

BALAKNAMA

World's Unique Newspaper for and by Street and Working Children

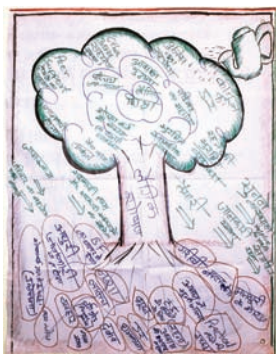
“Balaknama is the newspaper presented by Street and Working children themselves to fight for their own rights and problems because they are being completely ignored.

UNHEARD VOICES

STREET YOUTH UNITED AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Balaknama Bureau

Cases of sexual exploitation are on rise everyday and Street & Working children are also becoming its victim. Since it is a sensitive issue, Balaknama reporters did not find it appropriate to discuss about this with street children instead they spoke with former street and working youth. About 20 boys and girls took part in discussion and were interviewed separately. Balaknama is sharing their own version, leaving its



interpretation to the readers. Their names are not revealed to protect their identity.



Female Youth- One day after finishing our driving class, we were going back to our



home. Suddenly a boy came, and touched me at my back. Many people saw this act, but

no one came to save me. Instead they advise me to keep mum. They did not support me.

Male Youth- When I got to Agra for work, I live on bus stand. There bus staff sexually abuse boys, and even threaten me if I do not sleep with them, they will throw me away from bus stand.

Female Youth- My mother beat me and asks me to sleep outside and not at home. One boy offered me place to sleep with a condition that I

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Delhi Government can do stray dog's census, then why leave us?

APPEALED STREET CHILDREN

Talkative Reporter Javed,
Reporter Shanno, Shambhu

Issue of counting stray dogs in Delhi is again in news. It may be noted that government decided to conduct stray dogs' census during commonwealth games and now again government has decided to conduct census to control the increasing population of stray dogs and to give them

protection.

When Badhte Kadam members received this news they became very happy and said, “Good atleast our Delhi Government thought about conducting census and protecting the dogs that live with us. The thing which is disheartening is that the government immediately took an action when this happened with a dog but nobody bothers

when this happen every day with street and working children. Condition of children staying on streets and railway stations is deteriorating day by day and people treat them worse than animals. We are happy that government is conducting dog census in South Delhi but sad that we do not exist for our authorities and there is no step being taken by the Government

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STREET CHILDREN'S FIGHTS CHIKUNGUNYA THEIR OWN WAYS

Talkative Reporter Kishan,
Reporter Chetan

Street children are most vulnerable to vector borne diseases such as dengue, chikungunya as they mostly live close to places of mosquito breeding. 10 children fell ill to chikungunya in Nehru camp of West Delhi. They were the one who were earning for their family so when they only fell ill so from where the money would come for their treatment. Government



hospitals are also full these days with chikungunya patients. Children suffering from this disease are not able to walk the how they would stand in long queues in hospitals for their treatment. Their parents also do not have money to get them treated at private clinics so the children kept lying in their houses without any medicines.

After seeing their condition, some children collected Rs 10 from each person nearby and took them to private clinic for their treatment. Finally these

children got some relief and are safe now. As Delhi reels under the dengue and chikungunya, street children have found out some unique ways to tackle from these diseases. Children say, “We remain so under the influence of drugs that the mosquito's which bite us they also get killed so we do not fall ill to these vector borne diseases”. 16 years old Ajeet said, “The mosquito which spreads dengue develops in clean water at clean place and

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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

We are thankful to our readers who have given their love and praise to our newspaper Balaknama. We have always tried to bring the real stories of street and working children and the problems which they face in front of you and this time also we have done the same.

In this edition, street and working children have raised the issue of their census in front of the authority and have asked them about the reason behind the inability of the government in conducting street and working children's census when they can conduct dogs' census living in Delhi.

We have brought the real situation telling you about the fast spread of Dengue and Chikungunya. We have brought the real stories of children in front of you as always and also bringing you some of the children's heroic stories so that you can motivate them more.

We would be glad if you support Balaknama in any way (small or big or financially). You can contact us on address below or can mail us at balaknamaeditor@gmail.com

The Editorial Board

IT IS SCARY TO SLEEP UNDER FLYOVERS!!

