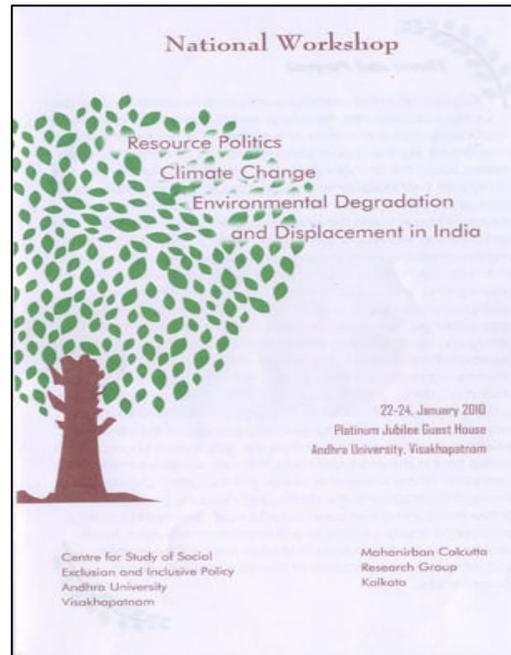


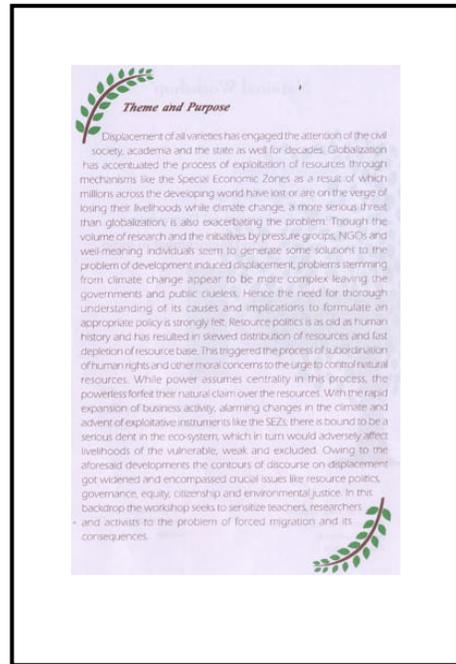
Report
Three-day National Workshop
on
Resource Politics, Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Displacement
in India
Jointly organised by
Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP), Andhra University
&
Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (CRG)
(22 Jan – 24 Jan 2010, at Visakhapatnam)

CRG over the past few years have been organizing short courses in collaboration with willing centers and departments of universities and research institutions across India as a follow up activity. This year CRG in collaboration with Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP), Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, organized a three day national workshop on “Resource Politics, Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Displacement in India” from 22-24 January 2010. This workshop was an outcome of the ongoing and past work by the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (CRG) and its collaboration with different universities in South Asia, particularly in the context of forced migration, over the last seven years. A select number of university students from southern India, in particular, from Andhra Pradesh, participated in the workshop and the resource persons were selected jointly by CRG and the CSSEIP. Participation ranged from research scholars, activists, and university and college teachers to journalists. Participants were given reading materials in advance for each of the sessions.



The three day workshop began with the formal inauguration by the Dr Beela Satyanarayana, Vice Chancellor, Andhra University at the TLN Sabha Hall. On behalf of CSSEIP, Dr V Subramanyam and Dr K Sekhar welcomed the participants and the resource persons to the workshop. The Keynote Address was delivered by Samir Kumar Das, President, CRG and Professor, University of Calcutta. Dr Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, Research and Programme Associate, CRG, introduced the workshop to the participants.

