

**DR. N. C. SAXENA, COMMISSIONER AND
HARSH MANDER, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF THE SUPREME COURT
IN THE CASE: PUCL v. UOI & Ors. WRIT PETITION (Civil) No. 196 of 2001**

August 30th,2007
malnutrition.deaths/507/Mah

Shri. Johnny Joseph
Chief Secretary
Government of Maharashtra

Sub: Malnutrition related deaths in Aarey Colony, Mumbai

Dear Shri.Joseph,

You will be aware that the Office of the Commissioners of the Supreme Court is designated to monitor the implementation of food related welfare schemes of the Government and the implementation of the orders of the Supreme Court in Writ Petition (Civil) 196/2001, PUCL v. Union of India and others. The incidence of deaths due to malnutrition has further been brought under the purview of the Commissioners by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

There have been repeated reports of starvation and malnutrition deaths in Maharashtra in the last few years. We are concerned about the recent reports of malnutrition deaths in the Aarey Colony, Mumbai. We have taken note of the response of the State Government as indicated in the newspapers. We appreciate that the Government of Maharashtra has decided to set up a committee consisting of members from the Women and Child Development Department and Health Department to conduct a survey in the entire Aarey Colony and take appropriate measures. In this context we request you to also take the following measures:

1. Provide immediate relief to the survivors in the affected family especially for any siblings of the deceased children who may be facing similar problems.
2. Ensure that other children who have been identified in the area receive medical attention without delay
3. Ensure that all children in the city of Mumbai, especially those living in slums, have access to anganwadi centres. It must also be ensured that these centres are functional where supply of supplementary nutrition, growth monitoring and referral of severely malnourished children to the health department takes place regularly. (Here, we may remind you of the Supreme Court order dated 13.12.2006 directing the universalisation of ICDS to every habitation (including urban slums), every child under six, every pregnant and lactating mother and every adolescent girl.)
4. Ensure that families that are at risk of malnutrition have access to subsidized food through the Public Distribution System and
5. Identify the communities that are living with starvation in the city of Mumbai, the structural causes for their malnutrition, and initiate longer term responses to address these problems

Kindly consider the above suggestions and send us an action taken report within two weeks. We also request you to send us the report of the survey initiated by the Government of Maharashtra as announced in response to the malnutrition deaths reported.

With Regards,



Dr. N.C. Saxena



Harsh Mander

Cc: Shri Jose Anthony Joseph, Adviser to the Commissioners of the Supreme Court.