

Report on the Second Research Workshop, August 21-22, 2015

Cities, Rural Migrants and the Urban Poor – Issues of Violence and Social Justice

The Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG) organized the Second Research Workshop on ‘Cities, Rural Migrants, and the Urban Poor – Issues of Violence and Social Justice’ in Kolkata on August 21 and 22, 2015. It was a follow-up of the First Research Workshop held in Kolkata on August 1 and 2, 2014. In the First Workshop, each of the participants in the project presented a long abstract to outline the possible terrains of their research on three big Indian cities – Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai – along with Siliguri, the second biggest town in West Bengal and the flood prone areas around the river Kosi in North Bihar. In the Second Workshop, they presented their findings based on their respective research work in the last one year. Collectively, the papers presented during the two days of the workshop illuminated some novel and interesting facts about the vulnerable conditions of the migrant workers in these cities and analyzed the connections between their poor living and working conditions and the drives of urbanization propelled by the uncompromising advent of neoliberalism in India. Each presentation was followed by energetic and critically engaging discussion by eminent scholars and activists who specialize on research on migration and urbanization in India.

Day 1: August 21, 2015

The programme took off with the Welcome Address by **Paula Banerjee**, President, MCRG, and Associate Professor at the department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Calcutta. Welcoming the participants to Kolkata and MCRG, she commented on the productive relationship between MCRG and the Ford Foundation, the funding partner in the project, and expressed her wish to strengthen this partnership in near future in order to facilitate quality work in certain neglected areas of research such as migration and forced migration. The Welcome Address was followed by the Statement of Purposes by **Ranabir Samaddar**, Director, MCRG, who situated the project in the conjunctural context of informalization of labour, gentrification of the cities and urban policy reform, and concurrent instances of physical violence and violation of rights of the migrant workers. He posited the importance of the project by highlighting the structural relationship between neoliberalism and marginalization and increasing precariousness of the working class.

Session 1 (11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

The first session of the day featured two papers: the first on the journey of migrant workers from the flood-prone regions of Bihar and the second on the making of the town of Siliguri and a history of incorporation and marginalization of the migrants in its workforce. The session was chaired by **Bishnu Mohapatra** (Professor, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru). The first paper, jointly authored by **Pushpendra Kumar Singh** (Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) and **Manish K. Jha** (Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and development Practice, School

of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai), was titled 'From Kosi to Delhi: Life and Labour of the Migrants.' In their paper, Singh and Jha spoke about the socio-economic and political structure and hierarchies in flood-affected villages of Kosi region in North Bihar and their relations with the phenomenon of migration. By looking at the migrants' life at source as also at destination of migration, they raised and attempted to answer few pertinent questions as to the nature of migration from the flood ravaged region of Kosi, the immediate concerns that influence migration, the level of dependency on labour contractor (locally known as the *meth*), the considerations that determine the choice of a particular destination or occupation, and the role of caste and other social affiliations in the decision-making processes. Based on a study of six villages of Balua in Kosi region. These villages are: Bhelahi, Kiratpur, Rajarpur, Musihari, Tarwara, and Kubaul as source and the capital city of Delhi as destination, the paper situated migration in Bihar in a historical perspective, explored details of socio-economic and geographic profile of the villages and the migrants, and inquired about the lives of the migrants – the issue of vulnerability, marginalisation and injustice, and their struggles to claim citizenship rights – at the destination in Delhi. Singh and Jha opined in conclusion that labour migration should be located in the broader social relations of production both at the source and destination and migration creates a definitive relationship between labour and capital in both areas. The precarious condition of the migrant urban poor is largely influenced by the social structure and production relations at the source areas. Caste and class hierarchies, landlessness, meagre wages, lack of adequate work, lack of 'skills,' partial mechanisation of farm production, debt, etc. shape their socio-economic and political position, status and power in the source areas. These structural conditions accompany the rural migrants, mesh with the socio-economic and political hierarchies in the city, and tend to replicate the position, status and power at destination.

