A Youth Meet

Crafting Peace & Justice Politics Today

25-27 January 2023
Darjeeling, India

'Life did not stand still and it was necessary to live'
Tolstoy

Contents

Preface

The world is going through a turbulent time, not just suffice to say of resource crisis, of wars and violence but also a crisis of ideology that has even a deeper impact on our lives as one might say war accompanies peace, crisis accompanies abundance in a cyclical force of time of varying dimensions and lengths but a change in the outlook of society or crisis of ideology is more venomous and sometimes irreversible. It's a ditch that nation-states make without a return path as it is easy to wedge a war but it is difficult to alter the mindset of society that not even a war can change. And incidents across the world whether it is the women's right to suffrage, abortion, education, or LGBTQIA+ rights of equal citizenship, expendable lives of the outcastes and many more such hierarchisation of rights, the twenty-first century have slowly started to shed off its many legacies of planning democracy, republicanism that decolonisation of twentieth century entailed. The unwritten clarions of separatism and exclusivism have led to a divided society. Such realisations entail the girder of who belongs and who does not. And it is this disjuncture or faultlines that numerous individuals, civil society organisations, and to some extent certain state agencies try to cement the gap; although they might not have been able to create a valley of equal status, attempt to create a staircase to achieve the vision of equal rights.

As the world and the foundational ideas of modern society, that of liberty, equality and fraternity are in disarray, and the future is blur than ever before, we gather our minds and strengths together here in Darjeeling to reflect and recollect with the warmth in our hearts, that blades of an egalitarian society will one day bloom. The three-day Youth Meet on "Crafting Peace and Justice Politics Today" organized by Calcutta Research Group and the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna from 25-27 January 2023 in Darjeeling will attempt to reflect, recollect and discuss the social experiments of peace and politics of justice today.

A Youth Meet

Crafting Peace & Justice Politics Today
25-27 January 2023
Darjeeling, India

Calcutta Research Group & Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna

Day 1: 25 January 2023

5:00-5:30 PM   **Tea & Registration**

Introductory Session: Chair, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & CRG, Kolkata*

5:30-5:50 PM   **Welcome Address,** Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury;
                                 Introducing the Youth Meet, Shatabdi Das, *Researcher, CRG, Kolkata*
5:50-6:10 PM   **Introduction by Participants**
6:10-6:30 PM   **Calcutta Riots: Introductory Remarks,** Ranabir Samaddar, *Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, CRG Kolkata*
6:30-6:40 PM   **Photo Display: Trail of Blood: Calcutta Killings of 1946 & Its Aftermath,** Artist: Dipanwita Saha, *Software Engineer, IBM, and Visual Artist, India*
6:40-6:55 PM   **Discussion**
6:55-7:00 PM   **Vote of Thanks,** Rituparna Datta, *Researcher, CRG, Kolkata*

7:00 PM   **Welcome Dinner**

Day 2: 26 January 2023

9:00-9:30 AM	**Registration**

9:30-11:00 AM **Gender Sketches**
Facilitator: Sabir Ahamed, *Pratichi (India) Trust & CRG, Kolkata*

Speakers
Shahina Javed, *Roshni, Kolkata*
Amina Khatoon, Empowering Women in Howrah through Howrah City Pilot Project
Sangbida Lahiri, Women, Solidarity & Social Leadership in Bengal during the Pandemic, *Doctoral Fellow, Department of South & South-East Asian Studies, University of Calcutta, Kolkata*
[15 Mins each presentation/talk & 45 mins Discussion/Q&A]

11:00-11:30 AM **Tea**

11:30 AM-1::00 PM **Voices from Socialscape**
Facilitator: Shatabdi Das

Speakers
Sabir Ahamed, Data for Social Justice: Issues and Challenges
Anagha C.R., Dealing with Depression, A Lesson from a Case Study, *Daya Rehabilitation Trust (Thanal), Calicut*
Padam Nepal, Environment & Peace Politics, *St. Josephs's College, Darjeeling* [T.B.C.]
[15 Mins each presentation/talk & 45 mins Discussion/Q&A]

1:00-2:00 PM	Lunch
3:00-5:00 PM	**Film Screening: Calcutta, A Migrant City** **Facilitator: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury**
3:00-4:00 PM	**Calcutta: A Migrant City [Part I] &** **Tale of a Migrant City [Part II]**
4:00-4:20 PM	**Tea**
4:20-4:40 PM	**City of Transit [Part III]**
4:40-5:15 PM	**Discussion**

Day 3: January 2023

9:00-9:30 AM **Registration**

9:30-11:00 AM **Congruence & Consonance**
Facilitator: Rajat Kanti Sur, *Researcher, CRG, Kolkata*
Speakers
Indira Tayeng, Songs from Cracked Pavements, *University of Delhi, New Delhi*
Martemjen Jamir, Fading Science: The Invaluable Naga Indigenous Knowledge, *Center for Indigenous Culture and Environmental Studies (CICEs), Nagaland.*
Kajal Limbu Subba, Everyday Gendered Gorkha Identity, *Darjeeling*
 [15 mins of presentation each & 45 mins of discussion/Q&A]

11:00-11:30 AM	**Tea**

11:30AM-1:00 PM   **Unequal Worlds**
Facilitator: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury

Speakers
Bincy Maria N., Muted Voice and Gendered Body: The Visible Invisibility of Dalit Christian Women in Kerala, *Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal*
Biraja Nandan Mishra, Could Visibility Liberate Me? Doing Transness and Being Political, *Nirantar, Delhi*
Rajat Kanti Sur, Fight for Basic rights: Working Women from Marginal Professions, *CRG, Kolkata*
[15 mins of presentation each & 45 Mins of Discussion/Q&A]

1:00-2:00 PM   **Lunch**

2:00-4:00 PM   **Creative Cues**
Facilitator: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury

2:00-2:45 PM   **One Act Plays**
U. Thilagavathi, Welcome to the World of Women, *Madras High Court & Vanaam Voice for Change, Chennai*
Abhipsa Chakraborti, Migratories, *The Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata*
[15 mins for each presentation & 15 mins of discussion/Q&A]

2:45-3:30 PM   **Reading Session: Subhankar Sengupta,** Empowering Women as an Approach to Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, *AAMRA: Ek Sachetan Prayas, Kolkata*

3:30-4:00 PM	**Tea**
4:00-5:00 PM	**Media Renditions**
	Facilitator: Ranabir Samaddar
	Speakers
	Martin Butler, On Media Fabrications of Migration & Migrant Subjectivities, *University of Oldenburg, Germany*
	Sadiq Naqvi, Migration & Local Media in India's Northeast*, DownToEarth, Delhi*
	[20 mins for each presentation & 20 mins for discussion/Q&A]
5:00-5:15 PM	**Valedictory Comments**
	Katharina Hasewend, *Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna*
	Evangelos Karagiannis, *Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna*
5:15-5:20 PM	**Vote of Thanks,** Shatabdi Das

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This schedule is tentative and subject to change

Participant Profile

Abhipsa Chakraborti [She]

Abhipsa Chakraborti is currently doing Masters in English from The Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata, India. She is a theatre activist and is attached to the theatre group *Ichapur Aleya*. They are increasingly trying to take plays to intimate spaces and community spaces, educational institutions, and cultural organisations. She also directed short dramas such as *'Raam-Rahim'*, and 'Macbeth'. She also wrote dramas, which are *'Paunopunik'* and *'Je Bhabani ke dekechilo'* and have directed several *giti-alekhya*, basically collages of songs and proses. Apart from theatre, she also practices *Rabindrasangeet*.

Amina Khatoon [She]

Amina Khatoon is the Secretary of Howrah City Pilot Project (HPP) since 1998. She holds Masters degree in Urdu, Sociology, and Mass Communication & Journalism. Her work with HPP includes running the *Talimi Haq* school. She is the President of *Shibpur Idara Ittehad-ul-Khawateen* (SIIK), a women's organisation. She has also written various journalistic pieces for local newspapers.

