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Carbide plant still poses threat

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Three decades after the gas leak disaster, the abandoned Union Carbide plant still continues to pose a serious threat to the people of Bhopal as almost every study done so far to measure the impact of the toxic waste lying dumped both inside and outside the factory premises has established conclusively that there is large-scale contamination of soil and ground water in this area.

New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), which has analysed various studies to track the impact of Union Carbide's toxic waste, released the key findings of its analysis at a media briefing here on Thursday. CSE also released a comprehensive Action Plan for decontamination of ground water and environmental remediation around the Union Carbide India limited (UCIL) Plant.

Satinath Sarangi of Bhopal Group for Information and Action gave a historical background and told media-persons that between 1969 and December 1984, when disaster struck, Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) had produced carbamate pesticides and organochlorine formulations. All these years, the toxic wastes and products were being dumped at several locations inside the plant.

Chandra Bhushan, CSE's deputy director general, said: "Over the years, this waste has been a continuous source of soil and groundwater contamination and therefore, a cause of serious public health concern for residents in the surrounding areas."