The presentation was discussed by **D. M. Diwakar** (Director, A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Sciences, Patna) who pointed out that migration in Bihar needs to be studied in connection with practices of water management and related policy perspectives with special reference to the national policies of Nepal and India in this regard. He also observed that Migration has a social cost as well where informal bondage of female agricultural workers becomes a necessity to arrange for the initial capital for migration of men to the cities. He concluded by stating that the paper has effectively dwelt upon the caste factor and has been successful in elaborating the replication and confirmation of various social ties even in the supposedly cosmopolitan environment of the metropolises. The comments and questions from the audience elaborated on the issues of climate change and environmental damages, feminization of the labour force, and influences of social affiliations on selection of destination and occupations by the migrants.

The second paper in the session was authored by **Samir Kumar Das** (Professor, Department of Political Science, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Commerce, University of Calcutta). It was titled 'A Transit Town in North Bengal: Siliguri in the Time of Globalisation.' Das' paper began with a description how Siliguri, the second largest town in West Bengal, transitioned into what it is today from a sparsely populated village in the nineteenth century. The growth of the town often surpassed that of the state itself and that happened chiefly due to high influx of migrant workers from the

neighbouring districts and states. In that sense, Siliguri is truly a ‘migrants’ town.’ However, in the subsequent sections, Das focused more on a shift in the identity of the town from a migrants’ abode to a ‘town in transit,’ gobbling up the surrounding tea gardens and neighbouring areas for construction of high-rises, evicting in a large way the tea labour, marginalizing and pushing them further into the adjoining rural areas. In this manner, urban-to-rural migration had become one of the distinctive features of Siliguri’s urbanization, giving birth to a new category of workers who arrive and inhabit the gated complexes and match the corresponding demand for informal labour for care, domestic work, waste disposal including electronic waste, services like electrical work and plumbing, etc. Also Siliguri continues to witness various kinds of cross-border criminal activities including smuggling and trafficking of goods and humans, resulting in turn incidents of violence along with the anxieties of being ‘homeless’ at home. Das concluded his paper with the claim that it is the city which is mobile, not the people as such, where displacement of humans and memories together churns out a space for transiting to a global network of capitalist accumulation.

Das’ paper was discussed by **Atig Ghosh** (Assistant Professor, Visva Bharati University) who remarked about the geopolitical proximity of Siliguri to the North East of India rather than the other districts of West Bengal and asked the author to illustrate this point more in his work. Also the logistical specificity and modality of Siliguri needs to be analyzed to elaborate on the phenomenon of trafficking and other legal and illegal commercial activities. Das mentioned in his paper about the role of the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in representation of the claims of the migrants and refugees, although Ghosh pointed out that this feature should be investigated more thoroughly and carefully. The issue of heavy securitization and militarization of Siliguri due to its locational proximity to China is also another topic that needs attention in any work on migration, especially to enrich the discussion on the town’s economy. The comments from the audience drew Das’ attention to the rapid escalation of transport and food processing industries and the shifting of the tea gardens to the plains from the hills. Also it was noted that smuggling of goods had started to decrease after liberalization.

Session 2 (1:30 p.m. – 3 p.m.)

The second session of the day had two papers dealing with the construction of the identity of the migrants and their working and living conditions in Mumbai. The session was chaired by **Nafees Meah** (Director, Research Council United Kingdom [RCUK], India). The first paper by **Manish K. Jha** (Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and development Practice, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) and **Pushpendra Kumar Singh** (Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) was titled ‘Homeless Migrants in Mumbai: Life and Labour in Urban Space.’ Based on empirical work in Mumbai, this paper makes inquiry into experiences of homelessness of the migrants. Their presentation attempted to locate the experiences of the migrant homeless people in the larger processes of a neo-liberal envisioning of Mumbai as the global city, the ever-growing informalization of labour, and displacement and inadequate resettlement, resulting in restricted access to affordable housing, services, work spaces and social welfare. It spoke about how

