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NCPPCR pulls up Chhattisgarh, seeks chief secretary's reply on 39,000 infant deaths since 2019

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National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

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By Ejaz Kaiser

Express News Service

RAIPUR: Taking cognisance of over 39 thousand infant deaths since January 2019 in Chhattisgarh, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), had asked the state chief secretary to conduct an inquiry and submit the fact-finding report in seven days.

Seeking action, a delegation of BJP MPs from Chhattisgarh led by the state president Arun Sao, who met the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights chairperson Priyank Kanoongo, held the Congress-led government in the state “responsible for the deaths”.

They told Kanoongo that the “alarming figure” has been given by the deputy chief minister T S Singhdeo, who also holds the portfolio of health department, in the state Assembly. Chhattisgarh has witnessed 23,693 neonatal (below 28 days) and 15,574 child mortality (1-5 years) deaths since January 2019 till 30 June 2023.



The state government gave the figure in a written response to the query raised by the former leader of the opposition and BJP MLA Dharamlal Kaushik during the recent monsoon session of the Assembly.

Kaushik contended that his party has been repeatedly raising the issue but the Congress government kept trying to conceal the facts.

“The figure is quite worrying. Instead of improving the health care delivery system, the state government has turned insensitive owing to which the infants are dying.”, the BJP MLA alleged. Countering the allegations, Congress claimed that significant intervention measures have already been put in place that resulted in five year mortality rate and the Maternal Mortality rate decline over the last few years.

As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) of the Registrar General of India, the mortality rate of children below 5 years per 1,000 live births in Chhattisgarh has reduced from 45 in 2018 to 44 in 2019 and then to 41 in 2020.

Similarly, the mortality rate of neonates below 28 days decreased from 29 in 2018 to 28 in 2019 and 26 in 2020. The latest report for 2021 has not yet been released. “There is a declining trend in the neonatal and infant mortality rate in the state”, Job Zachariah, Chhattisgarh Unicef chief told this newspaper. In November 2021, Singhdeo stated the mission of the state government is to reduce the infant mortality rate by almost 50 per cent and bring it to 20 in 2023.

‘Mortality rate reduced’

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