Anagha C. R. [She]

Anagha is working as Officer-CSR, Grant Management at NGO Daya Rehabilitation Trust (Thanal), a philanthropic organization headquartered in Calicut, Kerala. Before joining Thanal, she was working as a Research Assistant at Mental Health Action Trust (MHAT) in a project aimed at enhancing Mental Health Literacy (MHL) in urban and rural Kerala, conducted by the De Montfort University, UK. Prior to that, she was research assistant at Centre for Socio-economic and Environmental Studies (CSES), Kochi, Kerala. She holds M. Phil. in Political Science from the University of Hyderabad and M.A. in International Relations and Politics from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala. Her research interests include women and labour, the gender paradox in Kerala and mental health in Kerala.

Bincy Maria N. [She]

Bincy maria N. is a doctoral research scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal. Her research primarily focuses on caste, gender and religious conversion of Dalits in Kerala. She has been conducting motivational sessions, discussions, and career-oriented classes for students and youngsters from marginalized communities since 2012. During her post-graduation period, she got the opportunity to participate in the education and empowerment program for Dalit women. Currently, she is working on indigenous knowledge, alternative epistemology and cultural representations of Dalit women in Kerala.

Biraja Nandan Mishra [She]

Biraja N. Mishra is a researcher and a gender trainer who happens to be a non-binary transgender person. Their current research includes working with men, boys and masculinities. After completing his Master in Gender Studies, he has been working on digital media, community media, queer rights and sexual and reproductive rights with intersections of gender. He has worked with The YP Foundation, UNESCO Chair on Community Media, and Human Rights Law

Network in different professional capacities. He actively engages with right-based advocacy for the transgender community and right to food and anti-mining movements in Odisha. His research interests include labour rights, gender justice and universal public services.

Evangelos Karagiannis [He]

Evangelos Karagiannis is the research and publications co-ordinator with Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna. He has his M.A. in Social Anthropology and Balkan Studies and Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the Free University Berlin. Previously he was research associate, University of Osnabrück, Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (2000-2002), Research Associate, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), Germany (2002-2004), Assistant Professor and Project Leader, University of Zurich, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology (2004-2012).

Indira Tayeng [She]

Indira Tayeng, is enrolled in Ph.D. programme in University of Delhi. She is working on how migrants in the borderlands navigate their sense of belonging overtime in a region where they are situated, and in asserting their identity in those spaces how they come to influence the policy-making of the state, or not. Her work majorly speaks about the borderland lives which often go unnoticed in major policy-making decisions of the state, due to which we observe a peculiar phenomenon of lifestyle in the borderland areas where the border between postcolonial countries are not only cartographically disastrous but also paves a way to a skewed understanding of "belonging" for people living there.

Kajal Limbu Subba [She]

Kajal L.Subba has her research interest in the changing narratives of Gorkha community in Darjeeling and her Master's dissertation was focused on women's participation in 2007 Gorkhaland Movement. She worked as a development apprentice with Professional Assistance for Development Action and primarily worked with the Juango Community, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribe (PVT) in the Keonjhar district of Odisha She was working with ATREE to understand the socio-political and economic gaps and constraints of nature climate solutions at policy as well as implementation levels.

Katharina Hasewend [She]

Katharina Hasewend is the Executive Director with the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna. She has worked with others on the book 'When Democracies Go Under Democratically" (2019).

Martemjen Jamir [He]

Martemjen Jamir is a founder member of Center for Indigenous Culture and Environmental Studies (CICEs), Nagaland. He has authored the book, "Biodiversity conservation, Indigenous Knowledge and Practices: A Naga perspective" and "Apalener" (A biography of Chubainba in local Ao dialect). He did his Ph.D. from Nagaland University, and political education studies from Brazil and has participated in various programs under UNCBD, WIPO etc. Interested in studying and documenting the myriad of indigenous knowledge and practices of Nagas and other Indigenous communities all over the world.

Martin Butler [He]

Martin Butler is Professor of American Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Oldenburg, Germany. His research focuses on popular culture, specifically on music of protest and resistance, on audiovisual media and their representation of science, on forms and figures of cultural mobility, and on cultures of participation in new media environments. Apart from a broad range of articles in these fields, he published a monograph on Woody Guthrie (Voices of the Down and Out, 2007) and co-edited nine essay collections, including Hybrid Americas: Contacts, Contrasts, and Confluences in New World Literatures and Cultures. 2008, with Josef Raab); Precarious Alliances: Cultures of Participation in Print and Other Media (with Albrecht Hausmann and Anton Kirchhofer, 2015) etc., as well as a volume on Resistance: Subjects, Representations and Contexts (2017, with Paul Mecheril and Lea Brenningmeyer)

Rajat Kanti Sur [He]
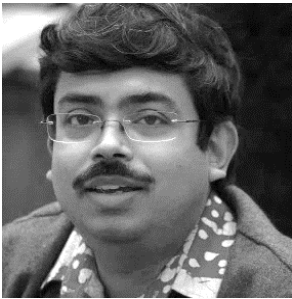
Rajat Kanti Sur is associated with CRG since 2020. He did his Ph.D. at the University of Calcutta. He has previously worked with TISS (Patna Centre); The National Library, Kolkata; Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta; and *Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee.* He has keen interest in urban studies, popular culture, public health, and labour studies. He is currently working on the role of cooperative formation as an alternative method to overcome the socio-economic crisis of marginal and migrant workers.

Padam Nepal [He]

Padam Nepal is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling. His research interest are in alternative Social Research Methodologies, Critical Epistemologies and Pedagogies, Hydro-politics, Environmental and Green Political Theory, Folk and Cultural Dimensions of Politics, Micropolitics of Development of Marginal Communities, Politics of Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Livelihood Studies, Politics of Recognition and Identity, Gender and transgender studies, Methodologies of Collective Action Studies, and Spatial, Symbolic and Material Mediations of Social Movements.

Ranabir Samaddar [He]
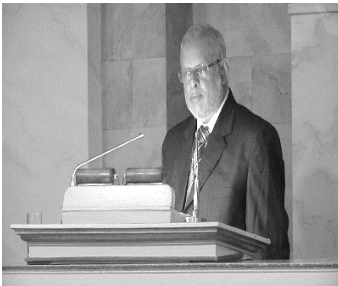
Ranabir Samaddar is Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group, India. He belongs to the critical school of thinking and is considered as one of the foremost theorists in the field of migration and forced migration studies. A few among his recent works are India's Migrant Workers and the Pandemic (2021, co-edited), Borders of an Epidemic (2020), The Postcolonial Age of Migration (2020), Neo-Liberal Strategies of Governing India (2019), Migrants and the Neoliberal City (2018).

Sabir Ahamed [He]

Sabir Ahamed is the National Research Coordinator at Pratichi Institute, Pratichi (India) Trust. His research interests include digital disparity, the socio-economic status of Muslims in India, child protection, and education. He is adept at dealing with official statistics of India including NSS, Census, DISE, AISHS etc. He is trained in data analysis software like Stata and R. His role as National Research Coordinator entails participation in research planning, execution of research plans, and overseeing the financial management of the research and project activities. Aside from his research activities, he has utilized and popularized the Right to Information Act 2005 in West Bengal for building transparency and accountability in governance. Also, he is an active member of 'Know Your Neighbour', a campaign promotes dialogue among various communities. He has been contributing op-ed pieces on various development issues for regional and English dailies for the last ten years.

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury [He]
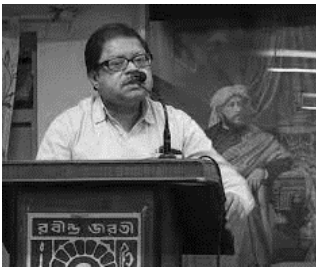
Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury is Professor in the Department of Political Science at Rabindra Bharati University, and the Honorary Director of the Calcutta Research Group, India. His areas of research interest include global politics, South Asian politics, and refugees, migration, democracy and human rights in the Global South. Among his publications are The Rohingya in South Asia: People without a State (2018), Sustainability of Rights after Globalisation (2012), Internal Displacement in South Asia: The Relevance of UN Guiding Principles (2005).

Sadiq Naqvi [He]

Sadiq Naqvi is a journalist with DownToEarth. He writes extensively on issues of identity politics in Northeast India. He has presented his work in CRG's Media workshop in association with IWM-RLS-CJAI on 'Climate Migration, Disaster, Displacement and the Role of Media' in 2022. He has reported widely on coal mine mishaps in Meghalaya, health infrastructures and condition of migrant labourers and tea garden workers during the pandemic, pollution, climate disasters, and narratives of shelter, safety, refuge and passage. He has also written for *Al Jazeera*. Times of India, Bloomberg News, NDTV and others.

