day Park Street inhabited by adivasi construction workers from Jharkhand, and there were tales of adivasi women being raped and murdered and their bodies thrown in the Maidan. Despite the changes in technology, there has been a surge in metro construction workers in Kolkata in present times, and this will produce its own lore. He urges Supurna Banerjee to look into this phenomenon in the context of her own project on construction workers. The question he directed towards Anwasha Sengupta was if she had tried to find out people today who had

congested Sealdah in the 1950s and 60s. Anwesha Sengupta admits that she has not really tried to locate any of the people who had crowded Sealdah at that time.

Dr. Kannibaran, drawing a reference from Dr. Subir Sinha's lecture on the paradigmatic city and the ordinary city, queried whether in their work, the presenters were aware of a conflict between the two. All the presenters responded positively, unanimously agreeing that they had indeed noticed a conflict between the paradigmatic city and the ordinary city, though this conflict was not what they focussed on in their papers.

Another member of the audience pointed out that the olfactory mapping out of the city space seemed to him to be the common thread running through the three papers. He then directed specific comments to each of the three presenters. With regard to Anwesha Sengupta's paper, he suggests that the descriptions in her paper reflect anxieties related to caste and class, and thus contamination in addition to congestion is something that the paper might look into. In case of Supurna Banerjee's paper, he wonders whether her respondents are beginning to replicate middle class values, his question arising from the way they discriminate against some localities while making their preference for others known. He also levelled a critique at this paper, that of homogenizing the respondents by looking at them as merely labouring bodies, suggesting that this aspect in the paper could be worked on further. To Samata Biswas he directs two queries – whether her work was necessarily specific to Kolkata, or could it apply to other cities as well, and if she was assuming some notion of shame, shame being a bourgeois construct here, with respect to open acts of excretion and defecation, – an aspect of sanitation that she deals with in the paper. Samata Biswas agreed that her work would be applicable to other cities as well, but she disagreed with him on the question of shame to some degree, stating that notions of hygiene associated with open sanitary acts could not be divorced from notions of the public and the private. Supurna Banerjee too agreed with the speaker, adding that one of the ways that they try to replicate middle class values is by replacing their physical presence at the haat with their virtual presence over the phone. She further assents to work on his suggestion of looking deeper at the plurality of identities of the construction worker.

A final critique levelled at the first paper was that it did not point out the difference between partition refugee and other kinds of migrants coming in to India in the 1950s and 60s, because the crowd that the paper essentially deals with were partition refugees, and not the other kinds of refugees. The same critic enquired of Supurna Banerjee if the construction

workers that she had worked with had ever been unionized, and if the sanitary workers that Samata Biswas had interacted with had some platform to air their grievances or demands. Samata responded saying that the TMC sanitary workers had said that there was no platform for them to discuss their problems or make demands, and that in the next 20 years, working conditions will become much more precarious, but there is no space to articulate this concern. Supurna Banerjee replied that the construction workers in West Bengal are among the most unionized among all unorganised sector workers. But among her respondents, the daily commuters were not unionized, while the ones who were residents were part of unions.

- **Panel 5(B) [Venue: Sabhaghar 1, Swabhumi] Rent, Infrastructure and Urban Improvement in Colonial Calcutta (Discussant: Subhash Ranjan Chakraborty, Eminent Historian, Chair: Prasanta Ray, IDSK)**

**Kaustubh Mani Sengupta (Bankura University, Dept. of History): *Infrastructural Development and the Issue of Compensation in Colonial Calcutta***

In this paper Sengupta studies the issue of compensation with relation to the infrastructural development of colonial Calcutta by taking some cases of construction of new roads and the Strand Bank along the Hooghly in the nineteenth century. The urban improvement schemes were predicated on the availability of appropriate funds. Apart from problems arising from technical considerations, engineering difficulties or cultural disapproval, financial constraint posed difficulty at every turn. The viability of a project often depended on the guarantee of an assured 'return'—the idea of 'recoupment' was crucial, which determined the course of a scheme. Along with that, there was the problem of deciding the 'value' of the property—how does one determine the worth of the land to be taken up? What were the cultural and social elements, apart from market considerations, that influenced the decision of the state and the individual proprietors? How does one calculate the amount of compensation to be paid? Specific cases elicited different methods and often the profit of the state had to be sacrificed. Acquisition of land for public projects entailed paying up the proprietors. Some people accepted the proposition, some resented. New challenges were posed and modes of negotiations varied.

