

THE FORD FOUNDATION

Grant Reporting Instructions

The Ford Foundation requires narrative and financial reports from all grantees based on a schedule specified in the Grant Notification Letter. The Foundation recommends that the narrative portion of the report be **between 3-8 pages** long. The Foundation prefers to receive reports by e-mail to secretary@fordfound.org, whenever possible. If you do not have access to e-mail, you may submit the reports in hard copy by mail or fax. Please note that if you submit reports by e-mail, you should not also submit a hard copy.

Grantee Name: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group Grant Number: 1090-0358

Reporting Period: 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012

Narrative Report

Reflections

Please reflect on lessons learned, events that have been significant to your work, changes that you believe may result within the next year or so as a result of the work conducted under the grant, ways in which you believe that the work performed will help the organization achieve its long-term goals, and/or challenges or surprises you have encountered during the most recent reporting period.

Sustained research work and widespread dialogues culminated in the publication of two companion volumes – *Political Transition and Development Imperatives in India* and *New Subjects and New Governance in India* – both published by Routledge in 2012. Some more workshops were conducted. One was a two-phase program. The first phase, which was meant to set the agenda for the main program, was held in Delhi on 19-20 March 2011 under the rubric ‘Understanding Collective Action, Violence and Post-Colonial Democracy’, which was covered extensively in last year’s report. This preparatory workshop focused to a large degree on the manner in which the interactions between violence and various forms of claim-making constitute what has come to be recognized as liberal democracy. The discussions were organized into the following sub-themes: ‘Elections, Social Inequalities, and Violence’; ‘Shrinking Capacity of Democratic Institutions to Contain Violence’; ‘Patriarchy, Gender, Democracy and Violence’; and ‘Contentious Processes of Collective Claim-Making and Impact on Democracy’. One of the fundamental motifs in these discussions was that it would be erroneous to see democracy and violence as phenomena inhabiting different political spheres, since across time and space the two have existed in a state of mutual embeddedness, both shaping and transforming each other. It was resolved, thus, that the problem of understanding the relationship between violence, claim-making and democracy, at the full workshop, would not merely have to adopt various theoretical frames but would have to be approached from different disciplinary perspectives. (For a full report of the deliberations, see http://mcrq.ac.in/Development/development_announcements.asp)

Against this background, a three-day workshop was organized at Shimla in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, which is based there, on 26-28 September 2011. This workshop was also entitled “Understanding Collective Action, Violence and Post-Colonial Democracy”. The broad perspectives from which this workshop was viewed were those developed at the Delhi workshop and the same concerns informed it. Thus, two points that

emerged from the workshop were: first, that while democracies tend to outlaw violence as a basis for collective claim-making, it has to be forever in a dialogic relationship with claim-making itself; and, two, that democracies can never be perfectly the realized forms of collective life, but, in fact, are entities that are continually constituting themselves through processes of negotiation.

The workshop, spread over three days, was organized around four themes: (a) Approaches to Understanding Legality, Constitutionality, and Violence in Post-Colonial Democracy; (b) State-Building, Persistent Inequalities and Histories of Violence; (c) Patriarchy, Gender, Democracy and Violence; and (d) Democratic Institutions and Violence. (For all details of the workshop see http://mcrq.ac.in/Development/development_announcements.asp.) A publication has been planned, and CRG is now working on it.

A three-day national symposium on 'Development, Democracy and Governance' was also held in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences at its Mumbai campus on 1-3 November 2011. The idea behind the symposium was that CRG would engage with young scholars through the symposium. Accordingly, the event was structured around four broad themes, each of the clusters being led by a resource person, who explicated the theme. This was followed by papers addressing the broad theme. The papers were presented by doctoral students or young teachers or other professionals who had already earned their doctoral degrees. The four themes around which the symposium was organized were: (a) The Juridical-Political Route to Sovereignty; (b) Paradigms of Inequality, Pathways to Entitlement; (c) Second Transition: Sources of Legitimacy; and, (d) 'Scientific' Governance and The Production of Appropriate Subjects. The symposium interrogated through wide-ranging themes the connections and disconnects between development, democracy and governance. It also discussed in depth the interrelations between various elements of a democratic polity – institutions of governance, law, the civil sectors, new mechanisms of scientific governance – in the context of two political transitions: first, the transition from a colonial to a constitutional regime in the 1940s; and, second, the transition from a welfare-oriented to a neoliberal regime. The highlight of the program was the participation of young teachers, research scholars, and development activists. (For all details of the workshop see http://mcrq.ac.in/Development/development_announcements.asp.)