Shatabdi Das [She]

Shatabdi Das is Researcher at the Calcutta Research Group, India. Her research interests include migration studies, borderlands, displacement, environment, urban issues and climate change. She has a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Calcutta. She was a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna in Austria, in April 2022.

Subhankar Sengupta [He]

Subhankar Sengupta is a freelance photographer and filmmaker. He grew up in the adjacent area of Telinipara of Bhadreswar Hooghly, a communally sensitive area, he witnessed severe violence and communal conflict since his childhood. These memories led him to work independently and with different collectives in different regions of West Bengal and India to explore the narratives of conflicts and resistance. He also documents the struggle of indigenous people due to forceful land acquisition and authoritative atrocities, resistance against environmental crises etc. His photographs and video reportage on communal conflict, farmer protests, tribal unrests are exhibited publicly in public spaces of West Bengal. Currently, he is pursuing a postgraduate certificate course on 'Aesthetic, criticism and theory' from *Jnanapravaha,* Mumbai.

Sangbida Lahiri [She]

Sangbida Lahiri is a researcher in Social Science who did her Ph.D.(submitted) at University of Calcutta. She worked on the History students' politics during early Twentieth Century Bengal. Her area of research interest includes gender, labour and migration also. Formerly she was a journalist at *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and *Ei Samay*, TOI. Presently she writes op-eds and is involved with civil right activism. She is keen to write pieces on the rights of women and Children in Bengal in vernacular (Bengali).

Shahina Javed [She]

Shahina Javed is the founder member of NGO Roshni. Roshni Youth Group is a community-based organization. It is led by young girls from the community. Apart from working on gender and rights issues, she also works on reproductive health rights, diversity, human rights, and recently on combatting climate change impact. She received the Thoughtshop Foundation Fellowship in 2008.

U. Thilagavathi [She]

Thilagavathi is an advocate with the Madras High Court. She is a writer, poet, human rights activist, intersectional feminist, orator and trainer for gender sensitization, self-defense trainer, media speaker and social media influencer. She assists tribal people in rural parts of Tamil Nadu to get their *pattas* and Legal rights and scheme. She extensively works with marginalised groups including physically challenged, LGBTQIA+ Community, sex workers, domestic workers, tribes, Dalit and also with environmental groups. She is the recipient of the Justice Bhagwati Award for Human Rights Law and International Law, Dr. Ambedkar Law University; Justice Fathima Beevi Award for best female Advocate, World Women Wing; World Changer Award, "Latchiya Magudam" (Cresentia); & Emerging leader in upholding constitution Award 2022 Young People for Politics.

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Overview of Themes

Empowering Females Howrah through the Howrah City Pilot Project

Amina Khatoon

Howrah City Pilot Project (HPP) focuses on women, adolescent girls, and children's health and education, with a special focus on family planning. It is not easy to address such issues in the Muslim community. To overcome this, we began teaching sewing classes and providing information about family planning and health alongside. This approach ensures that there is no stigma associated with women attending our center. Following our initial work with women, we decided to start working with adolescent girls, who are at an earlier stage of their life where they still need to make family planning decisions. To deliver additional health services, we partner with other organisations, such as Mary Stopes. Through this, we offer women the option to undergo tubal ligation as a form of permanent birth control based on their informed consent. We have recently also started to provide tailoring classes to young girls, as a means of generating a source of income. As well as teaching them the skills they require, we source work that provides earnings. In the last year, we have received an order to make school uniforms for the Government of West Bengal. We plan to continue this work and increase the number of girls we have trained on an annual basis.

Roshni

Shahina Javed

Roshni Youth Group began as an informal collective of ten young people in 2008-09 to create awareness and understanding on gender, gender-based violence, etc. Roshni got associated with South Asia We Can End All Violence Against Women Campaign and got an in 2009-10. Roshni Youth Group registered as a Society in 2013-14. Acceptance of Roshni Youth Group started the community safe space initiative where women and girls can reach to talk about and take action against gender-based violence in 2012-13. Roshni member got selected for a national level Changelooms programme in 2015-16. They took the initiative to start the first-ever team of girls' footballers in Roshni, as well as in a community where girls cannot play a game or sport in 2016. It is an important achievement for Roshni especially as Muslim girls are often discouraged from taking part in sports or wearing sports uniforms. In 2016 the core group member participated in the We Can International meet in Thailand represented by eight countries; working on Art Therapy in 2017; partnership with I Partner India in 2018. They also took initiative in the recent years to formalize the girls' football team. They also started legal support for women. Roshni core group member was nominated by the American Centre for a one-month learning exposure to the US in 2019. Roshni Football Team was selected and awarded the Global Resilience Fund in 2020. Roshni was elected for the Simmering Solidarity Global Rights Summit in 2021.

Women, Solidarity, and Social Leadership in Bengal

Sangbida Lahiri

The question of solidarity in Bengal has an old root in history. Whenever there has been a crisis women stood in the first row their roles have hardly been recognised in historical writings. Women's participation to save, standing in solidarity for others, or giving leadership in the foreground of a battle against crisis could be seen during the 1942 famine in undivided Bengal, during the refugee crisis at the time of partition of India-Pakistan in 1947, or during the birth of Bangladesh nation in 1971 or so on. Unfortunately, the effort of women at multifarious levels while in crisis, sometimes to save their own families, sometimes to save others' lives, or sometimes to develop a network of solidarity or to give leadership to grow this network, remained a small tale of in the greater narrative of struggle.

In the last two years, as we have seen a worldwide pandemic, again it is to be noticed how women fought earnestly to survive during crisis time. During the spread of Covid-19, in 2020 Indian government called for a nationwide lockdown suddenly, which affected thousands of families for several months. The media channels depicted the plights of migrant workers, who started walking barefoot to return to their homeland after the call for lockdown on the 25th of April, 2020. NDTV, The Telegraph, The Indian Express and several digital media platforms, depicted how these workers were facing starvation, death and road accidents while they were walking thousands of miles to reach their homes. Many people stood in solidarity with these people, organised crowdfunding to feed them or to give them shelter at night while they were walking. However, what happened after the workers returned to their homes was not broadly covered by the Indian media. A few media channels or newspapers tried to tell the actual situations of these workers' households, but they were suppressed soon by

state hegemony. Accounts of hardships at the home of migrant workers, their children, pregnant wives, or old-aged parents, were not told by anyone. It completely went undercover as the assembly election of West Bengal was knocking on the door by the mid of 2021. In spite of these stories of migrant labourers' households, the plights of lower-class people in the city or in the suburbs were not accounted for anywhere. This lower class includes factory workers in Kolkata, restaurant workers in the city, rickshaw pullers, and coolies in stations etc., who were also jobless and living in sheer poverty. We have found out that a group of leaders gave assistance to the poverty-stricken people and stood beside them during the time of crisis. A sizable section of these social leaders were women in the cities and also in villages in Bengal, who worked silently, grew up a network of solidarity in this time and served people to live to survive. These leaders have accounts of poor people in their localities and talk about the actual situation of crisis and give us an idea of a new form of solidarity which was never seen before.

I will try to discuss my work in the role of women leaders in their locality during pandemic-induced lockdowns. My discussion will attempt to bring a description of the working class within and outside of the city during the crisis days of the pandemic. It will argue how in this crisis situation the social leaders, most of them women, worked in their localities and built up a network of solidarity during the pandemic. Also, will try to portray a comparison between the social workers in Kolkata and remote places of Bengal. This will show how social workers, the women leaders from different groups, worked in Kolkata or in the suburban spaces of the city, more specifically, among the low-income minority groups and low-wage labourers in 2020-21. It will also focus on how women leaders work in remote village communities in the districts in West Bengal, among the migrant labourers' wives and children during the pandemic. It will talk about their hurdles, difficulties of work during the pandemic. My work on women solidarity during the pandemic was conducted in association with Krishna Trust.

Dealing with Depression: Lessons from a Case Study

Anagha C R

Depression is a common mental health condition that affects millions of people around the world, including a significant portion of the population in India (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). It is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest or pleasure in activities, and can also involve physical symptoms such as changes in appetite and sleep, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). There are several different types of depression, including major depression, persistent depressive disorder, and seasonal affective disorder (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). The causes of depression are not fully understood, but they may include a combination of genetic, environmental, and psychological factors (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). Some people may be more at risk for developing depression due to a family history of the disorder, a history of abuse or trauma, or other life stressors (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). In the context of Indian society, there are a number of factors that may contribute to the high rates of depression (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). These include stress and pressure due to poverty, social and economic inequality, and discrimination (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017), as well as a lack of access to mental health care (Patel et al., 2007) and significant stigma surrounding mental health issues (Rao et al., 2017).