**Iman Mitra (TISS, Patna): *Towards a Rental Economy of a City: Calcutta Improvement Trust and Urbanisation in Calcutta in the Early Twentieth Century***

In this paper Mitra looks at the urban question of Calcutta from the conjoined perspectives of an institutional politics of spatial organisation and everyday practices of rent extraction after the Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT) started its operation in 1912. Founded by the British in the previous year to 'improve' and 'expand' the city by building new roads, clearing congested neighbourhoods and implementing various sanitisation projects which included demolition of unsavoury establishments like slums and bazaars, the CIT became one of the most influential actors not only in the domain of urban development schemes but also as a

stake-holder in the sphere of urban land valuation and speculation. By restructuring the city and giving it a new look, the CIT effected two sets of urban transformation: it created a new discourse of improvement where the enhanced mobility of traffic (by building new roads and widening the older ones) was connected with reshuffling of the adjoined neighbourhoods – especially their commercialisation and valorisation; secondly, they planned to finance their schemes by acquiring, selling and renting land in these commercialised zones. While the previous studies on the CIT have mentioned these unique features and discussed its autonomous organisational structure and how it invited a range of reactions from the inhabitants of the city in the wake of its establishment, they have not focused on the shifts in the urban land market caused by the schemes initiated by the Trust. With availability of new archival materials, this aspect comes to light and one is able to explain the connections between urban development and everydayness of rent extraction and land speculation in twentieth century Calcutta.

The paper uses the newly digitised archive of the Calcutta Improvement Trust to explore this process of creation of a rental economy in the history of urbanisation in the twentieth century. At the same time it studies how the category of rent makes its appearance – the structures, modes, actors and relationships – in an archive of urban planning and how the politics of organisation of this archive may influence the politics of categorisation itself.

**Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (IISER, Mohali) & Ujaan Ghosh (Independent Researcher):**  
*Class and Tenancy Relations in Calcutta, 1914-1926*

In this paper Bandyopadhyay studies a specific form of “primitive accumulation of capital” in the central part of Calcutta in the second decade of the 20th century. During this decade, an ambitious street scheme of the Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT) recycled more than 200 acres of prime land of the city, and dis-housed at least 50000 individuals living in densely populated neighbourhoods of Surtibagan, Jorabagan, Jorasanko, etc,—where upper caste Bengali Hindu rentier class population lived with an increasingly prosperous Marwari community, a lower-middle class Bengali constituency, an up-country Muslim trading community, and a huge mass of migrant (male) working class population working in Barabazar area mostly as coolies and transport workers. The Central Avenue Scheme of the CIT in this area created a lucrative speculative land market and reshuffled the ethnic distribution of property-ownership and tenancy. This paper took a “micro-history” approach to study this transformation in Calcutta. The period under review is sandwiched between the 19th century traditions of urbanism and the 20th century narratives of mass political formation, and thus it has remained largely unattended by historians, despite the fact that the First World War had a significant global impact on the urban land market and tenancy relations.

### **Comments**

The discussant of the papers, Subhash Ranjan Chakraborty commented that the three papers chart their discourse in tandem bearing a chronological order. Sengupta elaborates on the early development discourse in colonial Calcutta and how compensation was associated with

displacement and planning. Mitra delves into the rental structures of Calcutta in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the formation of Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT), Bandyopadhyay narrates the micro-history of localities around the Central Avenue of Calcutta which lead to reconfiguration of the city. The discussant suggested Sengupta can consider sharing the context of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, wherein besides state sponsored infrastructural development, multiple wealthy families of Calcutta were instrumental in Calcutta's formation as an early colonial city. The exact stretch of Strand Road needs to be specified. As there were contestations over the government ownerships of land, it would be helpful to quantify the compensations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Mitra's argument about the new zoning pattern which emerged due to the phasing activities of CIT gives an important insight into the spatial segregation of the city. A detailing of the political economy of planning was an effective way to contextualize planning and its politics. Examples from elsewhere, such as the political rationale behind reconfiguring Paris might be a helpful literature for the paper. Did happenings in Paris were behind the formation of CIT? What was the role of multiple Bengal partition behind the functioning of CIT? How were the bombing cases of colonial Calcutta acted as a defining factor? It would be important to reflect on these questions, with focus on how urban development was a response against urban insurgency. Mitra might benefit by referring to some other archives as well. Bandyopadhyay can consider looking into the formation of the suburbs which lay south to his given field of study in colonial Calcutta. It would be interesting to bring in the 30 years period between the two world wars which influenced the property configuration in Central Calcutta. Nirmal Bose's Social Survey of Kolkata 1964 contains numerous maps between 1911-1961 which are divided into occupational land use patterns, could be a useful reference in the study.

