



**Urban Caregiving and Protection:
Histories and Contemporary Practices**

**Youth Meet
28-30 March 2024, Bolpur**

A REPORT

Calcutta Research Group

Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna

Youth Meet 2024

Urban Caregiving and Protection: Histories and Contemporary Practices

28-30 March 2024, Bolpur, Shantiniketan, West Bengal, India

Organised by

Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group

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In collaboration with

Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna

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Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen
Institute for Human Sciences

This Youth Meet was organised by the Calcutta Research Group in collaboration and with the support of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, and is part of the research programme on 'Refugees, Migrants and Urban Justice (2024).'

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Contents

1. Acknowledgements	1
2. Preface	2
3. Programme Schedule	3
4. Participant Profile	6
5. Discussion	10
6. List of Participants	29

Acknowledgements

The Calcutta Research Group (CRG) is thankful to the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, for the support and collaboration in organising the Youth Meet on “Urban Caregiving and Protection: Histories and Contemporary Practices” from 28 to 30 March 2024, in Bolpur, West Bengal, India, and the continued support in planning and organising this event since 2021.

We express gratitude to Ranabir Samaddar, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Samir Kumar Das, Shyamalendu Majumdar and colleagues at CRG for their support in planning the Youth Meet.

CRG thanks all the participants of the Youth Meet for sharing their thoughts and experiences, and acknowledges the rapporteurs of the programme Titas Ganguly and Aishani Khurana for their help in developing this report.

This Youth Meet is part of the CRG-IWM research programme on ‘Refugees, Migrants and Urban Justice (2024),’ and is part of CRG’s ongoing programmes on migration and forced migration studies, conducted in collaboration with several organisations, institutions, and universities in India and abroad.

Preface

The Calcutta Research Group (CRG) in collaboration and with the support of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, under its programme 'Refugees, Migrants and Urban Justice (2024),' organised the Youth Meet on 'Urban Caregiving and Protection: Histories and Contemporary Practices,' on 28-30 March 2024, in Bolpur, West Bengal, India, under its programme 'Refugees, Migrants and Urban Justice (2024)'. It was an attempt to gather minds across disciplines and professions to share their own experiences of urban justice, endeavours in urban caregiving and practices of protection, expressions, community participation, and leadership, considered as a way of bringing a harmonious union of peace and justice, and discussing the social experiments and chronicles of urban justice in history and today.

Urban centres have become magnets of magnanimity, of growth and wealth where capital has become the relentless superpower consuming every living being within its structure of preparing the infrastructures for a classic modern urbanity relevant to liberal global economy. This diabolical urban process on the one hand is visually co-relatable in major cities and its catering hinterlands with high-rises and glass charades, metro rails/tubes, multilane roads, upscale markets, multinational corporations, an ever-sprawling gig economy, thronging the service sectors, creating the easier life-system, more comfortable and competitive; while on the other hand, it comes with a dialogic process of receding camaraderie, more individual time as opposed to family time and much less community involvement, pleasure and leisure that come at the cost of vulnerability of life and living, consuming everything that caters to this urbanity; labour migrants, refugees, citizens, the human-non-human interaction is scaled at the cost of lesser harmonious interjections. Urban landscapes today are increasingly shadowing the ecological fragility with increasing instances of floods, inundation, epidemics, etc. This Youth Meet focused on questions of future urbanity within the model of urban caregiving, and protection, and finding the historical linkages to contemporary caregiving practices. To seek how urbanity becomes both a method and recourse to the understanding and provision of protection and care; how proactive are smart cities today in their autonomy of protection and balanced social justice for migrants, invisible citizens, without negatively impacting the climatic conditions of the future. Will this urbanity be part of the placemaking practices or a transitory recourse of flux for further urban sprawl where the present recedes into the gerontology of the past and the new consumes the peri-urban and its consequential rural. 11 applicants were selected from a pool of 63 applications received, in addition to invited speakers and one among the CRG-IWM Visiting Fellows for 2024 participated in this Youth Meet.

The major themes of conversations revolved around pandemic and precarity, faultlines in urban caregiving, role of agency in creating urban spaces, reflections on ethics and aesthetics of urban life, migration and memory in media, changing lives and urban ecosystems in transition, representation of care, marginality, protection and the dimensions of urbanity in storytelling, and chronicles of urban justice. The sub-themes of the programme encapsulated the efforts of CRG in building and strengthening networks and constituting the voices of people in precarious situations in varied ways, as CRG has been working over the years through dialogues, winter and summer camps, discourses, workshops, conferences, discussions, resolutions, declarations, publications, and dissemination. This year the Youth Meet was designed as a camp in an attempt to bring activists and young scholars together to initiate discourses that would transcend borders and bindings and help bring youth activists and social leaders to the foreground to disperse the barriers that divide society, belonging, in building bridges of solidarity, preservation of rights and unity.

Programme Schedule

Day 1: 28 MARCH 2024

6:00 PM-6:30 PM: Registration and Tea

6:30 PM-6:35 PM: Welcome Address: Shyamalendu Majumdar, *Director, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

6:35 PM-6:45 PM: Introducing the Youth Meet: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Professor, Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University, & President, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

6:45 PM-7:00 PM: Introduction by Participants

7:00 PM-7:30 PM: “Pandemic and Precarity in Conversations”

Speakers

Rajat Kanti Sur, *Researcher, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Sucharita Sengupta, *Researcher, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Day 2: 29 MARCH 2024

10:00 AM-10:30 AM: Registration

10:30 AM-11 AM: Session 1: “Faultlines in Urban Caregiving”

Facilitator: Shyamalendu Majumdar

Speaker

Samir Kumar Das, *Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta, & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

11:00 AM-11:30 AM: Tea Break

11:30 AM-1:00 PM: Session 2: “Agency in Creating Urban Spaces”

Facilitator: Ranabir Samaddar, *Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Speakers

Athil Banna, *Urban Fellow, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru*

Contesting the Concepts of ‘Migrant’ and ‘Worker’: Exploring the Translocality and Religious Agency

Upasana Patgiri, *Urban Fellow, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru*

Belonging in the City: The Governing Influence of Work Structure on Migrant Workers
[15 Mins each presentation/talk & 45 mins Discussion/Q&A]

1:00 PM-2:00 PM: Lunch Break

2:00 PM-3:00 PM: Session 3: “Ethics and Aesthetics of Life: A Workshop”

Facilitator: Sucharita Sengupta

Speakers

Agni, *Visual Artist*

Vandal

Shruti Roy, *Postgraduate Student, National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad*

Children and Inefficient Care-Giving Practices, and Anthology of a Few Special Lives
3:00 PM-3:30 PM: Tea Break

3:30 PM-5:00 PM: Session 4: “Memory, Media and Migration”

Facilitator: Sucharita Sengupta

Speakers

Vishal Shukla, *Environmental Journalist & @internews Fellow*

Insights from Environmental News Reporting: Exploring Climate Change-Induced Migration

Film Show: Walking in a Sinking Island in the Sundarbans

Director: Sukanta Sarkar, *Special Correspondent, Frontier*

Photo Exhibition: Trail of Blood: Calcutta Killings of 1946 and its Aftermath

Artist/Photographer: Dipanwita Saha, *Visual Artist and IBM*

Day 3: 30 MARCH 2024

10:00 AM-11:30 AM: Session 5: “Community and Care: Reflections”

Facilitator: Rajat Kanti Sur

Speakers

Aishani Khurana, *Doctoral Fellow, Department of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago*

Community Caregiving as a Practice of/in Sovereignty

Swastika Kashyap, *Doctoral Fellow, Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nebru University, Delhi*

Caregiver Burden on Migrant Adolescent Girl Carers in Urban Households in India

Tahseen Fatima, *Doctoral Fellow, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, New Delhi*

The Irony of Visiblens, Everyday Lives, and Labour: A Study of Indian Muslim

Women and Their Relationship with Work

[15 Mins each presentation/talk & 45 mins Discussion/Q&A]

11:30 AM-12:00 PM: Tea Break

12:00 PM-1:30 PM: Session 6: “Life in Motion”

Facilitator: Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury

Speakers

Rahul Yaduka, *CRG-IWM Visiting Fellow 2024 & Doctoral Fellow, B.R. Ambedkar University, New Delhi*

Floating with the Diyarascape: Life of People in the Koshi River Flood Plains

Sucharita Sengupta

Care for Tourists or Refugees? Diary of a Traveler from Cox’s Bazar

Rajat Kanti Sur

The Sawngs of Calcutta: Critic of Colonial Justice and Autonomy of the Subalterns

[15 Mins each presentation/talk & 45 mins Discussion/Q&A]

1:30 PM-2:30 PM: Lunch Break

2:30 PM-3:30 PM: Session 7: “Cities and Storytelling”

Facilitator: Shatabdi Das, *Researcher, Calcutta Researcher Group, Kolkata*

Speakers

Titus Ganguly, *Research Assistant, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam*

“Teen Shaap”: Three Tales of Urban Nightmares and a Careful Jolt for the Future
[15 Mins each presentation/talk & 30 mins Discussion/Q&A]

3:30 PM-4:00 PM: Tea Break

4:00 PM-5:00 PM: Session 8: “Margins of Protection”

Facilitator: Rajat Kanti Sur

4:00 PM-4:30 PM: Film Show: Struggle and Resilience of Momiron Nessa

Director: Wahida Parveez, *CRG Media Fellow 2022*

4:30 PM-5:00 PM: “Dunes and Depths of Urbanity: Creative Endeavours”

Open Discussion

5:00 PM-5:30 PM: Session 9: “Chronicles and Urban Justice”

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury in Conversation with Ranabir Samaddar

5:30 PM-5:35 PM: Vote of Thanks

Shatabdi Das

Rapporteurs

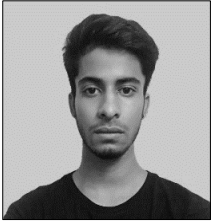
Aishani Khurana

Titas Ganguly

Shatabdi Das

Participant Profile

Agni



Agni is a visual artist and likes playing with various mediums ranging from prints to drawing, digital graphics, graffiti, AI, even errors and glitch. Anything is a medium for him to express and channelise the harder-to-visualise ideas or expressions that often come together in a process based on intuitive flow, alongside more distinct visual memories and forms. But the choice of medium plays a very key role in embedding the contextual language of a creation as much as it does for its visual language. Most of his work is highly individualised and personal in terms of its elements and a big part of the process of his own visual and pleasure, during the process and afterward, but he mostly chooses to let them interact with their organic audience outside of the white cube-either in public spaces or on the internet.

