

no separate shelter homes established by the KSWDC exclusively for the rehabilitation of transgender persons in the state and that the rehabilitation measures taken by the Government of Karnataka are restricted to financial assistance in the form of loans and subsidies.

Even though the policy sought to cover various categories of transgender persons under its umbrella, it has been done without any due research or survey. This is especially evident with the KSWDC being the primary authority to look after the welfare initiatives of transgender persons in the state.

A visit to the national web portal for transgender persons shows the issuance of 129 identity cards for applications received from Karnataka. There are no garima grehs established in Karnataka. In fact, there are only 12 garima grehs established in nine Indian states. It points to the lack of awareness among the third gender about the benefits announced for them. The santhwana centres entrusted with the task of extending care for the third gender are ill-equipped.

When the problems faced by transmen and their struggles are distinct from that of transwomen, it makes little sense to include them under the KSWDC, which was specifically incorporated for the benefit of women. This is also violative of their right to self-identification. Transmen and transwomen or cisgender women are not alike or “equals.” Putting them under the same class would be gross injustice. It is high time that more research is carried out and social awareness is created about transmen and transwomen. State-incentivising and funding for research and implementation of sound welfare measures are required. A comprehensive and robust rehabilitation mechanism needs to be put in place for their welfare.

Shampa Dev, Anusha G Rao

BENGALURU

A New-age Urban Imaginary

Due to the scarcity of data from government sources, twisting facts and rewriting histories in order to warp out a belligerent present has become a rising tendency. Such a tendency brings with

it a convenient inability to speak truth to power. The majority of the urban credo today has fallen victim to a system of what can be called a new-age urban ideology of perfective fakeness.

Today, urban India largely lives in gated communities where the self-satisfying nature of human needs and wants have reached a sky-high level, so much so that a macro-outlook of what and how a nation ought to be has become a matter of least importance for many of the urban households. With the advent of the gated community culture, where everybody is reduced inside a gate or perhaps just their houses, where they are not even bothered about who their neighbours are (despite calling themselves a community), all of which have resulted in the making of a new-age urban imaginary that instils the idea of perfective fakeness as the rule in urban spaces.

So what is perfective fakeness? It can be defined as the deliberate negligence or the fake performance of an individual, institution, or any governing body that tends to provide a feeling of everything going alright for everybody, while the truth on the other side stands that everything has never been alright for anybody at any time. In other words, through creating a sensation of shock and awe, a rosy picture is made in the minds of the people who are forced to perceive that everything is perfect in ethical as well as realistic terms, which, however, is not the case. Such a creation of a rosy picture is not only flawed, fake, and artificial, but drives a large majority of urban inhabitants towards a larger trajectory of promoting inequality and deprivation.

Let us take a simple example to conceptualise this better. For an upper-middle-class urban household staying in a gated community, the rice cooked for lunch would automatically be brought

from some supermarket or online platform while for a lower-middle-class informal worker, the rice cooked for their meals would either be from ration shops or a nearby local vendor who sells rice at a moderate or subsidised affordable/amount. Apart from the affordability aspect, for someone in a gated community, what matters even more is the brand and the price of the rice that they are consuming. Such a concern with branding showcases a household's identity by falling victim to the ideology of a perfective fake world.

An analysis of numerous surveys conducted in the aftermath of COVID-19 shows a common theme running across urban spaces, which is the plight of the poor urban dwellers who survive in vulnerable situations, marked by homelessness and hunger due to massive job losses in the urban sector. Interventions from public authorities and civil society were both inadequate and missed helping the most needy. Thus, the question of food security in India in a post-COVID-19 world depends on the nature of livelihoods and the social safety net in place for the urban residents, especially the urban poor.

While some propagate the idea of perfective fakeness and force others in the urban spaces to bask themselves in the “glory” of the emerging cities, as cities have become the centres of economic growth, the very same classes that are the “glorified” ones, that is, those who continue to follow perfective fakeness, also find themselves trapped in such a glory in order to strive harder for more and more returns. The “glorified,” in other words, follow such an ideology persistently because they are never really fulfilled with anything at any time.

Sankar Varma

BENGALURU

EPW Engage

The following articles have been published in the past week in the EPW Engage section (www.epw.in/engage).

- (1) The Indian Prisons and the Search for Equality: The Problems Faced by Transgender Inmates — *Harsh Mahaseth, Sparsh Jain*
- (2) Central Bank Digital Currency: The 'Digital Rupee' in India — *Jasdeep Kaur*
- (3) Flood, Displacement and Politics: The Assam Chapter — *Jharna Gogoi, Nazimuddin Siddique*
- (4) In Pursuit of Uniformity: The Hijab Row — *Shehnika Athar*
- (5) Impact of Public Distribution System on Poverty in Odisha — *Priyabrata Sahoo, Ranjan Kumar Nayak*