The inaugural ceremony was followed by the key note address by Prof. Samir Kumar Das, President, CRG. In his address, he said that administrative bodies do not consider people displaced by environmental disasters as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and prefer to call them disaster victims or evacuees. This creates a scope to keep these people outside the bracket of protection by the state agencies. However, such events like resource crisis, climate change and environmental degradation cause displacement of people who are not necessarily seen to be affected. The protection lens does not always detect them as people who could be entitled to relief or so called benefits. Now that the States have been retreating from their welfare activities while vigorously pursuing the neo-liberal agenda of development, civil society activism is viewed as perhaps as the only means that can not only compensate for the loss of livelihood of those who live as surplus and therefore are constantly on the edge but protect the rights of the displaced in times of resource crisis, environmental degradation and natural disasters. It may be helpful in this context to make a distinction between people's everyday concern for livelihood and what is commonly described as the realm of "civic consciousness, democratic leadership and a general sense of social and political responsibility in order to enhance citizen participation and to consolidate civil society strength"



The next day's proceedings began with the lecture by Prof. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Senior Researcher, CRG, and Professor, Rabindra Bharati University, where he defined the concepts of refugee and internally displaced persons, explaining with reference to the 1951 UN Convention, the Cartagena Declaration etc and said that the South Asian perspective towards protection of refugees is quite different from the western perspective as South Asia talks of group rights and the latter treats refugees on an individual basis. The lecture also delineated the reasons behind internal displacement as conflict, developmental projects and disaster. The lecture also indicated the ways of addressing the problem of internal displacement as: international humanitarian intervention, acknowledgement of the responsibility to protect by the host country and/or the international bodies, and voluntary repatriation. The discussions began by pointing out that India does not have a definite basis of refugee reception. IDP rehabilitation is also done on a piecemeal basis. Only with the exception of the Chakma refugees, no other case of refugee rehabilitation has been executed in India successfully. Discussion also pointed out that the migrants form part of invisible networks and move in response to invitations by their kith and kin. In this regard, experiences from Kerala and Tamil Nadu were shared. Samir Kumar Das, President,

CRG, and Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Calcutta, chaired the session.

In the second session, EAS Sharma, retired IAS Officer, presented a lecture on 'Changing Paradigm of Development: Displacement and Livelihood.' He discussed the displacements and changes in patterns of livelihood following the liberalization era in the 1990s. The key features of the phase like rapid and uneven economic growth, rapid industrialization being considered the hallmark of development, agriculture being given an inferior position in list of priorities, random removal of regulations and wishful regularization for maximum resource exploitation etc. were listed. He pointed out that the land acquisition act has been reviewed time and again to grab and snatch away the maximum possible amount of land for private profiteering purposes, often erasing out the boundaries between public profit and private profit. Displacement in this context is not always physical, but equally effected, nonetheless. He cited the case of Visakhapatnam and its surroundings and said, due to several projects that were harmful to the public purpose, people like the fisher folk, who are directly dependent on the sea, were uprooted from their livelihood. Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury chaired the session.

The next session was a 'Discussion on the Draft National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill' by VS Krishna. He remarked that the days of land reform are hardly over yet and cases of land alienation and land grab still continue. The Court couches land acquisition dispute cases in the language of development related disputes. He cited the example of Andhra Pradesh in this connection and said that here despite several such cases, there has not been almost any litigation, protest or criticism. The dispute related to the Gangavaram port construction was a case in point where fishermen were given no relief at all, despite their access to the sea being scrapped. He then brought on the table, the case of D Form Pattas, by virtue of which government gives away land to needy sections and said that now, the same land is being taken away in the name of development projects and no compensation attached to them, as they were originally land owned by the government. He mentioned the case of Mekalapandu, where for the first time; the Court ruled that compensation for D Patta land has to be there and should be equal to the compensation for regular land title holders, in occasion of acquisition. One very pertinent point made by the speaker was that in the bargain, along with the recorded number of people displaced, there are several invisible displaces whose plight is not recorded by law and therefore are not entitled to any redress. The point was extended to mentioning that common areas like wetlands and wastelands are used by several non possessing indigenous groups who, when displaced, can do nothing to reclaim. There were interventions by Dr Kalyan Rudra, renowned Geographer, to mention the cases of the three PCPIRs in context of West Bengal. The speaker's opinion was asked on how strong the human rights and civil liberty movement framework should be considered to address the issue in point? The role of media was also discussed with regard to such issues. The session was chaired by Samir Kumar Das.

