

Stories of gas affected women on waterless fast demanding correct compensation

1. Leela Bai Thakur (65)



In 1984 Leela Bai lived half a kilometer south of the Union Carbide factory with her husband and four children. Her husband was a welder in the Union Carbide factory. Shortly after her husband came home around midnight, their eyes started burning. They also started coughing and vomiting. Her husband told her it's a poisonous gas that has leaked from his factory. They fully covered their four children with blankets and decided not to join their neighbours who were running away to escape from the poison clouds. Her youngest child, a girl, was only one month old at the time of the disaster. She remained sick for a long time and died when she was 21. A son who was exposed to the gas at age 4, died untimely at 26. Leela Bai, her husband and their two children, all of who remain sick till today, received Rs. 25 thousand each as compensation.

2. Kapoori Yadav (70)



Kapoori Bai was busy with her nephew's wedding on the night of the disaster. In the middle of singing and dancing everyone started coughing and complaining of burning in eyes. Guests at the wedding started running away. Kapoori Bai, who was 7 months pregnant, also ran as far as she could and stopped at a village outside the city. She stayed the night there and came home the next morning. Her husband and one of their sons had gone to a different wedding in another part of the city and they too were back home. Kapoori found her husband and their four children in a terrible state. Two months after the disaster Kapoori gave birth to a daughter who has always been sick. Another daughter Munki also remained sick for many years and died at age 37. Kapoori lost her husband to esophageal cancer.

3. Batti Bai Rajak (41)



Batti Bai was only 3 years old at the time of the disaster. She lived with her parents and two brothers. Her mother told her that she and her brothers were covered with blankets and quilts by their parents for the entire night. The next morning all of them moved to a village outside the city limits. Batti Bai says her parents have lost much of their vision and her brothers continue to battle chronic health problems. Batti Bai and each member of her family has only received Rs. 25 thousand as compensation.

4. Chironji Ahrwar (80)



In 1984 Chironji Bai lived with her husband, 3 sons and 2 daughters close to the Union Carbide factory. When the gas hit them no one knew what to do but they chose to stay home. One of their goats died that night. They left for their village home on the morning of the disaster. The children were very sick. One of her daughters died three years after the disaster.

5. Premlata Choudhary (75)



Premlata and her husband, who worked as an engine driver lived close to the Union Carbide factory with their 4 sons and 2 daughters. Her mother from out of Bhopal was visiting them at the time of the disaster. She went missing that night and was never found. One of her sons died at age 8 when he fell down during an episode of convulsions. Her husband became too sick to continue with his job. Her sons had to drop out of school as their income went down. The

family's desperate economic condition drove one of her daughter in laws to suicide.

6. Vishnu Panthi (58)



Vishnu lived with her large joint family right across the Union Carbide factory. Three children of her elder sister died that night. Her husband was badly affected and was not able to carry on with manual work. He was later diagnosed with Tuberculosis. Her children had to quit school because their income dropped. One of her sons was only 3 months old when the gas hit them, they got no compensation for him. Vishnu who continues to suffer from breathlessness, chest pain, body ache and panic attacks

received only 25 thousand rupees

7. Shehazadi (67)



On the night of the disaster Shehazadi ran with her husband and four children to get on to a truck and escape the poison clouds. She still remembers her two neighbours who died in the truck. After the disaster her husband had to be hospitalized often and was not able to continue with his manual job. Diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease he died in 2019. She received no compensation for her husband's untimely death. Her son was diagnosed with

Tuberculosis. Shehazadi who continues to suffer from chest pain, impaired vision and burning in stomach received only Rs.25 thousand as compensation as did other members of her family.

8. Kasturi Kasote (73)



Kasturi who lived right across the street from the Union Carbide factory ran towards the hospital with her family on the night of the disaster. At the hospital she rescued one of her neighbours who was alive but was stuck under a pile of dead bodies. She lost one of her daughters that night and another to cancer several years later. Her husband who was a building contractor got paralyzed and had to stop working. He died in 2017. Her sons remain frequently ill and cannot go to work. Two of her

granddaughters have been diagnosed with physical and mental retardation.

Kasturi has received no compensation for the death of her husband and she herself has received only Rs.25 thousand as compensation.

9. Laxmi Ahirwar (65)



Laxmi Bai lived with her husband and 3 children, the youngest, a daughter just 3 months old, in Jaiprakash Nagar right opposite the Union Carbide factory. Her husband used to work in the factory as a casual worker. He was not able to do any work after he was gassed that night. He died five years ago and she has received no compensation for his premature death. One of Laxmi Bai's granddaughters was born with a malformed heart. Like most of the residents of her community, she and rest of her family members received just Rs. 25 thousand as compensation.

10. Laxmi Ahirwar (58)



Laxmi Bai's two daughters were only 4 months and two years old when poison clouds from the Union Carbide factory hit her family living right across. Her father in law was a policeman so her family took shelter inside the police station on that night. Her family was badly affected as the police station was close to the factory. Her husband was diagnosed with diabetes some years after the disaster, as have so many of the survivors, and had to have his leg amputated. He died three years ago. Laxmi Bai who has chronic heart problems has received only Rs. 25 thousand as compensation.