If depression is not properly treated, it can have serious consequences for a person's mental and physical health (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). Some of the potential consequences of untreated depression include difficulty functioning at work, school, or in personal relationships (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017), an increased risk of other physical health problems (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017), an increased risk of

substance abuse and addiction (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017), an increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017), and an increased risk of premature death (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). It is important for people in India to understand that depression is a treatable condition and that seeking help is an important step towards recovery (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). There are many resources available for those seeking help, including mental health professionals, support groups, and self-care strategies (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). It is also important to have a support system of friends and loved ones who can provide emotional support during the recovery process (Kishore & Jain, 2018; WHO, 2017). India, being a society with a lot of stigma, prejudice and misconceptions about mental illness, it is important that we need to have more initiatives to do away with these challenges. Here, I would present a case study of dealing with mental illness and suggest the best possible ways to recover.

Sarah is a 35-year-old woman who struggled with depression and anxiety for most of her adult life. She experienced a range of depressive symptoms, including low mood, lack of energy, difficulty concentrating, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness. She has also struggled with anxiety and panic attacks, which have caused her to feel overwhelmed and out of control. She has tried various treatments, such as medication and therapy, but has found limited relief. Sarah's typical day when she was experiencing depression was filled with challenges. She would wake up feeling exhausted and unmotivated and have difficulty getting out of bed and completing tasks that used to be routine, such as showering and getting dressed. She had a hard time concentrating and found it difficult to focus on work or other tasks, and would often feel irritable and have a hard time interacting with others. Sarah also experienced changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and had difficulty falling asleep or waking up frequently during the night. She lost interest in food and was either eating too much or too little. Sarah felt hopeless and worthless and had thoughts

of self-harm or suicide. Her anxiety and panic attacks were triggered by even minor stressors, causing her to feel overwhelmed and out of control. Sarah knew she needed to seek help and find a way to manage her mental health struggles. She heard about a community psychology program that focuses on building resilience and improving mental health within the community and decided to give it a try. She started by attending weekly group meetings with other individuals who were also struggling with mental health challenges. At these meetings, Sarah found a sense of connection and understanding that she had not felt before. She was able to talk openly about her struggles and receive support and guidance from others who had been through similar experiences. She also learned techniques for managing her anxiety and panic attacks, such as deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation. In addition to the group meetings, Sarah also began participating in community-based activities that promoted social connections and provided a sense of purpose and meaning. She volunteered at a local food bank and attended yoga classes at a community center. These activities helped her to stay grounded and focused and gave her a sense of accomplishment and purpose.

Songs from Cracked Pavements

Indira Tayeng

"Songs From Cracked Pavements" is a fictitious story based on collective narratives of indigenous people of Arunachal Pradesh and the migrants/refugees residing in the state for over several decades. The narratives are part of the interviews I have conducted for my ongoing Ph.D. work on "Understanding Statelessness induced by Displacement in Northern South Asian Borderlands" whereby I seek to navigate the 'sense of belonging' amongst a particular refugee/migrant community (Chakmas) settled in the state since the 1950s as opposed to the 'sense of belonging' felt amongst the indigenous tribes of the region. 'Songs From Cracked Pavements' brings out the complexities of identity formation of oneself when situated in various spaces throughout their life; of how identity, like a momentum concept, continues to evolve through space and time and how the assertion of this identity becomes a significant factor in making a place for oneself in the politico-socio-cultural-economical sphere of life. The narratives are a culmination of the lived experiences of the Chakmas who have been rehabilitated in the state since the 1950s and have acquired the status of Indian citizenship, of the Chakmas who are the second generation and have not been able to acquire Indian citizenship status and of the indigenous tribes in the state who vehemently opposes to share any permanence of spatial position with them within the state. What is interesting about the contentious phenomena between the two groups is the peculiarity of both being categorised as marginalised groups in India. Despite observing solidarity in being marginalised, there is still some sort of difference when it comes to how they identify themselves, which in turn paves the way for contention of how they belong or where they belong.

The story revolves around the protagonist who is herself a migrant in Delhi belonging to one of the indigenous tribes of Arunachal Pradesh. However, due to circumstances, she has to go back to her home state and it is when she stumbles on the contentious phenomena of the Arunachali-Chakma feud that operates in the region. The word "pavement" in the story symbolises a ground of permanence or rootedness, be it in the physical context of belonging to a place, geographical land, culture or in a sensory stance of belonging to the oneness of being and togetherness. As the story unfolds it puts the state and its border under the spotlight and undermines the unthinking methodological nationalism that takes the nation-state as the natural content and container for all social political and social processes. It goes on to show up close on how the ordinary people interact with the state, what they expect from it and when the expectations are not fulfilled then how there is a fuel for all kinds of movement and protests. There are new narratives sung, new identities formed, new rationales developed, and how in the process we tend to start observing cracks in the 'pavements' of oneness and togetherness we aspire from humanity, of being humane. This is a story of the songs from these cracked pavements, and in narrating so I intend to bring in the discussion of how as humans we can forge a world of kindness and love; what are the hurdles that inhibit us from doing that time and again? What is the peace we talk about on and on, and then how much do we contribute towards it?

Fading Science: The Invaluable Naga Indigenous Knowledge

Martemjen Jamir

It is true that, the first nations, adivasis, aboriginals, native or indigenous peoples, all over the world has developed their own invaluable knowledge systems through ages which have stood the test of time. However, with the onset of modernity and the domination of Western Science (WS) over the global culture, indigenous knowledge is losing its significance and is fast diminishing. Over the years, indigenous knowledge has been a target of extreme criticism from WS especially when certain practices fall short of the criteria of WS. On the other hand, WS has not been shy of taking on board the indigenous knowledge when they find it useful and likewise indigenous people are also increasingly incorporating WS into their knowledge system. *Nagas* as a group of Indigenous People, possess a colossal amount of indigenous knowledge, which were developed over time, accumulated incrementally, tested by trial and error and transmitted down from generation to generation orally or by shared experiences. This knowledge, though almost practically less existent in our modern *Naga* society, if adopted will be a vital asset in moving ahead as a people and nation.

For instance, long before Ayurvedic or Allopathic medicines were engineered in scientific laboratories, *Nagas* already had their way of curing different or any kind of ailments. *Naga* Indigenous Knowledge in medicine is one of great antiquity and continues to serve as an invaluable service even in this scientific age. WS is exploring every means to get access to such knowledge. Not only, *Naga* indigenous knowledge possesses detailed information and uses about species of plants, animals, birds, fishes, fungi and other micro-organisms; they also recognize types of minerals, soils, water, landforms, vegetation and landscapes. They had known the indigenous

name of trees, flowers, plants and animals along their vicinity long before the binomial system of nomenclature was introduced in WS. Their knowledge about the heavenly bodies is a thing to be accredited. They closely studied and observed the different phases of the sun, moon and stars. Their daily activities, be it agriculture, cutting of timber, bamboo, community fishing, hunting etc., were always in sync with the solar and lunar cycles. They also had indigenous weather forecasting (meteorological) and disaster management ideas.

In political, economic and social life, Naga indigenous knowledge and practice exceed modern thinking. One can strongly argue that one of the oldest democratic systems of governance existed in indigenous (*Naga*) societies. The *Putu Menden* (a system where each and every clan is represented equally) system of governance of the *Ao Nagas*, stands as a testimony to this claim. Further, *Naga* indigenous social life revolved around kindness, respect, giving, caring and unselfishness which is almost absent in our present society. The *Morung* system of education provided every man the necessary knowledge to survive and thrive in society. Their economic life revolved around hard work, self-sustenance and sustainable management of the available resources.