Aishani Khurana



Aishani Khurana, a third-year doctoral fellow in the department of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA. As a socio-cultural anthropologist, she is interested in the questions of discrimination and violence in urban spaces. Her PhD research explores how religious violence shapes the democratic capacities of Muslims in India and the ways in which experiences of violence are contested. Previously, she researched on the modalities of urban gatekeeping by dominant communities that create barriers to access for Muslims navigating the housing market in Delhi.

Athil Banna



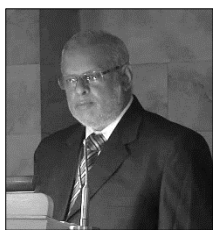
Athil Banna is majoring in sociology and history. He has delved into subjects such as cultural studies, religion, and philosophy during his academic journey. His professional journey contributed significantly to research and writing endeavours, collaborating with institutions like the People Foundation (NGO) and EIH (heritage company) over nearly two years. These experiences, coupled with his experiences in various cities, ignited his passion for urban exploration. Thus, he joined the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) as an UFP Fellow.

Rahul Kumar Yaduka



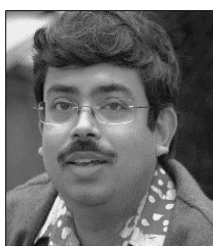
Rahul Kumar Yaduka is a doctoral fellow at the School of Development Studies, B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi, working on 'Politics and Policy of Environmental Issues: The Case of Koshi River Floods in Bihar'. He has done B. Tech. in Civil Engineering from IIT Bombay (2010-14) and MA in Political Science from University of Delhi (2016-18). His research interests are Disaster Studies, Development Studies, Migration, Climate Change and People's Resistance. He has been engaged with community-based organisations in Bihar, He is the member-secretary of People's Commission on Koshi River Basin, and also participant of river valley-based people's movements.

Ranabir Samaddar



Ranabir Samaddar is Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group, India. He is currently the CIFAR fellow in Humanity's Urban Future Programme. 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. Among his recent works are *Alternative Futures and the Present: Postcolonial Possibilities* (2023), *Imprints of the Populist Time* (2022), *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).

Rajat Kanti Sur



Rajat Kanti Sur is associated with CRG since 2020. He did his PhD from University of Calcutta. He has previously worked with TISS (Patna Centre), 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 has published several articles in reputed journals, newspapers and periodicals. He is currently working on the role of labour organisations to ensure social security among migrant labours. He has keen interest in occupational health and plans to work on it in future.

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury



Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury is a Professor in the Department of Political Science at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. His areas of research interest include: global politics, South Asian politics, refugees, migration, democracy and human rights in the Global South. His publications include *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), *Living on the Edge: Essays on the Chittagong Hill Tracts* (1997). He was a Visiting Professor, Panjab University, Chandigarh (2016), Visiting Fellow, Dayton Law School, Ohio, USA (2008, 2009) and Salzburg Fellow (1996).

Samir Kumar Das



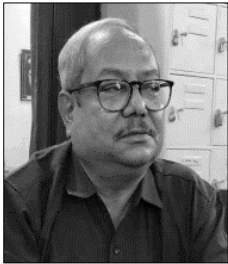
Samir Kumar Das is Professor of Political Science and Director, Institute of Foreign Policy Studies at the University of Calcutta, Kolkata. Previously Vice-Chancellor of the University of North Bengal, and a Post-Doctoral Fellow (2005) of Social Science Research Council (South Asia Programme), he also served as Adjunct Professor of Government at the School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Visiting Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Université Sorbonne Paris Nord among some of his recent assignments.

Shatabdi Das



Shatabdi Das is Researcher at the Calcutta Research Group (CRG). She was Junior Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna, in Austria, in April 2022. She is currently working on urban and environmental issues and climate crisis. She has previously worked as Junior Research Fellow at the Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta (2013-2014) and has also taught Geography in Post-Graduate Section of Sarsuna College, Kolkata (2014-2017). She was awarded PhD in Geography from the University of Calcutta in 2020. Her doctoral thesis is on ‘Impact of Industrialisation and Urbanisation on the Environment of Asansol-Durgapur Planning Area’.

Shyamalendu Majumdar



Shyamalendu Majumdar is the Director of Calcutta Research Group. He was Associate Professor in Sivanath Sastri College and taught Political Science there since 1985. He is particularly interested in conducting research on forced migration and has successfully completed his research on the problems and politics of internal displacement of the Reangs in Mizoram. His article on this was published in Refugee Watch Journal. He is deeply involved in carrying on research in the trends of political theatre in Bengal. Simultaneously he is focusing on the socio-political dimensions of the problems of the vagrancy in-flows to the urban areas in post-Independent India.

Shruti Roy



Shruti Roy is an aspiring visual storyteller. She is currently working on her first animation film based on women’s identity and representation in the red-light areas of Kolkata as a part of final master’s degree project at National Institute of Design. She has previously engaged with research organisations and public sector media for visual development, namely, Centre for Policy Research and India Development Review. Shruti has keen interest in graphic storytelling and her comic strip on the environmental crisis ‘This Could be Us’ was exhibited at Indie Comix Fest.

Sucharita Sengupta



Sucharita Sengupta is a Researcher at the Calcutta Research Group. She completed her PhD with the supervision of Professor Alessandro Monsutti and Graziella Moreas De Silva, from the department of Anthropology and Sociology in the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland in July 2023. She was also a Teaching Assistant at the institute between 2019–21. Before joining the PhD, she had been working on issues related to migration and forced migration studies in South Asia as part of her work as a researcher at the eminent research organisation, the Calcutta Research Group, in India. Under the supervision of scholars like Professor Paula Banerjee and Ranabir Samaddar, she has worked on Chakma refugees based in Arunachal Pradesh in India and on Bangladeshi women languishing under gross human rights violation in Indian Prisons (mainly West Bengal) under the foreigners Act, among others, as part of her work at CRG between 2014-2017.

Swastika Kashyap



Swastika Kashyap is a doctoral fellow with the Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has completed her MA in Political Science (2019-21) from the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and her BA in Political Science (2016-19) from Cotton University, Assam. Her research interests appertain to intersectionality of gender and sexual rights, gender and sexual violence, class and caste.

Tahseen Fatima



Tahseen Fatima is a doctoral fellow with the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. Her research centres on Muslim women's labour question, who are specifically engaged in the production of textiles at various clusters spread across the state of Jharkhand. The study focuses on their work from the lens of transition that a traditional caste-based occupation had to go through with larger transitions in the economy and polity. Her work centres around the idea of livelihood citizenship, as the state policies talk about the concept of livelihood accruing to women engaging in such allied activities.

Titas Ganguly



Titas Ganguly works as a Research Assistant at the University of Amsterdam. He received his MA in North American Politics at the John F. Kennedy Institute of FU Berlin and BA in Political Science at the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University. His research interests include migration, social movements, and political ecology.

Upasana Patgiri



Upasana Patgiri has an educational background in Urban Planning and is now transitioning to an Urban Practitioner. Ever since a young age, she has been interested in working in the domain of climate change, ecology and the urban. She aspires to be someone with the ability to have a say in how and into what our settlements develop, in a way that respects both the biodiversity in them and the local community. Belonging from Guwahati, Assam, her passion for sustainable development has been a driving force since her formative years.

Vishal Shukla



Vishal Shukla as an environmental journalist and @internews Fellow brings a wealth of experience from premier institutions like the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) and St. Stephen's College. He has worked with Dainik Jagran, Latin Post, NewsX, and Vigyan Prasar's magazines. Recognised by esteemed national and international institutions including the Russian Embassy, TERI, and EJN, he is also a recipient of the Rotary Club Mastermind Award.

Discussion

The Youth Meet commenced on 28 March 2024 with the Director of the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) **Shyamalendu Majumdar** delivering the welcome address and speaking about the new liberal world and how urbanity characterised by modern living, infrastructure, gig-economy and urbanisation, and digitised spaces, has been growing at the cost of marginalisation of people. Whether this urbanity takes into consideration the wellbeing and healthcare of migrant workers, refugees and marginalised groups, came up as an important question. Atomised and individualised life has impacts on psychological and physical wellbeing and ecological systems of the society, and how does one make modern, urban living inclusive-were questions that were raised.

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, President of CRG, in his introductory remarks talked about CRG's history, forum for policy discussion and analyses, as well as CRG's contribution to different aspects of democratic practice and research. The Youth Meet designed as winter/summer camp, has over the last three years brought together activists and scholars, and has aimed at bridging contemporary divisions. Present-day crisis of care as a problem in urban planning, and degeneration of care and its impacts on gender equality, and depletion of public transit not only affects city's liveability, but also the ability to execute care and familial responsibilities. The sessions of the Youth Meet followed after introduction of the participants.



Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury (left) and Shyamalendu Majumdar (right) in the inaugural session of the Youth Meet

Pandemic and Precarity in Conversations

Sucharita Sengupta engaged with the term 'precarity' and how it unfolded during Covid-19. Referring to Butler's argument that precariousness is a condition exposing human life to vulnerabilities and that there are socio-political conditions defining social precarity, she highlighted the ways in which Covid-19 magnified precarity in terms of life-conditions and the experiences of socio-economic marginalisation. 'Pandemic precarity' is a unique historical moment that exposed multiple faultlines and led to important questions of life and death. There was physical distance but also digital proximity, which led to care. Sharing her experience, Sucharita spoke about how students pursuing doctoral research began to think of precarity with uncertainties of travel and academic work. Pandemic brought back into focus the idea of care and solidarity networks. Covid

started out as the rich-man's disease, with slums at times remaining largely unaffected, though, following the outbreak of pandemic marginalised communities were often seen as superspreaders. Covid also pushed academicians, especially anthropologists, to think about fieldwork, especially with ideas of immersion, of trust and building connections. Sucharita went on to elaborate the examinations in the book 'Pandemic and Precarity', edited by Rituparna Datta (Sampark, 2023), and how the volume collates experiences of work through the adversities and hardships of the pandemic. She summed up saying that Covid-19 was not merely a breakdown, it was proliferation of existing disparities raising vulnerability.

Rajat Kanti Sur spoke about isolation as an important component of Covid-19, especially the politics of isolation, recapitulating incidences from Delhi's Nizamuddin neighbourhood. Sur emphasised how the book 'Pandemic and Precarity' looked at the impacts of the pandemic on different sectors such as housekeeping, construction, tea industry, mine workers, theatre artists, street performers, and social workers. The speaker elaborated how the research collective in the edited volume described donations as a big part of protection during pandemic, though the usage of donation and resources were questionable. The vignettes presented through the book looked at challenges that were greater for those working close to the ground during the pandemic. He talked about his experience of work and research with sex workers and street performers, loss of livelihood, and the struggles of artists for not only survival but revival of their performances during and after the pandemic, and how they mobilised support and solidarity networks in the process.

Shyamalendu Majumdar added that, during Covid-19, in West Bengal, people who were working backstage in theatre and as light men were unable to make ends meet, with agencies failing to provide livelihood. During Covid waves theatre halls were shut and people who were working there started begging to earn a living. Some leading personalities of group theatres started collecting money and providing financial assistance to those going through economic difficulties. Isolation became a mode of self-preservation and impeded solidarity even at times with Covid-19, with growing concern for societal cohesion.



In conversation on “Pandemic and Precarity” (from left) Sucharita Sengupta, Rajat Kanti Sur and Shyamalendu Majumdar

Session 1: Faultlines in Urban Caregiving

Samir Kumar Das while sharing a personal anecdote, with the help of a diagram explained the divides between topography and demography, separated along religious lines, conditioned by partition memory. Samir Das spoke of witnessing violence, panic, and total and absolute fear during emergency (situation). Imaginary urban borders, fear of trespassing, actions and the expected homogeneous state's presence, were also highlighted in the presentation. The speaker questioned the replication of divisions within urban spaces and further mentioned the discontinuities in connectivity; exemplifying how the lack of availability of prepaid mobile phone networks across a number of cities widens the gaps and divisions in the provisions of security, safety and protection. Citing Agamben's 'What is an apparatus and other essays', he interpreted the divisions that at times create invisible lines and carve communal differences across cities. More questions came up, such as, are societies at the junctures of million partitions today? How can the buffer zones that divide communities be protected? How do the imaginary, dividing lines get reproduced (not created by the state), but through a series of social practices? What leads the way to specific pockets of metropolis with invisible lines of divide? Why hiring and renting of houses are at times restricted to specific communities in these pockets within cities, and may be result into nestling of population in the particular part of the city? How neighbourhoods in a city have the possibilities of changing with time in their nature of community participation, and comprehensions of social unrest, justice, and peace. Social territories and invisible lines that divide society and elicit responses of communal nature or create communities, are most often not city wards or boroughs delineated by the state. Other Youth Meet participants joined the discussion and added that the idea of language may be associated with typical geographical zones or territories. Agamben's argument on the veil of invisibility and certain geographies being expendable to violence was reiterated. Echoing thoughts on whether urban spaces can engage with Lockean narrative, the modes of operation of the state in moments of communal crisis, ways of dealing with confrontations and achieving stability and communal harmony, surfaced; with alternatives such as letting communities have conversations. The session also reflected on the need of alternative political views for victims of violence, and non-state alternatives where communities protect each other, taking into consideration that all communities may not have the ability to prevent or protect themselves from violence. One of the participants added that, language usage in market areas, at times controls people's perceptions of migrant lives.



Samir Kumar Das (left) speaking in Session 1: Faultlines in Urban Caregiving

Session 2: Agency in Creating Urban Spaces

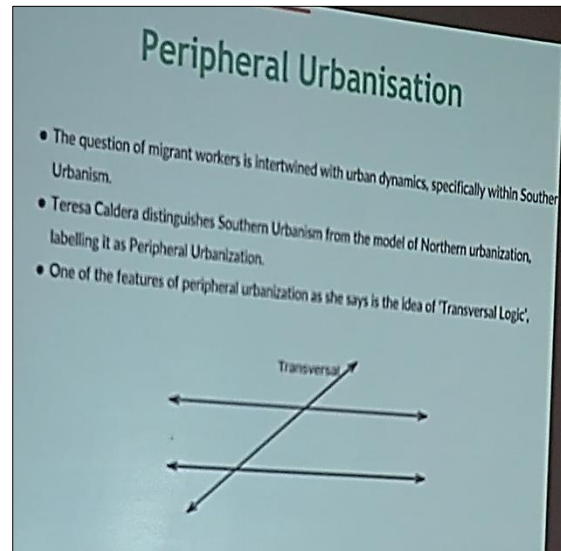
Upasana Patgiri in her presentation titled 'Belonging in the City: The Governing Influence of Work Structure on Migrant Workers', spoke of garment workers, especially migrant workers, and the ways in which the dictates of governance and their contracts prevent them from earning a sense of belonging in the city. Upasana's fieldwork in Pennya, Bengaluru, on garment workers (who are non-native Kannadigas with contractual work), explored how migrant workers in turn change their urban surroundings and work space to an extent, and how the space changes them. Long work hours keep the garment workers from familiarising themselves with the city and their neighbourhood, more so for the women workers living in hostel structures. The study found out that there was a more liberal set-up for women migrant workers living as paying guest; those staying with friends or relatives, had better options of exploring the new city after they migrate for work. Incorporating methods such as snowball sampling and in-depth interviews, Upasana examined the gendered experience of workers who were subject to strict hostel timings, with the marketplace or shopping area as their only place of visit outside the work set-up. The inability to leave work due to lack of alternative means of income, was also evident from the study. The research also focused on another group of salaried workers, who had connections with people in the city, and as a result could move around the city instead of being restricted to their workplace and hostels. Interviews indicated that the sense of belonging in the city, was also mediated through their aspirations of doing well and living better lives.

Athil Banna while elaborating on the theme 'Contesting the Concepts of "Migrant" and "Worker": Exploring the Translocality and Religious Agency', looked at shop owners and their relationship with the space i.e. Pennya, a large industrial area in Bengaluru. Banna explained that a shop as a physical infrastructure is a claim to agency, in addition to a collective sense of belonging. The shop as a space of social and cultural gathering becomes a place of familiarity which leads to the emergence of leadership and community-bonding, with the simultaneous emergence of agency and power. These economic contributors, thus, act as a link between interdependent economies and become reference points, exerting agency for creating urban space; the shops not only help develop a sense of belonging for the community but also support the creation of an infrastructure of belonging. Shop owners are active agents in translocality with a collective sense of belonging. The shop owners as active agents, organise and celebrate festivals from their native land, and other states, namely *Durga Puja* from West Bengal and *Chhat Puja* from Bihar. Athil referred to the concepts of 'transversal' and 'peripheral urbanisation', and argued that migrants do create and actively shape a new urban space within the city that they migrate to, for work.

Ranabir Samaddar pointed out that the papers in a way look at Southern urbanism and flagged that the relationship between urbanism and religion received less attention in the studies of the previous speakers. He mentioned the Pentecostal movement in Southern Africa, and the role of religion that surfaces in studies on Southern urbanism, along with the fact that migrants often have to bypass the city and create new settlements (like the urban enclosures in South Africa). Samaddar suggested readings on Dhaka garment workers and the need for further investigation of how religion becomes an important factor in Southern urbanism. Given the kind of segmented existence of migrant workers, how do workers cross boundaries? He stated that agency works in both city-making and remaking, because urban spaces are not static.

There were mentions of caste and religion, and the role of migrants in carving out space for themselves in new cities. Women had lesser interactions than men in the urban spaces under study, because men had a more pronounced sense of belonging and identification with a known community than women. Athil Banna stated that, while religious sites are transformed to create urban spaces, religious sentiments are difficult to form and control. Care and health services for

the migrant workers in garment factories and at or near their places of residence, were aspects that called for attention; familiarity and similar backgrounds created bonds between migrants who visited common health centres. Looking at urban transformation in places of migrants working and living, in terms of cultural and social impacts or changes, could be one approach. From the perspective of translocality, how care-work is urbanised in such localities could also be taken into consideration while taking the research forward.