Work also started on the theme of logistics and governance. Under this theme, CRG inquired into the present history of setting up of new towns, the logistical aspects of labor and mobility, and the social conflicts ensuing from the new ways of organizing work places, townships, and labor deployment. This research flowed into the papers submitted to the three-day Fourth Critical Studies Conference on 'Development, Logistics, and Governance' organized by the CRG on 8-10 September, 2011. A total of 18 papers were presented at the workshop on a broad range of themes but all within the rubric of the conference title. We were concerned to explore, briefly, how the notion of logistics links governance and development. (For a detailed report visit

http://www.mcrq.ac.in/dg_critical.htm and http://www.mcrq.ac.in/F_C_Conference/D_L_Governance.htm)

We had also organized a panel discussion on 'Writing the Contemporary History of Bengal', which brought together people from various arenas. The panel itself had a civil rights activist, a retired bureaucrat, two academics and a journalist. The speakers approached the project from widely varying perspectives; the reactions of the audience were not merely divergent but at times quite sharply antagonistic. Since the discussion took place in the almost immediate wake of a regime change – from that of the Left Front which had ruled West Bengal for 34 years to that of a populist opposition which had fought it bitterly – the discussion inevitably got

entangled in political and ideological meshes. Many of the disagreements were directly connected to the politics of the time: for instance, there was the fundamental question of chronology. One current of opinion was that the contemporary history of Bengal should date from 1977, the year the Left Front came to power. The contrarian view favored a longer temporal framework going back to 1947, when India achieved independence. Obviously, this had much to do with how the Left Front's years in power would be evaluated. For details see http://mcrq.ac.in/Development/development_announcements.asp

In short in the third year of the programme, three main things happened – (a) the research and dialogue of past two years culminated in publications; (b) the engagement with the ideas of governance, development, and democracy became deeper, with newer methods, newer ways of engaging with the theme, and newer issues coming under examination; and (c) the work drew a greater number of people, forged new collaborations, and strengthened CRG's network of researchers and activists.

Activities/Issues Addressed

For project support grants, please comment on the work done in regard to the proposed activities in the grant proposal. For general support grants, please comment on developments on the issues addressed in the grant proposal.

Activities/Issues Addressed in Proposal

- Research
- Organization of dialogues, conference, workshops, public forums, and public lectures.
- Organization of web based material for wider circulation, interaction, and web based print publications.

Activities/Issues Addressed

- **Research**

The research under the governance project has now resulted in the publication of two volumes – (a) *Political Transition and Development Imperatives in India*; and (b) *New Subjects and New Governance in India*.

This did not, however, mark an end to further research in related areas. At the Shimla/Delhi workshop on 'Understanding Collective Action, Violence and Post-Colonial Democracy', Samir Kumar Das presented a paper on 'Institutions, Equality and Violence: Reflections on the State of Democracy in Contemporary India'; Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chowdhury on 'Elections and Violence'; and Suhit K. Sen on 'Congress and Bureaucracy: Contesting Sovereignty'.

At the National Symposium on 'Development and Democracy' at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Suhit K. Sen spoke as resource person on the 'Juridical-Political Route to Sovereignty', which extended his earlier work on governance, while Samir K. Das spoke as resource person on 'Governance and the Production of Appropriate Subjects', which incorporated research done in the Northeast.

Some new research was incorporated in papers presented at the Critical Studies Conference on 'Development, Logistics, and Governance'. Ranabir Samaddar read a paper entitled 'The Wall is an Apparatus', which was later published in *Policies and Practices* 44; Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chowdhury presented a paper entitled 'Logistics of Elections in India: A Critique'; Atig Ghosh read a paper entitled 'The Final Making of Colonial Jalpaiguri, 1865-1900'; and Agnibho Gangopadhyay read a paper entitled 'Planning a Fantastic Revolution: Texts and Cases Towards a Logistics of Resistance'.