Nagas takes great pride in their prowess of hunting, fishing and *jhum* cultivation, but even so, the people's priority was always to protect and conserve the forest ecology. Besides, the *Naga* social etiquettes of respect and approbation towards their fellow brethren and nature add richness to their vast indigenous knowledge. *Naga* traditional etiquettes such as "do not waste food", "every time you waste even a piece of rice, they cry out to make you poor", "do not pollute the river", "never defecate in streams, lakes and rivers", "respect your elders", "never draw your *Dao* (machete) at nature unless necessary", "Never hunt a pregnant animal", "Never shoot a hornbill when he is alone", "Never steal from your neighbors (agricultural) field" etc., have become prerequisite

which needs to be implemented and practiced in our everyday lives. We can see the application of such etiquette in western countries today.

As such, there is an urgent need to coalesce IK with WS, and explore potential ways to act together, because neither western science nor indigenous knowledge alone will be able to provide every solution. In our quest to embrace development and modernization we have disembarked with our sound invaluable indigenous practices and have immersed into the global sea of deception, duplicity and villainy. In this so called digital age rather "the age of un-discovery" more languages are being lost than discovered. Indigenous people are being faced with the challenge of getting extinct let alone their culture, tradition and knowledge. The knowledge of the world is knowledge of the few and the wealth of the world is in the hands of the mighty few. Under such circumstances, as indigenous people, it is time for us to develop, practice and promote our indigenous science of knowing before it fades away forever. So, what is fading science? Why is it called fading science? Fading science is the knowledge that Indigenous people (Nagas in this context) all over world have developed and practiced independent of Western Science. I call it fading science or Indigenous Science, since this knowledge is fast disappearing into extinction.

Everyday Gendered Gorkha Identity

Kajal Limbu Subba

Being a member of the Gorkha community and having lived as one, I always wondered about the 'Gorkha' and its connotations. In India, the Gorkha community is referred to as a community of Nepali speaking Indian-Nepalis in various parts of India having their historical bases in British colonialism. Evolution of this term can be traced back to a place called 'Gorkha' in Nepal, the erstwhile recruiting area for British Indian Army. The significance of this term differs for Nepali speaking population in India and those in Nepal. For the Indian-Nepali community, particularly those living in the Darjeeling hills, Kalimpong, and Dooars, the term Gorkha not only signifies cultural aspects but also socio-political and economic aspects. Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri subdivisions and Kalimpong districts have a complicated history of belongingness, ownership and annexation involving Nepal, the erstwhile Kingdom of Sikkim, and Bhutan with a significant role played by the British in making them a part of India (Bagchi, 2012). Darjeeling as a part of India is, therefore, a colonial construct. The term Gokha initially referred to the Nepali-origin soldiers of the British Gurkha regiments having racial connotations. The colonial writings on the Gorkha forces were full of praises for their bravery, courage, loyalty and honesty (Subba, 2007) following which the stereotypical and romanticised image of Gorkhas as *bir* Gorkha has been created and remained. This masculine stereotyped colonial narrative if the Gorkhas has been imbibed so much in the narrative of 'Who is a Gorkha?' throughout the globe. Gorkha as an identity is unquestionably celebrated by the Indian Nepalis. Owing to the colonial construction of the Gorkhas' characteristic as brave and loyal, it has become a safe haven for the Indian-Nepali community who suffers from the identity crisis and thus, demands a separate statehood, Gorkhaland. In the words of Chettri (2013),

apart from providing a basis for an ethnic collectivity, the Gorkha shields the insecurities of the Nepali community -an obvious phenomenon owing to the subservience and domination that generations of Nepalis have endured under colonialisation and now neo-colonialistion.

The celebrated and essentialised image of the Gorkha in the world can be understood as the most acknowledged and honourable inheritance and possession of those demanding Gorkhaland particularly in India.

My M. A. dissertation had emphasized on the gendered narratives of the Gorkha identity despite the rise in women's participation in the Gorkhaland Movement (Limbu Subba, 2018). The masculine narratives and symbolic of the Gorkha identity, no doubt, has overshadowed other aspects of the community (Chettri, 2013). The greater cause of the Gorkha community is held to be too sacrosanct to question its masculinity and sabotage the honourable colonial possession. The study also emphasised on masculine symbolic of their identity. For instance, popular songs about the 'Gorkhas' valorises the bravery and courageous stereotypical traits, and the evolution of the *khukuri*, the famous traditional tool of the Nepali community, from a mere tool or weapon to a symbol of bravery and thus, has evolved to become the trademark of the Gorkhas, as it has been believed to have come *into limelight only* in *and particularly after the Nepal War in 1814-1815 after the formation of British Gurkha Army* (Khukuri Imports Ltd., n.d.). While studying the tools of protests and symbolism of the Gorkhaland Movement, the leaders and supporters have primarily used the masculine and celebrated colonial image of the Gorkha. Majority of the regional parties' flags have image of *khukuri*; the slogans and songs that are used contain valorised narratives and history; *khukuri julus* (rally while holding a *khukuri*). The participation of the women, no doubt has increased their visibility and involvement in the Gorkhaland Movement, however, they are yet to possess real powers of decision-making. The Gorkhland Movement has seen massive women's physical participation in protests, however, the decision-making power of the women is less but influential (Lama, 2014) (Rai, 2016).

Muted Voice and Gendered Body
The Visible Invisibility of Dalit Christian Women in Kerala

Bincy Maria N.

Dalit Christians in Kerala are a historically marginalized group who bear the brunt of exploitation from the casteist, patriarchal society, and the state. They are ranked at the bottom of the social ensemble. Dalits converted to Christianity as an immediate solution to combat the oppressive structures of caste. But the presence and persistence of caste practices in the Christian churches of Kerala prevented them from achieving upward social mobility and asserting their identity. Even after conversion, the Dalit Christians remained on the fringes as the upper caste Christians retained the same hierarchical structure of caste in the church. Their multiple identities as Dalit, as a Christian minority and as a politically disoriented group, have been aggravating the plight of Dalit Christians for centuries. Though Kerala is hailed for its unique Kerala model development, its policies have not favoured Dalit Christians. It is observed that their historical marginality is aggravated not only by their previous slave caste identity but by the latent Brahmanism in Christianity.

Early Christianity in Kerala was a paternalistic enterprise under which Dalit Christian women were constantly subjugated and belittled. For Dalit Christian women, it was a leap from a casteist patriarchal structure to an even more intricate ensemble composed of multiple patriarchies. They have been fighting against intersectional inequalities for ages. But it is scantily recorded and the Dalit Christian subjectivity is represented necessarily as masculine. The interlocking inequalities that pertained in the new institutionalized system led to the agential crisis and the constraining caste and religious norms prevented them from raising their voice. In their previous caste, the Dalit women were placed at the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy

and the liminal space given to them was controlled by both upper caste and Dalit men. Though Dalit Christian women constitute a great majority in the churches of Kerala, their intersecting identities as women and Dalit are not recognized. The triply marginalized state of Dalit women cannot be compared or homogenized with the situations of women in general. Caste, as well as gendered roles together, made their voice unheard. Years of oppression and marginalization of casteist society already left deep wounds and scars in the psyche of Dalit people in general and Dalit women became the most victimized category. Despite their exposure to colonial modernity through missionaries after conversion, it is observed that Dalit Christian women were kept away from all the progressive socio, religious and political movements. Though they played an instrumental role in the major Dalit liberation movements, none of the Dalit/ Dalit Christian women appeared on the lists of the major reformers of Kerala during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For instance, the Channar rebellion (1853-59 CE) heralded by Channar women opened up an era of resistance of the marginalized social groups in Kerala. But they are often depicted as silent sufferers under the slavish bond. The everyday experience of gendered casteism nullified dalit women's presence in the anti-caste movements. Most of the history of anti-caste movements recorded and celebrated the individual and collective resistance of men whereas Dalit women's acts of protests were subsumed under men's history which was written and articulated by men. Dalit Christian women are subjected to live under three folded patriarchal structures constituted by upper-caste Hindu landlords, upper-caste Christian men, and men from their own Dalit community. To a great extent, missionaries also tried to make them fit into the conventional 'good woman' norms through the gospels. The systematic and strategic attempts to conform the Dalit Christian women to the cloistered spaces led to their agential crisis.

