

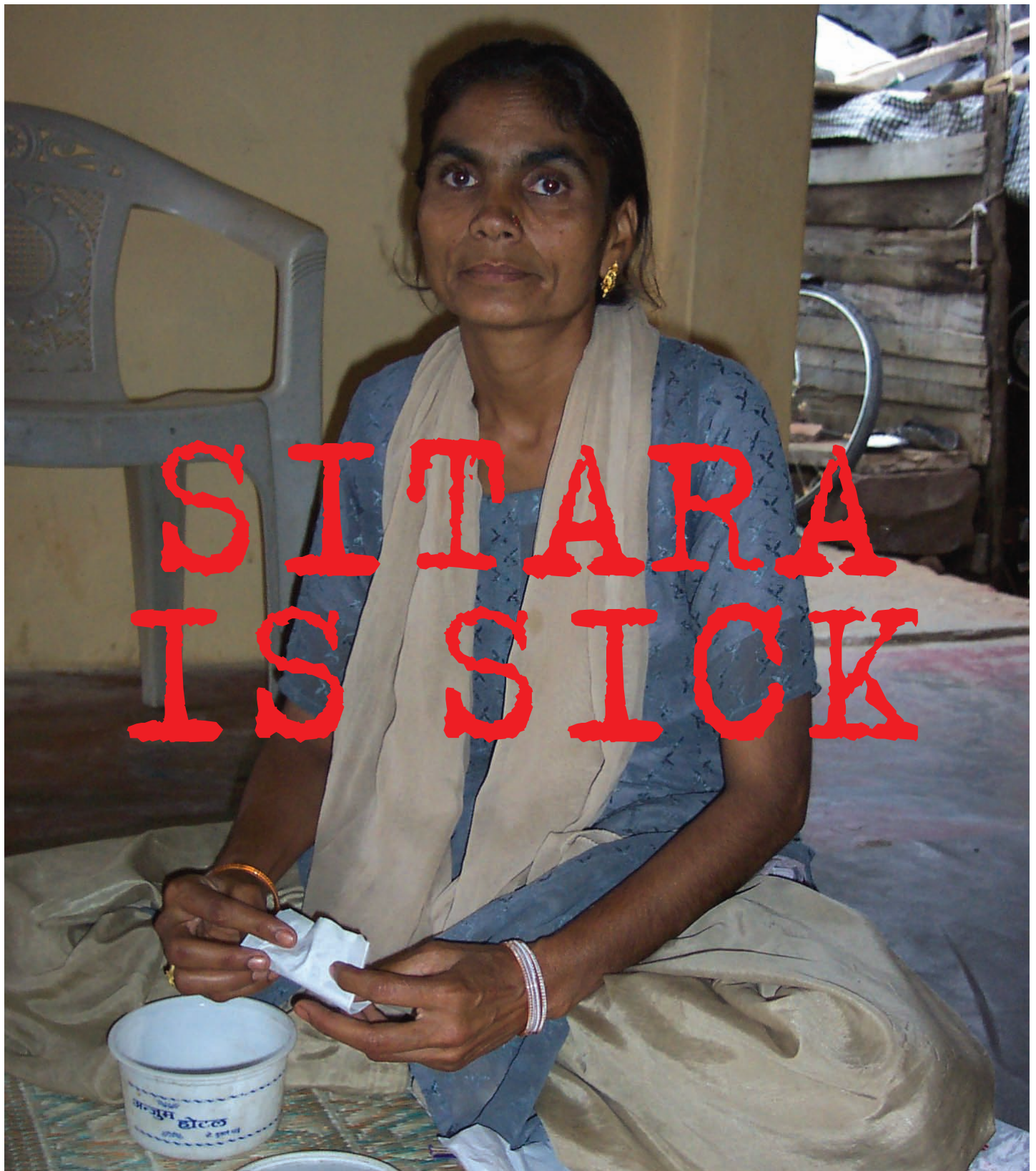
ZAKI IS DEAD



“We have spent a lot of money on my medical treatment... Sometimes we don’t even have 5 or 10 rupees for tea or medicines. I was very healthy before the gas... Sometimes it would go away and I would think that I would get better...”

Many survivors of the gas leak face chronic respiratory illness, and many of them have died as a consequence. One year ago, Zaki Mohammed was receiving treatment at the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, built in Bhopal exclusively for gas-affected patients. Despite the treatment he received, Zaki did not get better and died in 2004 aged 53.

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SITARA IS SICK

“It began for me one year after I was affected by the gas... When my period comes, I have weakness. I had back pain... I could not leave the house and I would have pain like I was having a miscarriage. ...They told me to drink milk and eat fruit. We can’t even afford to eat rotis [bread]. How are we going to afford to eat fruit?”

Studies have shown persistent, long-term gynaecological disorders in gas-affected women. Chief among the symptoms were excessive vaginal discharge and abnormal uterine bleeding. 41 year-old Sitara Bi still suffers from chronic menstrual problems, back pain and weakness.

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“In my ankles and arms and shoulders, I have swelling and pain always. I cannot even stretch my arms and legs. It feels like someone is pulling my nerves from the inside” said Shaheen, who was receiving treatment for breathing difficulties.

She contracted tuberculosis four times after being exposed to the toxic gas leak. She weighed only 27 kg, had swelling all over and endured chronic pain shortly before she died in 2004.

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“I was completely healthy. Then 14 months back, the problems started. I have blood and discharge all the time.... I am getting radiotherapy.”