the homeless migrants perpetually suffer from the condition of suspended citizenship, lead their everyday domestic life under public gaze, face violence and also confront civil society's growing assertion for rights over public spaces. Jha and Singh looked into the issue of homelessness of the migrants in Mumbai through an empirical work undertaken at four locations in Mumbai. They tried to derive meanings from issues related to violence, eviction, insecurity, lack of privacy, livelihoods and struggle for essential amenities based on interviews conducted in these locations: (1) Cross Maidan, near Church Gate Station of South Mumbai; (2) Indira Nagar (part of Shivaji Nagar), the farthest eastern portion in M East ward – a resettlement site near Mint colony; (3) Tulsi Pipe Road, Mahim West near Mahim station in the western suburbs; and (4) a garment manufacturing unit at Dharavi in Central Mumbai. These ethnographic explorations, as the authors argued, exposed the homeless migrants' everyday encounter with structural violence through the experiences of indignity, humiliation and insecurity: the illegality of housing claims, informality and precarity of work, indignity and humiliation at shelter, exploitation and repression by state agencies and different other layers of homeless experience depict the structural and systemic apparatuses and operations of violence and illustrate how effectively these instances of structural violence on homeless migrants are perceived as normal, natural and even desirable.

The second paper in this session was authored by **Simpreet Singh** (Activist and Doctoral Fellow, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) and it was titled 'The Emergence of the Migrant as a Problem Figure in Contemporary Mumbai: Chronicles of Violence and Issues of Justice.' Singh's presentation focused on the construction of the categorial figure of the migrant in Mumbai in official discourses and common parlance. Singh showed that the process of migration was facilitated and encouraged by the colonial rulers and has continued after India's Independence in 1947, the difference being in the shifts in understanding of the term 'migrant' over the years. The emergence of the idea of 'sons of soil' was concomitant with the idea of blaming the 'outsider,' the 'migrant,' who, according to the 'locals,' were responsible for everything that was wrong in the city, ranging from the over-crowded trains to the rise in crime rate. The 'migrant' has been labeled as 'illegal,' 'terrorist,' 'burden on city's resources' and what not. Singh's paper attempted to map the trajectory of emergence of the 'migrant' as a problematic figure in contemporary Mumbai by studying the actors, forces, and reasons behind it and also by exploring its political economy in the background of economic transformation of the city from a manufacturing center to a service center. In the context of Mumbai, Singh argued, the narrative about the migrants should be looked at in terms of three responses: *unworthy*, *uninvited* and *illegal*. During the colonial rule, the worthy migrants were welcomed while those who were inappropriate with respect to the economic functioning of the city were labelled as 'unworthy' and thus resisted from entering and living in the city. After independence, with the emergence of the Shiv Sena, they were treated as 'uninvited' and over the following decades, people from South India, Muslims, Dalits and North Indians had to face strong resistance. Since the 1970s, the anti-migrant campaign started to influence the law making processes by deploying the Maharashtra Slum Areas Act. This legal onslaught labelled the migrants as 'unauthorised' and 'illegal' and thus made way for stronger and more officialized reaction against their entry and stay in the city.

Both presentations were discussed by **Sharit Bhowmik** (National Fellow of ICSSR, Centre for Urban and Environment Studies, Mumbai). Taking a clue from both the papers, Bhowmik questioned the stability of the definition of the migrant in a city such as Mumbai. The question in Mumbai is one of the urban poor and the access to public space which has been misrepresented as a ‘problem’ caused by migration. The feeling of permanent precariousness and insecurity makes the dispossessed unable to challenge the state or assert their rights. He further pointed out that Residents’ Welfare Associations have been instrumental in marginalization of the migrant workers as their membership seems to be the only legitimate form of citizenship. Pointing to figures from 2011 Census, Bhowmik demonstrated that 72% of the city households live in one room tenements while 18% live in two room houses. He stated that one needs to take into account the immense contribution of migrant labourers along with home based workers and street vendors to the city’s economy as they cater to the largest number of the consumers. The discussion by the audience covered issues like the layered definition of the migrants, their accessibility to social and financial capital, and the real incidents of physical violence notwithstanding the structural violence that both papers focused on.