The fourth session was on 'Asking Questions of Ecofeminism: Women in Environmental Struggles in Contemporary Kerala' by J Devika, Centre for Development Studies,

Trivandrum. She spoke extensively on how ecofeminism problematizes development as a concept because the latter uses the female body necessarily as the instrument of reproduction. The female body is also the resource for development which is supposed to add to the upward mobility of the family as a unit. She cited examples from Kerala where average age of sterilization of women is twentyseven and this proved to be the point of contention for tsunami victims who lost children in the disaster and could never again give birth. The social milieu has been of producing appropriate national subjects and the role mothers have to play in it. Presently this project has been re-dedicated to producing subjects for corporate globality. Child crafting is the art now and draws parents away from public; thus having a key role to play behind domestication and political docility of Malayalis. Devika added that ecofeminism is suspicious of this rationalizing. The interventions pointed out that a new language of protest is needed which will do justice to this gendered nature of exploitation, to which it was responded that language is often the product of situational demands and no common language is possible. Dr Paula Banerjee, Senior Researcher, CRG and Reader, Department of South and South East Asian Studies, University of Calcutta, chaired the session.

The fifth session was a 'Roundtable Discussion on Coastal Regulation Zones'. The panelists were G Papa Rao, Advocate for fishermen displaced by the Gangavaram private port project; Kadiri Kannaya, a fisherman from the village of Dibbapalem and Dr ABSV Ranga Rao from Andhra University. The roundtable dwelt on the premise that the master plan of the port and exclusion of the fishermen was drawn even much before the Special Economic Zone Act was in place. Land acquisition was completed for the port by virtue of a special act that the Andhra Pradesh Government passed to favour the construction. One outcome was that the fishermen united and demanded jobs in the upcoming port. The administration called the agitators rowdy and immediately implicated them in police cases that ranged from civil to criminal. Thus keeping the fisher folks on one side, the port authority continued to build a firm wall around the port enclosing the sea. The fishing community has been largely neglected in India. Only disasters like cyclones etc bring their stories to the forefront. The fishing community includes not only the fishermen but also several secondary and tertiary occupational groups like women who sell fish in the Visakhapatnam market, people who make and repair the fishing boats and the nets and will be devastated if one ring of the collective chain is broken. Interestingly, the relief measures, however small attach only to the direct fisher people and not the others. The roundtable was a vent to the fisher people who think that the fishing community has been guarding the coasts from time immemorial and now the marine police force ward the same community away from the sea. This not only threatens them from the economic point of view but also push them to a point of suspecting the state to be conspiring against them. Khadri Kannaya brought into notice the related issue of the much promised fishing jetty that the AP Government promised to rehabilitate the fishermen occupationally to some extent. Though declared to appease the opposition at some point of time, the authorities plainly rejected the pleas from the fishing community to finally construct the jetty pointing towards the fisher people as criminals who did not deserve the fishing jetty. Their agitation against the construction of

the port has earned them this wrath. The most severe effect, as Dr Rao explained, is possibly that the fishermen suffer from psychological stress due to this untoward development and consequent displacement. This dislocation therefore causes problems of psychological health and decrease in average life span of members of the community.

Next was the film session on forced migration and internal displacement. Excerpts from 'Bhangan', a film on the erosion of Ganga, by Sourav Sarangi were screened. Prior to the screening, a detailed introduction of the problems of people facing river erosion in West Bengal was done by Dr Kalyan Rudra. The Farakka Barrage project had the purposes of water sharing and resuscitation of the Calcutta port behind its construction. In its wake, a huge displacement was caused in the area creating a new group of refugees and IDPs who would remain in that condition always in the years to come. On the other hand, almost no advantages which were in the prospect have been affected by the erection of the barrage. This failure has been acknowledged even by the governmental agencies. The failure on the part of the Government has been that they have always looked at problems of engineering, trying to convert the barrage into a success story of development, and almost never recognizing the troubles of the people who were displaced. The barrage also compounded the issue of the borders between West Bengal and Bihar on the one side, and West Bengal and Bangladesh on the other. The Ganga has been considered to be the border between West Bengal and Bihar for a long time and after the construction of the barrage, due to the frequent shifting of the river course, the border has become the line of contention. So has become the the people's identity and entitlement to benefits. The discussion following the film session pointed out that this is a manmade disaster and that there has been inexhaustible resilience on part of the people to never give up the struggle for justice. Question was also raised whether it is a shortcoming of governability that the state fails to listen to the real problems and concentrates of lesser ones instead?