Apart from this, Ranabir Samaddar and Suhit K. Sen are involved in a research project that explores the construction of a new township in Rajarhat, a place on the northeastern outskirts of Kolkata. They are looking at issues connected to changing patterns of economic organization, labour deployment and governance in the context of the destruction of an agrarian economy and consequent displacement and its replacement by a mainly residential township with enclaves of a service economy. The work on governance also extended to an examination of the policy to create new townships – both at national and state level, and focused on the new township programme at Rajarhat, which has caused enormous social conflicts. Two rounds of discussion and a one-day workshop (7 September 2011) were held on this issue. Urban governance (relating to certain forms of labor in new townships) was discussed at length, with comparisons being made between Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata. This work has been done partly in collaboration with the Transit Labor program initiated by the Western Sydney University and the international network associated with it.

- **Organization of Dialogues, Conference, Workshops, Public Forums, and Public Lectures**

These have been listed above.

- **Public Lectures**

1. **Seppala Tiina**, 'Movements against Neoliberal Development in India: The Case of Rajarhat New Town Project in Kolkata', 15 March 2012.
2. **Leonie Ansems de Vries**, 'On the Immobility of Political Life', 15 May 2012.
3. **Ivan Ivekovic**, 'Egypt's Uncertain Transition', 18 January 2012.
4. **Sita Venkateswar**, On her book *The Politics of Indigeneity, Dialogues and Reflections on Indigenous Activism*, 7 January 2012.
5. **Mithilesh Kumar**, 'Chronicle of a Man-made Disaster Foretold: Bihar Floods 2011', 28 November 2011.
6. **Slbaji Pratim Basu**, 'Chronicle of a Forgotten Food Movement', 28 November 2011.
7. **Peter Burgess**, 'The Ethical Subject of Security', 22 September 2011.
8. **Mithilesh Kumar**, 'Logistics of Labour Migration: A Case Study of Bihar', 24 August 2011.
9. **Anisha Dutta**, 'Eugenics and Macro-Motherhood in the Name of a "Sustha" Nation-state', 22 July 2011.

10. **Ranabir Samaddar**, 'Rajarhat Beyond Kolkata – An Urban Dystopia', 11 July 2011.
11. **Suhit K. Sen**, 'Bizarre Urbanity: The Unmaking of Rajarhat', 11 July 2011.
12. **Ishita Dey**, 'New Labour in New Town', 11 July 2011.
13. **Janam Mukherjee**, 'Hungry Bengal: War Famine and End of Empire, 1939-46', 22 June 2011
14. **Suhit K. Sen**, 'Indira Gandhi and the Subversion of Indian Democracy?' 18 May 2011.
15. **Brett Neilsen**, 'Logistics and the Sovereign Machine of Governance, 9 May 2011.
16. **Ned Rossiter**, 'Of Life, Labour and Logistics', 9 May 2011
17. **Mithilesh Kumar**, 'Prism of Partition: Historiography and Manipur', 20 April 2011

- **Organization of web segment**

The web segment of the program has been updated to include the primary sources used by the researchers and links to other institutions working around the same theme. The draft research papers also have been put up in the resource centre. A comprehensive list of related documents, as suggested by the researchers, has been uploaded. Many of these documents are also available in print at CRG resource centre. The reports of the above mentioned workshop, symposium, panel discussion and conference are also available in the web segment.

The CRG website is a rich and popular source of not only information but dialogue as well. Till date, we have received almost 56,200 visits on our website. We constantly update it and provide the relevant reports and the details of the progress of the program through our web segment. The details of the program are available on <http://mcrg.ac.in/ddg.htm>. These reports are sent (both electronically as well as in the form of hard copy) to the researchers involved with the program as well as the almost 50-strong research collective that has now been formed.

- **Publications**

Books

- (a) Ranabir Samaddar and Suhit Sen (eds), *Political Transition and Development Imperatives in India*, Routledge, 2012.
- (b) Ranabir Samaddar and Suhit Sen (eds), *New Subjects and New Governance in India*, Routledge, 2012.

Under the Policies and Practices (research paper) series:

- Eva Pfostl and Jean-Louis Halperin, *Law and Democratic Governance: Two Studies from Europe* (40)
- Ranabir Samaddar and Anja Kanneiser, *Two Essays on Security Apparatus* (44)
- Sajal Nag, *A Gigantic Panopticon: Counter-Insurgency and Modes of Disciplining in Northeast India* (46)
- Sarbani Sen: *Public Interest Litigation in India: Implications for Law and Development*. (47)

 Indicators of Success

Please compare the original proposed indicators of success with the results achieved to date. Comment on any variances you feel require explanation.