Session 3 (3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

The third and the last session of the day had three papers on the conditions of migrant workers in Delhi and their location in the policy regime of the National Capital Territory. The session was chaired by **Prasanta Roy** (Professor Emeritus, Department of Sociology, Presidency University and Secretary, Calcutta Research Group). The first paper by **Amit Prakash** (Professor, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University) was titled ‘The Capital City: Discursive Dissonance in Law and Policy.’ Prakash’s paper examined the ideational premises behind the extant policy and legal framework for governing the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. This focus of analysis, he argued, attains greater salience with respect to the NCT on account of its peculiar location in the constitutional scheme wherein it is both a Union Territory and a State leading to powers and functions being fractured across multiple agencies and competencies. Focusing on three key issues – the conception of a city, the question of poverty and livelihood, and the ways in which migrants are constructed in these policy spaces – Prakash studied how their interstices form a crucial discursive space allowing construction of a city that fails to address crucial questions facing its denizens. The discursive hegemony of urban planning and development that informs the structures of governance of Delhi, he observed, is driven by technocratic and bureaucratic control, centralization and bourgeois aspirations of a world-class beautiful city. In this ideational frame, issues of social justice takes a back seat due to a conspicuous efforts at the invisibilization of the poor and marginalized. This effort to remove what is seen as a blot on the fair face of Delhi has gone to the extent of removing productive enterprise to the outskirts and undermining labour intensive industries. Studying the Delhi Master Plan in detail, Prakash showed that policy deliberations are often negligent of the fact that the same poor and migrants who are sought to be either disciplined or invisibilized are the motors of economic growth and service industry in the city.

The next paper authored by **Ishita Dey** (Doctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology, University of Delhi) was titled ‘The Migrant in a Service Village in the City’ and was described by her as an anthropological account of migrants in a service village in the city of Delhi. The presentation was based on her field-work in several intermittent phases in three sites: Gurgaon, Gautampuri Resettlement Colony in New Delhi and a dera in Faridabad. Many conversations, unstructured interviews in various intermittent phases in 2014 and 2015 with workers and organizations informed her study. Apart from that, she conducted detailed unstructured interviews with seventy women across the same three sites. Each of the narratives pointed to specificities of the challenging work conditions under which a women chose to be a kamgar (worker). Dey argued that narratives across these sites helped her to understand what it means for women to be a mahila kamgar, gharelu kamgar (domestic worker) and also to adapt to other working conditions in their course of life. Most of these life-stories, she told, helped to understand how caste and religious backgrounds shape their choice of occupations and livelihood in their migrant lives. Dey pointed out that one of the ways to understand how these women got inducted in the labour market could be through the category of ‘intimacy’ and ‘intimate’ labour, which needs to be explained at the points of interjection between home and work and productive and unproductive labours.

The last paper of the day was authored by **Mithilesh Kumar** (Doctoral Fellow, University of Western Sydney and Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group). It was titled ‘*Terra Firma* of Sovereignty: Land, Acquisition and Making of Migrant Labour.’ Kumar, in his presentation, introduced the concept of ‘primitive accumulation’ in writings of various earlier thinkers and academics and posited his understanding of the same concept at the heart of the violent processes of land grabbing, displacement and shifting of identity of settlers and workers near and around the Airport City of Delhi. Kumar, in the later part of his presentation, studied the genealogy of the ‘logistical labour’ where the lower caste members of the workforce operated as porters in the airport godowns or warehouses and the upper castes workers participated in the logistical activities of carrying goods to and from the airport. By making connections between displacement and changes in the composition of the workforce, Kumar showed how the logistical labourers becomes migrant workers over a period of time under the regime of privatization of the airport economy.