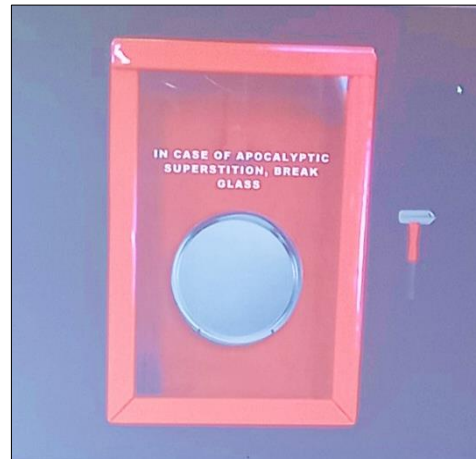


Presentations in Session 2: Agency in Creating Urban Spaces

Session 3: Ethics and Aesthetics of Life: A Workshop

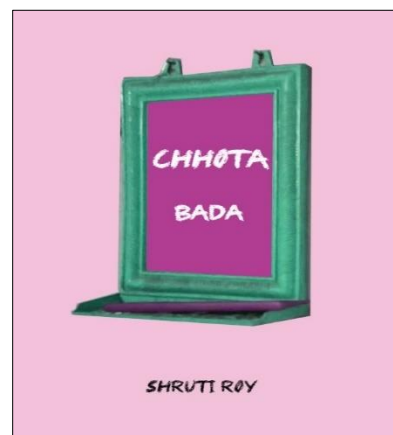
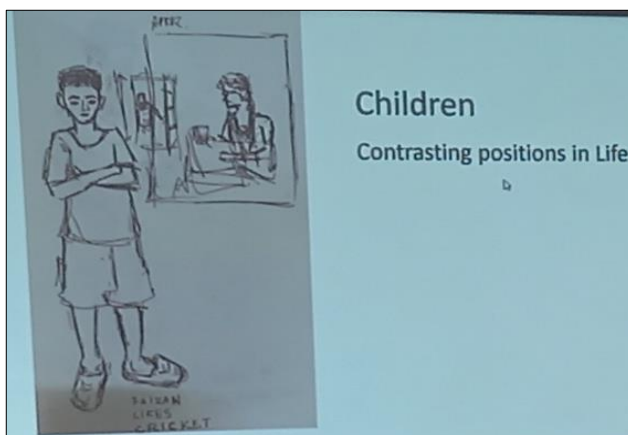
Agni shared photographs of his digital art highlighting data surge, information overload, work-life balance, cities in constant flux such as Ahmedabad, Shantiniketan, as well as illustrations from the phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. Reasoning out the term 'vandal', often considered a person who deliberately destroys or damages property belonging to others, Agni added that people often conform to (or are expected) certain roles and norms, especially artists, curators, hosts, critics. Public art and vandalism are two distinct yet interconnected forms of artistic expression that play significant roles in shaping the socio-cultural landscape of India. Within the contexts of urbanity, migration, and the socio-politics of visual expression, they both serve as reflections of societal dynamics, power struggles, and cultural transformations. In the urban context, public art 'ideally' serves as a means of enriching public space, fostering a sense of community, and promoting cultural heritage. Artwork often employs art practitioners and students and are sponsored by the state or brands in the form of endorsements. Layered on the architecture of cities and towns along with uncategorised organic forms of visuals like markings, hoardings or posters, living spaces, flora-fauna, waste, these add up to a manmade socio-political definition of urban space. Urbanity also breeds tensions in the form of graffiti tags, defaced murals, and damaged sculptures, not uncommon sights in urban landscapes. Yet, vandalism, in this context, can be seen as a form of artistic expression, a rebellion against the hegemony of mainstream art institutions, and a means of reclaiming public spaces for marginalised voices; with the socio-political nature of public art also making it vulnerable to censorship and suppression many a times. Agni mentioned that the Youth Meet was an opportunity to create a safe space that can serve as a melting pot of ideas, identities, roots, vulnerabilities, memories, etc., in a voluntarily expressive and collaborative manner; and thereby opened a workshop, for the representation of the thoughts and experiences of the participants through visual media in the form of craftwork, magazine or collection of

souvenirs as memoirs, together with interaction over common surfaces of art expression, or representations of individual choices.



Agni speaking about 'vandal' in Session 3: Ethics and Aesthetics of Life: A Workshop

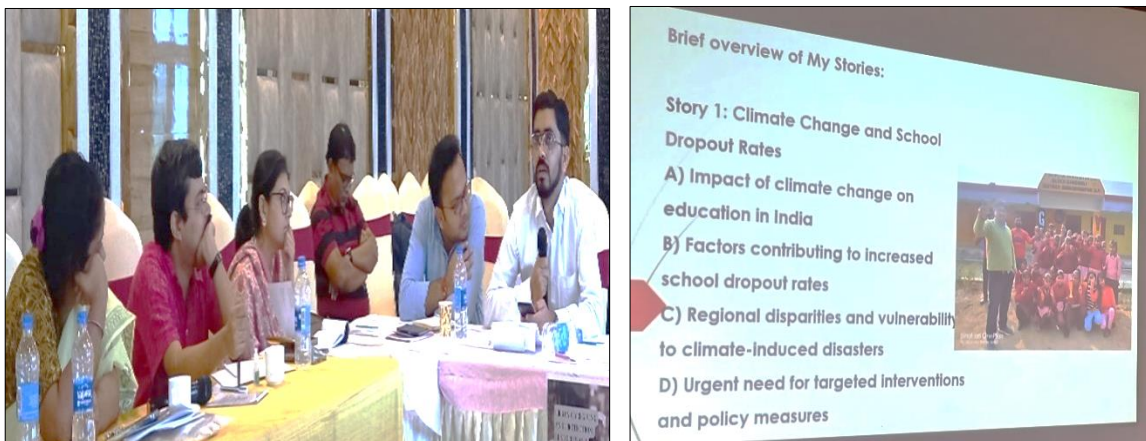
Shruti Roy in her presentation on 'Children and Inefficient Care-Giving Practices', shared insights from family systems that lack care-giving for children, especially in families where children become the breadwinner as well as the caregiver. In typical Indian households grown up men are often the breadwinner and mostly also the caregiver, alongside the women in the family. However, absence of this figure disrupts the usual structure, causing initial crisis and then leading to alternate systems. Shruti stated that her pursuit for stories took her to pockets of cities where these alternate practices co-exist. Cities provide homage to everyone who seeks a livelihood including women and children. Using verbal narration of her work experiences, along with pictures and sketches from visits to parts of Ahmedabad (city), Shruti portrayed incidences where the care-receiver in a family fills up for the absence of the care-giver in the family. Drawing from a case in the Rakhial textile hub of Ahmedabad where numerous small-scale textile mills and sewing workshops thrive on child labour. Rajan Gaur, a seventh standard student in a village school in the state of Bihar in India, voluntarily took up the responsibility upon himself to look after the family to continue his younger siblings' education. This inspired Roy to work on her graphic story 'Chhota-Bada'. Primarily a storyteller, Shruti Roy attempted to communicate the incident through a visual medium to a larger audience. She ended with the impending concern that children as young care recipients become vulnerable with their future at stake, in weak financial conditions. Thus, spreading awareness on similar situation and finding effective prospects to tackle such crises is necessary.



Illustrations by Shruti Roy in her graphic story 'Chhota-Bada'

Session 4: Memory, Media and Migration

Vishal Shukla in his discussion on ‘Insights from Environmental News Reporting: Exploring Climate Change-Induced Migration’, provided insights from news reporting and field trips focused on the linkage between climate change and migration. He described the problems associated with rural-urban migration triggered by food insecurity, the impacts of climate change on rural-urban migration and plausible remedies to curb such issues. Shukla cited collaborative action, community involvement in partnership with social, political and economic organisations and multilateral collaborations as helpful ways of providing relief. Education and awareness about climate change is weaved into the curriculum of school and community outreach programmes and storytelling can amplify the voices of those experiencing climate induced migration. His presentation highlighted the multifaceted impacts of climate change on migration patterns and the urgent need for proactive measures to address this pressing issue. Shukla while analysing the findings from his field investigation, enlisted the following points. Climate change worsens school dropout rates of children in India. The impacts of climate change on migration as a result of food shortage in India, occur in the form of reshaping of landscapes, disruption of schooling, destruction of fabric of society, and in the aftermath of disasters like floods, droughts, and cyclones, education is interrupted, particularly in vulnerable regions; impact of unpredictable weather patterns on agriculture, declining crop yields, and shortages of food force communities to migrate in search of livelihoods and essential resources, in the Himalayan region. Vishal signposted the importance of environmental-societal interconnectedness, need for adaptation strategies and policy interventions, collaborative action, role of education and awareness in building resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate-induced displacement. He exemplified mindful awareness campaigns that have yielded results in the village of Keshavapuram in Maharashtra, where recurrent droughts had historically forced residents to migrate in search of water, and a grassroot campaign promoting rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation techniques resulted in a 30% decrease in outmigration rates, demonstrating the transformative impact of education and awareness on local resilience to climate-induced migration.



Vishal Shukla speaking in Session 4: Memory, Media and Migration

Film Show: Walking in a Sinking Island in the Sundarbans

Directed by Sukanta Sarkar, the film ‘Walking in a Sinking Island in the Sundarbans’, transported the participants into a world tormented by climate hazards. The Sundarbans, a cluster of low-lying islands in the Bay of Bengal, spread across India and Bangladesh is an active delta region measuring about 10,000 sq.km. area covered with wide swathes of rare mangrove vegetation of which over 4,000 sq.km. is in West Bengal, India. Out of the 102 islands in Sundarbans, 48 are reserved forest, in a unique landscape with many water channels. This region is cyclone prone, receives heavy rainfall, and is low-lying. The intensity of natural calamities has increased in recent years due to

climate change, while the region also faces significant threat from rising sea levels. The film documents the struggle for survival of the people of this region, where the main livelihood of the people comprises agriculture and fishing. Apart from these, honey collection from the forest is another means of livelihood for the local people, which is risky for the inhabitants, because of the habitat of the man-eater Royal Bengal Tiger in the forests. During colonial rule, the British took initiatives to use part of the region for economic benefit, and therefore, people migrated and settled here. They used the resources in the region, and within a few years, the population of the place increased. Now, due to paucity of fresh ground water, mono-cropping is common. The film showed narratives from Sundarbans where among one in every five household at least one family member has migrated. Three islands, Lohachara, Suparibhanga and Bedford, have already been submerged on the Indian side; while the island of Ghoramara is at a high risk of land erosion, having lost five villages to submergence. Moushuni and Sagar Islands are sinking due to rise of sea level and the effects of calamities like storms, floods, and cyclones. More than 40 thousand people have lost their huts and land to natural calamities and rise of sea-level. In 2009, the Director of the film Sukanta Sarkar first visited the Ghoramara, and then went back several times. Sarkar narrates in the film that during one of his recent visits to the sinking islands, what stood out prominent was an environment with concerns for climate refugees.



