

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4199**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2024

**STRESS FACTORS AFFECTING TROOPS**

4199. ADV DEAN KURIAKOSE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the study in August, 2023 regarding stress factors affecting troops and their families;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken by the Government regarding progress on understanding and mitigating stress factors affecting troops and their families;
- (c) whether any screening has been conducted to recognise the affected persons and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any other measure has been taken by the Government for the mental well-being of officers and army troops; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF STATE  
IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

(SHRI SANJAY SETH)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. Under the ibid study, a team of wellness enablers which included members from Discipline and Vigilance Directorate, Specialists from Directorate General of Medical Services (Army), Scientists from Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR) and Psychological Counsellors visited 12 military stations and interacted with Officers, Junior Commissioned Officers, Other Ranks and their families from August to December 2023 during Wellness Enabling Campaign to identify issues affecting mental health and suggested measures to build mental resilience.

Further, this team collected data of 2500 officers, Junior Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks for wellness profiling through questionnaires, open house, focused group discussions and one-on-one interactions during this campaign.

(c): Yes, Sir. Tool/test designed by Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR) and Psychometric Assessment by Disha Kiran were utilized, to screen risk-prone personnel with intention of imparting timely and appropriate intervention.

(d) & (e): The Army has taken numerous steps for mental well-being of Officers and troops: -

- (i) Conduct of Yoga and Meditation as part of Unit routine.
- (ii) Better manpower management and prompt attendance of grievances by Unit and Formations.
- (iii) Improved accessibility of leaders and frequent interaction of Junior Leaders with the Soldiers.
- (iv) Unit Administration and Officer-men relationship are being accorded high priority.
- (v) Buddy system has been expanded from two to four / five Other Ranks, to be more effective.
- (vi) Group activities like sports, games and recreational activities are being encouraged at Unit / Formation level, within the constraints of operational deployment.
- (vii) Liberalized Leave Policy to attend to domestic problems and authorization of Additional Railway Warrant to personnel deployed in Counter Insurgency / Counter-Terrorism Areas.
- (viii) Widespread dissemination of reading material in vernacular languages on management of stress.
- (ix) Counselling of susceptible individuals by Religious Teachers, and Psychological Counselling by Psychological Counsellors / Psychiatrists, where required.
- (x) Training and deployment of Army Medical Corps Junior Commissioned Officers as Psychological Counsellors in Commands.
- (xi) Officers are trained every year by DIPR as Psychological Counsellors.
- (xii) In addition, Nursing Technician Junior Commissioned Officers as well as selected Unit personnel are being trained on psychological counselling.
- (xiii) Military Hospitals have facilities to provide medical care to serving soldiers with psychiatric illness and Psychiatrists are posted at these hospitals.
- (xiv) Counselling facilities are being created at numerous Military Stations by outsourcing civilian psychological counsellors. Remaining facilities will be operational by end of Financial Year 2024-25.

In addition, following initiatives have been undertaken by the Indian Army: -

- (a) Introduction of psychometric assessment at recruitment stage.
- (b) Introduction of psychometric assessment of recruits at all training centres from training year 2024-25.

- (c) Counselling facilities at Psychiatry Centres.
- (d) Training of Officers and Junior Commissioned Officers in basic Psychological counselling at Defence Institute of Psychological Research and Institute of National Integration, respectively.
- (e) Mental Health Helplines at Psychiatry Centres at Service Hospitals. In addition, Tele-MANAS node has been established at Armed Force Medical College, Pune with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2023 in association with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- (f) MANAS, an application to address mental health issues in Indian Army has been developed by Armed Forces Medical College in association with C-DAC and NIHMHANS.
- (g) Personnel are also sensitized to use the Government of India Helpline “KIRAN” (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment) for online counselling.
- (h) Employment of Psychological Counsellors in stations exclusively outside the hospital location, with a view to maintain confidentiality to avoid social stigma. Over 100 facilities are being established at identified locations, for which funds have already been allocated.

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