

'65 kids died daily due to malnutrition in 9 months'

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Nagpur: The state continues to grapple with malnutrition among children. Nearly 17,688 deaths of children in the 0-6 age group were recorded during the first nine months. As many as 65 child deaths were reported daily during the period.

Varsha Gaikwad, minister for women and child development, shared this information in reply to a starred question during the Question Hour. Out of 17,688 deaths, about 13,683 fatalities were reported in the 0-1 age group, raising questions regarding the nutritional status of pregnant women. About 7.4 lakh live births were recorded during the corresponding period.

About 2,183 deaths in the 0-6 age bracket were reported in January. This declined to 1,637 in February. After remaining around the mark in

the next three months, the state recorded 1,946 deaths in June. These have only risen during the subsequent months. About 2,558 deaths were recorded in September.

With malnutrition among

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child chronic in various parts of the state, a large number of legislators raised queries related to the subject. These were clubbed together in one starred question.

In districts like Gadchiroli, Gondia, Amravati (Dharni), Nashik, Nandurbar and Thane, where such cases are

on the higher side, special rehabilitation centres have been opened up.

The government has introduced various schemes under the integrated child development scheme and the Rajmata Jijau nutrition mission to address the problem.

In Melghat, which holds the "dubious distinction" of being among the most chronic malnutrition belts, the government has undertaken a 15-point programme. This includes periodic medical check-ups of children and pregnant women.

The government has decided to set up child development centres to monitor its implementation in the premises of various Anganwadis. In a written reply to another starred question, Gaikwad said that 231 child deaths in the 0-6 age group have been reported in the region in the last six months alone.