

Goa faces neglect behind scenic facade: book

Domestic violence is 'fairly common' in Goa. One-third of its women suffer from anaemia, and one-fourth are undernourished, says a new book that for a change takes the focus away from the state being a sun-and-sand tourist haven.

Titled 'Picture-Postcard Poverty', the book takes a look at what it calls the 'unheard voices, forgotten issues from rural Goa'. It argues that critical issues of concern are often overlooked in the state.

'Goa is often subsumed in media-driven cliches of being a beach-sun-and-fun place. The dominant image we are left with is of a state on permanent holiday, urbanised and inhabited by a Westernised middle-class,' says the book.

'But its dominant projection sidetracks a range of other issues.'

Released by Gurunath Kelekar on the 25th anniversary of the Gandhian NGO, Peaceful Society in Madkai (Ponda), the book has been co-authored by journalist Frederick Noronha and social campaigner Kumar Kalanand Mani.

In 12 chapters, the book focuses on issues of rural displacement, poor health, the impact of alcoholism and casteism in Goa.

The book also touches on the impact of mining, the mismanagement of Goa's huge water potential and the promise and perils of panchayati raj.

While examining the concerns of rural and poor women, the book also takes a look at the reality that hides behind Goa's claims to be one of India's best states.

Only 130 pages long (Price Rs.150), the book narrates stories of huge resources being wasted on large irrigation projects, hospitals that have been built but are lying under-utilised.

It also talks of the mysterious loss of assets at the Hospicio and Asilo hospitals after their takeover by the government.

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