

Annual Report 1997 - 98

Introduction

The Calcutta Research Group was established in December 1995, with a core group of eight scholars of the city. Some of the main objectives of forming the research group were (a) to develop a group of scholar – activists to engage in policy studies particularly relating to the east and north east of India and the sub – continent, these policy matters relating to the themes of cultural studies, ethnicity, trans border and internal population flow, human rights and peace and conflict resolution, labor rights and dignity; (b) to sponsor or commission studies based on research and translation or compilation relating to the above mentioned themes of policy interest; (c) to foster academic and cultural contacts within the country and South Asia at large towards developing a research network on related policy matters; (d) to organize, undertake and promote publications, audio – visual documentations seminars, workshops, and campaigns on the said policy matters.

The Calcutta Research Group following its applications was registered as Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG) in June 1997, under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act 1961. The MCRG is now a Registered Society with certain statutory obligations. It has now its own office, a part time computer operator, and help – hand for its office work.

In this period reporting (1997 –1998), the society has been active in a number of projects of social importance as per the objectives of the society. Some of the activities the book release ceremony.

Carried out include:

1. Refugee Watch

Refugee Watch is a quarterly newsletter on the flow of refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons and potential refugees in South Asia.

The purpose of this newsletter is to study, campaign, and build a network of concerned people including academics and activists. The first issue of the newsletter was published in January 1998 and the second issue is under preparation. The newsletter is edited by Ranabir Samaddar, who is supported by a team of specialists in the field including Paula Banerjee, Lipi Ghosh, Sabyasachi Basu Roychaudhury, Prodip Bose and Subir Bhaumik and others. Special mention should be made of Jayanta Das Gupta, Circulation Manager, who has put in unstinted effort to bring out the publication in time.

Refugee Watch is brought out in collaboration with South Asian Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR). It has been circulated widely and is viewed as necessary contribution in the dissemination of information on the Refugee problems in South Asia.

2. Publication

A two days workshop on the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, held by the CRG in Calcutta in 1996 had decided to further campaign on related issues of militarisation, refugee exodus, problem of settlement in the hill tracts, treatment of the jumma refugees in India etc. As a part of the campaign programme on the CHT, Living on The Edge, Essays on the Chittagong Hill

Tracts came out in October 1997. The volume has been edited by Subir Bhaumik, of BBC, Dr. Megna Guha Thakurta of Dhaka University and Sabyasachi Basu Roychaudhury of the Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta. The volume is based on the papers presented in the above mentioned seminar and a similar seminar was held in Dhaka in 1996.

This book also has been published in association with the South Asian Forum for Human Rights. The book was released in December 1997 at Kathmandu, Nepal by SAFHR. Ranabir Samaddar, Pradip Bose, Sabyasachi Basu Raychaudhury and Subir Bhaumik, members and friends of MCRG were present in the book release ceremony.

3. Meeting

A meeting was organized on "Women in Bangladesh" at Bangla Academy, Calcutta on 16 December 1997. The speaker were Dr. Megna Guha Thakurta, Dhaka University, Bangladesh and Suriyya Bengam, Hasina Ahmed Activist from Bangladesh. Through the audience was not large, the meeting was rich in the discussion.

4. Society Management

a) new Membership

Three new members have enrolled in the period of reporting.

i) Paula Banerjee, Women's Studies, Research Centre, Calcutta University.

j) Anirban Chattopadhyay, Journalist, Ananda Bazar Patrika.

k) Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chudhury, Teacher, Rabindra Bharati University.

b) Staff

The MCRG has two part time staff in this period for carrying out necessary administrative functions. They were R. K. Mahato, Computer Operator and K. K. Singh, Office staff.

Debjani Datta
Secretary
Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group