

The activities of Calcutta Research Group

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Dr. Ranabir Samaddar, India, a founder and director of the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) visited and had a lecture in the Institute of Migration autumn 2005. He is also the founder of CRG's journal, Refugee Watch. He is known for his critical studies on contemporary issues of justice, human rights, and popular democracy in the context of post-colonial nationalism, trans-border migration, community history, and technological restructuring in South Asia.

Some of the main objectives of CRG are: 1) to develop a group of scholar-activists to engage in policy studies particularly relating to the east and the north east of India and the sub-continent on themes of justice, dignity, forms of democracy, conflict resolution, peace and human rights, diaspora, refugee studies, internal displacement, borders, boundaries, partitions, and the broad issues of forced migration, 2) to sponsor or commission studies based on research, translation or compilation relating to the above-mentioned themes of policy interest, and 3) to focus on legal-constitutional aspects of problems relating to resolution of conflicts, ensuring human rights, and decentralization.

One of their recent publications is Refugees and the State



Dr. Ranabir Samaddar

– Asylum and Protection Policy of India, 1947-2000, which is a collection of essays (2003) on the practices of asylum and refugee protection in India over the last fifty years. Written by specialists in the field of political science, history, administration, law and gender studies, this volume is a political, legal, institutional and ethical history concerning hospitality, care and protection. The book highlights the contradictions between these virtues and the manner in which state power organises care and protection of the vulnerable groups and communities, such as the asylum seekers. It is an extra-ordinary study on the interface between care and power.

Another publication to highlight is Refugees in West Bengal – Institutional Practices and Contested Identities. This book (2000) is a significant addition to the existing discussion on how refugees are treated and managed worldwide under two different circumstances - with and without international support. This collection of essays by political scientists, sociologists, historians and human rights activists narrates the activities of the refugee protection institutions in West Bengal in the wake of the massive influx of refugees from East Pakistan after the Partition of 1947. The book highlights how the society of West Bengal absorbed this huge influx in the post-partition era in a quiet and effective manner despite a serious lack of necessary institutions of relief and care. At the same time, as the volume shows, the response and self-activism of the refugee community was a great factor in enabling the refugees to negotiate with an alien world and often a hostile political environment.

Source: the lecture of Director Ranabir Samaddar, CRG and <http://www.merg.ac.in/index.htm>