

an>

Title: Regarding deaths caused due to open pits and uncovered borewells.

SHRI R. DHRUVANARAYANA (CHAMARAJANAGAR): Thank you very much.

You have given me an opportunity to raise an important issue regarding increase in death rates due to uncovered, abandoned borewells across the country. Every day, thousands of borewells are drilled across the country and the uncovered borewells become deathtraps for several farmer citizens, especially children across the country. Every day, hundreds of borewells are drilled for purposes like drinking water, irrigation, and cultivation. The recent statistics of the Department of Mines and Geology of Karnataka Government states that 22 lakh irrigation pumpsets are attached to borewells, of which a large number of borewells have failed due to depletion of the water table. This is the story of one State and we do not know about other States. There is a clear cut Supreme Court guideline on borewells and how to handle the responsibility for borewell owners and others involved. After depletion of water levels, thousands of borewells get dried up and they have not taken any action to cover those borewells. Due to the uncovered borewells, death rate is increasing. There is a clear-cut Supreme Court guideline to cover such borewells. But the State Governments have not taken any step in this regard.

So, I urge upon the Union Government to pay special attention to this serious issue, set up a Statutory Agency to check the status of uncovered borewells across the country and provide strict guidelines to State Governments, local bodies and civic authorities to constitute a task force to cover the uncovered borewells to avoid the reported incidents. The District Collector should have the records of the number of borewells dug and the number of borewells that are left open after they dried up. He should see to it that the company which digs the borewells, should close them appropriately.