### **Q and A**

Questions were asked regarding to the resistance to the urban planning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, what were the kind of collies who were employed in the factories and what was the level of attachment? Bandyopadhyay responded to the discussant's comments that he is undertaking a research to find a correlation between new settlements formation in Calcutta with the cases related to bombs. Rajat Kanti Ray's book 'Urban roots in Nationalism' has a chapter on the resistance against the urban planning of CIT. Within the CIT official board members there was also disagreement about CIT's plan by three Indian members. Mitra responded that state was governed by the market and primitive accumulation was followed by market capitalism.



**Panel 6(A) [Venue: Rang Durbar, Swabhumi] Gender, Everyday Life and the Making of the Cityscape**  
(Discussant: Sanam Roohi, St. Joseph's College, Bangalore; Chair: Samita Sen, Jadavpur University)

**Lalitha Kamath (TISS, Mumbai, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance) & Radhika Raj (TISS Mumbai, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance): *The Politics of Home Making: Migrant journeys and water encounters in a New City***

In the early 2000s in Mumbai, imaginations and aspirations of building a world class city led to mass slum demolitions that generated an exodus of marginalised populations -- largely second and third generation migrants and religious minorities -- into the hinterland in search of new lands to settle on. Big men or 'dadas' in Vasai Virar, a peripheral metropolitan sub-region responded to this demand by acquiring and developing lands and colluding with land-owning castes to settle these populations in new informal settlements. They were encouraged in this by the ruling patriarch of Vasai Virar, fondly called 'Appa' (father) who used the opportunity to consolidate a powerful gangster-style regime that governed the area through a combination of formal state-systems and informal party networks of smugglers, contractors, builders, social workers and fixers of different sorts, and relied on a combination of surveillance, violence and promises. These burgeoning settlements, collectively referred to as the 'city of the poor', provided refuge to migrants banished from Mumbai while producing a flourishing economy centred around real estate and building construction. At the centre of this political economy was water.

Water can also be said to have influenced the future course of the city. Arguably, access to statelevel funds that could be pumped towards large dam and water projects was a key motivation for Appa to engineer the formation of the local government, the Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation (VVMC) in 2009. The impetus for this was clearly to transform into a more legitimate and formal governance structure that could tap the benefits of central/state government programmes. Based on these promises, Appa's party, the Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA), swept the VVMC's first civic elections in 2010. Furthermore, though the party's

ideology was exemplified in the term '*bahujan*' to woo the host of different 'lower caste', 'migrants', and 'religious minorities' from Mumbai, in practice it maintained local social hierarchies by giving local leaders from land-owning castes tickets to contest municipal elections. This gave them authority in the new municipal dispensation to control building of chawls for 'migrants', and provision of different services, including water outflows, from their villages/territories.

A decade later, city elections are still fought and won on promises of water - but the regime represents the relationship that water shares with the city and its dwellers rather differently - from merely consuming water for survival, to seeing it as providing leisure, aesthetic value and enhancing real estate and quality of life values. Political posters assure 24-hour water supply and large dam projects take pride of place in election manifestos, but we also see representations of beautified lakes, swimming pools, and a water park as prominent instances of the 'smart city' that Vasai Virar is going to become. Yet the materialisation of these promises is uncertain. "What do people want in Vasai-Virar today? Water. Who has the water? Shitti (BVA's election symbol). They won't release water until we vote for them." (Interview auto driver June 11, 2015). Scarcity of water for daily needs animates the everyday routines and agency of 'migrant' groups and the strategies of control of local *dadas* and the ruling regime.