In Kerala, Dalit Christian women are at the crossroads where caste, gender and religion converge. For ages, they have been confronting politico-social, cultural and economic deprivation. Neither mainstream feminism

nor Dalit politics adequately address the issues of Dalit Christian women. Christian historiography as well as popular imagination failed to recognize the enmeshing identities of Dalit Christian women. The Dalit Christian women in Kerala are invisible due to the multifold inequalities they have been facing for ages. Their social location is not exactly the same as the Dalit Christian men. It is different due to the interlocking caste, gender and religious systems. They are placed at the lowest echelon of the church and society. So it is imperative to examine the different layers of the oppressive structures that make them invisible. The interlocking inequalities they have been confronting due to their social location is a less investigated area. My study attempts to find them not as silent sufferers subsumed under the homogenized dalit category but as a distinct group whose identity and agency are erased for the sake of Brahmanical patriarchy. With the theoretical lens of Intersectionality and Dalit feminist standpoint theory, my study aims to explore the many shades of inequalities existing in the churches of Kerala and society that make the life of Dalit Christians miserable. The systematic erasure and oppression of Dalit Christian women from the transformative movements and related social engagements lead to the need for a Dalit feminist standpoint. By taking Dalit Christians as a distinct category, this study emphasizes the need for acknowledging the rights and political representation of Dalit Christians.

It demands an epistemological shift from a constructed historiography that belittle the agency of Dalit Christian women. Instead of limiting the cause of Dalit Christian women under narrow identity politics, everyone should be able to engage in the discourse freely and fearlessly. To a great extent, it will lead to the empowerment of Dalit Christian women. Such a standpoint would definitely help to identify the alternate epistemology of the most oppressed.

"Could Visibility Liberate Me?" Doing Transness and Being Political

Biraja Nandan Mishra

In 2015, I was in my undergrad at a reputed state university in Bhubaneswar. In the same year, Manobi Bandyopadhyay took charge as the principal of Krishna Nagar Women's College in West Bengal. As usual, the "First Trans Woman to …" news was all over national and regional dailies. One of my professors, famous on the campus for being jolly and student-friendly, cracked a joke looking at me. "Nowadays, your kind are becoming Deans as well." Indeed, the news was reassuring for many trans people. But the effect of that visibility was not uniform. In current times, when I see 'visibility' occupying the centre stage of trans-political imagination to ask for trans liberation, I often wonder about the limitation of this framework.

What does it mean to be able to be visible??
to get clarity about my gender?
to utter my gender?
to express/perform my gender?
"Beyond the binaries",
Everyone (including me) adds to all of the above.

Sometimes I do feel my visibility is also in the thraldom of binary.
Sometimes I do feel to be able to be "visible" is a trap;
If I deny choosing such visibility, then my existence simply cannot be hence invisibility.
But can the denying of visibility be equated with the systemic and historical invisibility?

Visibility is the tone of the time we are currently living in, where visibility is confused with equality, visibility is confused as representation, visibility is confused with existence, and visibility is confused with worth. Visibility is the upward mobility. Everyone wants visibility, and every one offers visibility. Visibility is the new capital for which we all need to compete, even if, most of the time, visibility leads to death (literally).

During my post-graduation in gender studies, I was the only visible transgender person. My visibility made me a 'trans-life journey' expert everyone wanted to pay attention to. But that did not make the campus immediately transgender-inclusive. It did change a few things; the discomfort at the sight of my existence mellowed. But I don't think that made anything easier for the non-binary students who joined the institution in the subsequent years. They must have repeated the same visibility routine unless they were the same kind of trans, exactly like me. Over a period of time, I have realised visibility definitely disrupts the visual grammar of the gender binary whenever a trans person asserts their gender expressions in ways that are not conformist. But visibility does not dismantle the estranged feeling between the so-called normal world of the binary and the non-binary world.

Because visibility becomes optics bound—that trans person who dresses differently.
Because it becomes speech bound—the trans person who comes out.
Because it becomes proof bound—the valid trans person with accurate documents.

This idea of visibility, when it is imagined as the promise of gain and only gain (individual or collective), without leaving space to reflect on what we lose when we embrace visibility, bothers me as much as the historical invisibility of trans existence. By posing itself as the most radical aspiration of the time, visibility sometimes comes at the expense of the radical possibilities of change, i.e., collectivisation, friendship, kindness,

and structure of care. Visibility is the new offering, the new reward, the new convenience, so much so that even the state is ready to offer it (should not be a surprise).

Then I wonder if there is a way to be without being visible. Can there be ways for invisibility to be a choice and not an imposition? Can there be an imagination where self-determination is understood even when it is not uttered loudly or not even uttered ever? Is there a way where visibility would not turn out to be the lethal individualism in the garb of most radical imagination? Are there ways where visibility is not confused as collective aspiration and as every problem's solution but as a way towards collectivisation?

A few years ago, when I thought my gender expression could be the only site to contain my transness, I was grappling with my desire to be visible at the same time, my discomfort with visibility. Now I have arrived at a point where visibility has made it possible for me to seek sites beyond expression that holds my transness because I feel visibility is a burden, and I desire invisibility. In this time and era when visibility is at the centre of trans politics, I would like to think about the possibilities where invisibility—rejection of visibility—can also be the politics of resistance.

Fight for Basic Rights: Working Women from Marginal Professions

Rajat Kanti Sur

A recent survey on the condition of women labours in jute mills discusses the role of gender justice in the workplace. They are surveying the jute mills in the surrounding districts of Kolkata. The team of researchers found a discrepancy between the male and female labours regarding the availability of facilities. A preliminary report on the study found that the female workers of the jute mills faced several types of harassment in terms of payment of wages, facilities of separate washrooms and distribution of work shifts. The study found that the women labours of those jute mills were sexually harassed, not only by the owners but also by a section of their male colleagues. The study report also found that most of the political party-affiliated labour unions were callous about the complaints coming from their female comrades. The labour leaders of different parties claimed that they were unaware of the harassment against their female colleagues. However, they claimed that they continue fighting against the exploitation and unequal payments by the owners of different jute mills.

The experience of the women workers in the jute mills is not an isolated phenomenon. Women workers from marginal professions suffered the same discrimination. The struggle for minimum wages for domestic workers all over India is a part of the struggle for basic fundamental rights. Recent studies on domestic women workers prove that they are not only ill-paid, but also one of the most harassed communities among working women. Although considered one of the major workforces, political party-affiliated unions are also negligent about their existence. Some of the trade unions started thinking about themselves very recently. They organise conferences and conventions involving domestic workers to fight against.

The position of sex workers in West Bengal is a little better due to the existence of their own organisation. The organisational strength gives them the capability to raise their voices for their rights. The presence of a cooperative credit society run by a committee of sex workers gives them some economic stability. Therefore, the voices against the unfair provisions in the recent amendments of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 are more prominent. They claimed the success of their demand after the recent observations of the Supreme Court regarding 'sex work' as a profession (May 25, 2022).

These three studies show the struggle of the women workers of marginal professions and their fight for justice. The main aim will be to begin the discussion on ensuring the fundamental rights of marginal women workers based on the studies on women workers in jute mills and the protest movements by the sex workers in West Bengal.

Notes

1. The survey was conducted by Nagarik Mancha and Sanhita. The preliminary observations published in a report titled "Creating Safe Workplaces: An engagement with Jute Mills in West Bengal", Kolkata, Sanhita, March, 2022.
2. Aditi Natarajan and Malavika Rangarajan, "Bound to Labour: The Cyclical Burden of Wages and Time Poverty on Female Domestic Workers." *Economic and Political Weekly* LVII, no. 53 (December 31, 2022): 39-46.
3. Ishita Dey, "Social Distancing: "Touch Me Not" and The Migrant Workers," in *India's Migrant Workers and the Pandemic*, eds. Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay, Paula Banerjee and Ranabir Samaddar (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2022), 242-249.

Role of Law in Upholding Social Justice in the Contemporary Anti-Marginalized Environment with Caste, Class and Gender Perspectives by Enacting Progressive Laws

U. Thilagavathi

The Indian constitution has ensured social, economic and political justice to all its people with equality and equal opportunities. Social Justice is in the preamble and inbuilt in the essence of Equal society mentioned in the Indian Constitution. It clearly says that we have the right against discrimination and violence on the basis of caste, religion, sex language, race etc. But saving and ensuring the rights in the contemporary, casteist, fascist, communalist and patriarchal environment is bringing new challenges to social justice. We have special laws and provisions for socially oppressed sections viz Dalits, tribes, women, LGBTQIA+. But sometimes privilege people who intend to destroy social justice with their power and authority. Very recent example of this is 10% reservation for so called economically weaker sections which is unconstitutional and social injustice. Meanwhile half of the women are still not freed from the oppressive family system and do not get social and political representations. Dalits are openly thrashed all over the country just for eating, praying, contesting, and just living in this country. Muslims are slaughtered and tortured for slogans. They are asked to leave the country. Gender justice and child safety is a question mark.