Film Show: Walking in a Sinking Island in the Sundarbans (Director: Sukanta Sarkar)

Photo Exhibition: Trail of Blood: Calcutta Killings of 1946 and its Aftermath

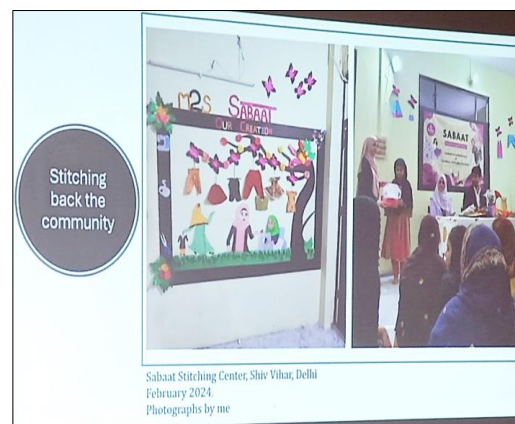
A digital photo exhibition on ‘Trail of Blood: Calcutta Killings of 1946 and its Aftermath’ by visual artist Dipanwita Saha, brought back the visual stories that captured the wounds and scars of residents of Calcutta (Kolkata) due to communal violence, class-caste rifts, and political conflicts. Each photo unravelled the untold tales of a turbulent history. The photo exhibition highlighted memories of a city and its people through photos that were eye-opener for many, especially participants less familiar with the history of Calcutta and its people. The collective depicted how the intermeshing communal, class, and political conflicts made deep wounds and scars for Calcutta and how some of the incidents still live on, as memories, artefacts, abandoned buildings and fractured sites in different parts of the city.

Session 5: Community and Care: Reflections

Aishani Khurana in her work on ‘Urban Care Giving as Sovereignty in the Afterlives of Violence’, looked into the afterlives of communal violence in urban spaces, taking the Delhi pogrom of 2020 as an analytic. Conducting ethnographic research in two Muslim neighborhoods in North East Delhi—Mustafabad and Shiv Vihar, that were at the epicenter of the religious violence in 2020, claiming 53 lives, her preliminary findings indicated how practices of caregiving and rebuilding the community at times also become practices of ‘sovereignty’. She engaged with the concept of

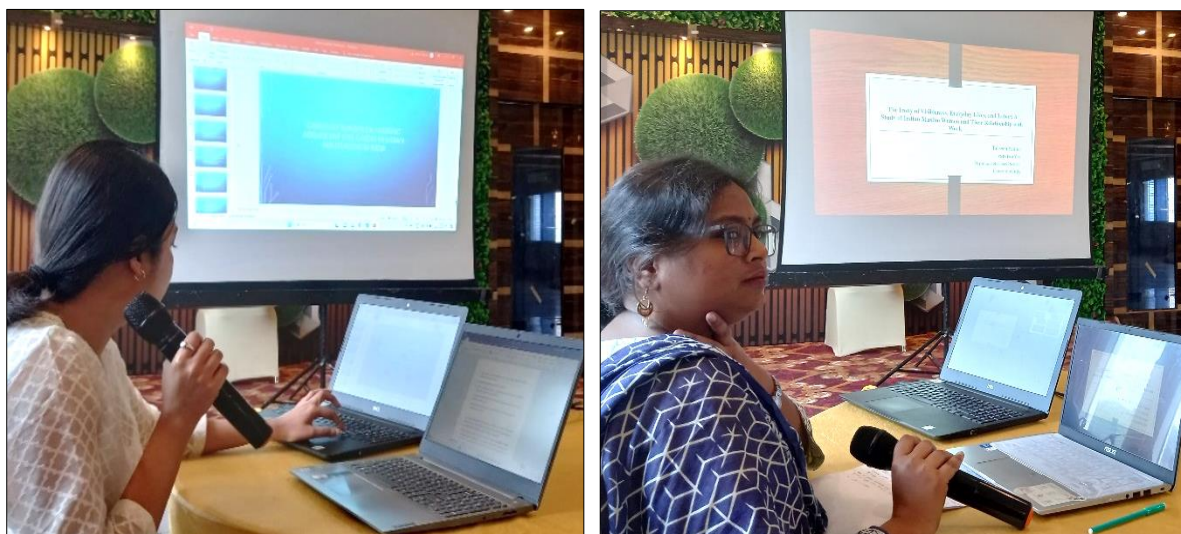
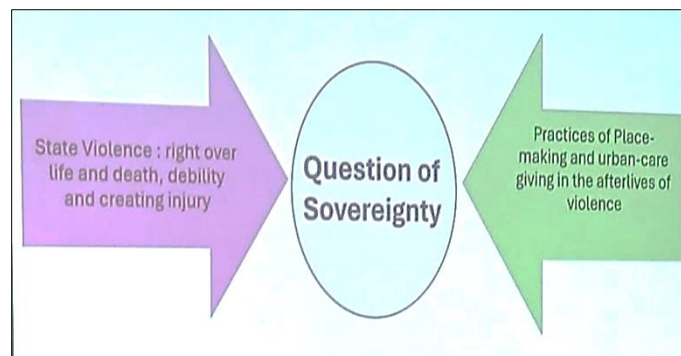
sovereignty as a thinking tool to explicate both the nature of anti-communal state violence and also to qualify forms of agency and caregiving practices that emerge in the aftermath of violence. Khurana used theoretical frameworks of sovereignty to argue how the Delhi pogrom as an act of violence was also in many ways an exercise of sovereignty by the state. Based on ongoing fieldwork, the speaker shared stories, anecdotes and incidents, and underscored agential practices by members of the community in these two neighbourhoods. Focusing on relationalities that emerge in the afterlives of violence, the presentation concentrated on vulnerability and situated the practices of urban caregiving that have emerged in the afterlives of communal violence. Discussing the emergence of institutions and community life in three sites during field work—a library, a stitching center, and a school, Khurana argued how these emergent forms of institutions run and built by Muslim members of the community were acts of caregiving which not only fostered a sense of belonging and affirmative identity for the impaired section of population, but also became an exercise in practicing sovereignty, in place-making, in resilience and in making claims to citizenship.

Swastika Kashyap reflected on ‘Caregiver Burden on Migrant Adolescent Girl Carers in Urban Households in India’, and pointed out that adolescent migrants, especially girls, often shoulder significant responsibilities in caring for their employers’ family members, contributing to household chores, and sometimes even becoming the primary caregivers due to various socio-economic factors. The burden of caregiving on young girls, compounded by their migrant status and urban living conditions, remains largely understudied. Although in India there is a bar at below 14 years of age, in which cases children cannot be employed in domestic work, it leaves out a wide range of young caregivers within the adolescent age of 14-18 years, who migrate from rural to urban areas in search of work and livelihood. Kashyap harped on the fact that poverty stricken rural families usually want to relieve themselves of the burden of raising a girl child. Furthermore, it is believed that household chores and care work is the domain of women, so it is only justified to them that their girl child may work as a caregiver in an urban household and earn to support her family. These adolescent girl carers bear the caregiving burden under varied circumstances of financial and sexual insecurity, poor healthcare and no access to basic education. She went on to add that employment in low-wage, care-work in urban households in their adolescent years not only deprives the female adolescent workers of the required parental guidance and support, but also affects their physical and emotional growth. The study conducted by Swastika intended to present at the Youth Meet an outline of the concepts of devaluation and wage penalty, to highlight the association of women with urban care. She asserted that investigating the state’s role in addressing the needs of migrant adolescent caregivers in India, and examination of the existing policies and programmes in addressing the needs of migrant adolescent caregivers are crucial.



Presentation on ‘Urban Care Giving as Sovereignty in the Afterlives of Violence’ by Aishani Khurana in Session 5: Community and Care: Reflections

Tahseen Fatima’s presentation titled ‘The Irony of Visibleness, Everyday Lives, and Labour: A Study of Indian Muslim Women and Their Relationship with Work’, brought to light developmental impulses, lack of information and knowledge about the working status of Muslim women, and inadequate allocation of resources, as factors that often push women to margins and informal work, subsequently impacting their lives. Tahseen identified shift to casual employment and limited opportunity of economic mobility as more prominent in case of women, signifying prejudiced lens, wherein discourses around such issues tend to have an overdue focus on relationship with religion, culture, and other symbolic areas such as fundamentalism, terrorism, questions of hijab, talaq, and sharia; thereby, discounting the fact that Muslim women stand at the intersections of not just religion and gender, but also caste-community, region, polity, and economy. She stressed on the need of looking into the question of work, labour, or gainful employment in the everyday lives of Muslim women and situate their work within the larger process of informality, globalisation, state policies, and livelihood; more deliberate engagement with the secular discourse of development and empowerment might be one way out. Tahseen expounded that it was essential to investigate the adequacies of the relationship between forms of employment and the social, economic, and political emancipation or empowerment that accrues to the women undertaking work and how such emancipation reflects in their day-to-day lives. There may or may not be a linear or direct relationship between employment and empowerment because various factors may determine or influence such a relationship. One such factor could be the advent of globalisation and privatisation that brought transformation in the way the state negotiates with the public sector undertakings. Therefore, it becomes important to problematise the relationship between employment and empowerment and the various facets of citizenship of Muslim women relating to their lives, livelihood, and community.



Swastika Kashyap (left) and Tahseen Fatima (right) presenting in Session 5: Community and Care: Reflections

Session 6: Life in Motion

In his work titled ‘Floating with the Diyarascape: Life of People in the Koshi River Flood Plains’, **Rahul Kumar Yaduka** stated that more than a million people live in the Koshi Diyarascape, and the fluvial biophysical givenness of the region consistently interferes with the state-led mega hydraulic interventions intended to manage floods, generate electricity, delineate land-water interface for ensuring agriculture and associated land revenue, facilitate irrigation, etc. Yaduka recapitulated that the project interventions have taken over the last few centuries, and concretised the region with the Koshi Project of 1954. This project straight-jacketed the migrating river Koshi within a pair of embankments. He explained the outcomes of the Koshi Project, as reported by the inhabitants, and highlighted the impacts of the embankments on the region’s ecology. The speaker pointed out the manifestations in the socio-economic and cultural life of the riverine community. On the ecological front, the embankments ruptured the complex interrelationship between the main channel of the river Koshi and multiple smaller rivers in the region, leading to the death of its paleochannels, intensified floods and land erosion on the riverside due to the deposition of sediments, causing perennial waterlogging on the countryside. The talk raised concerns about the changes in the ecological backdrop that have over the years led to uncertain monsoon crops, i.e., paddy, and the extinction of riverine biodiversity, flora, and fauna.