This paper follows women's laborious efforts at home and place making in one such 'migrant' settlement, Makarandnagar, that lies on the peripheries of the 'city of the poor'. A central focus of the paper is seeking to understand the politics of home making that undergirds the everyday practices that women engage in and make the argument that while these maneuvers are not always planned or consciously enacted, they reveal the operation of women's agency. Following Mahmood (2006) we conceptualize agency "not as a synonym for resistance to relations of

domination, but as a capacity for action that historically specific relations of subordination enable and create.” Thus the paper closely attends to how the nature of women’s agency has been enabled and created by the nested structures of subordination that ‘migrant’ women confront at the micro (*basti/gaon*) and macro (city) level and how it ultimately remains limited by it. This attention also helps elucidate the discursive and practical conditions within which women ‘migrants’ in Makarandnagar arrive at various forms of aspiration and capacities for action (ibid).

We keep ‘migrant’ women at the centre of the discourse. In centering their stories, and highlighting the manner of claim-making and its embodied consequences as different from that of ‘migrant’ men, we recognize ‘migrant’ women as active agents of social transformations, even in cases where their agency may not be as obvious or easy to locate. We locate women’s agency in the largely invisible practices and politics of home making, but expand the term ‘home’ to encompass not just the four walls of the house but places created and nurtured through the commoning of spaces in and around homes. Thus, this paper on women ‘migrants’ and their claims to making homes in the city builds on a rich tradition of feminist anthropology. It contributes to complicating and expanding debates about gender in non-Western societies, and to restoring an important but absent voice of women to anthropological analyses of the urban everyday and incremental modes of place making.

**Maggie Paul (TISS, Mumbai, Centre for Social and Organisational Leadership) & Yogita Naruka (TISS, Mumbai, School of Development Studies): *Jed-o-Jehad of Everyday: Two Cases of Negotiating Space Making***

Identity formations and reformulations closely associated with the practice of migration are a deeply contested phenomena, unfolding among varied political imaginaries, practices, concerns and assumptions (Roy, 2010). Identity is “a continually constituted and reconstructed category, a process of becoming which entails not a fixed position but positionally and locations” (Thapan,

2005: 26). It is within this context of constantly shifting positionalities and locations, that the migrant identity has to be situated.

While most earlier studies on migration tried to explain the phenomenon in terms of the voluntarist perspective - elaborating the push and pull factors as well as the structuralist perspective explicated in terms of the dichotomies of the centre-periphery ending up in economic determinism, it has been argued by scholars that a more holistic approach is necessary to understand this complicated human aspect - especially that of a migrant identity. It has been a general argument, especially from the discipline of Sociology that aspects such as religion, race and nationality along with emotions such as a sense of belonging, fear and nostalgia must also be accounted for in order to get a wholesome view of the same (Thapan, 2005). Moreover it has also argued that migrant communities are not a homogenous category and are marked by varied socio-cultural-historical pasts that shape their differentially articulated present. There is multiplicity and heterogeneity in the manner in which individuals experience and negotiate with the phenomenon of migration - which relate to the varied dimensions of gender, ethnicity, religion, work etc. In addition, migration is also not a freely floating, completely personal experience. Along with the societal norms and diktats, the state and its many apparatus regulate the process in such a manner that the negotiations with the state does not get restricted to the public domain but enters the very private, everyday lives of immigrants (Chaudhuri, 2005).

It is within all these considerations that this paper would like to make an incursion. It intends to

specifically talk about migrant identity and negotiations from the vantage point of gender focusing on migrant women. Moreover, it aims to do this within the specific context of the those migrant women who face the state induced phenomenon of displacement, eviction and resettlement. Migrant identity in such cases within the city spaces is infused with expressions of constant mobility, relocation and resettlement. The phenomenon of displacement has been understood by varying paradigms within the larger ambit of urban studies and urban sociology such as in political economic terms - "accumulation by dispossession" (Bannerjee-Guha, 2010; Harvey, 2008; Mahmud, 2010), "Hausmanization" (Davis, 2006), and a "global urban strategy" (Smith, 2002) - or subjective spatial desires and discursive practices of elite and middle classes - "bourgeois environmentalism" (Baviskar, 2003; Fernandes, 2006) - or more nuanced understanding of the politics of evicted - "accumulation by differentiated displacement" (Doshi, 2012). The latter has highlighted how the phenomenon is implemented, experienced and resisted differentially by different social groups. It is these

differentiated and heterogenous negotiations with the phenomenon of displacement and the subsequent claiming of housing space that this paper intends to highlight through two different case studies drawn from two field sites namely, *Bainganwadi slum community* in Mumbai and *Bawana resettlement colony* in Delhi.

