

## WORKSHOP REPORT

# Urbanization and Migration in Transnational India. Work and Family Life from a Welfare Perspective

5 – 7 March 2013

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The Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), the Nordic Centre in India (NCI), and the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) organized the explorative workshop “Urbanization and Migration in Transnational India: Work and Family Life from a Welfare Perspective” in Bangalore, India, on March 5 to 7, 2013. The venue for the workshop was the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), at its Nagarbhavi campus in Bangalore.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together Nordic and Indian researchers in the

Humanities and Social Sciences to identify new areas of research on the ways in which work and family life in India are rapidly being transformed by urbanization, national and transnational migration, and new economic policies, especially with regard to welfare distribution and social security. The objective of the workshop was to lay the groundwork for research cooperation between Nordic and Indian researchers, while providing young scholars in both countries an opportunity to establish contacts with prominent researchers in the field. Close to 50 researchers and doctoral students from different universities and research institutes in the Nordic countries and India participated in the workshop.

The discussions on urbanization and migration in transnational India during the three workshop days were structured by the following sessions:

- Migrations and Modes of Urbanization
- Changing Ruralities and Urban Life
- Diasporas and Transnational Networks
- Migrations and Family Life



- Migrations, Margins, and Exclusions
- Employment and Self-employment in Urban India

The workshop is one of the projects that were granted funding in 2012 from the Swedish Research Council for Working Life and Social Research under a special call for proposals for arranging workshops to explore future research cooperation specifically with India. The organizing committee consisted of Dr. **Kristina Myrvold**, NCI; Dr. **Anna Lindberg**, SASNET; and Prof. **Gopal Karanth**, ISEC, whereas Ms. **Christabel Royan** from NCI was the workshop coordinator.



## INAUGURAL SESSION

The workshop was inaugurated as per Indian protocol. A young researcher from ISEC, PhD Candidate, **Pooja Thapa**, introduced the gathering in the main Auditorium building of ISEC, welcoming the honorary guests, including the organizers and the keynote speaker, with flowers and asked them to enter the stage. Thereafter **Prof. R. S. Deshpande**, Director of ISEC, held a warm-hearted introductory welcome speech, presenting the other speakers on stage and formally inaugurated the workshop.

**Dr. Anna Lindberg** and **Dr. Kristina Myrvold**, representatives of the two Swedish partner institutions behind the workshop, SASNET and the Nordic Centre in India respectively, also held short speeches, presenting the program for the coming three days, and explaining the objectives behind organizing the Bangalore workshop – an explorative workshop that may lay the ground for a wider Indo-Swedish research collaboration in the field of Urbanization and Migration.

**Prof. Surinder S. Jodhka** from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and currently ICCR Visiting India Chair Professor at Lund University, then held his keynote lecture, entitled "Beyond the Binaries of □Bharat□ and □India□: Reimagining the Rural-urban in

Contemporary Times". He was introduced by Associate Professor **Anand Inbanathan**, Head of the Centre for Study of Social Change and Development at ISEC.

In his fascinating presentation, Prof. Jodhka focused on the Rural–Urban dichotomy, and the concepts of Bharat and India as different moral categories, popularized by the farmers movement leader Sharad Joshi 30 years ago. Jodhka criticized Mahatma Gandhi's romantic view of rural life and homogenous villages, as well as the misconceptions that cities came into being only in recent centuries as a modern western invention, forgetting that urban life has existed in India since millennia.

A Presidential address followed, delivered by **Prof. G. Thimmaiah**, Chairman, ISEC, thanking Prof. Jodhka for his keynote speech, and the organizers for their excellent job in preparing for the workshop. He informed about ISEC's Centre for Urban Studies, and a new Centre for Gender Studies, soon to be set up. Prof. Thimmaiah added that ISEC is very interested in co-hosting more workshops like this one.

Finally **Prof. G.K. Karanth**, the key person behind organizing the workshop expressed his sincere thanks to the co-organizing institutions and to all ISEC staff involved in a Vote of thanks speech.

## **SESSION 1: MIGRATIONS AND MODES OF URBANIZATION**

Chair: Anna Lindberg, Ph.D. and Director of SASNET, Lund University

The session included three presentations:

- **Ravinder Kaur**, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, on "Rural to Urban Marriage Migration and its Implications for Social Mobility"
- **Olle Frödin**, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Lund University, on "The Social Question Redux: Emerging Social Protection Regimes in Urbanizing India"
- **Jajati Keshari Parida**, Ph.D., Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi, on "Migration, Employment and Household Consumption in India"

Ravinder Kaur held an interesting presentation on marriage strategies among rural middle class families. Such families are keen to marry their daughters to urban based grooms in order to acquire contacts in urban areas. Families in rural Haryana and Punjab tend to send their sons to colleges and work in the cities, sons who do not want to be seen as agriculturalists, but want to get government jobs in town. The daughter thus married off becomes a housewife and is seen as 'unemployed' or not having economic worth. Dowries are demanded of such women. Such newly urban based couples want to have small but son-biased families, leading them to use sex determination technologies to ensure son/s in the family. This urbanizing class is most likely to sex select and thus bias the sex ratio further. This class could also be characterized as an emerging urban middle class which employs certain practices to establish its middle classness, many of which may be female unfriendly.