Rahul Yaduka speaking on ‘the Diyarascape’ in Session 6: Life in Motion

Sucharita Sengupta drew attention to “‘Care’ for Tourists or Refugees? Diary of a Traveler from Cox’s Bazar’, and shared the takeaways from a 2019 visit to Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh as a tourist, at a time when refugees flocked into the city. A small seaside town and an international tourist destination, Cox’s Bazar spans over some 75 miles stretch of beaches and is now paradoxically also a hub for foreign humanitarian aid workers who work in the nearby Rohingya refugee camps. Sengupta shared accounts of camp tours organised by NGOs, INGOs and renowned professionals—the refugee camps having transitioned within a few years with infrastructure built to accommodate care and protection for refugees as well as cater to the visitors, in addition to upgradation of the city airport. Thus, refugee camps are transforming into semi-urban or suburban localities, stuck between humanitarian spaces and cities. Refugee camps are mostly situated in slightly faraway places from the main town areas that are often borders, sometimes marked by illicit transactions, smuggling and trafficking that result into the criminalisation of refugees without taking into cognizance the obscurity of the regions that necessitate such semi formal settings. The discussion indicated the general contemporary South Asian scenario of refugee reception, and India hosting refugees. Crossing over of tourists, migrants—both economic and forced, and asylum seekers across new borders that came up in 1947, have remained a recurring occurrence. Despite being non-signatory of the international conventions of Refugees, India and Bangladesh have been

known to have welcomed refugees to their respective countries in the past. Sucharita threw light on the changes in Cox Bazar since 2015 and stated that the Rohingya camps of Bangladesh are located a little far from the town or beach area of Cox's Bazar, in Ukhiya, Kutupalong and Teknaf. After more than one million Rohingyas were forced to flee Myanmar in August 2017 taking shelter in Bangladesh, the entire district of Cox's Bazar has changed to accommodate the refugees, developing into a sort of 'refugee tourism'. Road connectivity projects are also underway to make Cox's Bazar better connected with the rest of Bangladesh and flights have also increased. It is undeniable that all this is being done to make Cox's Bazar logistically more accessible to visitors and tourists. These are just a few instances of the becoming of a place as a destination. The structures of these camps too have undergone significant changes in contrast to 2015. Sucharita argued that Cox's Bazar was not a destination before but the influx of a million plus refugees has garnered world attention to the place with multiple winds of change. Are big humanitarian aid bodies pumping crores of funds to the region boosting employment opportunities for the locals? How far are locals benefitting from the situation? Who are the main beneficiaries? How do researchers based in Bangladesh (for their studies) navigate this space now, which recently was a weekend gateway? These were some of the questions the speaker raised. Can one decipher that these camps will perhaps attain a semi-permanent temporality that will not disappear in the near future.



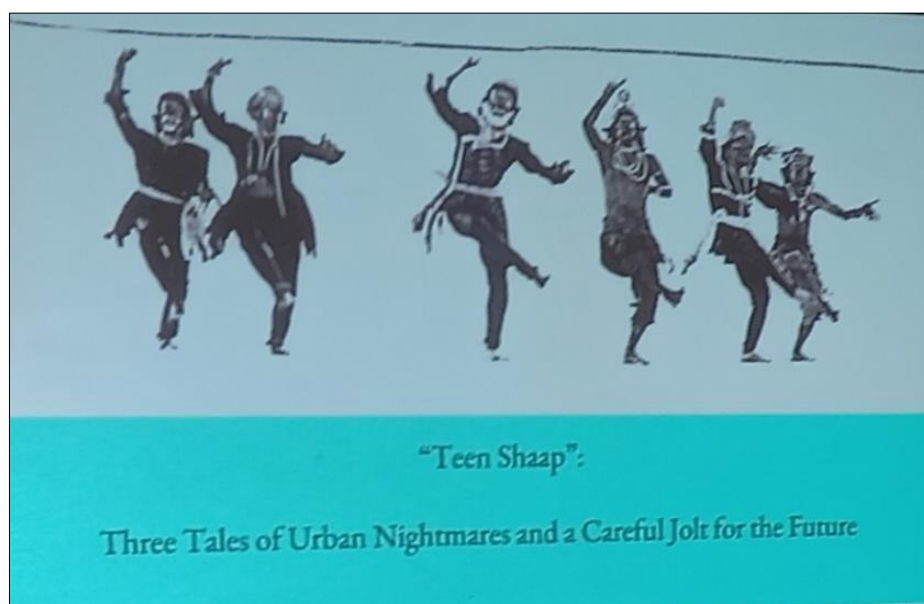
Sucharita Sengupta (left) and Rajat Kanti Sur (right) in Session 6: Life in Motion

Rajat Kanti Sur in his presentation titled 'The *Sawngs* of Calcutta: Critic of Colonial Justice and Autonomy of the Subalterns', elucidated that *Sawng*, a form of street performance by the subaltern class, once was a unique identity of Calcutta's popular street culture, appreciated by the nineteenth-century neo-rich class of colonial Calcutta; performances of *sawng* also acted as a method to criticise the class. Sur outlined several aspects of the performance and went on to expand that the neo-rich sections of society at times used *sawng* performances against their contemporary rivals within the same socio-economic background. The song actors, who were primarily servants of the palaces of rich people, took the opportunity to design '*sawng*' performances of the nineteenth century as humorous criticism against different activities of the elites. *Sawng* became a medium for nationalist sentiments to be popularised by nationalist leaders in the twentieth century. It attracted the newly emerged Bengali middle class, who gradually became the most influential sections of Bengali society. This resulted in a significant cultural shift of *sawng* performances where the subalterns moved away from the performances due to the imposition of nationalist sentiments by the political elites who newly emerged at that time. Gradual changes in the cultural taste and the growing popularity of regional cinema and theatre had also drawn the Bengali middle class out of this popular cultural practice. At the same time, the changing socio-economic conditions in Calcutta during the Second World War, partition and independence caused a significant shift in the cultural scene. The great economic crisis during the 1940s and 50s also changed the economic status of the middle class. Those who came as refugees from the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh)

changed the definition of Bengali subalterns because of their original belonging to the middle or lower middle classes before the partition of Bengal. Rajat Sur summarised that *Sanny* performers also played the role of critic of colonialism, the legal and judicial system, and the municipal and police administration and noted that the subalterns of the city gradually carved out their own space in the city through performance and the reaction from the colonialists against their claims and reproaches.

Session 7: Cities and Storytelling

Titus Ganguly in “Teen Shaap”: Three Tales of Urban Nightmares and a Careful Jolt for the Future’, traced the ill-fate of the hundreds of acres of Kolkata’s wetlands, functioning as an ecological network of sewage management for the city. Ganguly hinted at the gradually degrading status of the East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW) over the years, as trucks have scrapped-up soil and concrete for construction and the growing hunger for real estate development have filled wallets. He emphasised that subsequent to capital returns on investment in the market, the city can be often found living with corpses of lush creeks, remodelled urban imitations, and ghost towns. The bruises and horrors of the *bhoots* (ghosts) of the neoliberal awakening and awkward leap was the major premise of Ganguly’s presentation. He cited the incident of August 2022, inside the elevator of a Mumbai high rise building where a Zomato personnel was attacked by a pet German shepherd as he emerged from the elevator, and added that in India’s numerous gated communities however, distraught anxieties are not restricted to the canine tribe alone. Hauntology provides a new perspective to look at, if not deconstruct, the history of capitalist production, neoliberal development and different aspects of the current social condition in India. Ganguly’s work as a field investigator with platform workers in Kolkata and climate activism have made the theoretical tenets more tangible. Other ghosts also live on in urban spaces such as the skeletons of welfare nets, and the relics of the colonial past. The presentation retold the story of urban reorganisation through three contemporary and somewhat personal tales, aimed at a better understanding of how the nostalgia and remnants of the past, the grudges of the present, and promises of a careful future may be addressed through experiences of daily life and work in the city. In the first tale the speaker mentioned the encroachment into the East Kolkata Wetland and how structures constructed become new hauntologies of illegal activities to petty crimes. The second tale moved from the wetlands to gated communities and the horrors of informal work and gig economy. The third tale recounted the rituals of urban life and the colonial relics that linger on, within the political systems.

