

Title: Do Canals Have Histories? Environmental Heritage Between Memory and Forgetting in the Eastern Periphery of Kolkata

Principal Investigator (PI)

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Overview of the project: The project ‘Do Canals Have Histories? Environmental Heritage Between Memory and Forgetting in the Eastern Periphery of Kolkata’, has its roots in a historic location at the eastern periphery of Kolkata, India. It responds to a deep heritage crisis in the diverse neighbourhoods spanned by the present-day Beliaghata and parts of the Maniktala Assembly Constituencies, precipitated by tumultuous recent history, rapid urban transformation, and environmental degradation. It identifies a disproportionate cultural amnesia with regards to the megacity’s eastern peripheral neighbourhoods, in sharp contrast with other historic locations in the city. This project envisions itself as an urgent intervention with regards to the same, keeping in mind the at-risk nature of the Beliaghata Canal that shaped this peripheral terrain and the threat of rising water levels for a low-lying city like Kolkata.

Research Methodology:

- The project will involve archival research, interviews, and participatory action-oriented undertakings. It will interview residents and business communities of the area, and engage with experts and scholars on the environmental history of the region. In terms

Deliverables:

- A graphic environmental history with the Beliaghata Canal as the protagonist, centering non-human narratives; print and digital formats.
- A journal-length paper to be submitted to peer-reviewed journals on making environmental heritage accessible.