Balaknama Bureau

Balaknama Reporter conducted support group meeting with girls living under Moolchand flyover to discuss about the problems faced by them. 16 years old Sapna (name changed) said, "We work whole day at traffic lights for the survival of our family. We have to sleep here itself only at night as we have no safe place anywhere to go and we do not have enough money to rent a house for us. In case we have money then also nobody gives us their house on rent. Neither can we continue paying the rent for a longer time so we are compelled to sleep under the flyovers only after our work but we face many problems in sleeping here. Older boys under influence of alcohol keep roaming around us and abuse us". 14 years old Kajal (name changed) said, "We girls sleep in open under



flyovers and become victims of abuse and molestation from nearby crossing people. At times, boys who consume drugs come and sleep with us so we are always under a fear of something wrong happening to us". Reporter asked, "Why have you not complained to Police about it?" 15 years old Preeti (name changed) said, "What do we complain to Police about?"

They are also the one who treat us badly and shoo us away at night when we sleep there. In this situation where do we go with our family?" Girls staying under the flyovers told the reporter, "We request our Government to provide us the facilities the way night shelters have been there in the city so that we can stay safe somewhere".

Street children compelled to drink contaminated water

Talkative Reporter Kailash,
Reporter Shambhu

Balaknama Reporter conducted a support group meeting with children staying under Moolchand flyover and working there at red light. Children said, "We face many problems related to water here". 15 years old Aakash said, "We have to go far off places to get water for us. We get a water supply machine here from Delhi Jal Board from where we get our water for drinking and other purposes but there is a problem with the machine. We have suffered from electric shock many a times from that machine. We are always under the fear of rickling our life from the electric shock".

Ashok said, "Recently on 12th August when it rained heavily, a child amongst us named Kavita went to fetch water from that machine and



got an electric shock and she was thrown away due to the current and was hurt badly. Our parents are scared after this incident so they do not let us go there but then we have to get water from somewhere for our needs. So we go far off places to fetch water. We drink water put to plants in the park which is very salty and taste and this water is making us sick also

but we have no other choice". Balaknama Reporter then went to Delhi Jal Board to talk about the machine.

Reporter asked the security worker of Jal Board about this issue. He said, "This problem arises only when it rains heavily. The water gets clogged up in the machine otherwise Delhi Jal Board's machine supplies water safely in every home".

SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN SUFFER DUE TO LACK OF TOILETS

Balaknama Bureau

There are still many places in Delhi where basic facilities like toilets are not available. We are talking about a similar place Valmiki camp near Shakurpur in Delhi. The camp is near railway tracks so majority of people go to tracks for defecation. There is only one toilet in that area despite the camp is densely populated. Due to availability of only one toilet, there is an always a queue in morning from 5 to 11. Children going to school also gets late due to this problem and get scolded by their teachers so they have to go on tracks to relieve themselves to avoid the queue. Girls said, "We face a lot of problem when we go out in open to relieve ourselves as older boys watch us and also abuse us after getting drunk". They added, "Small children and girls are the worst sufferers because of this problem. Along with this there is one more problem near tracks. There is a desolated place near tracks which is almost in ruins. Children get kidnapped from this place so children are scared to go out near tracks". Children said, "We want toilet in our camp as early as possible so that we are saved from abuse and then defecation in open leads to various diseases and affect our environment also. Our problem should be solved under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan campaign and help girls from exploitation so that they feel safe in the society".

Deplorable condition of shelter meant for street children

Balaknama Bureau

Balaknama Reporters met those children who live at Old Delhi Railway Station and work there only. Some children have been to shelter amongst them. 14 years old Ajeet (name changed) said, "Workers of nearby shelter homes take us forcefully with them as they see us working and staying there at railway station. This is very good for us that we are kept in centre home but the problem



is that we face many problems there".

Vikas (name changed) said, "I was also taken to a shelter but I ran away from there as the food which was served to the children was not nutritious at all. Watery pulses are served in shelter and milk given to children in morning also has more water in it than milk content. And if we complaint to centre home workers, they abuse us and tell us to eat the same food or remain hungry. That is why we run away from the shelter and

do not want to go again there as our life at station is much better".

He added, "Nobody scolds us at railway station. We get enough tasty food also by picking rags at station. We are happy here". Reporter asked, "How do you want your ideal shelter to be?" Vikas replied, "We want a shelter where the food is good and employees speak and listen to us properly. If we get such centre homes we would never run away from there".

CHILDREN SELLING FLOWERS AT DELHI'S TRAFFIC SIGNALS FOR SURVIVAL

Talkative Reporter Kishan,
Reporter Shambhu

Often you see children selling bouquet of flowers at Delhi's traffic lights. Balaknama Reporter spoke to these children at red lights and got to know that small children are made to either beg at red lights or sell flowers. 15 years old Bhanwar (name changed) said, "We have come here from Rajasthan. Our parents bring us here with them when no work is left to do in Rajasthan. We work there also. There are around five fairs which take place in Rajasthan and we sell wooden stands



made by us in fairs which are used to keep footwears"

14 years old Sapna (name changed) said, "We make stands from the wood which our parents bring from market. We face many problems in making them. Dust produced in the process of cutting the wood gets into our lungs which causes pain in our chest and stomach. After facing so many challenges we are able to sell the stands at cost of Rs.120 to Rs.200. This way we are able to earn Rs.2000 to Rs.3000 in each fair but this money gets over after the fair due to which many a times our siblings have to sleep without

food". She added, "We have relatives already working in Delhi so we also move to Delhi in search of work here. We sell bouquet of flowers at red lights. We get one bundle of rose from Sadar market in Rs.20".