Her presentation was followed by a vibrant discussion on the new middle classes of India, and the notion of changing elites appearing.

Kaur was followed by Olle Frödin, who plans for a new research project, on Emerging Social Protection Regimes in Urbanising India. Frödin discussed emerging social protection regimes, i.e., collective structures that serve to protect people from various risks such as income losses, in India. Urbanization tends to entail a need for new social protection mechanisms as urban residents are detached from informal rural



institutions of social protection, and exposed to new risks. How relative newcomers to urban areas develop collective strategies to cope with new risks. This project proposal seeks to explore the social foundations of new protection mechanisms, e.g. family, kinship or caste ties, private insurances, associations, mutual aid funds etc. On a more general level, the project seeks to shed light on the social sustainability of current urbanization trends in contemporary India. Olle Frödin put a question to the audience on where India is heading for, and he got a lot of insightful comments, among them some pointing out that the gender perspective is extremely important.

The final paper was presented by Jajati Keshari Parida, and focused on the connection between migration, employment and household consumption in India. Parida's presentation was mainly based on statistical data from the Census of India. From these data he had collected some extremely interesting material on what role remittances play in determining household's expenditure. He showed that 43 % of the total work force in India consists of migrant workers, and that 65 % of non-seasonal migrant workers work in the formal sector. Most of the money sent back by the migrant workers to their villages are used for food consumption. Parida was complimented by members of the audience for his good basic data research on welfare effects of migration.

## SESSION 2: CHANGING RURALITIES AND URBAN LIFE

Chair: **K. S. James**, Professor and Head, Population Research Centre, ISEC

The session included four presentations:

- **Knut A. Jacobsen**, Professor, Department of Archaeology, History, cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen on "Hinduism, Migration and the City: A Historical Perspective"

- **Siddharth Sareen**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen, on “Governing the Conflicted Commons: Democracy in the Indian Tribal Belt”
- **Ranvijay Singh**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi on “Everyday Geographies of Migrant Men in Delhi: Paths to Belonging”
- **Srilata Sircar**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Human Geography, Lund University, on “Exploring Social Transformation and Social Exclusion in Emerging Census Towns in India”

Knut A. Jacobsen started by posing the question as how do the village and the city influence each other’s religious practices. Traditionally in India, according to Knut, urban religious traditions are considered exceptions rather than the rule. But a large number of cities in India began as religious places that then formed into cities. And now Hinduism is on its way to be a predominantly urban religion, probably for the first time in its history. Some argue that the origin of Buddhism and Jainism are to be found in urban areas, at a time when the urban and rural started to separate. For example, towns and market places are frequently mentioned in early Buddhist texts, the Buddha delivered his teachings in urban areas, etc. Early Hindu traditions on the other hand often show a negative attitude towards the urban lifestyle, as was also showed by Mahatma Gandhi. A Brahmin should avoid visiting cities, etc. Benares is an ancient city, but Benares is not an ancient sacred city. It started out as a trading city. People also carried their urban religious practices from the cities and to the urban. The conclusion was that early urban religious movements should be further studied in order to understand how the city influences religion and religion influence cities. The following discussion revolved around the theme of cities being transformed into sacred places which led them to be open for all, which in turn was good for business. Pilgrimage tradition has the ideology of openness to all. The idea of the city as providing “moksha” (liberation) is reverse to early Hindu beliefs. Cities were places where Buddhism and Jainism flourished. Population became Hindu with the decay of cities.

Siddharth Sareen continued with a presentation on “Governing the Conflicted Commons: Democracy in the Indian Tribal Belt” in which he talked about national commons and indigenous communities in the Indian state of Jharkhand, a state rich on minerals and natural resources as well as on indigenous and independent tribes, and where a problematic situation has come to place where the government offer some social security but at the same time it is “almost impossible” for the tribes to access these rights in practice. Siddharth has conducted field work in the area and shared some of his findings. His description is of a region where a lot of interests are colliding, creating a complex and problematic situation. An example mentioned is the Saranda forest in Jharkhand where conflicts over access to the natural resources have led to the presence of many armed forces in the area. Siddharth also mentioned the so called Access Theory that states that it is not possible to talk about access to natural resources if there is no possibility for people to sell them at a fair price. He also asked the question whether decentralization actually can lead to democratization. The discussion brought up questions on how to deal with mobility to and from the region when studying the relationship between authorities and tribes and the fact that the population is so diverse, with young people who aspire to gain access to modern things like mobiles etc., and at the same time there are men and women who has never been more than 10km from their home

villages. Also some "constitutional contradictions" was mentioned in that the government is giving rights etc. to the tribes but then acting against those rights when it comes to actual resource access.