The three papers were discussed by **Partha Mukhopadhyay** (Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi) and **Ravi Srivastava** (Professor, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University). Srivastava initiated the discussion by observing the complex interaction between universal hypotheses about migration and migrant workers and contextual specificities of the cities in question. He also commented on the distinction between the rural-to-urban migrants and the rest of the urban poor. Commenting on Prakash’s paper, he stressed the need to mark the specificities of the neoliberal trends of urban planning in Delhi vis-à-vis structuring of the multifarious discursive space of urban reform. Speaking about Dey’s paper, Srivastava pointed out that often the challenges faced and decisions taken by the female migrant workers cannot be reduced to the binary of agency and constraint. While discussing Kumar’s paper, he questioned the centrality of ‘primitive accumulation’ to Kumar’s argument, as existence of the reserve army of labour is characteristic of any stage of capitalist

accumulation. He also enquired about the connection between labour mobility and the formation of logistical labour. Partha Mukhopadhyay, speaking on Prakash's paper, interrogated the claim that aestheticization tends to normalize violence and disparities experienced by the migrants in a city and drew Prakash's attention to Kalyan Sanyal's argument about co-existence of capital and need economies within the same economic formation. Disussing Dey's paper, Mukhopadhyay pointed out the flexibilities with which the domestic workers deal with their work – whether such flexibilities are intrinsic to their work form as well. He asked Kumar to complicate his notion of land in terms of capital investment and 'built environment.' He also asked him to elaborate on the idea of 'zones of exception.' The response from the audience included questions and discussion of differences in reaction of the migrants to government policies in different cities, the disruptions caused by chaos in order and discipline, durability and non-durability of village caste networks, and the specificity of the land question in conceptualizing exception in the Indian context.

Day 2: August 22, 2015

Session 1 (9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

Like the previous day, the second day of the workshop started with presentation of papers followed by discussion by invited experts and members of the audience. The first session of the day had three papers on Kolkata and was chaired by **Paula Banerjee** (Associate Professor, Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Calcutta and President, Calcutta Research Group). The first paper of the day was authored by **Debarati Bagchi** (Transnational Research Group Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University). The title of her paper was 'Migration, Street Dwelling and City Space: A Study of Women Waste Pickers in Calcutta.' Bagchi argued that our identification of a migrant is still largely informed by the subject's nature of 'dwelling' in the city; dwelling in public refers to an ever-existing and irrecoverable condition in the subject that makes her a migrant. Women waste pickers are often identified as migrants to the city because many of them reside on the street. Her study showed that the gendered question of waste picking cannot be addressed by just understanding the act of waste picking. Rather, it has to be seen in conjunction with their spatiality of dwelling which is often subsumed in our *a priori* understanding that waste pickers must be migrants for they do not belong to the city's formal regime of tenancy. The initial exploratory goal of this study was to have an understanding of some aspects of the life, labour and routine of the waste pickers through ethnographic research. She attempted to see if qualitative research among a limited number of respondents creatively speaks to the larger data-set. Her respondents were second or third generation women 'settled migrants' in the city of Calcutta and she looked into waste-picking as a social-economic livelihood practice by tagging it with the notions of homelessness.

The next presentation by **Madhurilata Basu** (Doctoral Researcher, Presidency University) was titled 'Migration and Care-giving in Kolkata in the Age of Globalization.' Basu sought to probe a gendered domain of labour under contemporary capitalism, namely, care-giving, with a focus on ayahs and nurses in Kolkata – the nature of their jobs and patterns of mobility – on the basis of field-studies in and around Kolkata. She also looked into 'care' as operating through both the formal

and informal structures. Nurses, working in hospitals and nursing homes, form a part of the institutional or formal care system, while the ayahs, mostly working in private households, combining the duties of nannies and home nurses along with performing other chores in the house like cooking and cleaning, are part of the informal care. Basu concluded her presentation with two observations: (1) migrant nurses see Kolkata as a transit point to go to other 'more developed' regions and cities and (2) ayahs who migrate from other districts of West Bengal describe it as their destination.

