

## Annual Report 1999- 2000

1. The Refugee Watch has continued to be a major publication of the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG). MCRG has published four issues (Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9) during 1999 –2000. The issues contained articles and reports on displacements in Kargil and other parts of Kashmir. There was also a write – up on the families and partition of the Indian subcontinent, Refugee Watch focused on the returnee refugees in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and on the refugees from south Bhutan. There was a special article on the legal protection of refugees in South Asia. The newsletter also examined the role of Tamil women in the civil war in Sri Lanka. One contributor examined the post – Amsterdam migration policy and European citizenship. There was also a special article on the internal displacement in northeast India. Excerpts were published from Jurgen Habermas' The Asylum Debate and from Patrick Thornberry's International Law and the Rights of Minorities. The Refugee Watch contained all other regular features like the news section, book notice, research notes and voices from the exile.
2. The MCRG organized a two –day workshop in November 1999 on the experiences of refugees who arrived in West Bengal after the partition of India in 1947 or those who arrived during the genocide in Pakistan in the early 1970's. Interim reports of the UNHCR aided project with the same title were presented in the workshop and commented upon by eminent scholars, litterateurs, media persons, film personalities, bureaucrats, refugee activist as well as the officials of the UNHCR.
3. The MCRG subsequently published the papers presented in the workshop in the form of a book entitled The Refugees in West Bengal: Institutional Practices and Contested Identities. Pradip Kumar Bose edited the volume and Madam Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, released it at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. Paula Banerjee and Samir K. Das attended the function on behalf of the group. The book consists of the following reports:
  - Refugee Crisis: Responses of the Government of West Bengal (Samir Das)
  - Millions seeking Refuge: The Refugee Question in West Bengal: 1971 (Sandip Bandopadhyay)
  - The Legal Regime for Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation in West Bengal, 1946-1958 (Sarbani Sen)
  - The UCRC: Its Role in establishing the Rights of Refugee Squatters in Calcutta (Arun Deb)
  - Foundation of a Refugee Market: A Study in Self- reliance Initiative (Dipankar Sinha)
  - Reintegrating the Displaced, Refracting the Domestic: A Report on the Experiences of Uday Villa (Bolan Gangopadhyay)
  - Bengali Refugees at Dandakaranya: A Tragedy of Rehabilitation (Alok Ghosh)
  - Exiled to the Andamans: The Refugees from East Pakistan (Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury)
  - Adjustment and Transition in a Begali Refugee Settlement: 1950 – 1999 (Dipankar Sinha)
  - Growing up Refugee: On Memory and Locality (Manas Ray)
  - The Cruelty of Inside/Outside (Ranabir Samaddar)

4. It held an intensive three – day symposium on the idea of “Peace as Value” on 29 November – 1 December in Darjeeling. Three broad themes were discussed in the symposium – the concept of peace as value, the political content of current conflicts in South Asia, and new modes of conflict resolution. Nineteen papers (19) were presented in the symposium. It was held in collaboration with Konrad Adaneur Foundation. The papers will come out in form of a volume in 2001 published by Monohar Publishers.
5. Members of the MCRG presented papers and participated in seminars, symposia and workshops on the problems of refugees organized in India and abroad.

Secretary  
Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group