In his presentation on "Everyday Geographies of Migrant Men in Delhi: Paths to Belonging", Ranvijay Singh talked about "Everyday Geography" as the study of



small, repeated actions and routines that are analyzed on a spatial basis. The main concepts used Singh were Space, Spatial practices, Representational space and "mini-spaces". The latter understood as embedded spaces in larger spaces where certain repeated actions of psychological significance are carried out. Ranvijay intend to study migrant men in Delhi from the surrounding rural areas who are unmarried and have settled in Delhi without families. The subjects are stressed from their low wage work and general life circumstances and thus create or find mini-spaces in which they practice routines which make them feel better, often by practice customs from their native villages. The discussion revolved around the importance to be careful and not to romanticize these so called "mini-spaces" because they can actually be spaces of caste and gender inequalities etc. Questions were also raised if there was discrimination between public and private spaces and if he had had any thoughts on the political consequences of these mini-spaces. Surinder Jodhka emphasized that it is not as simple as people wanting to "feel good": It is much more complicated and carries components of caste, religion, politics and gender. Another question dealt with the significance of the "Geography" of the mini-spaces, and what importance was actually given to that aspect in the study.

Srilata Sircar ended the session with a presentation on "Exploring Social Transformation and Social Exclusion in Emerging Census Towns in India" in which she started out by showing the phenomenal rise in the number of Census Towns (CTs) between 2001 – 2011 and that new CTs account for nearly 30% of urban growth in the last decade. More than 80% of the new CTs are located outside the proximity of existing million-plus cities, indicating spontaneous in-situ urbanization. Srilata focuses on West Bengal, the state with the largest number of CTs. Srilata asked: What economic and social relations have sustained the emergence and growth of the new CTs in West Bengal? What are the aspects of change and continuity in the traditional social relations of caste and gender? How does caste and gender relations reproduce themselves in these growing settlements? She also wants to look at how new enterprises are set up in these settlements.

The discussion revolved a lot around the apparent absence of a caste discourse in the West Bengal and what the possible causes for this could be. Some possible answers were given that the West Bengal has seen a powerful anti-caste intellectual movement, but a question

was raised that if people say "caste doesn't exist", is it because it does not exist or is it because it is suppressed? Another fact that was raised is that a large Muslim population often shows lower number of CTs, and that it is an important question to understand why that is.

### SESSION 3: DIASPORAS AND TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS

Chair: **Knut Axel Jacobsen**, Professor of History of Religions, University of Bergen

The session included five presentation:

- **Jan Magnusson**, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Lund University, on 'Social Movements Online: The Baltistan Movement on Facebook'
- **Katarina Plank**, Ph.D., Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg, on 'Lay Asceticism and Compassionate Action: Vipassana Meditation and Social Engagement in the Goenka Movement'
- **Helene Ilkjaer**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, on 'Back to Serve? Return Migration among Indian Professionals'
- **Anjali Gera Roy**, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, on 'Revisiting the Komagata Maru'
- **Rosy Hastir**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi University, on 'Inter-Generation Difference and Gender Equality: Sikh Migrants in Italy'

Jan Magnusson spoke of the process whereby migrants from Baltistan, a region in the western Himalayas characterized by its blend of Muslim Shi'ite and Tibetan culture, are rediscovering their homeland through Facebook in a manner that is challenging the present post-colonial state by presenting an alternative narrative related to the idealized imagined Baltistan at a time when their own citizenship is a contested one. He highlighted the use of pop ghazals sung in Tibetan as an example of the subversive political resistance that can be witnessed in the movement as



represented in Facebook. The Balti pop ghazals are modern versions of an Arabic poetic tradition and present an alternative narrative of local history and belonging that is situated in a Himalayan rather than South Asian context. The pop ghazals that are sung in Tibetan have become symbolic in the migrants' online resistance against attempts of India and

Pakistan to integrate the Balti people in their respective postcolonial nation states in their quest to define their citizenship.

Katarina Planck highlighted the form of lay asceticism as witnessed in the workings of the Goenka movement as witnessed in Sweden. She spoke of the Western translation of traditional Buddhism that has taken the form of a postmodern engagement with the Vipassana movement wherein inner spirituality is given precedence over ritualised traditional forms of worship within Buddhism. This takes the form of 'mindfulness', which is a technique that originates in the Buddhist meditation practise wherein strengthening one's alertness and concentration on the present is the focal point with an added consideration of social engagement. Katarina Planck highlighted the convenience based reinterpretations of Buddhism to meet the needs of the West, and this further led to a discussion about the westernization of eastern spiritualism, and a similar dynamic seen in an Indian prison like the Tihar jail wherein traditional religious practice has been reworked sans the ritualized tradition and philosophy to meet the needs of a prison population.

Helene Ilkjaer presented the results of her ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Bangalore among highly skilled Indian professionals who have returned to India after spending a decade or two in the West. Her research focused on how consumption practices are used as mechanisms to manage the experienced uncertainties of return and their moral belief of their return migration being a way of giving back to the homeland. She highlighted her subjects' tendency to stay in large Americanized gated communities, work in hi-tech work environments, limit their kids to international schools, and socialize with other returnees as coping mechanisms that offer them a fair protection in the backdrop of the uncertainties of return to India. She also spoke about her subjects' avowed goal of returning to serve India with a focus on 'giving back'. They do this not only through traditional involvement in charities, but also through their idea of empowering people in their immediate vicinity by employing them as hired help, such as maids, nannies, drivers, and gardeners. She continued to speak about the return of these people as something temporary as the children of such returnees are encouraged and typically continue to migrate to the West, this continuing the dynamic of a transnational family life.

