

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1875  
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2004  
STARVATION DEATHS  
Murmu Shri Hemlal;Singh Shri Prabhunath

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the incidents of starvation deaths in various parts of the country between August and October 2004;
- (b) if so, the number of starvation deaths reported during the last three years till date, State-wise and year-wise;
- (c) whether the central team visited the States from where such cases were reported;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the findings of the team;
- (e) the action taken against those held responsible; and
- (f) the further steps taken by the Government to check the recurrence of such incidents?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH)

- (a): No incidents of starvation deaths have been brought to the notice of Central Government by any State Government/Union Territory between August and October, 2004.
- (b): No starvation death has been reported by any of the State Governments/Union Territories during the last three years.
- (c) & (d): Since September, 2002, 5 Task Force Teams have been deputed by the Central Government to the following places where press and electronic media highlighted about alleged starvation deaths:

1. Rayagada and Keonjhar Districts of Orissa.
2. Baran District of Rajasthan.
3. Vidhisha and Shivpuri Districts of Madhya Pradesh.
4. Banswara District of Rajasthan.
5. Madhepura District of Bihar.

The main findings of the teams are at Annexure-I.

(e) & (f): Does not arise.

**ANNEXURE-I**

ANNEXURE REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (c) & (d) OF THE UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1875 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 13.10.2004 IN THE LOK SABHA

**TEAMS DEPUTED FOR CHEKING ALLEGED STARVATION DEATHS**

Five teams had been deputed to the places where the press and electronic media have highlighted about alleged starvation deaths. The outcome of the Reports is as under:-

(i) Rayagada and Keonjhar Districts of Orissa

A Task Force Team visited Muniguda and Ghatagaon Blocks of Rayagada and Keonjhar Districts (Orissa) in early September 2002 for an 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. The State Government, in turn, instructed all the Collectors to sensitize the field functionaries, in general and the staff of F.S&C.W Department, in particular, to conduct regular checks on the dealers and to take action against unscrupulous traders/dealers.

(ii) Baran District of Rajasthan

Consequent upon reports appearing in sections of the Press about alleged starvation deaths in Baran Districts (Rajsthan), a Task Force Team was sent to the area in October, 2002 for an 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 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 had been taken up with the State Government to put in place a fully functional Public Distribution System in the vulnerable areas and to provide interrupted supply and distribution of food grains to them. 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.

The State Government in their letter to the Minister CAF&PD had, however, denied any starvation deaths in Baran District or failure or deficiency in the functioning of the PDS. Chief Minister, Rajasthan was of the view that the purchasing power of the local people has gone down because of unemployment and the State Government is trying to provide wage employment to the affected population.

(iii) Vidisha and Shivpuri Districts of Madhya Pradesh

One Task Force Team was deputed to Vidisha and Shivpuri Districts of MP to examine certain reports in media etc. regarding alleged starvation deaths in these areas. The team was of the opinion that the deaths were due to illness, malnutrition, lack of timely medical attention etc. and not due to starvation. There was lack of adequate employment opportunities due to closure of illegal mines and drought. The PDS was found to be working satisfactorily.

(iv) Banswara District of Rajasthan

It was reported that one Shri Phulia S/o Shri Kalia, aged about 65 years died of starvation in village Khanpura of Banswara District of Rajasthan State on 11th May, 2003. The Task Force Team which visited Rajasthan on 10th - 11th July, 2003 reported after necessary inquiries in association with the District Collector (Relief), Banswara that Shri Phulia was physically weak and died of prolonged illness and not because of starvation. It was also noted that as per Land Revenue Records, the deceased was a owner of 16 Bighas of agriculture land and few cattles at the time of his death.

(v) Madhepura District of Bihar

On receipt of information that 3 people had died of starvation in Madhepura District of Bihar, a Task Force Team visited Bihar in October, 2003. It was found that deaths had taken place due to diarrhoea. During the inquiry, it was revealed that the family though poor, was never so hard pressed for food. Task Force Team confirmed this while interacting with the villagers. It was also reported that because of 48 hours of continuous rains, no medical assistance could be given to the deceased.