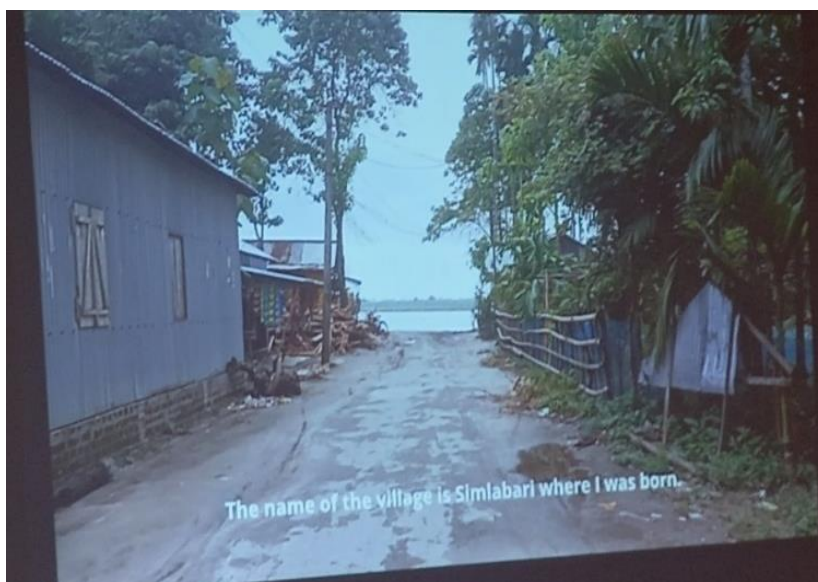


Titus Ganguly’s presentation in Session 7: Cities and Storytelling

Session 8: Margins of Protection

Film Show: Struggle and Resilience of Momiron Nessa

The session opened with the screening of the film 'Struggle and Resilience of Momiron Nessa', directed by Wahida Parveez. The film encapsulated the story of life hit by flood in Assam, that takes people's lives, crops, houses, etc., every year. Erosion is a major problem for people who live in Char Chapori area of River Brahmaputra and sometimes become a chronic problem for a person who has lost his or her home in flood or erosion, then has shifted to another place. Most people who live in the riverine area of Assam shift their home because of river-bank erosion. They are victims of both climate induced displacement as well as violence. The film highlighted that in the last fifty years approximately seven percent of Assam's total land mass has been eroded. The film documented how devastating the effects of climate change has been on the lives of ordinary people. Impact of construction of dams, change in river courses, and release of excess dam water ravage downstream areas with floods. The film documented the story of a woman who was living in a *char* called Takakata on the River Beki, in Assam. The erosion took away her home and she moved to Monir Char. The film had descriptions of resilience and adaptations by women for living in ecologically fragile zones, together with their struggles for identity.



Film Show: Struggle and Resilience of Momiron Nessa (Director: Wahida Parveez)

Dunes and Depths of Urbanity: Creative Endeavours

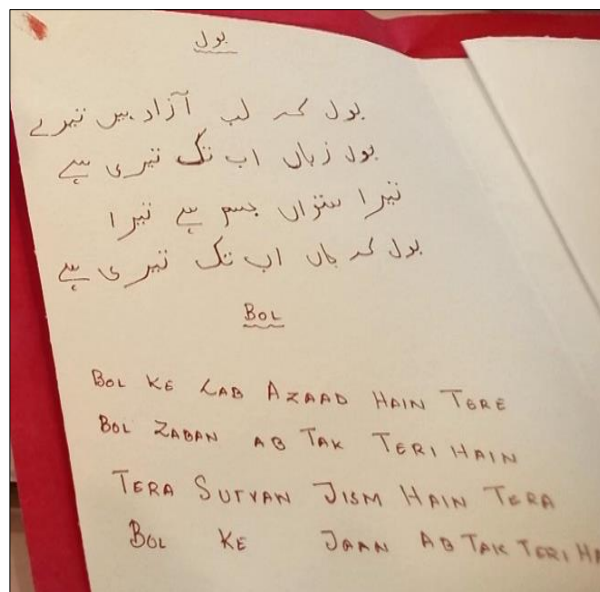
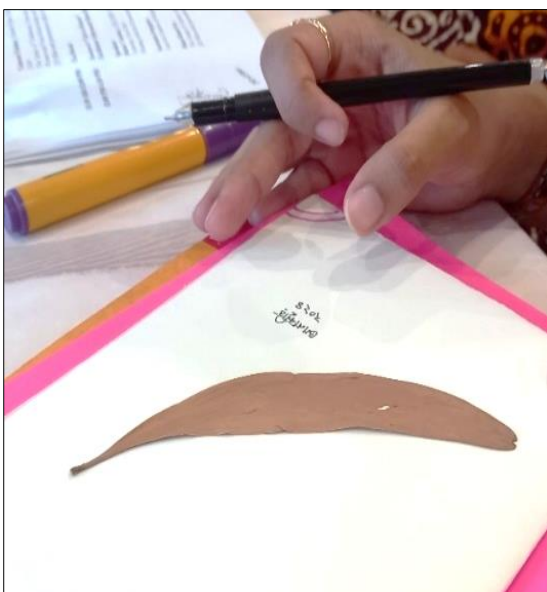
Youth Meet participants Agni and Shruti Roy conducted a workshop, encouraging fellow programme participants to create magazines, share their thoughts using representations, stories, poems, drawings, collection of memorabilia and objects, staged as pieces of art, readings or visual pieces, as well as other depictions. The discussion brought together expressions and experiences of the participants of the Youth Meet through the 'zines' they created. The creative endeavours culminated into a collection of art work that largely comprised reflections from deliberations, and conversations in the Youth Meet. Several of the zines with the creative expressions were thoughts inspired by personal experiences, expressions and accounts from the themes and sub-themes of the sessions in the programme, embedded in the narratives of the participants. The zines were in a way, a new series in the collective of CRG and its visual repository, bringing forth free thinking, expression through art, commentaries and the takeaways of the participants of the programme, including youth activists, academicians, urban scholars, cultural historians, researchers, journalists, designers and artists. Designed for open discussion the zines created by the participants were put

on display, and the inspirations of the participants expressed in their work of art, helped to commence conversations and opened doors for opinion sharing. One of the objectives of the session was documentation and compilation of a visual format like a zine, complementing the outcome of the exercise and efforts that have gone into organisation of the event and finding ways of greater dissemination of learnings and expressions that culminate from such gatherings and interactions, with the expectations of helping in community building as well in the long run.

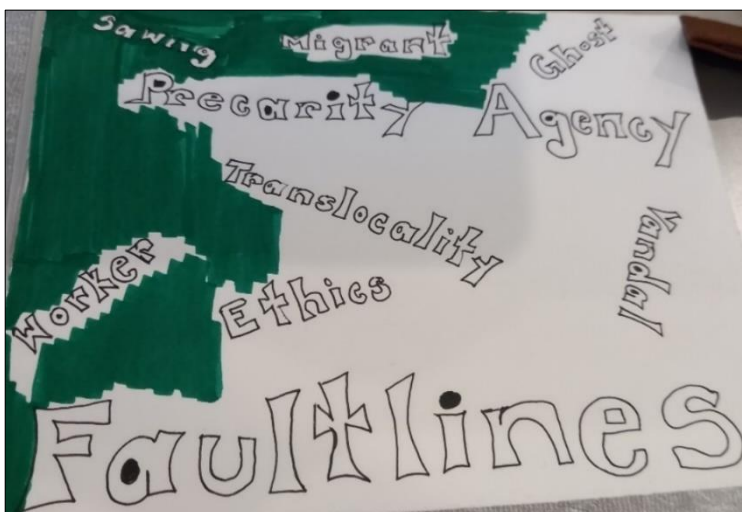
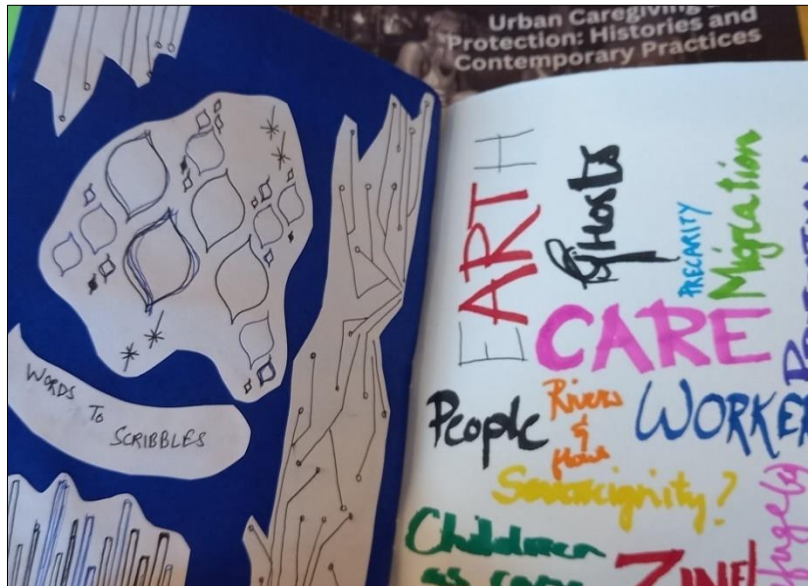
A note on the creative session and preparation of the zines by the participants of the Youth Meet was prepared by Shatabdi Das and published on the blog RefugeeWatchOnline in May 2024. For the full note see: [Workshop on Creative Endeavour in the CRG Youth Meet, 28-30 March 2024, Bolpur – A Note](#)



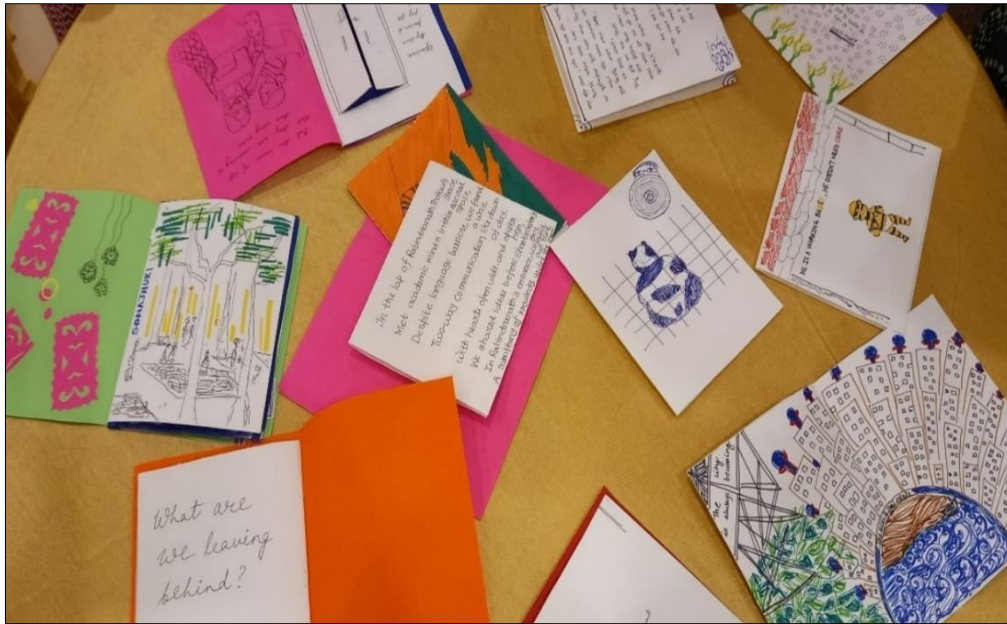
Youth Meet participants preparing zines with expressions, thoughts, memories and experiences