"And we are able to sell one bouquet of flowers at Rs. 50 to Rs.120. Rose bouquets are given to us by other person and then we go to different red lights and sell them. Children keep coming and going at traffic lights. Mostly 10-12 children are found at one traffic light", said Sapna. Rahul said, "Our owner gives us Rs.3000 per month".

Rag pickers children harassed by locals



Balaknama Bureau

Lajpat Nagar, one of the biggest market of Delhi where on one hand rich people come for shopping and on the other Street and working children pick rags for their survival.

But people are not letting them survive there, they abuse these children the moment they come to the market. These children may not be well dressed, pick rags but they never do anything wrong rather work to earn some

money so that they can feed themselves.

15 years old Salima (name changed) told Balaknama Reporter, "Many wrong things have been happening with us here. There are some older boys who roam around in the market and steal things and do pick-pocketing. But Police doubt us as we wear shabby clothes and pick rags. They blame us saying that we roam here and there in the market so we are the culprits and nobody else can do this. Sophia (name changed) works in the market said, "Whenever somebody's pocket is picked police catch us and take us to police station for inquiry. We are not the culprits; we work here so why would we steal anything. Thefts are done by the elder boys but nobody listens to us".

Young as 12, she stitch for livelihood

Talkative Reporter Manisha,
Reporter Chetan

12 years old girls of Kamla Nehru camp do the work of stitching old and tattered clothes after coming back from school at 2 till 7 in the evening. These girls are working because their parents' financial condition is not well to take care of them. They stitch others' clothes to fund their education. They get Rs. 10 for stitching each cloth. These girls complete their studies while making food on the stove.

Girls said, "We mostly work on Sundays so we remain over burdened all the time as it is off for everyone. We keep sitting on our stitching machine from



9 in the morning till 7 in the evening on Sundays. We have to sit in one position for very long due to which our hands and legs start paining. This also has an impact on our eyes too due to which we are not able to see properly at times".

Forced by compulsions, girls leaving education

Talkative Reporter Lakshmi,
Reporter Jyoti

10 girls have left their school in West Delhi. When reporter asked them about the reason behind this then 15 years old Kajal said, "My father fell ill and was not able to go to work. My family's condition worsened so to manage our expenses I had to leave my school". 16 years old Pooja said, "My mother goes to work in other people's house and I was the one left to take care of my house. In the remaining time, I have to go to pick sawdust in the factory. No time and energy is left after all this work so I left my school".

15 years old Meera said, "My parents go out to work and I had to take care of my siblings. I had to get them ready for school and then had to get ready for my school. I used to reach late in my school and always used to get scolded by



the teacher. That is why I left my school and now I am busy in my daily chores so I do not get time to study". 16 years old Praveena said, "I used to study in Government school but when my father started drinking, he got my name stroked off my name from the school and got me open a junk shop to earn some money. Now I sit at shop whole day and buy bottles from other children and send junk to big junk shop".

13 years old Sonia said, "I used to study in government

school but I had to leave school because of my parents. They used to always taunt me saying that would you become an engineer after studying so I left my school. Now I do only that work which my parents tell me to do. I wanted to become a teacher but my dream remained unfulfilled because of my parents".

These girls are taking full responsibility of their homes. They do work of pruning sawdust from 6 in the morning till 11 at night. They face many problems in doing this. They have to climb stairs of the building till 4th and 5th floor to carry the sawdust. They get tired in going up and down the stairs and at times sawdust gets spilled in the stairs so their owner scolds and abuses them. While pruning the sawdust, dust gets into their eyes, nose and mouth which affect their health too.

Save us from begging, appealed street children



Reporter Saurabh

All children of Sector-106, Noida beg on the streets. Balaknama Reporter asked them, "Why do you all beg?" Children said, "Begging has been done in our family since ages. Our parents also beg". 14 years old Karan (name changed) said, "The moment we grow up, our parents give us begging bowl in our hands rather than giving books and tell us to go out to beg and bring money. We do not know what study is; we only beg and face many problems while begging. People hate and abuse us. We get a feel as if we do not belong to this country. What do we do in such situation".