**Mahuya Bandyopadhyay - *Izzet, Galat Saubat: Negotiating Intimate Relationships and Public Spaces in a Working-Class Muslim Neighbourhood***

My discussions with young women and men, in a largely Muslim working class slum close to Kolkata, foregrounded the notion of *izzet* as a basic organising principle in the public and intimate spheres of their lives. These restrictive terms such as *paabandi* (restraint), *izzet* (honour) and *galat saubat* (wrong or bad company) surfaced repeatedly in our discussions. They appear to militate against the ideas of choice, independent decision-making, and the varied aspirations that young people in this neighbourhood had. Yet, paradoxically, the negotiations of these contexts also revealed narratives of choice, and independent decision-making in the private lives of young people. I argue that this creates a disjuncture, one that enables us to complicate a linear understanding of global inputs and local responses. It also enables a disruption of the ways in which space making practices in the city are conceived. The discourse around gender and access to city space is framed by the idea of inaccessibility, of the dangers that the city holds for women and girls, and consequently, a protectionist logic and practice is sought to be imposed in the way women and girls participate in the public domain of the city. In this paper, I argue that many of the young women and men, too, in this old, crumbling and yet resolutely present, working class Muslim neighbourhood, present narratives of choice and of the making of city spaces, of creating their own pockets of freedom in the city, despite, and at the cost of, experiencing its many apparent dangers. The tenor of academic research on gender and the city is premised largely on the following ideas: first that the gendered separation of the private and public spheres even though considerably reworked in industrial urban society, continues to shape women's experience of the city; second, the discriminatory access that women and young girls can be addressed through gender mainstreaming and effective policy making in building inclusive city spaces and practices of use for all (Phadke and others) and also through larger movements to reclaim the city spaces. Finally there is the idea that urban spaces produce and are produced by gender. My paper falls largely within this third strand as it articulates the varied re-makings of urban public space and the multi-layered nature of gendered belonging in the city. These remakings, I argue also draw on certain cultural specificities, institutions and embedded community practices.

The paper addresses the issue of young women and their relationship to their environment, specifically in the context of their intimate relationships and their desires for experiencing the joys of freedom and choice. The ethnographic instances featured here enable a rethinking of the sharp divide between public spaces and private worlds and provide a nuanced understanding of how women in a working class neighbourhood remake city spaces simply by accessing these spaces and their bodily being and expressions in these spaces. As the gender and city discourse remains framed within the arguments of controlled access, of the dangers of the city, of the need to build inclusive spaces and of the call to reclaim city spaces, the cultural nuances from a working class neighbourhood reveal deep class faultlines. The paper, implicitly, is an elaboration of these faultlines, as young women narrate their experiences of accessing city spaces as active agents, and in contradistinction to the dictates

of the triumvirate of family, community and the notion of izzet. It is this triumvirate that reproduces dominant metaphors of access to the city and frames how the working class woman is to access the city.

I draw on the grounded notions of paabandi, izzet and galat saubat, and *marzi*, *hakh* and *adhikar* to focus on the dynamics of larger changes, and local responses in intimate and familial relationships in an urban neighbourhood. These changes can be seen in three interconnected realms: first, in the concrete material realm of technology and its use in people's everyday lives; in the context of how young people express their everyday struggles to educate themselves and find respectable employment in the global economy. In this context, young men articulate a strong desire to move away from the kind of work that their parents do. Young women resist their family's attempts to marry them off at an early age, by finding ways to prolong their education or find some ways to enter the workforce, generally within the neighbourhood. And thirdly, at the time of fieldwork, West Bengal was in the throes of political upheaval and change, and this happened within a larger context of the need for democratisation and deep-seated anger and frustration with its lack in more than thirty years of Left front rule. These aspects had significant implications for people's private lives and intimate relationships and my paper draws on narratives from this realm to reveal connections between people's private lives and public worlds in this neighbourhood.

