

REPORT ON WORK DONE BY CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP (CRG) ON THE SOUTH ASIA NETWORK FOR COMMUNICATION, DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION (SAN-CDM) August – December 2022

Introduction:

Following the [South Asia Consultations: Media, Information and Participation in Displacement and Migration Setting](#), the Calcutta Research Group, henceforth CRG (www.mcrg.ac.in) put together the [South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and Migration \(SAN-CDM\)](#) in collaboration with DW Akademie.

Vision and Mission Statement of the SAN-CDM:

CRG and DW Akademie arrived at the need for a regional network of journalists and other stakeholders in South Asia, in contexts of displacement and migration, from complementary yet separate trajectories. In the course of the South Asia consultations, the need to develop a “A network of regional actors comprising journalists, media houses, media schools, advocacy groups, rights activists, research organizations, labor unions, civil society groups etc.” was strongly felt by all participants. The SAN-CDM has been formed to enhance cross-border and intra-regional collaboration between journalists, academics, community members and civil society actors, through exchange of knowledge, expertise and ideas.

Hosted by the CRG, the SAN-CDM aims to provide support to regional actors in improving media coverage, access to information, and participation of refugees and migrants in media making. Through its dedicated website, network of stakeholders and newsletters, the SAN-CDM will promote inclusive media making practices in the region, contribute to the media discourse on migrants and refugees, and facilitate exchange of ideas and opportunities among its members and interested participants.

The following report is a short summary of CRG activities related to the SAN-CDM in the period August- December 2022.

1. The network website:

A roll of SAN-CDM members, as well as its activities, reports and recordings of events are available on the network website: <https://mcrg.in/san-cdm/> One may reach the website by clicking on the prominently displayed SAN-CDM logo on the MCRG home page. The image below is a screenshot of the home page displaying the placement of the logo.

2. Contacting network members, creating database: The Programme Officer, under the guidance of the Programme Supervisor and the Technical Advisor contacted all the participants of the South Asia consultations, as well as past participants of CRG media programmes. The names of those willing to become a member of the Network are being updated on this evolving list: <https://mcrg.in/sancdm-members/>
3. Content for the network website:
All reports and video recordings of network events have been uploaded on the network website, under the head RESOURCES.
4. Creating and Maintaining Database: Network members are periodically requested to inform the Programme Officer about their achievements, publications, etc. However, very few of them have responded. Those of the network members who reached out to the Programme officer, have had their information included in the newsletter. The members' list has an updated database of the members.
5. CRG created and maintains the following social media handles for the network:
Facebook Page: [South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and Migration](#)
Instagram: [@sancdm](#)

Twitter: [@SanCdm](https://twitter.com/SanCdm)

- The Programme Supervisor and the Programme officer discussed separately with some network members about the feasibility of creating a voluntary steering group. While the members agreed in principle, it was felt that a separate meeting, ideally in person, during the proposed February conference, would make the steering group a reality. CRG also discussed with Bharat Bhushan, who has been the most regular and enthusiastic participant in network activities, the possibility of taking up the position of the network coordinator. This conversation is ongoing.
- The SAN-CDM was launched formally with an inaugural online event on 27 October 2022, Thursday, at 6:30 PM IST on “Climate Disaster, Migration, and New reporting: A South Asian Discussion”. 88 people from across South Asia and Europe joined the meeting.

Programme Schedule:

Welcome Address and Introduction to CRG: Paula Banerjee, CRG 7 University of Calcutta

Welcome from DW Akademie: Andrea Marshall, DW Akademie

Introduction to the Scope and Functions of SAN-CDM: Samata Biswas, CRG & The Sanskrit College and University

Moderator: Bharat Bhushan, Senior Journalist, India.

Four experts from South Asia spoke of their respective situations:

Fatema Abedin Nazla, Journalist, Bangladesh

Meena Poudel, Migration researcher, Nepal.

Nagraj Adve, Author of *Global Warming in India: Science, Impact, and Policies*, India

Nidhi Jamwal, Gaon Connection, India.