India has laws and provisions for social justice. Those are made from the ideas of a lot of people who have good human rights perspectives. But the individuals who implement law in the society believe in inequality as it comforts them. They want this caste–class–gender hierarchy to remain the same in the society. So, they demolish the idea of social justice and do no justice for the laws. This includes Judges, Advocates, Police

officers and Government officials. They don't understand the objective of marginalized pro laws like SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, Domestic Violence Act, POSH etc. Since they are part and parcel of society, even the judges pronounce misogynist and castiest judgements without having basic social justice ideology. Those judgements threaten marginalized people and stop them from approaching courts. It makes us lose hope in the Indian Judiciary system.

I largely work with Dalits, Women, tribes, Domestic workers and Children. From my analysis and experience, I emerged with some issues and remedies. Honour Killing is the major issue in India where the fundamental right of choosing their own partners is brutally violated and the couples are killed in the name of honour especially when it comes to caste. Law against honour killing must be implemented with strong provisions to eradicate caste. Anti-Dalits, and anti-Muslim laws like CAA, must be thrown away. Special Laws about women exist, but due to the practical difficulties to attain justice these laws become ineffective. Indian women slowly start reporting sexual harassment, most of them are afraid of the media exposures, slow legal proceedings and providing evidences to prove it. Nowadays women are facing a lot of cyber violence, harassment and bullying. But the cybercrime department is totally down and not even considering those complaints that cause lot of suicides. All Women Police Stations are constituted to support and save women from violence but the worst part is they behave like Khap Panchayats. Whenever a woman approaches them, they just advise her normal in family life and carry on with your husband. That is the safe decision for you and your children``. 90% of the domestic violence cases are treated as family issues and the women are sent with the husband. No actions are taken unless it is a dowry death, murder, suicide attempt or grievous injury. Those women police officers in the All Women Police stations believe that they are not actual police and have no powers like the law and order police officers. So, marginalized women have no hope and access to police stations and courts. In India we have good laws and poor implementations that throw the objectives of those laws in vain. Domestic Workers who are

mostly women face abuses, tortures, violence. They have no proper forum under laws to get remedy. It is a class, caste and gender struggle altogether.

Tribes have no documents other than voter ids because politicians want votes. Ration cards, patta, aadhar, community certificates are mandatory for survival. It has to be concerned and Special laws for tribes and their protection should be enacted. I would also recommend strong gender and caste sensitivity, human rights and importance of social justice training to the Judges, advocates, police officers and Government officials. Speedy trial for the Victims who are deprived of social justice. Monitoring committee for periodically checking the applicability and practicability of laws and legal set up. Creating awareness on women/children laws and making women/child friendly legal procedures. opinion polls from the particular community before making any laws for their welfare. providing shelter homes for women throughout the legal proceedings against her husband /family. Creating violence free zones for women and children in every district. Effective Free legal aids should be provided for the victims. Social Justice that is ensured by law would be the strongest step that is difficult to strike down. In order to attain Equality, mere equal plans and schemes don't work out. Because Social Justice is the path that leads to Equality through Equity.

Welcome to the World of Women!! A Theatre Act

This is an individual play which talks about world of women. It exhibits life, desires, love, harassments, gender roles, patriarchy and liberation of women. It emotionally connects the play with the audience with the objective of empathizing and sensitizing them. Breaking the objectification of women and questioning their consumerization. To make us realize our roles and responsibility to bring up gender justice.

'LAND'- Home or Native

Abhipsa Chakraborti

"Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither, in my opinion, is safe"
Edmund Burke

This rings true for The Partition of India, and the conditions that followed. The condition of the nation both in 1947, during the partition of India and Pakistan, and the following years and again in the year 1971, when Bangladesh was formed were terrifying. These partitions were almost like dissecting a landmass into two halves, with the repercussions of massive bloodshed, riots, conflicts, and brothers turning into sworn enemies. But these were not the only horrors of Partition, along with these horrors, there came burning of houses to ashes, abduction and rape of women, which left scars of unspeakable horror on their bodies. Instances of such horrors have been depicted through literature for ages, from Amitav Ghosh's Shadow Lines, Lalithambika Antharajanam's Leaf in the Storm to Manto's several short stories. This turbulent period also witnessed the migration of huge masses of people from then East Bengal, to present West Bengal, in various capacities over a long period of time. As many people from the East had their government jobs in the western part of Bengal, they were bound to settle in the West. Majority of these people were Hindus. A similar scenario was seen amongst the government employees who were Muslim. They had to shift to East Bengal under the Pakistani Government.

In Sadat Hasan Manto's words, "You won't find Lahore there, as I couldn't find my Ambala here". This hits hard to the similar ideas of 'native' and 'home'. For the refugees, the state of homelessness became dominant as they

had to shift constantly from one place to another. With their homes being burned, or having being uprooted unceremoniously from their houses, they had no choice but to settle elsewhere. The search for a new home was not easy though. They were uprooted several times before actually finding like-minded or rather, people of the same religion and establishing a colony. This search for a new, stable home after the Partition is showcased perfectly by Ritwik Ghatak in his film, Subarnarekha. As a result, colonies popped up in different parts of West Bengal. If observed carefully, we would notice that there lies a significant difference in the names of the refugee colonies. This difference hints at the diversity of religions during this time of upheaval.

This play is originally an extract from a one-act play 'Graas' written by Sangita Chowdhury. The original play was mainly based on the aggression of languages. Partition comes as a subplot. In this play we see a ten-year-old boy, named Piku, who studies at a convent school where speaking any other language except English is a punishable offence. The play starts off with his grandfather from his mother's side, coming to their house to live with them, permanently. The grandfather forges a new bond with piku's grandmother, from his father's side, over their shared emotions and experiences of the migration caused by The Partition of Bengal, through their colloquial language. Where on one hand we are shown that these two people want to go back in time and reminisce about their respective childhoods, through their vernacular language which has now been mostly forgotten, on the other hand we are introduced to the character of Piku's mother who is shown only to deal with reality, and is only concerned about achieving material success in life. It is then that the play moves into the core action. The humdrum of their usual day-to-day life faces turmoil, when Piku recites a poem in Mayamansing's traditional language at his school. In the school, where, speaking Bengali or any vernacular language is a 'crime', a punishable offence, speaking a rural language such as this, is treated as if a slang was

spoken. As a result of this, Piku's mother decides to either send her son to a boarding school, or the grandparents to an old-age home. My chosen extract to perform though, showcases the two old people sharing their horrifying memories of partition, although I have taken the liberty of converting their relationship from that of being in-laws, to that of friendship.

Oppression of rural languages has been an important after effect of partition, from my perspective. People coming from then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, were not only dominated by their religion, caste or economical condition, but also with their culture and languages by people of other religion, caste and economical condition. And this 'fashion' has only gradually developed over time. In the present scenario, Bangla is dominating the rural Bengali languages, nationwide the most importance, among all other languages, is given to Hindi as a language. Now efforts are being made to construct a 'rashtriyo bhasha'. And worldwide, the language spectrum is almost completely dominated by English. This is the chronology. Many might not consider this as a direct consequence of partition or an important of consequence of such, but in my opinion, it is a side-effect of partition which is not swift, but is more gradual, like a slow poison, trying to destroy a race.

My play 'Migratories' concentrates on this portion of the partition, where we find out how these two people came to this foreign land from their homeland and created a home, and the concept of home. What is a homeland? Or rather a 'home'? Is that only a surface surrounded by four walls? Or something else? Something related to emotions, feelings, smells, touches? My play inspires us to look for these answers.