In the next presentation, **Iman Kumar Mitra** (Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group) spoke about the workers in the waste management sector and the construction industry in Kolkata in his paper titled 'Migrant Workers and Informality in Contemporary Kolkata'. Both work forms accommodate a large number of migrant workers in the city, although with varying constitutional attributes. Most of the scavenging responsibilities in the city are performed by migrant workers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. On the other hand, most of the construction workers hail from other districts in West Bengal, especially the two 24 Parganas, Maldah, Murshidabad and East Midnapur. Most of the workers in the solid waste management industry are second- or third-generation migrants who have settled in the city with their families since before independence. Barring a few, the construction workers migrate to the city seasonally, leaving their families behind in their villages and small towns. Locating his study at the juncture of neoliberalism and large scale urbanization, Mitra spoke how workers in these two sectors contribute to the production of a rental economy of space making, in spite of facing various obstacles in the form of displacement from their impermanent settlements, absence of job security and other social benefits, and humiliation and berating from the gentrified citizens. The workers in both industries, he argued, exist at the margin of the rental economy of Kolkata and often they are driven out of the city after appropriation of their capacities by the ruling elite.

The papers in this session were discussed by **Samata Biswas** (Assistant Professor, Department of English, Haldia Government College) and **Samita Sen** (Professor, School of Women Studies, Jadavpur University). Biswas, in her discussion, emphasized the commonality of all the three presentations in terms of their focus on the interlinks between the production of the city space and the construction of the migrant's identity. All the papers, Biswas pointed out, explore the morphing of the identity of migrant workers in connection with their location within the city of Kolkata. If for Bagchi it was shaped by the ever-present sense of 'rurality' emanating from the experiences of living in public, for Mitra it was the seasonality of their movement that sometimes prevented them from accessing the meagre social security benefits offered by the state. While discussing Basu's paper, Biswas connected the questions of labour and logistics by citing how the caregivers try to find employment close to the railway stations on their way to the city and back. Similarly, in Mitra's work, the municipal structure of solid waste management becomes crucial to underscore the living and working conditions of people employed in the sector. Highlighting the question of the labour in the three papers, Biswas drew attention to how in the official and vision discourses of futuristic urbanism, healthcare, and cleanliness, actual material labour are rendered invisible. Bagchi, she observed, does a commendable job of representing this materiality: the manual segregation, the

differential treatment accorded to clean and dirty waste, the prices of different materials collected, the balancing act between cooking and sorting stuff. In seeking to reinstate the human subject of labour into the vision of the smart city, Mitra also tracked the workers in the waste management sector through their castes, locations, and salaries. Basu's paper, on the other hand, pointed to important questions regarding the 'gendered' condition of care-giving: the femininity of the female employers of caregivers and the differences between care workers and women who perform domestic work including housework. Sen's discussion also focused on the attempts at rethinking of gender in both Basu's and Bagchi's papers. Discussing Bagchi's paper, she spoke about the multiple layers of home and homelessness transpired through the narratives of female waste pickers. Since Mitra's paper also raised the issues related to informalization of labour, she advised him to look into the different facets of unionization and its reverse among the conservancy workers in the city. In this context, she observed that the changing condition of the rural economy in Bengal must be brought into consideration while studying migration practices and labour in Kolkata. The responses from the audience touched upon various issues including the linkages with global politics and networks of waste management, location of ethnographic accounts in the broader social contexts, and methodological reflections on relation between the subject and the structure that seem to produce them.

Session 2 (12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.)

The second session had two papers on the issues of settlement and employment of migrant population groups in Kolkata and was chaired by **Atig Ghosh** (Assistant Professor, Department of History, Visva Bharati University). The first paper by **Kaustubh Mani Sengupta** (Transnational Research Group Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University) was titled 'Taking Refuge in the City: Migrant Population and Urban Management in Post-Partition Calcutta'. Sengupta's paper began with sketching the intertwined histories of rehabilitation of the refugees from East Pakistan and the development of the city of Calcutta in the initial decades after the partition of British India. In the course of the paper, he made an appraisal of the rehabilitation schemes of the government focusing on the way the refugees were categorised according to their background and previous occupation and what was the consequence of such a practice. Accordingly, he spoke about two particular groups of population – the Muslim population of the state and the women of the refugee families. The tension between the Hindu refugees and the Muslim residents of the state, Sengupta showed, gives a glimpse of a complex situation and questions the standard understandings of violence and social justice. He also spoke on the women and the various training and job they took up to sustain themselves and their family. In a way, Sengupta's presentation offered a historical overview of how the city changed due to the massive influx of population in the initial years of independence. The rehabilitation policies, as Sengupta showed, tried to sort out the problem of huge influx of population by linking them with the development regime of the nation. But the rehabilitation of displaced population could not be done in a cold, technical manner. Even though the government took several measures to manage the refugees, the mode in which they were implemented left much to be desired.