Anjali Roy Gera attempted to connect the historical and spatial journeys of Sikhs from small villages in Punjab to Canada on the Komagata Maru via Kolkata and Hong Kong to try and recover a little known narrative of subaltern transnational cosmopolitanism. She primarily used the incident involving the Komagata Maru as an example of a site of contestation over the discriminatory practices regulating the movement of South Asian citizens under the British colonial administration. She based her analysis on oral history of the incident involving the Komagata Maru beginning at Budge Budge in West Bengal. In the process she also attempted to complicate the history of migration from Punjab to the west beginning in the 19th century.

Rosy Hastir focused on the prolific migration to the West, particularly Italy, among Punjabis. She spoke of the first generation's view of Italy as a second home and their longing for their homeland along with a romanticisation of their native traditions and way of living. On the other hand, the second generation of migrants is more integrated into the host country and its way of living, seen as they are divorced from their original homeland. This obviously leads to intergenerational tensions due to a juxtaposition of conflictual expectations on both

sides. She went on to highlight these dynamics particularly in the case of women that have migrated wherein the first generation is still limited by their traditional mores as practiced in their rural homeland and the second generation increasingly attempts to break away from the traditional demands of their gender and move towards more Western notions of liberty and equality. Rosy uses her research as an example to highlight changes in family structures due to the pressures of transnational migration.

#### **SESSION 4: MIGRATIONS AND FAMILY LIFE**

Chair: **Kristina Myrvold**, Assistant Professor of History of Religions, Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University

The session included 4 papers:

- **Aneeta Rajendran**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Gargi College, University of Delhi, “The Pardesi as Woman: Female Homosexuality and Community in Indian Cinemas”
- **Bibin Jojo**, Professor, Centre for Social Justice and Governance, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, on “Migration and Family life of Tribal/Adivasi Domestic Workers in Mumbai”
- **Berit Helene Vandsemb**, Associate Professor, Department of International Studies and Interpreting, Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, on “Return Migration of Women Domestic Workers to Kerala, India”
- **Shiju Joseph**, Ph.D. candidate, ISEC, on “And they lived happily...with contradictions”

Aneeta Rajendran looked at the female queer subject through the process of migration in transnational cinematic discourses through examples from Bollywood and Mollywood. The movement of a woman migrant to a city is a contrast to the traditional prescriptions of heteronormativeness as her labor is moved from the private reproductive sphere to the public sphere. In the movies one sees an objection of the female laboring body wherein the mobile female body meets different kinds of patrilocal violence primarily sexual in nature. This is quite vividly shown in these movies wherein some may argue that it is being used as a vehicle of titillation, whereas others argue that it points towards the changing role of the economically independent woman in an accessible geographical space and that would include points of friction in the process of the displacement of the traditional role of women as defined in the private sphere of a family, which is a natural consequence of the laboring female negotiating with displacement.

Bipin Jojo highlighted the plight of Mumbai’s laboring tribal migrants originating from Central India particularly in the moral stigma that is attached to them in the host city wherein they are treated as ‘bad character’ since they do not subscribe to the normative principles of the host city particularly in the conduct of their home life which does not conform to the hetero-normative notion of marriage. This is further complicated by their lack of identity as a member of the host city due to their inaccessibility to public services caused by the non-possession of identity cards that empowers them as citizens. This situation is further problematized due to the clash of culture that these migrants face in the host city. This paper led to a very enthusiastic discussion among participants about the nature of subaltern studies and how to provide such research further legitimacy since this kind of

research is value loaded, there is a normative assumption in these kinds of studies that need to be formally legitimized to make it qualify as research.

Berit Helene Vandsemb spoke of the phenomenon of return migration of women domestic workers to Kerala that emerged as a noticeable phenomenon by the mid-1980s. Keralite women migrants usually fall into the categories of nurses and domestic workers among whom the latter are a particularly vulnerable group as their work is typically treated as informal work as they work within the private sphere and tend to use informal mechanisms to facilitate their migration particularly to the Gulf. These women migrants typically come from the poor and disadvantaged sections of Keralite population and tend to fall into the categories of the ambitious unmarried group, the dutiful daughters migrating for the sake of their family's welfare, the dutiful wives and mothers, the distressed women and the destitute women. Berit looked at the consequences of return migration of these women, the level of success in their integration into the home, the degree of social inclusion/exclusion, and their capacity to contribute to local development. She raised these issues within the context of the patriarchal structures these women need to operate in at the home despite their substantial economic investment in the family through the instrument of remittance. She also contrasted her research findings with her experience of the same from Srilankan women labor migrants and asked whether these women, despite their economic agency, are truly empowered and the difficulties they face post return in terms of integrating into their community highlights the degree of empowerment, agency and control these women have.

Shiju Joseph highlighted the results of his research on 'A Sociological Study of Relationships among Dual-Career Married Couples in Urban India' wherein he has specifically looked at the issues of marital adjustment while measuring marriage quality through quantitative tools. The research seemed to have several normative patriarchal values hidden which emerged as a reason for an animated discussion among the participants.