Indicators of Success Identified in Proposal

- The quality, particularity, and the cogency of the work produced- and this can be understood only through public recognition of the impact of the work.
- Finding out if and how many new and competent researchers and participants in the dialogues have entered the program, and the quality of the diversity in dialogues and workshops.
- Attaining diversity of the locations and participants of the interactive programs.
- Maintenance of the time schedule through 3 years.
- The number of people accessing resources generated by program- web, print, library, and human resources etc.
- Success in coming into contact with new networks working on similar issues and concerns.
- Finally, and significantly, it will be a great test of the program as to whether CRG will be able to create through this work an impact on the terms of the discourse on developmental governance in West Bengal, where conflicts have become acute and violent over claims and counter-claims.

Actual Results to Date

- The publication of the two companion volumes is a significant achievement. Its reception and recognition will allow us to gain access to the insights of readers regarding the quality of work produced. This is also true of the Policies and Practices series. We must continue to endeavor to ensure a wide circulation.
- The workshops mentioned above have brought into our fold numerous scholars of international repute and have allowed us to exchange ideas vis-à-vis the program, as we had mentioned in our report for the previous year. There is a strong research collective involving almost 50 researchers across the world. This has been strengthened by our collaboration this year with TISS and IIAS.
- CRG is extremely particular in ensuring that the program involves people with diverse backgrounds and the results are disseminated to a wide variety of audience. The researchers involved with the program come from different backgrounds in terms of gender, location, ethnicity and caste. Also, the research collective involves scholars and activists from the Northeast of India as well.
- We think we have been successful in meeting our commitments keeping our time schedule intact. As mentioned earlier, our dialogue component benefited from our collaborations.
- The dissemination of published material especially *Policies and Practices* can be improved and we are trying to extend our reach, as mentioned above.

- The web resources are being used extensively by researchers as is evident by the number of visits to the site.
 - Through various dialogues, workshops, seminars and through the web and publications, the program is now well known.
 - We extended the field of study by bringing in new issues under discussion, for instance, the study of the new township near Kolkata, the relation between democracy and violence, and regime change and its impact on governance.
1. However, because of state elections in 2011 and the massive cyclone in the same year, some of the activities could not be completed. We already informed the Ford Foundation of the difficult time in West Bengal in 2011 and therefore the reasons as to why we had to reschedule some of our activities. These will be completed in the next seven months (April-October 2012), on the basis of the plan given below:

Plan for 2012 (April – October)

1. We shall hold a one day workshop on “Areas of further research on governance, development, and democracy”. This will be held on 4 May 2012. The workshop will coincide with a discussion of the two books and the research reports brought out as a result of work in the last three years. About thirty scholars, teachers, and development activists will join the discussion. This workshop hopefully not only will be a fruitful review of the work, it will also identify new areas of study and stabilise the network produced out of the three years of work.
2. We shall continue the research on the role of logistics in a regime of developmental democracy. The work on new towns will continue. We shall collaborate with the CSCS in holding a workshop on migrants and digitization of identity. We shall bring out certain short reports. We have planned a discussion on 29 June 2012.
3. We shall bring out some Bengali and Hindi translations of the work done till so far.
4. Finally we shall hold a local dialogue in North Bengal on the broad theme of the programme sometime around September 2012.
5. The extended phase of the programme will end on 31 October 2012. A full report on the basis of the entire work (2009-2012) will be published for wide distribution.

Goals

Please help us understand what you achieved with this grant in relationship to the larger goals you hoped to achieve.

Expected Goals to be Achieved

Long-term goals

- Developing the knowledge base on some of the most critical issues facing India and other post-colonial countries, namely, conflicts over development, challenges for developmental governance, new types of mass response to developmental disorders, impact on democracy and current modes of representation and response.
- Developing the policy fund by concretizing the scattered experiences of both governmental responses to public views, and public dialogues on the development programs.

- Finally foregrounding the issue of a dialogic democracy in the conflict-prone context of development, globalization, and governance.

Short term and Concrete Goals

- Publishing seven to nine research papers in this period, and subsequently publish research monographs and volumes.
- Bringing the decade long research and discussion on some of the critical aspects of post-colonial democracy to a focused conclusion.
- Strengthening the network of development and rights activists in select areas through the program of dialogues, public forums, and public lectures.
- Bringing in new researchers and involving new interlocutors from diverse backgrounds.
- Strengthening the CRG website as an important tool for discussion, archiving, and interaction. This will work in consonance with print based literature circulation and face to face discussion- all these taken together resulting in diffusion of the policy knowledge exercise on development and democracy.
- Dissemination of the outputs of the exercise among the community of scholars and activists in select areas through distribution of reports of the dialogues, workshops, and other exchanges.
- Making effective policy interventions through the program.

