

Refugees and the urban fringe: the experience of *namasudra* displaced persons in North 24 Parganas

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The North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, India shares international border with Bangladesh, and it is (together with the Nadia district) home to the largest number of East Bengali Hindu refugees coming from Bangladesh to West Bengal. North 24 Parganas is also part of Kolkata's expanding northern suburbs, which includes planned townships like Salt Lake City and Lake Town. In this paper I look how metropolitan plans of urban expansion often seek to exclude dalit displaced persons. This holds particularly true in urban contexts where land value is high and market forces of property work in collusion with the state. I am also interested in how such uneven urbanism have been negotiated by the displaced themselves. I utilise the concept of informal urbanism to understand the process of negotiation. The paper further highlights that the sense of belonging of such dwellers of peripheral grey-spaces often strikes a discordant note. I draw on ethnographic fieldwork conducted around a dalit *namasudra* Hindu East Bengali refugee ex-camp site, Bahirdoba in North 24 Parganas.