## **SESSION 5: MIGRATIONS, MARGINS AND EXCLUSIONS**

Chair: **G. K. Karanth**, Professor, Department of Sociology, ISEC

The session included six presentations:

- **Manish K. Jha**, Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, on "Politics of Identity and Identity Cards: Experiences of Migrants in Mumbai"
- **Jayaseelan Raj**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, on "Hidden Injuries of Caste: Tamil Youths in Urban Kerala"
- **P. K. Shajahan**, Associate Professor, Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, on "Muslims and Advanced Marginalities in Urban India"
- **Catarina Kinnvall**, Professor, Department of Political Science, Lund University, on "Differentiated Citizenship: Indian Secularism and the Challenge of Multiculturalism"
- **Selim Jahangir**, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi on "Gender, Space and Ageing: Care Geographies of Elderly Men in Delhi and Kolkata"

- **Swati Banerjee**, Associate Professor, Centre for Livelihoods and Social Innovation, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, on “Marginalities and Exclusion of Women in Urban Resettlement Neighbourhoods: Struggles and Assertions”

Manish K. Jha talked about Mumbai as India's most cosmopolitical city, but also a place where migrants often face a very hard situation. The history of creating identity markers is long, for example the use of tattoos to identify members of tribes. Later came the use of fingerprints etc. In postcolonial time the intensity has increased regarding the collection of ID-data under the vow of security, although arguments of security are not new. According to Jha people experience anxiety because of the data collecting being intrusive and scaring and a state in turn is always anxious about non-citizens. History shows that there might be a reason for worry and the experience of hypocrisy of the authorities. During the discussion the question was raised that all countries collect biometric data for driving licenses etc., why is it that Indian's are so suspicious to this? It was not Prof. Jha's perception that this is the case. The migrant's most prized possessions are their different ID-cards and their life very much revolves around those cards. But often the people that are collecting the ID-data have no ID-cards themselves, which of course creates problem. There was also a warning raised against getting stuck in a too polarized and "populistic" view of the problem, forgetting about the complexity of the matter, that biometric data can be used both as a tool for oppression as well as for welfare creation.

Jayaseelan Raj continued the session with a presentation in which he talked about what he is looking forward to do in his postdoc, namely to look on the life situation of Tamil youths in Kerala in respect to the recent economic crisis in the IT-sector. Young Tamils migrate from plantations in Tamil Nadu to get higher education in Trivandrum and Raj wants to analyze and conceptualize the life situation of those uneducated men. He describes a feeling of alienation among them and he wants to look into the social processes that dictate their life situation. He argues that we should not look at this following a linear model where higher education automatically leads to better life circumstances; there are other factors to consider. The studied Dalit men are integrated into a bureaucratic system that gives them an identity of being outcaste. Raj described some major social processes at action, first of all a stereotype and stigmatizing Dalit identity: He took as an example the word "pandi" as a word that in general is describing something of inferior quality as well as anything of Tamil origin. Secondly, the immigrants are educated in the Tamil language but in Trivandrum the education is given in English and Malayalam which they are not so familiar with. Most of them pass all courses except English as a second language. And they are not trained in Malayalam, which the teacher uses to translate. They may complete their Bachelor, but often end up in jobs where they are not well-paid. He concluded that social and economic mobility needs to take into account more than just education. The discussion brought up the question “what about Dalit women?” Raj answered that maybe in the future he will look into their situation as well. He said that in case of male immigrants he talks from his own experience and that the migrating workforce is in fact mainly consists of men.

P. K. Shajahan looked at his own movement from Kerala to Mumbai as a young man. His mother wanted him to study Arabic, but for his father religion was not a big issue so he didn't. But in Mumbai he was reminded every day that he was a Muslim, and he started to wonder why this identity was forced upon him, even if he wasn't a practicing Muslim. When for example looking for a house, questions about terrorist connections etc. to his neighbors

made him realize he carried a lot of cultural baggage. Census data shows that Muslim population is comparable under-educated and over-represented in jail statistics in Maharashtra. He even mentioned that Muslim areas has longer scheduled power cuts, are more filthy etc. and that Muslims often live in dangerous houses close to collapsing. They pay rents but do not get safety in return and they organize in response to the press of economic necessity, social insecurity, racial hostility etc., creating their own urban structures, institutions etc. He argued that the oppressive conditions under which many Muslims live necessitate the development of different illegal coping processes.

The discussion brought up questions about whether there is also a class dimension to the problems described. The answer according to Shajahan was yes, as well as a sect dimension (Sunni vs Shia). But, given same class being a Muslim is a negative in Maharashtra. Another question was raised concerning whether there is an ethnic dimension to this it as well, and the answer was that ethnicity can be a significant factor but in the kind of study he would like to do he do not consider that as a key factor. "Muslims are muslims", whether you come from Kerala or somewhere else. Muslim seems to be more important than for example state of origin. Another question was posed whether he would consider selecting a more specific sub-group for further research, e.g. inmates? How specific is the Mumbai case to Mumbai? Does the same situation apply to other cities?

