

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE  
**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. 336**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2019

**LOSS OF LIVES IN AVALANCHES**

\*336. SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:

SHRI SANJAY SADASHIV RAO MANDLIK:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE j{k k ea=h  
be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a number of soldiers and civilians have lost their lives in a massive avalanche in Siachen recently and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has provided assistance to the family members of the deceased and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any precautionary steps have been taken to safeguard against such eventualities and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the number of soldiers who lost their lives due to avalanches in the hilly States during each of the last three years and the current year; and
- (e) whether more than a decade long field testing and trials by Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wearable Physiological Monitoring System (WPMS) to predict avalanches and protect the soldiers from the avalanches is not proving fruitful and if so, the present status of WPMS and the time by which it is likely to be developed and used for the benefit of soldiers of the country?

**A N S W E R**

MINISTER OF DEFENCE

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(SHRI RAJNATH SINGH)

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

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 336 FOR ANSWER ON 11.12.2019 REGARDING 'LOSS OF LIVES IN AVALANCHES.**

(a) In the current year, there have been 06 fatal casualties of Army personnel till 01 December, 2019 due to recent Avalanche in Siachen area. Also there were 02 fatal casualties of civilians due to avalanche in Siachen on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2019.

(b) Assistance to Next of Kin is provided by the Government as per the policy in vogue.

(c) All Personnel inducted into High Altitude regions are provided adequate training in mountain craft, ice craft and survival in glaciated terrain in mountain, coping with any eventuality like avalanches. They are also taught to handle medical emergencies. Troops are suitably equipped to undertake the operational challenges and carry out their mandated tasks. The various modern technological equipments being utilised by own troops include the following:-

- (i) Helicopters,
- (ii) Unmanned Aerial Vehicles,
- (iii) Snow Scooters,
- (iv) Avalanche Detectors and
- (v) Mountain clothing & equipment

Weather conditions in the snow bound areas of J&K are also closely monitored by the Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) station at Sasoma and Srinagar. Due cognizance is taken of weather warnings issued by the SASE.

(d) There were 18 fatal casualties in year 2016, 30 fatal casualties in year 2017, 06 fatal casualties in year 2018 and 16 fatal casualties in year 2019 (till 01.12.2019) of soldiers occurred due to avalanche/snow slide in Siachen and other areas.

(e) DRDO has successfully developed the Wearable Physiological Monitoring System (WPMS) for monitoring of physiological data of soldiers. However, WPMS is not related to avalanche prediction and protection.

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