

24<sup>th</sup> August 2017, 11:00 to 1 pm

Panel 3: **The Urban Question and the North-East**

(**Discussant:** Bharat Bhushan, **Chair:** Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury)

### **The Intersectionality of Citizenship and Gender in the Livelihood Strategies of Protracted Refugees: A Case Study of Rohingya Refugees in Delhi, India**

**Debarati Sarkar, Research Candidate, Delhi School of Economics**

Refugees in India constitute a large portion of the country's population. The growing interest in the displacement and refugee-migration nexus has largely focused on understanding how migration patterns may change as a response to asylum variability. The paper explores the intersectionality of citizenship and gender on the livelihood strategies of protracted refugees through a case study of *Rohingyas* in Delhi, India. It is a comparative qualitative study that focuses on the experiences of Rohingya refugees and their host community in their access to economic opportunities. Using an intersectional approach allows for a more rigorous understanding of the influence of gender and citizenship in situations of refugee protraction. This paper argues for the need to look at the intersection of gender and citizenship status and their impact on economic opportunities, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which agency addresses intersectional discrimination. It highlights that human agency is influenced, but not determined, by social norms and structures. Gender identities, relations, and power are continuously renegotiated through migration processes with consequences on some of the social and cultural barriers to adaptation. Although involuntarily situated because of inherited structures, protracted Rohingya refugee women and men are able to negotiate agency to transform their conditions. Even vulnerable groups exercise different levels of agency within the constraints of the structures that are present in their personal situations. This work explores the importance of social networks along with social and cultural institutions in dealing with intersectional discrimination.