Catarina Kinnvall focused on of how differentiated citizenship has worked in India, its relationship to secularism, religion and to various notions of multiculturalism. She has looked into the particular kinds of citizenship discourses that can be found in India as contrasted with Western notions of citizenship and how such discourses are related to a specific version of Indian secularism as a historical response to religious conflicts etc. She talked about how this relationship has been played out as India is becoming a "superpower" in which modernity and human rights discourses are often countered by discourses of insecurity, uncertainty and the call for exclusive identities. She asked, how can a discourse that relies on religion include other societal groups? What kinds of governing techniques are available to the state in order to enforce this kind of secularism? During the discussion a youth movement in Kerala was mentioned that have responded to Hindu nationalism, not by arguments of religion, but with arguments of "secularism". Catarina said that "modernity brings in a new logic of belonging" and she believes that when individuals and groups go through rapid processes of change they strive for some kind of belonging (from a psychological perspective), whether it is religion or something else. She does not think of "secularism" as an ideal but as one way of seeking belonging.

Selim Jahangir talked about interviews that he conducted with care-takers and care-providers in Delhi and in Kolkata with the purpose to gain insights into how care is carried out in different locations and how the care takers interact with their care providers. The main result so far was that the elderly would prefer to receive care in their own homes. The discussion brought up questions about what exactly he means by the term "geographies" in this context. In what way is geography central for the studies? Also a questions about urban vs. rural areas was brought up and how he would take into account the differences between the two. There was also a mentioning of the book "No Aging in India" by author Lawrence Cohen, which would be of interest for Selim to study. Then there were some concerns raised that he has to be very sensitive with his work in order to get trustworthy results and that to study home care/elderly care homes in both Delhi and Kolkata (all in all 4 different locations)

might be too ambitious and that it might be wise to narrow it down to fewer locations. Further, cultural differences between Delhi and Kolkata need to be taken into consideration. Someone mentioned that Bengali people are softer in their attitudes towards elderly people whereas in Delhi the attitude can be harsher.

Swati Banerjee ended the session by speaking about “layered marginalities” of women in marginalized communities. This is exclusion in terms of gender, poverty, resource deprivation, cast, capability, deprivation, migrant, ethnicity, etc. Mumbai is often talked about as a city of migrants. A young man has the educational merits to apply for a job, but the office is located in an upper class neighborhood, this highlights the many dimensions of discrimination. Dr. Banerjee has studied settlements by the stretch of the new road under construction that created the demand to relocate people. This resettlement means changes in livelihood, neighborhood and weakening of the social networks. There is also a lack of facilities like education, health care etc. She could also observe an increase in violence and atrocities against women as well as poor access to physical and social infrastructures and services. Individual experiences connect to a larger social reality. Women are marginalized and we need to start look at their immediate needs. The discussion brought up questions on how to look at women's collective power and how to identify their immediate needs? There was also a question about whether there is a way to look at the “sustainability of rights”.

## SESSION 6: EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN URBAN INDIA

Chair: **Swati Banerjee**, Associate Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

The session included seven presentations:

- **G. Manjunath**, Government of Karnataka, on “Policy, Research and Implementation Paralysis and Disconnect: Social Security Measures for ‘Unrecognized’ Workers”
- **Rajni Palriwala**, Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, on “Family Ideologies, Paid Work, and Care in Urban India:
- **Sunita Kaistha**, Associate Professor, Jesus & Mary College, University of Delhi, “The Indian Middle Class: Impact of the Changing Patterns of Consumption”
- **Amita Sahaya**, Founder-Secretary, Women Work & Health Initiative, on “Gender and Labour Migration in Contemporary India”
- **Linda Lane**, Ph.D., Department of Social Work, University of Gothenburg, on “Work, Family, Health and Globality: A Comparative Study of Work-life Balance in India and Sweden”
- **Gunnar Gillberg**, Dr., Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg on “Young Adults and Social Change”
- **Sakshi Khurana**, Ph.D. candidate, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, on “Work, Family, Community and Neighbourhood: Lives of Women Informal Workers”

G. Manjunath from the Govt. of Karnataka began the session by showing short films depicting examples of “unrecognized workers”, workers without any social security. The first film showed jaggery making children and women workers in Karnataka, engaged in hard physical labor for very low wages. The next film was from a cotton ginning mill in Karnataka, where a 90 years old woman in a similar way is seen working hard for very low salary. Another film showed the unsafe dwelling place of migrant sugarcane workers near a

factory premises at a remote taluk in Karnataka. Neither the factory nor the contractors provide minimum working or living conditions for the workers' families. Women working in a field near Haveri district in Karnataka for 50% of minimum wages and without any social security concluded the film session. All the films were captured in 2013. They attempt to highlight regulation and implementation failures, i.e., though legislation covers the workers they are not under the gaze of bureaucracy. He asked: What is the role of the state and to whom should the state provide social security benefits? What are the bottlenecks? Who are the stakeholders?

