

## West Bengal officials decided to starve the people, denying ration

**Kirity Roy** <kirityroy@gmail.com>

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To: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Cc: Right to Food & Work West Bengal <rtfwestbengal@gmail.com>, DM Cooch Behar Kaushik Saha <dmcoochbehar@gmail.com>, Secy Food & Supplies W B <itcellfswb@gmail.com>, SDO Mathabhanga <sdombtdeo@gmail.com>, Chief Secretary Gov of WB <cs-westbengal@nic.in>, "Home Secretary Govt of W.B." <wb.secyhome@gmail.com>, Satyen Pal Bartaman CBR <satyenbna@gmail.com>

To,  
The Chairman  
National Human Rights Commission  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan  
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA  
New Delhi- 110023

14 July 2020

Respected Sir,

Through this complaint, I would like to bring to your attention the plight of the villagers of Mahishmuri Haldikura, Mahishmuri Shiyaldanga under Khalishamari Gram Panchayat, Shitalkuchi Block, Sub-division- Mathabhanga, Cooch Behar district. The villagers are poverty-ridden and most of them are migrant workers and some of them are dependent on agricultural work. The villagers had applied several times to procure the digital ration cards but they did not receive the same till now, due to which they could not avail the benefits of a digital ration card holder from the time it was issued. Even if they approached the dealer to procure their rations, they were blatantly refused, especially during the period of lockdown. The ration shop owner of the said village is Jitendranath Barman, ration shop no.- 25 vide License no.- 50/SLK/2012.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2020, the Government of West Bengal, Food and Supplies department issued an order vide memorandum no. - 1224- FS/ O/Sectt /IT-19/2018 where it has clearly stated that people having no digital ration cards will be given food grains against food coupons which are to be delivered to people at their doorstep authorized by the Block Development Officers.

The negligent act of the concerned officials of Food and Supplies Department Mathabhanga Sub Division, in particular of Sitalkuchi Block are violator of their own Departmental order vide Memo No. 1480-FS/0/Sectt/IT-19/2018 (Part-I) Dated 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2020. The acquiescence of people paid from public exchequer cannot force people to die due to hunger.

On 15.06.2020 an application was submitted before the Block Development Officer of Sitalkuchi Block, District- Cooch Behar pleading to provide them with their share of ration despite not having their digital ration cards as per the governmental order but no step was taken to restore the situation.

These details of people along with their ration card numbers, who were deprived of ration despite having ration cards are listed down below-

Sl No	Name	Ration Card no.
1.	Madhab Chandra Barman	11739064
2.	Lakshmi Barman	1131001
3.	Bithika Barman	296903
4.	Malti Barman	11739036
5.	Kanika Pramanik	13673064
6.	Bishnu Barman	163307
7.	Dilip Barman	262662
8.	Mamota Barman	366167
9.	Sagorika Barman	256473
10.	Dipika Barman	309284
11.	Anarul Miah	268246
12.	Maksedul Miah	832130
13.	Najma Bibi	605271

14.	Dulali Khatun	26104
15.	Chumki Khatun	26105
16.	Raiaz Ahmed	26103
17.	Jesid Miah	26102
18.	Hamidul Miah	616992
19.	Hapijul Miah	616993
20.	Ajadul Miah	16304915
21.	Tajmira Khatun	14314831
22.	Pulin Barman	12200393
23.	Sobha Barman	1212013
24.	Puspita Barman	12112014
25.	Biswanath Raj	5511160

Keeping in mind Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, giving people the right to live which also ensures the right to food as given in the judgment of PUCL V. Union of Writ Petition (Civil) No.196 of 2001 and Goal 2 of the 2030 Sustainable Development agenda seeks to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

I request your urgent intervention in this case by fulfilling these demands of the villagers:

- The Commission must immediately intervene and hold the BDO, Shitalkuchi Block, SDO Mathabhanga and Food Inspector, Mahismuri be accountable for failing to abide by the Governmental order as issued.
- The villagers having their respective ration cards should immediately be given the due benefits of holding ration cards with due arrears.
- The villagers should also be compensated for depriving them of their right to avail ration from the time the digital ration cards were issued.
- The villagers had applied for the digital ration cards but they did not receive the same until now. Therefore, the onus does not lie on the villagers; hence the Commission must look into this.

Thanking you,

Kirity Roy  
Secretary  
Banglar Manabdhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)





Government of West Bengal  
 Food & Supplies Department  
 11A, Moran Gate West, Kolkata-47

Memo No. 1484-FNS/REG/EE/421937-1-13      Date: 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

**NOTIFICATION**

The people who have not paper ration cards, but either not yet received Digital Ration Card / Coupon or had not applied for Digital Ration Card, are eligible for food grains under EDB due to existing hardship caused by COVID-19 pandemic. In view of the aforesaid circumstances of the Government in the Food & Supplies Department to provide food grains to these people in a normal period to mitigate their hardship.

Now, when COVID-19 pandemic is over, the Government is pleased to issue notification to the people who have not paper Ration Card, but either not yet received Digital Ration Card / Coupon or had not applied for Digital Ration Card and are facing their problems due to existing hardship caused by COVID-19 pandemic to be provided food grains from EDB of 5 kg per Coupon or under EDB 20 kg per month as follows:-

1. Any person who is a permanent resident in the State of West Bengal and has not yet received Digital Ration Card / Coupon or is in the need of food grains may be eligible to apply for issue of food grains under EDB, subject to the condition that he/she must have been registered with the Government of West Bengal as a beneficiary of the National Food Security Act, 2013 and must be a member of the Household in the State of West Bengal.

2. The Government will consider the application on the basis of the guidelines evolved with the notification. The eligible applicant will be issued a "Special Coupon" on the basis of which he/she will get food grains from the ration shops. The distribution of food grains to Special Coupons holders will be done by 30<sup>th</sup> May '20 onwards.

3. The Government reserves the right to amend this notification at any time without any notice.

By order of the Commissioner  
 (Prasenjit Ghosh, Additional, IAS)  
 Secretary, Food & Supplies Department