

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:849

ANSWERED ON:22.11.2002

TASK FORCE ON F PDS

GADDE RAMAMOCHAN;KAMBALAPADU E. KRISHNAMURTHY;M.V.V.S MURTHI;NARESH KUMAR PUGLIA;SHRINIWAS  
DADASAHEB PATIL;SHYAMA SINGH

**Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Union Government have set up a task force comprising 50 officers from the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies to keep a vigilant eye on complaints of starvation deaths, diversion or recycling of foodgrains meant for PDS and the quality and foodgrains procurement for the Central pool;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the task force has recently inquired the allegation of hunger deaths in Kalahandi;

(d) if so, the details in this regard;

(e) whether the attention of task force was also drawn to the various media reports of starvation deaths in Rajasthan;

(f) if so, whether any inquiry has been conducted by the task force in this regard;

(g) if so, the outcome of the inquiry; and

(h) the remedial measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION ( SHRINIVAS KRISHNAM RAJU )

(a)&(b): A list of suitable Officers has been drawn up in the Department of Food and Public Distribution so that, when situations arise necessitating investigation into the adequacy (or otherwise) of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in any area, alleged `starvation` and other matters concerning the supply and distribution of foodgrains, a Team of such Officers can quickly be deputed to these areas to assess the situation. Each Team of Officers is called a Task Force.

(c)&(d): One Task Force Team visited Muniguda and Ghatagaon Blocks of Rayagada and Keonjhar Districts (Orissa) in September, 2002 for on-the-spot assessment of alleged `starvation` deaths.

The shortcomings in the Public Distribution System (PDS), as pointed out in the Report were brought to the attention of the Government of Orissa for remedial action.

(e),(f),(g)&(h): Consequent upon reports appearing in sections of the Press in regard to alleged `starvation` deaths in Baran District (Rajasthan), a Task Force Team was sent to the area in October, 2002 for on-the-spot assessment of the situation and the working of the PDS.

As per the Report of the Task Force, the deaths in Suvans and Gangapur villages of Baran District could have been due to starvation coupled with malnutrition and lack of timely medical attention. The Team observed wide-spread hardship, hunger and malnutrition in remote areas due, mainly, to the failure of the Public Distribution System and the absence of employment opportunities.

The matter has been taken up with the State Government to put in place a fully functional Public Distribution System in the vulnerable areas and to provide uninterrupted supply and distribution of foodgrains to the same. It has also been stressed that employment generation programmes ought to be implemented vigorously and that the State authorities have to ensure requisite measures to combat starvation and extreme hardship at the earliest.