

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2072**

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 15TH MARCH, 2022/ PHALGUNA 24, 1943 (SAKA)

BARIDARS OF VAISHNO DEVI SHRINE

†2072. SHRI RAJAN VICHARE:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that about 20,000 families of Baridars or priest (Hindu Community) families are facing crisis of their subsistence as they were dependent on offering and who have been worshipping Maa Vaishnodevi since thousand of years and they have been expelled out of the cave without prior notice and all rights have been vested in the shrine board on 30 August 1986 all of a sudden;

(b) if so, the action taken/being taken by the Government to give back the rights to the Baridars;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Government promised to find permanent solution to the problems of Baridar but nothing came out so far; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
(SHRI NITYANAND RAI)**

(a) & (b): The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has not reported any such subsistence crisis relating to families of Baridars of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. The administration and management of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine are vested in the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, an autonomous body constituted through an act of J&K State Legislature in August, 1986.

Various initiatives have been taken by the Government for the welfare of Baridar families, which include the following:

- (i) An amount of Rs. 9,34,60,530.00 (including interest) has been disbursed to the Baridar families as compensation.**
 - (ii) Scholarships to the students belonging to the erstwhile Baridar families are being disbursed. So far, Rs. 8.45 Crore has been disbursed to 15379 students as scholarships.**
 - (iii) An amount of Rs. 4.05 Crore has been distributed to 1311 families as Financial Assistance to the Baridars for the marriage of their daughters.**
 - (iv) Rs.1.00 lac Fixed Deposit Receipt has been kept reserved for each of 79 girl children of Baridar families under the Adoption of Girl Child Scheme. In addition, Rs. 500/- per month is disbursed to the families of the registered 79 girl children of Baridar.**
- (c) & (d): The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has informed that no such record/information is available.**