

# Borewell Accident Palwal

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## **Borewell Accident**

The incident occurred in the Balai village of Palwal district of Haryana. The victim Tanu (Bipasha) and her family had come to her maternal grandmother's house for a relative's marriage.

The accident took place on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Wednesday, afternoon at around 3.30 pm when 4 years old Tanu was playing outside the house; she suddenly slipped into the open 180 ft borewell and stuck inside at about 25 ft down. Her family members were alerted when she started crying and called out her mother's name. Immediately, villagers informed police and district administration about the incident.

### **Action by District Administration and Police, Palwal**

As soon as, Police and District Administration received the information about the incident, they all rush to the site at around 4.00 pm. Doctor's team, Fire Men along with their resources reached to the site.



Fig: District Officers while discussing the issue at Site

Immediately, provision for oxygen supply was made and oxygen was given to Tanu with the help of long pipe and she was told to hold that pipe. Throughout the operation continuous communication was maintained with Tanu so that she didn't lose her calm. Food and water were given at regular interval of time with the help of pipe and water bottles.



Fig: Police and Doctors while providing help to Tanu

At around 5.00 pm, district officials with the help of 1 JCB involved in rescue operations and started digging parallel alternate path 6 feet away to the original borewell path. Meanwhile Deputy Commissioner, Palwal, established a contact with Delhi Army and DMRC to seek their help for rescue operation. To speed up the digging work another JCB was called at 5.30 pm. Two tractors were also brought to fill soil. Local Villagers, fire men, labours involved in taking off the soil from dig.

Even after 4-5 hours passed, no expert from Delhi Army or DMRC reached at site. Due to which local villagers started agitating and showing their anger towards the district administration. Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police addressed the crowd and assured the safety of Tanu.

Working at night was tedious task. Search Light was bought from Fire Department but it was not functional. Rescue work was carried out with the help of JCB lights and lights arranged by local villagers. Till 9.00 pm, 28 feet dig parallel to borewell was made. Firemen, local villagers then started digging tunnel to reach near to Tanu's position. Delhi Army personnel reached at site at around 11.15 pm and inspected the operation and involved in making tunnel.

And finally at around 1 am Tanu was taken out and immediately she was sent to hospital in Ambulance. Tanu was admitted to private hospital to give her best treatment and facilities.



Fig: Doctors while giving treatment to Tanu.

It was clearly witnessed that District Administration was completely involved in rescue operation, but one cannot deny the fact that Supreme Court's guidelines were not completely followed in the district in order to avoid such borewell accidents.

#### **Need to follow Supreme Court guidelines**

Even before the occurrence of this accident in Palwal, at the beginning of this year, the Haryana government has asked the authorities to follow the Supreme Court guidelines in this regard.

In a written communication addressed to all officers of state government departments, they have been asked to follow the Supreme Court guidelines issued in 2009 when the court had taken suo motu initiative following various cases of children being trapped or falling into borewells or abandoned wells.

The guidelines state that the land owner has to inform in writing the district collector or district magistrate or sarpanch of a gram panchayat or officers concerned of the department of public health and Municipal Corporation/Committee, at least 15 days prior before constructing a borewell.

The registration of all government, semi-government and private agencies should be mandatory with the district administration.

At the time of construction, signboards should be installed near the well with details of the drilling agency and address of the owner.

Barbed wire fencing or a suitable barrier should be installed around the well during construction. A platform of cement or concrete measuring 0.30 metres above the ground level and 0.30 metres below ground level should be constructed around the well casing.

If the pump is being repaired, the tubewell should not be left uncovered. After the work is completed, mud pits and channels should be filled. The abandoned borewell should be filled with clay, sand or pebbles.

The district collector should be empowered to inspect whether the guidelines are being followed. Proper monitoring of borewells should be taken care of by the state or central government agencies concerned.

So in order to avoid such borewell accidents District Authority has to follow SC guidelines. Resources like JCB, drilling machines, rescue lights, Oxygen cylinders with long tube, rope, and trained human man power have to be kept ready, in case such accidents occur. It is seen that in such accidents Army plays a vital role, so maintaining communication with Delhi Army, NDRF, NSG, and DMRC can proved to be an effective weapon in response