Munni Bi lived in Rajghat colony, less than a kilometre from the plant, at the time of the leak, and suffered cervical cancer. Studies conducted after the gas leak indicated increased cervical and breast cancers among gas-affected women. Munni's health got worse in the last two years and she finally died of advanced cervical cancer at her own residence in 2004, at the age of 46.

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“Water is red here and it smells... like there is some medicine in it,” complained Faujia last year.

She is 16, no more than 4 feet tall, and does not have the mental growth typical of her age. Faujia suffers from a disorder called *Persistent Craving & Compulsive Eating of Non-food Substances* and as a consequence, eats clay daily. Drinking contaminated water and eating contaminated dirt can cause neurotoxin disorders. She suffers from high levels of anaemia that would normally require immediate transfusion. The water she drinks is laced with trichlorobenzene which is known to cause anaemia and if ingested in higher quantities, can lead to leukaemia.

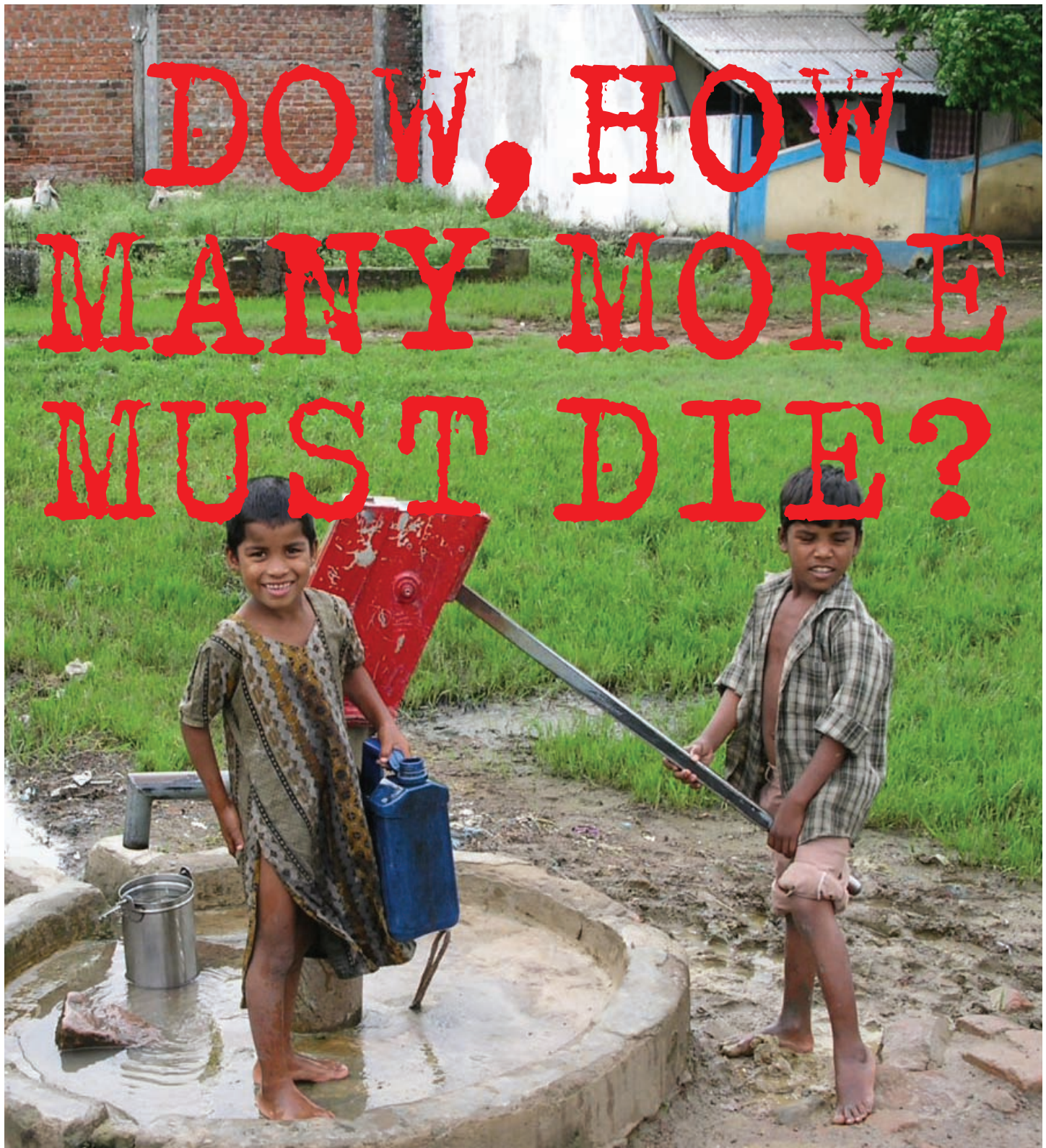
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“We have to travel at least two kilometres to get clean water... My health is so bad that it prevents me from carrying the water I need from there” Hasina Bi explained last year.

For the last 18 years, she has been drinking the same water from the hand-pump near her house. Her health has deteriorated in the last year. She suffers from goitre, piles, chronic joint pain and upset stomach. She is so weak that many times she lacks the energy to stand in the long line to fight for her two buckets of water and ends up getting water from the contaminated pumps.

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**DOW, HOW
MANY MORE
MUST DIE?**

Pumps at contaminated wells are painted red by the government. Yet, local people continue to use them as they have no other regular and accessible source of clean water.

After 21 years since the gas leak, the toxins propagating from the Bhopal plant are still affecting the health and the environment of the people living in the area. Poisonous material left in the site continues to contaminate the earth and waterways of Bhopal. Many people who were not exposed to the gas leak developed health problems probably from drinking contaminated water.

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