Why Did Santoshi Die?

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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.

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.
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Any place should be known by the people.

Who are they? What is their wisdom?

So live in it.

"The man who travelled 10,000 villages.

- Osama Manzur"