**Comments** (Sanam Roohi): Three very rich, insightful ethnographically detailed papers. Gender, everyday life and making of the cityscape; it was a pleasure to read these ethnographic papers and point over some key arguments made here. Before I go to discuss individual papers, I want to draw out the running thread between all of these papers in this final panel, including the one that was not presented. These include the issues of gendered negotiations in urban spaces, particularly by migrant women whose experiences sometimes reproduce and at times blur the boundaries between public and private. These papers also succinctly weave the narratives of women who maneuver structurally defined precarity and vulnerability by using their agency to either off-set it or to work around it. Finally, these papers draw upon the everydayness, which she just mentioned, everyday of negotiations, both tactics as well as strategies that these migrant women adopt to not only survive but also to make home in unfamiliar spaces.

Now I will take the order of the papers presented here today. The first paper that I'm going to discuss is 'The Politics of Homemaking: Migrant journeys and water encounters in a New City' written together by Lalitha Kamath and Radhika Raj. This paper is a very mature draft, with very well thought out arguments. It's one of the more fully developed papers among three papers that I received. Through the example of Vasai Virar Municipal Corporation and the Basti of Makrandnagar in particular, we learn about how VVMC overrun by a *dada* not only provides refuge to migrants banished from Mumbai. It also produces a flourishing economy centred around real-estate, construction, and most importantly the political economy of water. The latter, that is the political economy of water, produces the most intense contestations between the new settlers, who are also derogatorily referred to as Bhaiyas from UP and Bihar, and locals, or sthaniks, who are the bearers of Marathi manus. Water here is not only commodified but becomes a tool of control in the hands of the local

landlords. Makarandnagar is not connected to the city's modern hydraulic network, or the informal water-tanker network, but interestingly relies on a public tap built by the landlords, who are also Patils by caste. This is interesting, because VVMC became a corporation to legitimately justify their tapping into central and state government resources and different programmes. So, it's a little surprising that a part of this VVMC is actually outside the scope of state intervention. But, areas like Makarandnagar still exist outside the scope such government-like interventions and thrive in the hope that in the future, access to water can be a reality. The people dwell on the changing relationship between the city, its emergent politics, caste, class etc and everything that comes to share this politics. Its inhabitants both local as well as "outsiders" and water at the centre of it all. Using Mahmood's conceptualization of agency, which Lalitha had already mentioned, not as resistance but as capacity for action that specifically relations of subordination enable. The authors extend this concept to extrapolate how access to water defines place-making or even city-making by migrant women. The resilience of women's agency is founded upon everyday resources and constraints. It is against masculine Marathi *manus*, these women achieve intermittent success from time to time. My first comment is regarding the making of the VVMC. What was missing in your article was a background that actually tell us, the readers, the precise ways in which the water requirements of the region allowed Vasai Virar to become a municipal corporation. You just mentioned it in a line, but I would want to know a little more about it. How did this water economy allowed Vasai Virar to become a municipal corporation? Secondly, the figure of Appa, very interesting. A powerful local *dada*-cum-politician. I also wanted to know what is the relation of Appa with the landowning Patils of Makrandnagar? When Appa promises water to all women, does he address the migrant or does he address the wives of these local people who are the *sthanik*? In other words, I want to know who is Appa emerging as a patron of? Is he a patron of these locals or is he a patron of the migrants as well? And if he is a patron of the migrants as well, what allows for him to become the patron in the first place?

You provide a fascinating insight into what we can call "migrant economy". You tell us that taking in often unwanted and hated migrant tenants has strengthened the local rent-based economy controlled by the dominant caste of this. But you could perhaps explore how does migrant economy in its disruption, and by disruption I mean by evicting migrants again in the near future in the name of aesthetics and pragmatics of building a smart city, because you have told us that Vasai Virar is one of the cities marked for the smart city campaign. How could that perhaps impact the local rent-based economy in this newly designated municipal corporation?