Goals Achieved to Date

Long-term goals

- The two volumes that have been published are a collection of studies, as mentioned in the earlier report. While they were in the process of preparation, they helped bring into focus critical issues of violence, collective action, development, elections, gender issues, governance etc, in post-colonial democracies. They are a comprehensive survey of these issues and will throw new light on problems plaguing post-colonial democracies.
- Research materials, dialogues and conferences based on the program bring together works of various scholars and are an attempt to bring to the table diverse views on democracy, development and governance. The discussions in these activities as well as the ongoing research have policy implications. The participation of activists in the dialogues ensures that these discussions do not only have academic value but is taken up by people to propagate the necessary policy discourse. We have mentioned this in the previous report. Here we would like to add that our collaboration with IAS is very important in this respect and that the program on writing the contemporary history of Bengal was framed by these considerations and included, both as speakers and participants, people from various relevant fields apart from academics, preeminently, bureaucrats, activists and journalists.
- CRG's research interests have always included the issues of governance and development in the perspective of conflict. Even in this program, there was substantial involvement of scholars and activists from Northeast India and scholars working on issues relating to democratic institutions. Governance and development have foregrounded the issue of dialogic democracy. This, too, we have mentioned earlier.

Short-term and Concrete Goals

- The details of publications have been mentioned above.

- The research work and dialogues are an attempt to bring into relief the fragmented work on issues and come up with concrete policy recommendations and research results.
- CRG in its dialogue program makes it a point to involve activists in the program, as mentioned earlier. Human rights activists have participated in all the dialogue programs.
- The network involving scholars has expanded, as mentioned above.
- The list of participants in the various dialogues and workshops are a testimony that CRG has succeeded in bringing into its fold new scholars and interlocutors from diverse backgrounds.
- The web segment has been updated and new materials are being added regularly. Please see above.
- Dissemination of published material requires sustained efforts and those are being made in earnest.
- There was one failure in meeting the schedule set in the beginning. Because of the state elections and the massive floods in West Bengal in 2010-2011 we had to delay some of our filed work and programs. Therefore about 20 per cent of the work remained to be completed – under research and workshops heads. This we plan to do in the next six months (April-September 2012).

Organizational/Environmental Changes

Please describe any significant organizational or environmental changes that have had an impact on your work during the most recent reporting period. Include a description of how you have responded to those changes and how your plans may change as a result.

1. In the third year of the program, a research and program associate involved in the running the project has had to leave to pursue higher studies. A new team had to be set up at short notice to carry on the work. This was also an additional factor in delaying the completion of the work as planned and scheduled earlier. We now hope to complete the rest (about 20 per cent of the work in 2011-12 in the next seven months (April-October 2012).

Organizational or Management Challenges

Please review any significant organizational or management issues you have experienced during the most recent reporting period (such as significant changes in your staff or board composition or other factors that could hinder the organization's ability to gather and interpret financial or program-related data). Please also highlight any outstanding needs for organizational strengthening.

As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest challenges that CRG faces is the organization of the research collective. Researchers are drawn from various parts of India and abroad, cutting across several disciplines. It was a challenge to ensure quality as well as form a strong research collective, which now consists of almost 50 scholars.

Diversity

Please describe any changes in the forms of diversity (e.g., gender, racial, cultural, religious, immigrant/refugee background, linguistic, etc.) to the Board or staff composition over the reporting period. If your organization has had any recent diversity challenges, please comment on these as well.

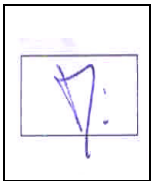
No. there has not been any significant change in the profile of diversity.

Financial Report

Please use the separate Grant Financial Report worksheet to report expenditures of grant funds in each of the budget categories.

Certification

Please type your initials in the box next to the following certification if it is accurate. If you are unable to do so, please contact your Grants Administrator before submitting this report.



By submission of this report we hereby certify that the individual submitting this report is authorized to submit it on behalf of the organization and that we are in compliance with the requirements of the grant letter and that any funds expended have been expended in accordance with the purposes of the grant.

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