The second paper in this session was authored by **Iman Kumar Mitra** (Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group) and was titled as ‘Migrant Workers and Informality in Contemporary Kolkata’. Mitra’s paper sought to bring together two aspects of life, livelihood, and habitation practices in the city – the phenomenon of urbanization and that of rural-to-urban migration. The chief purpose of this exercise, as he explained, was to investigate the location of the category of ‘migrant worker’ in the broader and adjacent discourses of urbanization and to initiate a scheme of research which would explore the politics of defining and stabilizing this location and find out its implications in the area of social justice for the urban poor. The first part of the paper referred to certain past studies done on migration and zoning practices in Calcutta in the 1960s and 1970s. Taking a clue from this historical narrative, Mitra’s paper explored few issues related to the settlement practices in Kolkata – especially in the context of laws and policies regarding the *bustee* (slum) settlements – in the last few decades and showed how the category of the ‘migrant’ itself was produced in and through the various deliberations at the level of urban planning and policy making. Mitra ended his presentation by citing a recent incident in the history of the city where migrant workers were displaced from their settlements in the names of environmental improvement and urban development. This phenomenon, he argued, should not be understood only in terms of accumulation by dispossession but needed to be seen as indicative of a structural relationship between recycling of urban land and informalization of the city workforce.

The two papers were discussed by **Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay** (Assistant Professor, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta). In his comments on Sengupta’s paper, Bandyopadhyay referred to the significance of the two World Wars in shaping the history of Calcutta in relation with the emergence of a new migrant working class and how it would prove fruitful in understanding the readjustment of the society and the urban economy in the period after partition. In connection with refugee rehabilitation, Bandyopadhyay pointed out, it was worth studying the development of medium-to small scale real-estate markets not only in the vicinity of the city, but also in places along the rail track stretching as far as Krishnanagar, Bardhaman, Bongaon, Halisahar and Sonarpur – various small towns in the neighbouring districts. While discussing Mitra’s paper, Bandyopadhyay pointed out that the main thrust had been on the xenophobic attitude of the hosts or insiders of the city towards the migrant outsiders existing in and drawing strength from a meta-structure of violence and violation of social justice that informs the structures of knowledge formation, migration, and urban zoning. Though this xenophobic attitude is crucial in understanding the linkages between urbanization and migration, Bandyopadhyay observed that Kolkata did not occupy a special position in this regard, except the ethnic demarcations in concentration of labour and capital in different zones of the city, leading to a distinction between the cultural-political elite and the economic elite in terms of ethnicity. Speaking of the meta-structure of violence, Bandyopadhyay suggested to clarify the distinctiveness of neoliberal forces of capitalist accumulation that defines exploitative urbanism in the twenty-first century. The responses from the audience raised questions about the formalization and informalization of migrants’ settlements in the city and the role of the state, the location of rent economies of the city in the larger dynamics of global capital, relationship between land and built-in structures in an urban context and the increasing participation of big players in the real estate market in Indian cities.

Session 3 (2:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.)