Empowering Women as an Approach to Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

Subhankar Sengupta

The role of women during and after the outbreaks of communal violence has been a significant topic of academic discussion for decades. A range of testimonies by women belonging to either party involved in communal conflict shed a considerable amount of light upon their personal sufferings, domestic relations, dispossession, mobility, socio-economic position and anxieties arising out of unfortunate situations that have been putting their own dignity at stake since time immemorial. In contemporary India, the rise of toxic Hindu-nationalism and ethnic democracy heralded in a new age of tremendous polarization that has been relentlessly unforgiving to women belonging to the minority communities, causing them substantial anguish, traumatizing them physically and emotionally. In the past decade a number of politically motivated, planned riots took place across West Bengal where Hindu women, inclined towards or working with powerful right-wing organizations have openly advocated communal violence; spreading misinformation deliberately for manipulating the mass into perceiving the marginalized communities as anti-national entities, painting a doctored picture of them in order to back up their hateful speech. Women belonging to either party have been victims of this nefarious propaganda, sometimes not even realizing that they are being used as mere cogs in the machine; jeopardizing their own socio-economic position and wellbeing. The need of the hour is to expose the dissemination of fake news and politically motivated marginalization, eradicating the ignorance and helping all the women see the unfiltered truth and stand up for their own causes irrespective of their communities, thereby resisting the evil forces that turn them against each other. Telinipara and Bhatpara, two jute mill cladded settlements on the either side of Hooghly river are home to thousands of migrant working class people, mostly Hindi and Urdu speaking,

who are living in reciprocal coexistence spanning over 100 years. Bhatpara, one of the most prominent names in the existing map of communal conflict in West Bengal has witnessed a series of violent riots between 2018 and 2020 that resulted in the loss of several lives. These politically motivated riots caused heavy losses to both groups of people, disrupting normal life. Amidst lockdown In 2020, political propaganda and fake news led to communal riots in Telinapara, Hooghly between Hindu and Muslim communities. Temples, mosques and shrines were attacked; houses and shops of certain communities were set on fire; petrol bombs were thrown. According to eyewitnesses, the rioters entered from the outside and that led to a fierce situation between the two communities living there. Houses of both Hindu and Muslim communities were burnt, many became homeless and sought refuge in various shelters. Students lost their books and stationeries. Though this happened in front of the police administration, they remained inactive most of the time. Later police arrested many women including older women and innocent people and denied fair trial. These conflicts created such an atmosphere of hatred and mistrust between the people of Telinipara and Bhatpara that coexistence that was once natural became difficult.

'AAMRA (An assemblage of movement research and appraisal) is an amalgamation of researchers, scholars, professors, psychologists and activists has been documenting communal conflicts in West Bengal and other parts of India for many years. Their fact finding reports and zines of Basirhat, Baduriya, Telinipara, Bhatpara communal violence, Rejinagar shariyati violence are indispensable documents for studying communal conflict and coexistence in contemporary West Bengal. AAMRA has extensively documented the struggle and existence, life and death, assertion and dislocation of people of both communities in Telinipara and Bhatpara jute mill settlements. From August 15, 2021, AAMRA took two initiatives in these two regions as an intervention for peace building. An evening school named 'Udaan' was started at Telinipara jute mill line number-9, to teach Bengali, Hindi and Urdu as a tool for exchanging the ideas of fair and dignified life. This

school is mainly run by local college students mostly young girls, teachers from different places and AAMRA. On the other hand, a peace centre named Bengal Peace Centre was started in Bhatpara jute mill colony where young girls and housewives from both communities formed eight self-help groups till now. Through these self-help groups, women there are learning sewing, taking computer class and building networks to secure an independent economic, social and family position. Apart from these, various cultural programs and educational excursions are organized in both places to celebrate the idea of India, eternal values and communal harmony.

As a fact-finding team member of AAMRA and documentary filmmaker, I have extensively documented the testimonies of victims of Telinipara and Bhatpara and currently associated with both initiatives of AAMRA, specially with "Udaan" school of Telinipara as I grew up at that region. My presentation will be an assemblage of sufferings, pain, living in fear as well as coexistence, cultural exchange and hope for better life though the documented facts and AAMRA's approach of crafting peace by empowering women in riot-hit areas of Telinipara and Bhatpara, Hooghly.

On the Medial Fabrication of Migration and Migrant Subjectivities

Martin Butler

In my presentation, I would like to reflect on the intricate relationship between media and the making of migration and migrant subjectivities. I start from the assumption that media representations are not only socioculturally produced, i.e., influenced by their specific economic, political and technological contexts in which they emerge and spread, but also socioculturally productive in that they significantly shape our conceptions of the world and ourselves. Media, in other words, are "world-making" devices (see Nelson Goodman). In settings of (forced) migration, they unfold their potential on different levels: First, as channels of communication, media take part in the discourse on the mobility of people; they regularly contribute to reproducing differences (e.g. through the stereotypical depiction of (alleged) cultural markers of identity) and thus sustain the existing power differentials between center and periphery; or they are used to articulate a sense of belonging (e.g. in contexts of protest and resistance) and may thus serve migrant communities. On another level, and second, media and their technologies can be (and are) used to map and navigate routes of migration, both by migrants and by those who seek to survey and control patterns of human mobility. Migrant subjectivities, I argue, are formed through medially driven discourse on migration and the various representations circulating in it, as well as through the technological apparatus of managing migration as part of national and international border regimes which continue to reinforce processes and patterns of Othering.

Darjeeling

Darjeeling

Brief History

The land under the possession of Sikkim was developed into a hill station in the 1850s during the British regime, after having gone through turmoil, strife, seizure, and then with treaties, peace settled in the hill town by 1866; the Tibetan name 'Dorje-ling' was anglicised to Darjeeling. This foothill town served as a summer retreat of the Governor of Bengal for escaping the pre-monsoon heat, while attracting aristocrats and labourers who arrived in search of work in the tea plantations; thus, giving the municipal town a mixed demographic profile where Nepalese, Bhutias, Tibetans as well as the indigenous tribes the Lepcha, Aka, Mechi, Dhimal, Murmi, Urava made a home of the hills. Today a population of more than one lakh resides here, with the hills standing witness to the dialogues between the hill people and the government for the establishment of autonomous self-governing local body the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) to govern the region and foster its socio-economic, cultural, linguistic development and the ethnic identities.

Geography

Darjeeling is located 70 km to the north of New Jalpaiguri (NJP) Railway Station at an elevation of around 2,045 metres (6,709 feet) in the lower Himalaya. A drive of around three hours from the Bagdogra airport and the NJP rail junction winding through steep slopes laden with tea plants takes one to the Darjeeling observatory hill where Mount Kanchenjunga (8,586 m/28,169 feet) and the locally known 'Sleeping Buddha Range' (with the peaks of Mt. Kumbhakarna, Mt. Kanchenjunga, Mt. Pandim from left to right) part of the Great Himalaya Range, is visible on clear skies days hanging mid-air. The famous Darjeeling Mall is one of the focal tourist spots lined with shops

and view-point for the Kanchenjunga. The average temperature in January varies from 10°C to 14°C during the daytime and 4°C to 6°C in the night.

Places of Interests

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railways (DHR) built between 1879 and 1881, with headquarters in Kurseong, was accorded the UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 1999. The tiny four wheeled steam loco of the nineteenth century runs along 88 km on narrow gauge track of 2 feet (610 mm) width from NJP to Darjeeling Rail station, while the joy rides for tourist plie to and fro between Kurseong, Ghum and Darjeeling. The places of interests for tourists are the Mall or Chowrasta, Clock Tower, Mahakal Temple, Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) Museum, Bengal Natural History Museum, Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Deshbandhu Museum, St. Andrew's Church, Ramakrishna Mission Nivedita Educational and Cultural Centre (Roy Villa), Peace Pagoda, Rock Garden, Ghoom Monastery, DHR Museum at Ghoom, War Memorial at Batasia, DHR Museum at Kurseong, Mirik lake.

Tea

Tea is grown at elevations ranging from 600 to 2000 metres above sea level. Tea was first introduced to the slopes of Darjeeling in 1840s; subsequently commercial tea gardens were established in 1856. Sourenee Tea Estate, Glenburn Tea Estate, Makaibari Tea Estate, Gomtee Tea Estate, Chamong Tea Estate, Happy Valley Tea Estate surrounding the Darjeeling town are some of the oldest, established in the nineteenth century. The 86 tea gardens in and around Darjeeling are worked by women tea-pluckers who craftily collect the leaves that are processed into the famous aromatic tea of Darjeeling. The famous first flush leaves are picked between February and April and make a brew of light, floral flavour while consequent flushes, plucked in different times of the year yield varied flavours and aromas.