Finally, your paper acknowledges an adequately lends from structures of subordination that migrant women confront at the micro, the *basti* or the *gaon* level, and macro, a city such Vasai Virar, level. However in quite a few places in the paper you jump scales. What I mean to say by that is, suddenly, I don't know whether you're referring to the city or you're referring to the particular *basti* or *gaon*. Would it be useful to use the lens of scale to understand if the city subsumes the neighbourhood. For example, in the making of VMCC as

a smart city for example. And if that be the case, perhaps you could take a more nuanced view of the state.

Now I'll come to the second paper, that is, 'Paabandh, Izzat, Galat Saubat: Negotiating Public Lives and Intimate Relationships in a Working Class Muslim Neighbourhood'. Taking us through a Kolkata slum, the paper begins by pointing out how *izzat* is the basic organizing principle in a century old Muslim slum made up of migrants from UP and Bihar who settled here to work here as cheap labour in jute mills. The mills are long gone but not the migrants. One of the central themes of the paper is to explore the notion of *izzat* or honour, that circumscribed much of women's experiences while accessing public spaces and how this honour militates against the autonomy of these women to make decisions for themselves.

The vulnerability the women encounter in these *bastis* can be captured through the lens of *paabandhi* and *izzat* and *galat saubat* that sets boundaries for these women within the *basti*, yet the author's respondents often juxtapose narratives of choice, decision-making or carving their own space in the city. When these women navigate the constraints presented by their *mahual*, or a socially constraining environment, one of the major changes that women in contemporary times see in the *basti* is the relaxing of social norms that allow women to seek education, with the condition that these young girls would keep away from *galat saubat* and *galat kaam*. The *purdah* is both limiting and freeing in this sense, which the author sees as anonymising. It facilitates women to seek access to spaces they weren't allowed before. Be it schools, or cabins where, as the author mentions, their desire for intimate relationship comes to fruition. Places such as this however always carry a potential of risk and violence, in case one gets caught. One of the questions that I want to ask is the proposition you make somewhere in the beginning of the paper, that *izzat* is the organizing principle of the *basti*. I would urge you to explore other socially constructed idioms that may not be so frequently articulated. I find it a little problematic to think of *izzat* as the basic principle around which this *basti* has organized itself.

Somewhere in the narrative, the idea of resistance also surfaces yet the idea is not carried forward through the rest of the paper. Also, when you use the term *purdah*, what are you actually referring to? Is it burqa, or naqab or hijab or chadar? Because if it's not burqa, then I doubt it's an anonymising attribute. Finally, by using a lens of intimate relationships, is there a danger of re-emphasizing stereotypes of Muslim patriarchy, and choices made by women within such constraints? What I mean is, perhaps, if you use the lens of education, would your arguments change or remain the same?

Now I'll jump to the last paper, 'Jed-o-Jehad of Everyday: Two Cases of Negotiating Space Making'. This paper provides a more holistic approach to the study of migration. Migrants' experiences and identity are not just molded by personal experiences, but also societal norms and regulatory mechanism for state apparatuses. With this as a background, the paper focuses on displacement, and subsequent claiming of housing space in two different case studies. One is the Bawana resettlement colony in Delhi and the other is the Baiganwadi slum community in Mumbai. Bawana resettlement colony comprises of 70 percent Muslim migrants from UP and Bihar who had arrived in the city as cheap labour to build the Asian village in 1992 and then settled in the Yamuna pushta slum. The Bawana settlement was made to make room for



space for another game, this time the Commonwealth Games. The case study brings out psychological and cultural dilemma that the women faced in the case of displacement, their mobility curtailed by the collective fear of the more dominant other, in this case, Jats and Gujjars who were the locals in this area already. The second case study of Baiganwadi in Mumbai comes to counterposes the first case by analyzing everyday negotiations of recent migrant women through the lens religious and cultural networks that assist and help them to shape them as political agents in claiming spaces for resettlement, in homemaking, and in maintaining these spaces.

- **Closing Session**

The Conference closed with the remarks of Ranabir Samaddar who proposed that there could be a publication volume (journal special issue or book) from selected papers of the conference.

It was decided that there would be an editorial committee of six who would deliberate upon this consisting of the following:

- Rajarshi Dasgupta, JNU, New Delhi
- Samata Biswas, Bethune College, Kolkata
- Iman Mitra, TISS, Patna
- Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, IISER, Mohali
- Anita Sengupta, MCRG, Kolkata