Calcutta Research Group
In collaboration with Deutsche Welle Akademie
Presents

27.10.2022, Thursday, 6.30 PM IST

Climate disaster, migration and news reporting: a South Asian discussion

Moderator: Bharat Bhushan, Journalist & Member, CRG
Panellists: Fatema Abedin Nazla, Journalist, Bangladesh
Nidhi Jamwal, Gaon Connection, India
Meena Poudel, Migration Researcher, Nepal
Nagraj Adve, Author of *Global Warming in India: Science, Impact, and Politics*

South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and Migration
mediaofficer@merg.ac.in www.merg.ac.in @SanCdm

SAN CDM
SOUTH ASIA NETWORK FOR COMMUNICATION, DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

Link of the report: <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2022/11/15/a-report-on-climate-disaster-migration-and-news-reporting-a-south-asian-discussion/>

YouTube Link to the Recording: <https://youtu.be/p8mD15pg4Zs>

8. CRG in collaboration with DW Akademie hosted the second online discussion by SAN-CDM on "The Unseen Game: Infrastructure, Labour and the City", on 15.12.2022, at 6.00 pm IST. This event was attended by 44 persons. The participants joined enthusiastically in the discussion around migrant workers and Qatar World Cup.

Programme Schedule:

Introduction by Nasreen Chowdhory

Moderator: Bharat Bhushan

Speakers:

1. Arup K. Sen (Economist & Member, CRG, India)
2. Porimol Palma (The Daily Star, Bangladesh)
3. Pavithra Jayawardena (University of Colombo, Sri Lanka)
4. Som Prasad Lamichhane (Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee, Nepal)
5. Francis Adaikalam (Loyola College, India)

Vote of thanks : Samata Biswas

Link of the report:

<https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2022/12/27/a-report-on-the-unseen-game-infrastructure-labour-and-the-city/>

YouTube Link:

<https://youtu.be/Pul3SZQk9gE>

Poster of the event:

SOUTH ASIA NETWORK FOR COMMUNICATION, DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION (SAN-CDM)
presents its second online event on

THE UNSEEN GAME: INFRASTRUCTURE, LABOUR, AND THE CITY

organised by
Calcutta Research Group (CRG), in collaboration with DW Akademie

DATE: 15.12.2022 (THURSDAY)
TIME: 6 PM IST

Moderator: Bharat Bhushan, Journalist & Member, CRG

Panelists: Arup K. Sen, Economist & Member, CRG, India
Porimol Palma, Journalist, The Daily Star, Bangladesh
Som Prasad Lamichhane, Executive Director of Pravasi Nepali Co-Ordination Committee(PNCC), Nepal
Francis Adaikalam, Faculty in Social Work, Loyola College, India
Pavithra Jayawardena, Senior Lecturer, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Scan this code to join the meeting

After each of the two online discussions, a number of people reached out to the Programme Officer, showing their interest in joining the network.

9. Third online event: CRG in DW Akademie hosted the third online event on Refugees and Forced Migrants (South Asian Perspective) on 27.12.2022, at 1:30-3:00 pm IST. It was a need assessment meeting, conducted by Zobaer Ahmed, a Multimedia Journalist from Bangladesh working on the area of migration and refugees.

Programme Schedule:

Introduction by Samata Biswas

Participants:

Nasreen Chowdhory (India): Associate Professor Department of Political Science, Delhi University

Samata Biswas (India): Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sanskrit College and University & Blogger

Debasree Sarkar (India): Researcher; Media and Programme Officer, CRG.

Sreetapa Chakrabarty (India): Assistant Professor, Rabindra Bharati University

Debashree Chakraborty (India): Writer and Researcher, Assam University.

Niruka Sanjeevani (Sri Lanka): Senior Lecturer in International Relations at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Salwa Jahan (Bangladesh): Program Manager at Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom South Asia and communications specialist.

This needs analysis meeting was conducted to understand the needs and challenges academics face in disseminating the knowledge developed by them in their research on migration and displacement settings. One of the concerns voiced by many journalists in the South Asia Consultations was their lack of access to academic knowledge and data, which hindered their ability to present holistic and region-wide stories. Academics were also put to task for writing incomprehensibly. Simultaneously, journalists felt the need for more humanitarian and story-driven reportage. This needs analysis meeting highlighted some of the more pressing needs in this context.

Zobaer Ahmed focused on displacement as the main point of discussion and asked the participants about their respective needs from the training programme. The participants raised some important questions, such as how to disseminate the research or journalistic work but also how to make the voices of the migrants themselves understood or what impact our words have on the audience? The question of the implications of images that have deep imprints on the minds of people, ameliorating the stereotypes more and more, also came up. Another question was how can we go beyond stereotypes and cliched narratives about displacement and migration. These narratives are usually about people who are either victimised or criminalised. How can we come out of that and build real perspectives and other perspectives as well? How to breach the difference between us and them?