The third session of the day was chaired by **Arup Kumar Sen** (Professor, Serampore College). The two papers in this session linked the issues of migration in Mumbai with various conditions of precarity including old age, unsafe work environment and vigilantism. **Mouleshri Vyas** (Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and development Practice, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) paper was titled as ‘Dangerous Labour: Age and Precarious Work Practices in Mumbai City’ in which she spoke of how the anti-migrant political environment in the city had created a confused socio-political and economic environment where the migrant worker was essential to manufacturing and service provision, and able to find work, while being unwelcome in terms of occupying physical, social, political and cultural spaces in the city. Her paper had attempted to bring this contradiction to the fore through a study of migrant labour around two phenomena – morbidity and the employment of the elderly in the informal workforce in two different occupations. The paper examined death and old age in the informal economy of solid waste management and elderly workers in insecure jobs in the private security provision industry. From her study it became apparent that the reality of the lives of these two sections of the informal workforce was shaped by factors beyond work and wages – their living conditions, inability to cope with any exigency including illness or death, the atomised lives that they lead in the city in comparison to the villages, and absence of social security or access to quality welfare services make for conditions of extreme precarity for them and their children. This reproduction of the precariat within the increasingly inadequate welfare regime seemed to be one of the biggest challenges for the country in the years to come.

In the second paper titled ‘Migrants, Vigilantes and Violence: The Making of New Urban Spaces in Mumbai’, **Mahuya Bandyopadhyay** (Associate Professor, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) talked about another paradox by exploring the lives of migrants who served as security guards or protectors to a city which was known for its politics of violence against them. In exploring the organization and experience of security work in the city through these aspects, her co-author **Ritambhara Hebbar** (Professor, Centre for Study of Developing Societies, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) and she attempted to challenge and move beyond the linear and descriptive understanding of the precarity of migrant labour, the fixity often assigned to the category of ‘migrant’, and the simplistic understanding of security. The in-depth interviews with security guards taken during their research provide a glimpse into their lives affected by issues such as the declining revenue from agriculture and changes in agrarian relations and the risks involved in their profession. Many of the migrant security guards viewed their profession as a risky one because of the malpractices within the industry, poor conditions of work, irregular pay, the constant fear of losing their jobs, and the ad hoc and informal nature of their terms of work. The presentation also included the complex and controversial issue of violence perpetrated by the migrants themselves and argued that it indicated a confrontational aspect of certain structural violence which is a part of the security guard’s everyday life. This aspect, the authors pointed out, is often underplayed in the media and associated discourses to dramatize and enhance the implications of the act of violence by the guard.

Mahalaya Chatterjee (Associate Professor, Centre for Urban Economic Studies, University of Calcutta) was the discussant in this session. Emphasizing the plight of security guards and informal workers, she pointed out that India had been unable to reap the benefits of its demographic advantage and the difference in the supply and demand of labour. She pointed out how the abrasive relations spawned by urbanization was also destroying family life. The discussion raised many points including the calculations that went into employing older security guards as they would demand less wages, the observation and defiance of international protocols in hiring security personnel, and the metaphorical usage of the term ‘precarity’ while discussing links between old age and mortality.

Concluding Session (4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

The concluding session of the Workshop had **Ranabir Samaddar** (Chair Professor in Migration and Forced Migration Studies and Co-ordinator of the Project) talk about various possibilities of dissemination of the research work presented in the workshop. It was confirmed that the research, although confined to the geographical boundaries of three Indian cities, has a potential to generate interest among readers all over the world. Subsequently, it was decided that CRG and the researchers must look for avenues with global reach, that is, publishers of international repute. It was disclosed that one such publishing house had already shown interest in publishing the works on migration and neoliberal city. This volume would include eight to ten essays of eight thousand words (including footnotes) on the said theme. Some of these essays might combine works of two or more researchers to accommodate most of the research done under this project.

It was further decided that the first publication rights of all the papers presented in the workshop would lie with CRG. However, upon inability to include all the papers in one volume, the individual researchers might explore other options for dissemination of his/her work. There were suggestions to bring out multiple volumes of essays considering the thematic diversity of the works presented in the workshop. This option, it was affirmed, would be explored as well in due time. The presenters were requested to submit their final papers within **15 October 2015**. The authors were also requested to submit their primary research materials collected during the research for this project in order to enhance public scholarship through digital archiving by CRG.

The Workshop ended with **Mithilesh Kumar** (Research Associate, Calcutta Research Group) formally giving the Vote of Thanks to all the participants, organizers and the Ford Foundation for making the event successful in terms of its intellectual energy and political and ethical relevance.