Glimpses from the session on creative endeavours: Participants even prepared their zines reflecting the multilingual plurality and using collectables



Zines prepared by the Youth Meet Participants



The zines on display in Session 8

Session 9: Chronicles and Urban Justice

The Youth Meet came to a close with a conversation between Ranabir Samaddar and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury posited as chronicles of urban justice. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury began by asking Ranabir Samaddar, can structural spatial injustice in today's urban space be ignored, given the ways in which spatial organisation affects community lives, networks, power dynamism and transformations in cities? Ranabir Samaddar spoke of 'chronicles' as a kind of a report, given in a chronological order, a diary, or a newspaper report, taking a number of forms in the writing of history, at times an analytical work, that may be considered as a chronicle of the time. Referring to the film 'Chakra' (1981), he added that amidst the process of the city being remade, space redesigned, and areas reshaped, and the workplace and residence combined, existing with large slums, informal workplaces, and shanty towns, assurance of urban justice when the city is redesigned, may be found in chronicles. He asked, if in the scattered geography of city, that necessitates remaking of both work and living space, is justice ensured? Why is it that this issue of the city can be shaped as a chronicle? Why not other forms?

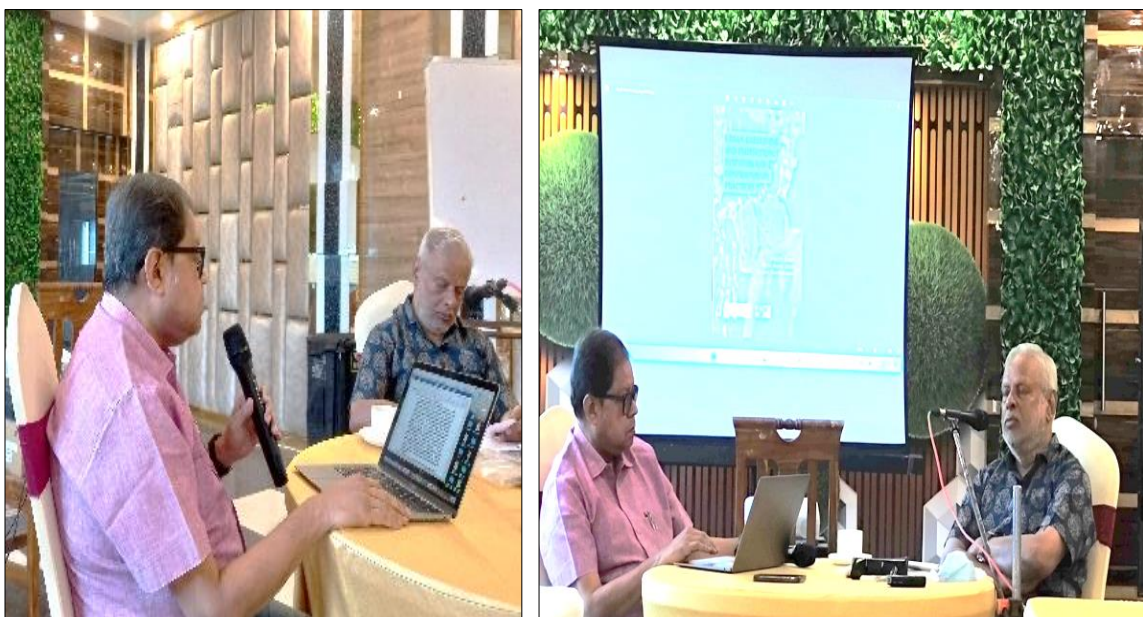
Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury asked about the cycles of tragedies of life and the possibilities of embedding justice in the processes and outcomes of urban policy making. Ranabir Samaddar spoke about policy regimes and their role in establishing justice, and the ways in which justice calls into consideration the time frame of policy, whether for a long time or a short time. He added that, firstly, policies extract sacrifice. Secondly, the ways policies are studied are often not the way in which the histories of the time, the histories of the effect of the policy, etc., can be understood. In such cases, the cost, the sacrifice extracted, and issues of justice, keep on surfacing. Is policy then the right kind of apparatus to address the issue of justice? Is it the right frame in which one can address questions of justice? Or should thought processes and opinions be shared in the forms of daily procedures, daily dialogues within the city, kind of a daily plebiscite on the so-called successes or failures of policies? This production of the daily, in terms of addressing justice, is again something which is not much considered or discussed. Theories may not always be very helpful to understand how new modes may be devised for addressing justice. It may be said that either daily dialogues can be geared towards achieving justice, that is *minimal justice*. Or, the daily mode is not the mode to redress; the daily mode is punctuated by exceptional things and that is how justice is achieved.

The conversation continued on the relationship between the pandemic and the city, keeping in mind the question of care and protection. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury further referred to urban revolutions and Charles Tilly's work, adding movements like the Black Lives Matter in the West, or in India the anti-CAA movements, and farmers' protests, as well as the latest significant movements that have upended the social and political order of cities, in pursuit of justice, equal opportunity, and dignity for those left behind in the neoliberal pursuit of urban development. He asked Ranabir Samaddar how biopolitics from below can be visualised in this context. What can be the ethics for a city and if it is possible to imagine an empathic city?

Ranabir Samaddar went on to explain the different forms in which one can visualise life with all its vicissitudes, unevenness, tragedies, what is meaningful and satisfactory—often becoming visible through other modes than the theoretical mode. Protest movements leave imprints on the urban life which cannot be easily effaced or erased and remain as inputs for public policy. A study of daily life does not throw much light on the path of urban justice, because people's senses may remain bifurcated, partitioned into the daily and the exceptional. But on the other hand, space must be given and kept in order to provide scope within people's ways of thinking and the understanding of the unanticipated that might happen. Biopolitics from below may appear as the daily, but its emergence is in the event, which one thinks to be exceptional. In the old days every philosopher thought of the city ethic. Today it is important to reframe the question of ethics. The city life must be a plural life, and the city sphere must not be a monolithic sphere, but practice daily dialogues. It further means that one needs to have a much more dialogic structure in the running of the city, in imagining the roles of associations and individuals, the role of various segments, whether it is gender or caste. All these things will have to be admitted as elements of the structure of public life. In this sense, the ethic of a city life will take its inspiration not from the thought of philosophers, but from the biopolitical practices of the lower classes of the city.

The conversation has been published by the Calcutta Research Group: http://www.mcrq.ac.in/IWM_Migration_2024/Final%20Chronicles%20of%20Urban%20Justice.pdf

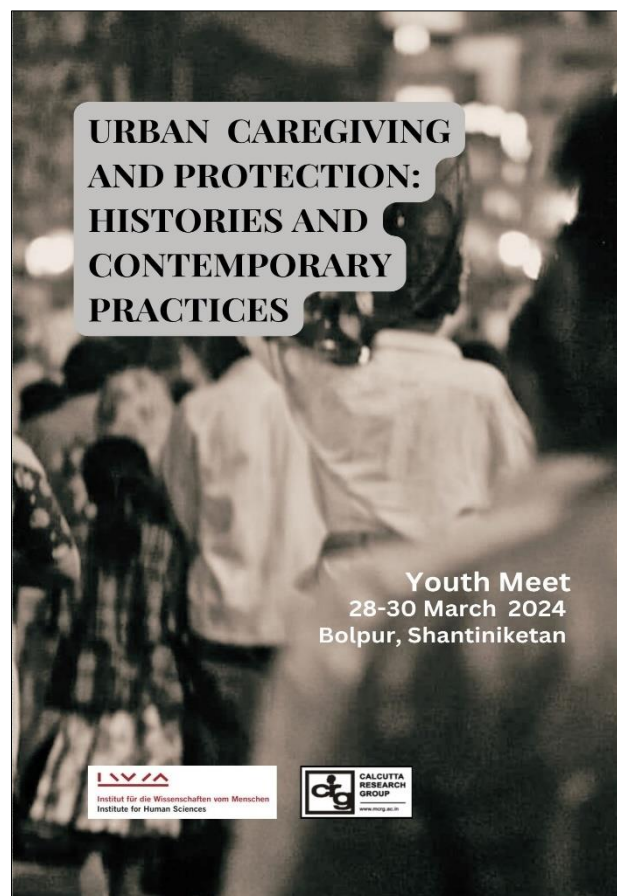
The Youth Meet came to a close with the formal vote of thanks delivered by Shatabdi Das.



Session 9: Ranabir Samaddar and Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury in conversation



Participants of the Youth Meet 2024



Event Poster

List of Participants

Agni, Visual Artist

Aishani Khurana, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago

Athil Banna, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru

Rahul Yaduka, B.R. Ambedkar University, New Delhi

Rajat Kanti Sur, CRG, Kolkata

Ranabir Samaddar, CRG, Kolkata

Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Rabindra Bharati University, & CRG, Kolkata

Samaresh Guchhait, CRG, Kolkata

Samir Kumar Das, University of Calcutta, & CRG, Kolkata

Shatabdi Das, CRG, Kolkata

Shruti Roy, National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad

Shyamalendu Majumdar, CRG, Kolkata

Sucharita Sengupta, CRG, Kolkata

Swastika Kashyap, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Tahseen Fatima, University of Delhi, New Delhi

Titas Ganguly, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam

Upasana Patgiri, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru

Vishal Shukla, Environmental Journalist & @internews Fellow