Also, casual references about the total number of refugees or forced migrants do not make us understand the people or the situation they are living in. Another point was that in mainstream media practices, people engaged with media needs to be sensitive about using sensitive words and sensitive images, as they can cause a lot of misrepresentation and misconception.

Another crucial point raised by the participants was that as researchers and journalists working in the field of migration and displacement, we should not be the 'trojan horse' either, and include people from the marginalised groups which are suffering. The training programme ended with the discussion about the impact and utilisation of data in news-making or storytelling. How can we make people imagine/visualise what we are writing? How to mitigate bias/ empathy/ sympathy in journalistic writing? Do we have multiple ways of getting our point

across? These were some of the queries that rightfully pointed towards the scope of another such training programme and possible ways of new collaborations in such a way that would help us remove biases and extraneous variables while writing about the displaced.

10. CRG announced the first conference/workshop of SAN-CDM, in collaboration with DW Akademie on "Forced Migration and Media in South Asia" from 4-7 February 2023 in Nepal. Interested media persons, civil society representatives, and researchers from different universities and media schools were requested to apply to this programme. CFA was sent to the stakeholders of the South Asian Consultations, the members of CRG and the network members, as well as widely disseminated on SAN-CDM and CRG's media handles. More than 60 persons applied to be part of the conference. After two rounds of discussions with DW Akademie colleagues and an external evaluator, a shortlist has been prepared, which has been shared with DW Akademie colleagues.

Poster of the CFA:



Detailed concept note for the Conference: <https://mcrg.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Displacements-and-Vulnerabilities-09..pdf>

11. Newsletter: Two newsletters have been prepared and circulated during the project period.

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MAHANIRBAN CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP

NEWSLETTER : AUGUST- OCTOBER 2022

SOUTH ASIA NETWORK FOR COMMUNICATION, DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION (SAN-CDM) NEWSLETTER

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South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and Migration
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QR code

As part of Calcutta Research Group (CRG)'s continuing programme on migration and media, the South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and Migration (SAN-CDM) in collaboration with Deutsche Welle Akademie was launched with an inaugural online event on 27 October 2022, Thursday, at 6:30 PM IST on "Climate Disaster, Migration, and New reporting: A South Asian Discussion".

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Media presence of the network:

Facebook Page: South Asia Network for Communication, Displacement and Migration
Instagram: @sancdm
Twitter: @Sandm

Link of the online landing platform of the network: <https://mcrq.in/san-cdm/>

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MAHANIRBAN CALCUTTA RESEARCH GROUP

NEWSLETTER : NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2022

SOUTH ASIA NETWORK FOR COMMUNICATION, DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION (SAN-CDM) NEWSLETTER

SOUTH ASIA NETWORK FOR COMMUNICATION, DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION (SAN-CDM)
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Recent Activities of Network Members:

- **Samata Biswas:** WISCOMP's journal Peace Prints: South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding has published an article written by Dr. Biswas on women migrant workers during Covid 19 in South Asia, focusing mainly on the Indian situation. The issue is titled "COVID-19 and Gender: Perspectives from South Asia", and it is available here: <http://wiscomp.org/peaceprints>. Another article titled "Fences, Goods and "Police" has been published in the Journal of Borderlands Studies
- **Bharat Bhushan's** article "Migrant worker deaths: The dark underbelly of Qatar Football World Cup" was published in the Refugee Watch Online: <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2022/11/08/migrant-worker-deaths-the-dark-underbelly-of-qatar-football-world-cup/>
- **Nasreen Chowdhury** co-authored an article titled "Dispossession and Displacement: Notes from South Asia" with Shamna Thacham Poyil, which was published in the Journal of Borderlands Studies. Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08865655.2022.2151032>
- **Fatema Abedin's** article titled "Labor Migration A prospect for Bangladesh" was published in the Refugee Watch Online: <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2022/09/02/labor-migration-a-prospect-for-bangladesh/#more-1748>.
- **Shahnoor Akhtar Urmi** presents an overview of media approaches to climate induced displacement. <https://refugeewatchonline.wordpress.com/2022/11/06/media-approach-towards-climate-refugees-disaster-and-displacement-in-south-asian-economy-and-society/>