

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:297
ANSWERED ON:03.09.2007
SUICIDE BY WOMEN OFFICERS IN ARMY
Aaron Rashid Shri J.M.

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the incidents of suicide by women officers in the Army has increased in the recent years ;
- (b) if so, the details of the suicide cases committed during the last three years ;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted in-depth enquiry into such incidents; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the details of the steps taken by the Government to check such incidents in future ?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.297 FOR ANSWER ON 3.9.2007

There have been only 3 isolated cases of suicide by Women Officers in the last 3 years in the Army. The details regarding the three cases of suicide are as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of the women officer who committed suicide	Details of the individual officer	Date of incident
1.	Major Shobha Rani	Army Medical Corps, posted at Command Hospital (Air Force) Bangalore	29.5.2006
2.	Lt. Sushmita Chakraborty	5071 Army Service Corps Battalion	15.6.2006
3.	Capt. Megha Razdan	- 113 Engineer Regiment	1.7.2007

Every such incident is inquired into by a Court of Inquiry. The Courts of Inquiry conducted in the first two suicide cases of women officers during the year 2006, have revealed that factors like personal reasons, depression and psychological adjustment disorder etc. led to the incidents.

2. The following measures have been adopted by the Army to prevent such incidents:-

- (i) Increased formal and informal interaction between senior and junior officers, improved accessibility of leaders and frequent interaction of junior leaders with soldiers, better man management and prompt attention to grievances;
- (ii) Strengthening time tested reporting and feedback system in the unit;
- (iii) Liberalized leave policy to attend to domestic problems;
- (iv) Identification and counselling of persons who show signs of stress by Regimental Medical Officers, junior leaders and unit commanders.
- (v) Psychological counselling by psychiatrists where required

(vi) Training capsules in relaxation exercise including yoga/meditation.

(vii) Post Army Medical Corps Junior Commissioned Officers as psychological counsellors who will interact with the troops and alleviate their stress related problems.

(viii) Committees have been established at Army, Command, Corps and Divisional Headquarters level to monitor and analyse stress related incidents and periodically review measures to be adopted. At Army Headquarters, the Committee is headed by Director General (Discipline Ceremonial & Welfare).

3. Apart from the above, the following steps have been taken to address grievances specific to Women Officers:-

(a) Women officers are treated at par with similarly placed male counterparts in terms of recruitment, training, tenure of service, promotion, pay and perks, leave, welfare measures etc.

(b) Commanders at all levels have been instructed to be more sensitive to the tasks being assigned to the lady officers with special focus on

(i) providing an honourable working environment

(ii) being sensitive to the constraints faced by lady officers in performing certain specified tasks and

(iii) keeping in mind displayed aptitudes while assigning non-core duties.

(c) Women officers are provided with separate living accommodation in the Officers Mess.

(d) Adequate grievance redressal mechanism has been put in place to address complaints of sexual harassment and other complaints of lady officers.

(e) Women officers are free to approach their Commanding Officers/Supervisors at any time to discuss their personal/official problems and seek immediate assistance.

(f) Instructions have been issued that displayed aptitudes of individuals should be kept in mind while assigning non core duties to lady officers.