The third day began with a session on 'Gender Dimension on Displacement' by Dr Paula Banerjee. Mentioning several reasons of displacement Dr. Paula Banerjee initiated the lecture by saying that since the last two decades gender question is important in displacement. Vulnerability is the initial cause of displacement and women are more vulnerable within the vulnerable communities. Women bodies are not completely owned by them rather they are viewed as representatives of communities during conflict. When repeated attacks, killings, abducting, trafficking take place those can be cited as hints that concerned community is going to be displaced. She shared her experiences of camps and found that women's security is always related with 'physical space'. Discussion was centered on the concept of 'nostalgia' in connection with the displaced persons. Also, the joblessness as a potential cause of internal displacement has been discussed in the floor. Question was asked about the unique nature of women displacement in Northeast India. The response was that it is unique and symbolic as all the categories of displacement merge together in Northeast India. Question was raised whether registration of IDPs can initiate power game within governmental regime. The discussion floor reached the conclusion that women should not be seen as 'victims' only but also 'agents' for changing the approach towards displacement.

The next was the panel discussion on 'Resource Politics, Marginalization and Social Exclusion.' The Director of CSSEIP, Professor V. Subramanyam, chaired the session and initiated the discussion with the concept of social exclusion elaborating some mechanisms of it, like – geographical isolation, social discrimination, inequality, intimidation, poverty, corruption, physical disability and other health problems. Dr. J. Devika initiated her discussion with the experiences of rubber-plantations in Kerala and sufferings of the *Dalit* communities in this connection. She argued that this has been a part of the mechanisms of a neo-liberal state. Non negotiable citizen rights were not practiced for *Dalits* in Kerala. Under the neo-liberal development paradigm 'rights' are 'charities' not 'offers'. According to her, 'extracted growth' has replaced the concept of development. She offered a terminology for the welfare approach under the neo-liberal development paradigm as 'responsibilized welfare'. Question was asked whether 'left' in Kerala is anti-*Dalit*. The response was whether 'left' in Kerala is anti-*Dalit* or not is a different issue. Her argument centered only on the transformation of the entire regime of welfare to 'responsibilized welfare' where the principle is to incorporate more and more persons into the market regime but not assuring empowerment. She urged for rigorous formulation in this context. Dr. K. M. Parivelan initiated his discussion mentioning three components of social exclusion e.g. social discrimination, inequality and isolation. He cited the example of the fishing community of Tamil Nadu. He argued that this community has always been neglected and marginalized and somehow forgotten in every aspect. He concluded by saying that no comprehensive policy framework for this vulnerable socially excluded community is available yet and researchers and academicians should take the responsibility through their research to raise the issue of incorporating the fishing community into the mainstream. There was intervention about the role of the judiciary and social activism keeping the mentality of the ruling class in consideration. Dr. Parivelan argued that judiciary is the last resort and it is also a long and difficult process for the vulnerable and affected communities to reach the judiciary. There was also discussion around the controversial Draft Coastal Management Notification 2008 and the resource politics in this connection. The Chair concluded the session by commenting that academia should not restrict itself in only research and academic discourses but also in direct intervention.

