

## **Labour migrants in the canal side shanties in Kolkata**

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This paper explores the struggle for spaces of livelihood of rural migrants who flock to certain marginal spaces around the Calcutta metropolitan region from the rural districts of Bengal and their negotiation of myriad forms of dispossession and displacements. These groups are variedly labelled as 'squatters' and 'vagrants' and seen to 'encroach' on urban lands. They face discursive erasure in migration histories and policy circles, in spite of a growing numerical presence in the region from around the late 1930s. I focus at their areas of concentration at peripheral and precarious locations like the banks of the city's sewerage canals and pavements. The time frame of my paper is from the 1990s with the initiation of countrywide neoliberalism till the present. I look into the politics of space that unfold around these migrant quarters. I am concerned with how migration have mediated the nature of their citizenship. My paper takes the scale of the urban/city to enter into this discussion of migrant citizenship and discusses how these groups who are often cast as outsiders or placed at the bottom of a hierarchy of a graded membership structure, negotiate for legal status, participation and substantive benefits of citizenship.