Rajni Palriwala focused on gender, paid work, care, and family ideology. She mentioned a juvenile sex ratio study that showed a very negative trend and that this aversion of daughters occur when woman labor is held in low regard. 1981 census data vs. 2001 census data showed clear differences between north and south but very little change over time. She also mentioned an increase in female marriage migration. She spoke about a "romantization" of the family, an underlying assumption that most people live in families, that families are good, that problems in families are exceptions, not the norm. The view has been that the family has an essential welfare role to perform and that women should be encouraged to stay at home and take care of children, the elderly etc., and thus the wages for women has been kept down. But domestic work does not decrease. There is a continued demand for cleaning, home cooked food etc. but there is a reinforcement to lack of value of domestic work through various mechanisms. There is also a division between those who can retain unpaid workers at home and support them with paid workers, and those who cannot. Palriwala argued that we have to look at family ideologies in a much more differentiated way than the assumption that the family is "good". She wants to break up the family ideologies into its components using qualitative and quantitative data and she is working on a family ideology survey distributed to 1000 households in Delhi and 1000 households in Chennai. This survey was described by Palriwala "a very very long survey" that focus on intergenerational relations, with questions like: "If X happens, do you think that Y is okay?" By having different set of question and looking for contradictions they tried to catch the actual practices of people. For further research she would like to pick up on particular themes, for example location, caste, class etc. and look at internal contradictions within each such sub-group.

Linda Lane presented an incubator project with roots in the SIDA financed collaboration, Swedish India Gender Network (SIGN) between the University of Gothenburg and the Indian coordinating partners Women, Work and Health Initiative (WWHI). This collaboration between India and Sweden on gender issues is a continuation of contacts initiated in 2002 between researchers at the former National Institute for Working Life (NIWL) and the WWHI.

During the discussion a question was asked about where the concept of "work life balance" originates from, and according to Linda it does not have its background in the feminist movement, but rather the feminists turned the discussion around and said that care is not just something for women: How can we be good people, not just good productive mothers?

Amita Sahaya talked about collaboration between her and Prof. Denis Frank at the University of Gothenburg in which they focus on gender and labor migration in India and Sweden. She mentioned two aspects of migration: External and internal migration, and the lack of discourse about it. In Sweden questions has been raised about low skilled migration

in the service sector, characterized by insecure working conditions, low wages, lack of social security etc. and at the same time arguments are heard about a "growing need for labor migration into Europe". The researchers in the project want to gain insight in exactly what factors lay behind migration (marriage, work etc.) and Amita expressed concerns about the lack of women data in national census data. Questions were asked about whether the decisions to migrate sometime came also from women or largely by the men? During the discussion a large survey completed at the Centre of Women's Study in Delhi was mentioned, and that it could be of interest for the researchers.

Gunnar Gillberg and Sunita Kaistha presented the outlines for a project in which they intend to investigate how new global trends in the labor market affects young adults in India and Sweden. They argued that new demands on the labor market has emerged, characterized by a global trend of individualization. In this context the term individualization referred to more pressure that is put on each individual, and thus creating new types of distinctions between those young adults who can cope with these new demands of responsibility, flexibility, creativity and ability to take initiatives, and those who cannot. They also argued that because of the globalized world of today and the growing numbers of educated middle class youth in India, young adults in both India and Sweden often faces very similar challenges, thus creating the possibilities and need for cross-cultural studies. Of course young people in India and young people in Sweden are living in two very different worlds, but there are similarities that connect to the new global economic trends and demands. The researchers wish to develop methods for cross-cultural surveys to understand how young people are affected of the global economic trends. Through the use of focus-groups of 6-10 young persons from different background (each group homogeneous with regards to education etc.) and a question about what they dream for in life, they found that poor people in India do not even dream of what they want, because they feel they know they cannot achieve it. This is put in stark contrast with Swedish and Indian middle class youth, which seemed to have similar aspirations in life.

The discussion brought up questions on whether the researchers does not miss out on marginalized group like young immigrants, Muslims, etc., and how those groups would be taken into account. They answer was that they are planning to include these groups as well. Another question asked whether it was necessary to start from the assumption of "individualization". Related arguments brought up was that maybe the model of individualization is true for Sweden but not for India and that the researchers seemed to imply a linear model of social progress, from a to b to c etc., but maybe reality is not that simple, and is it really meaningful to compare 1% of India and 99% of Sweden? The researchers answered that they were aware of all those problems but that they try to figure out how to take them into account and that they were very grateful for all the useful feedback, which was exactly what they hoped for when attending the workshop.

Sakshi Khurana concluded the session by presenting field work carried out between August 2010 to October 2011, in two colonies in New Delhi, India; a slum colony predominated by construction workers' families, located in East Delhi, and a resettlement colony of garment workers, located in North-East Delhi. In the garments sector, she studied three sub-groups of women workers; home-based workers, women working in garment factories and women subcontractors. While the first two groups of women worked as wage workers, the last category of women formed a group of self-employed entrepreneurs who took work orders

from contractors and supplied pieces for embroidery to women home-based workers on piece-rates. Her methods of data collection included participant observation, a short socio-economic survey, interviews, narratives and group-discussions. She gave an example of a man that worked less because he thought that his wife could support the family, but that women never seem to have the choice to say that, if they earn money, then they don't have to take care of the children: No case could be found where a woman could renounce their responsibility for the family. But women on the other hand often reminded the men of their role as providers.