The next session was on 'Global Warming – A major environmental hazard of the 21st century' by Dr UB Reddy. He introduced his work on ecology and proceeded to explain the causes of global warming. He raised the question that whether Global warming is real? There is a debate regarding this. One group negates the idea and claims that Global warming is not real while the other is on the affirmative and recognizes the threat of global warming. Reddy also argued that the amount of atmospheric carbon dioxide is increasing every year. To support this statement he cited the examples of how the Arctic snow cap is melting causing sea levels to rise. Forest fires, severe cyclones, storms and floods are occurring at an unprecedented scale. Therefore, climate change is a real threat to the world now. Reddy summed up his lecture by saying that there could be only one way out: promoting 3 greens- green cover, green power and green technology. Green here means being eco friendly and afforestation. He also mentioned that we

should think, plan and act green. Measures like carbon burying, lowering carbon lifestyles, by saying no to carbon fuels etc. can be adopted.

The last session was by Dr Sumithra Sripada, Andhra University Law College, on 'Human Rights, Citizenship and Marginalization.' She began by saying that 20th century is said to be the century of rights and commented that human rights pertain to all people. She explained that first generation of human rights included civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights. They lead to right to life with dignity, imply the right to food, shelter, education, clothing, clean environment and peace. She also pointed out the modern origins of human rights like the Magna Carta, the UDHR and said that these pledge to promote human rights without discrimination. Human rights violation leads to marginalization and cases in point are those of indigenous people and dalits in India. To wind up, she asked whether rights can be extended to all, drawing attention to the differences between citizens' rights and non citizens' rights, saying that political equality is not all; to ensure justice; substantial equality on all fronts is required, citing examples from the Sachar Committee Report.

The workshop ended with a plenary on the two roundtables on i) Resource Politics, Climate Change and Environmental Degradation and ii) Disaster Management, Care, Rehabilitation and Resettlement that were organized on the second day. The plenary was moderated by Dr Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury and reported the two roundtables. The first roundtable was moderated by Dr K R Rama Mohan, CSSEIP and Dr KM Parivelan moderated the second one. The respective reports of the roundtables are attached to this report.

Reading list distributed among the participants

Please find below the reading materials for the three-day national workshop

1. CRG report entitled **Eroded Lives**.

Please click <http://www.mcrq.ac.in/Eroded Lives.pdf> **Policies and Practices 10, Women and Forced Migration** for detailed report.

2. For gender dimension and displacement please see **Women and Forced Migration, Policies and Practices 10**, Compiled and Edited by Paula Banerjee.

For detailed report please click
<http://www.mcrq.ac.in/pp10.pdf>

3. For ***Climate Change, Natural Disasters, and Displacement*** please consult the articles below from the **Refugee Watch Issue No 31, 2008**

- *Making Sense of Climate Change, Natural Disasters, and Displacement: A Work in Progress* by Elizabeth G. Ferris
- *Build Back Better: Hurricane Katrina in Socio-Gender Context* by Elizabeth Snyder

For details: <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/rw%20files/RW31.htm>

4. For discussion on **Rehabilitation Policy of India** please consult **Refugee Watch, Issue No 31, 2008**

Relief to Rehabilitation: Towards Policy on Development Planning, Displacement and Rehabilitation by Madhuresh Kumar.

Click on the link: <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/rw%20files/RW31.htm>

5. *The Draft National Rehabilitation Policy: A Critique*, Essays by Walter Fernandes, Priyanca Mathur Velath, Madhuresh Kumar, Ishita Dey, Sanam Roohi and Samir Kumar Das, **Policies and Practices 16, 2009.**

6. **Refugee Watch Issue No 32, December 2008.**

HIV and the Displaced: Deconstructing Policy Implementation in Tsunami Camps in Tamil Nadu by Ratna Mathai-Luke

(The publication has been provided with the workshop folder)

7. **Refugee Watch Issue No 24, December 2005**

- Tsunami: Gendered Nature of the Problem and Responses
- Gender, Media and the Tsunami by Ammu Joseph
- The Tsunami Situation in Tamil Nadu by Bimla Chandrasekar
- The Tsunami and the UN Role in India by K. M. Parivelan

The readings are available on the link: <http://www.mcrg.ac.in/rw%20files/RW24.doc>

8. **Cyclone Aila and the Sundarbans: An Enquiry into the Disaster and Politics of Aid and Relief**, by *Amitesh Mukhopadhyay*, **Policies and Practices 26, 2009**

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