

Why Did Santoshi Die?

December 15, 2022 [The Beacon](#)

Calligraphy and Found Poem by H Masud Taj, based on the words of **Osama Manzar**, to coincide with '20 Years of Digital Empowerment for All' convention held in Guwahati on December 16, 2022. Osama Manzar's mission is to teach rural Indians the use of the Internet and create livelihoods.




Calligraphy and Found Poem by H Masud Taj, based on the words of Osama Manzar: "[The Man who travelled to 10,000 villages](#)". The Found Poem is based on his article "[Death by Data](#)." The Osama Manzar calligram can be downloaded from [Academia](#).

Why Did Santoshi Die?

She was a tribal
all of eleven years
from the village of Karimati
district of Simdega
in Jharkand.
At school
she did not receive
the midday meal
she was entitled to
by the government.
At home
her family had registered
in the Aadhaar database
each member had a UID
(unique identity number)
Her family was also registered under
the public distribution system PDS
entitling them
to a monthly supply
of food grains.
Santoshi's family
visited the local office
submitted their Aadhaar
and PDS and were assured
a regular supply of ration
But at the ration shop
the database in the computer
refused to recognise
Santoshi's family
as enrolled in PDS.
They tried for half a year
but their Aadhaar and PDS
could not match
despite layers
of Identification -
1. name
2. address
3. UID
4. fingerprint
5. iris scan.
Under a digitized e-governance
it is the data and not the physical
presence of the person
that decides whether or not
a person is eligible for food.
A poor person can only access food
based on the availability of an Aadhaar card
a ration card and linked database of the two
a functional biometric-enabled POS machine
uninterrupted supply of electricity
as well as internet connectivity
and unquestionable ability
to recognize humans from their data.
After starving for four days
Santoshi Kumari died
Her death was caused
not due to lack of
availability of food
but only due to
lack of access to
available food
It was
death by
data.

H. Masud Taj: Why Did Santoshi Die?

 thebeacon.in/2022/12/15/h-masud-taj-why-did-santoshi-die/

The Beacon

December 15, 2022

Why did Santoshi Die?

She was a tribal

all of eleven years

from the village of Karimati

district of Simdega

in Jharkand.

At school

she did not receive

the midday meal

she was entitled to

by the government.

At home

her family had registered

in the Aadhar database

each member had a UID

(unique identity number)

Her family was also registered under

the public distribution system PDS

entitling them

to a monthly supply

of food grains.

Santoshi's family

visited the local office

submitted their Aadhaar

and PDS and were assured

a regular supply of ration

But at the ration shop

the database in the computer

refused to recognise

Santoshi's family

as enrolled in PDS.

They tried for half a year

but their Aadhaar and PDS

could not match

despite layers

of Identification –

1. name

2. address

3. UID

4. fingerprint

5. iris scan.

Under a digitized e-governance

it is the data and not the physical

presence of the person

that decides whether or not

a person is eligible for food.

A poor person can only access food

based on the availability of an Aadhaar card

a ration card and linked database of the two

a functional biometric-enabled POS machine
uninterrupted supply of electricity
as well as internet connectivity
and unquestionable ability
to recognize humans from their data.

After starving for four days

Santoshi Kumari died

Her death was caused

not due to lack of

availability of food

but only due to

lack of access to

available food

It was

death by

data.



Calligraphy and Found Poem by H Masud Taj, based on the words of Osama Manzar: "The Man who travelled to 10,000 villages". The Found Poem is based on his article "Death by Data." The Osama Manzar calligram can be downloaded from [Academia](#). Osama Manzar's mission is to teach rural Indians the use of the Internet and create livelihoods.

Any place should be known by the people
who live in it.
Who are they?
What is their wisdom?
Unseen corners.

- Osama bin Laden
'The man who travelled to
10,000 villages'

10/22
31/11/11
OSAMA