During the discussion SASNET Director Anna Lindberg mentioned that she during research on work in Kerala came across reports from the 1950s on wages with some interesting statements with regards to family ideologies that she suggested for further reading. Also, there was a suggestion to draw on research from the garment industry that has been done in South Asia, that in many ways relate to the subject.

## SESSION 7: VULNERABLE GROUPS AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Chair: **J. Devika**, Associate Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, India

The session included three presentations:

- **Helle Rydström**, Professor, Centre for Gender Studies, Lund University, on "Jeopardizing the Welfare, Security, and Rights of Women and Children: Violence in the Domestic Sphere and Beyond".
- **Anindita Datta**, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, on "Theorizing Care and Care Geographies in the Context of Urbanization and Migration in Transnational India".
- **Arpita Das**, Ph.D. candidate, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, on "Weaving Changes, Changing Livelihoods: The Changing Role of Women in Mising Society".



In her presentation, Helle Rydström focused on gendered violence in India. By taking the recent Delhi rape case as a point of departure, she discussed how public spaces translate into zones of exception that allow for the 'normalization' of violence. This process creates fear in Indian women and girls for public spaces. She argued that the study of violence against women and girls in India, and elsewhere, should focus on local constructions of a Machismo culture and, in turn, ideas about male privileges. Helle also took up the terrible situation which victims of sexual violence experience when reporting various kinds of abuse to the authorities, the writing of biased police reports, and the ways in which male dominance is reflected in political debates. Exemplified by horrifying quotations from politicians, she

showed how women and children who have been subjected to gross sexual abuse are blamed and met by no sympathy. Finally, Helle Rydström considered practical measures to reduce sexual violence in India and stressed the importance of including the police in the combat of violence against women and the girl child.

A lively discussion followed. G. K. Karanth mentioned about projects which include ethical training of the police in Karnataka, and thus agreed that collaboration with the police is necessary as a way to reduce police harassment. Rajni Palriwala commented on the exceptionality and banality of violence and wondered whether they could exist at the same time. Helle replied by referring to the ways in which the law does not apply in spaces of exception and therefore facilitates the 'banalization' of violence. Ravinder Kaur suggested that a class perspective would enrich the study of violence something with which Helle Rydström agreed.

Anindita Datta followed with a presentation on Care and Care Geographies in India, stating outright that it was not a finalized project description, but rather a set of ideas that she would like to work with, questions to investigate. So far, she has not been able to receive funding for such a project, being a geographer but interested to do research in a field that is not really proper Geography. Instead it consists of theorizing on care in India, at a time when the state retreats from care and a massive privatization is going on in the cities, coupled with the lack of care in rural areas. She discussed what she described as Caringscapes, existing in metropolitan cities such as Delhi and Kolkata, something involving much more than institutionalized carescapes.

Anindita Datta asked for suggestions on how to develop her project, and she got a lot of responses.

The final presentation in this session was given by young Indian researcher Arpita Das, who has done anthropological fieldwork on women's role in the Mising tribal society. Mising is a major tribe in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, living in flood prone areas along Brahmaputra. They live surrounded by Bengalis. The women play an important role in their society, including the fact that their characteristic weaving work is solely carried out by their women. From early morning no women are to be seen at home in their villages, whereas a lot of men are there, taking care of the children.

In her interesting presentation she highlighted the paradoxical situation that in spite of the women's major share of income generation, the work is generally not described as an occupation but rather as a homely side activity, and this is also reflected in the control of the money earned. The men control its use. Arpita Das received much acclaim for her research work. Surinder Jodhka meant that it was an important piece of research on change effects in tribal society, and the existing power of men.

## **CONCLUDING SESSION**

The participants were divided into three groups to discuss the way forward for future collaborations as a positive extension of the workshop. The results of these discussions of future plans in terms of research, publication and collaboration are as follows:

The first group spoke about limiting their research agendas to the themes of social change, intersociality, social protection and cross cultural methodological techniques. They were keen on creating a forum for the purpose of exchanging concept notes among each other and stressed on the need for interdisciplinary collaborations.

The second group was focused on how to build and retain the intellectual capital that was present within the group. As a response to that they came up with several ideas such as creating a Working paper series post peer review on forums such as SASNET or SSRN, creating a discussion group to facilitate spontaneous communication and know about the progress of each other's research, creating a searchable index of their papers on a web platform, and exploring funding opportunities on both the Nordic and the Indian side. While aiming to maintain the inter-disciplinarity of the group, the members wanted to focus on the following research agendas: Migration and Identities; Neoliberal Economic Transformations and Challenges of Inclusion; Circulation of Cultures on a Globalized World.

The third groups focused on avenues for publications and hoped ISEC would publish the workshop proceedings, later developing a working series on the theme of the workshop. The themes they were interested in pursuing were: the interface between welfare and security,



interface between family and work, and states of exception. J. Devika from CDS and Helle Rydström volunteered to produce a full-fledged paper on the theme of the workshop. There was a proposal for looking at avenues for joint research collaboration between TISS, CDS, and ISEC. The Ph.D. candidates also hoped to find funding for a student level conference on the subject.

The workshop ended with Prof. Karanth proposing the Vote of Thanks wherein he thanked the participants, the various organizers, funding agency, and staff that made the event a success.