He added, "Children go to market to earn some livelihood for them. At time we are not able to earn enough money to have our food so we collect the rotten discarded vegetables thrown by vegetable sellers in the market and cook our food from it. We do not like to beg but we have to do it out of our helplessness for our survival".

Street children met to train accidents under drugs' influence



Reporter Poonam

Children staying near Agra Cantt Railway Station come to work at railway station. Most of the children do rag picking, sell tobacco or clean and beg inside the train. These children staying and working on railway station are meeting mishaps every day. This came into light when Reporter Poonam conducted a support group meeting with children and asked about their problems. Golu said, "We take drugs also along with our work and when we consume drugs in more quantity we do not remain in our senses. Under drugs' influence when we pick rags on railway tracks we are not able to judge the speed of approaching train and do not react on time. At times we get

struck in between the tracks also and we are not able to save ourselves from the approaching train".

Krishna said, "We get on the running train to sell our products. At times our hands slip and we fell down on tracks and nobody come to our help".

14 years old Rahul said, "We run away from our homes due to bad behavior of our parents and come to station and then to survive here we start begging and picking rags. We start consuming drugs by seeing other children and now we have got addicted to drugs. Whenever we miss our parents, we consume drugs; if we do not get food we take drugs. We are getting entrapped in drugs day by day due to which more mishaps are happening with us".

PUSH TO WORK AT YOUNG, THEY LOSING THEIR CHILDHOOD

Talkative Reporter Manoj, Reporter Chetan

70 children who are staying in West Delhi have been brought from Madhya Pradesh are of age group from 12 to 16 years for construction of houses and sewers. When these children go for work their owners put 50kgs of sack on their shoulders. They work from 9 in the morning till 7 in the evening. After all this hard work children get Rs.250

at the end of the day. Children suffer a lot of pain in their back and waist due to heavy sacks. Children start eating tobacco and pan masala to gain strength and motivation to carry on with their work. Balaknama Reporter asked the children, "How do you get strength from eating tobacco?" 16 years old Manoj said, "We carry heavy sacks weighing 50kgs due to which we feel a lot of pain so we start eating tobacco fast so that our mind gets diverted

and we feel less pain. But sad thing is that one of the boys has developed stone due to tobacco consumption and now he remains sick all the time. If he tries carrying a little weight only his stomach pains a lot". Explaining children, Reporter said, "Tobacco consumption is bad for health and it leads to many diseases. Children should not consume tobacco and whoever is eating tobacco should immediately leave this habit".

PEER RESCUED PEER FROM TRAIN STATION

Took her to shelter home with help of Balaknama Reporter

Talkative Reporter Gudiya, Reporter Jyoti

15 years old Gudiya used to stay with her parents in Mathura but her parents used to remain ill all the time. One day when they were going to the doctor from Mathura railway station alongwith gudiya and met with a train accident. When Gudiya lost her parents she was just 12 years old only and it all happened in front of her. She kept crying there, nobody came to help her. Gudiya did not know what to do now as

she was all alone but then her nearby aunt took gudiya with her. Despite being very old, her aunt kept gudiya with her like her own daughter for one year but after that she also started falling ill so she also left Gudiya. Gudiya was alone again. She started working in other people's homes for her survival and one day she came to Delhi by train. Delhi was new to her; she had nobody to go to so she got scared and started crying. One girl who is a rag picker at Nizamuddin Railway Station saw her crying and

went to her. Gudiya explained her whole story to Guddi. Then Guddi said, "I am a rag picker here and I stay in a night shelter. I go to a centre to study". Guddi asked her, "Do you want to go to a shelter home?" Gudiya refused to go to a shelter home so Guddi took her to Balaknama Reporter Jyoti. Jyoti explained her, "If you will stay here on station nobody will take care of you; you will be safe at shelter home". Then next day reporter Jyoti with help of CHETNA team member sent her to shelter home through legal process.

UNIMPEDED FAST RUNNING CARS, RISKING CHILDREN LIVES

Reporter Chetan and Jyoti

School going and working children have to daily face fast running cars between Punjabi Bagh and Rampur Ashoka Park due to lack of red lights. Vehicles run very fast on that road as there is no red light in that area. Children face difficulties in crossing the road. There is always a risk to children's lives

in crossing the road as the cars speed away very fast but still children have to cross the road facing the challenge as that is the only way of reaching their school and work. Children said, "If at times a child stumbles while crossing the road then the car driver abuses back the child only as if he has committed some mistake by crossing the road. The icing on the cake is

that there is no traffic policeman also so nobody stops". They added, "Recently an accident occurred where a bike hit the school child. Children got very angry and created ruckus then only the child was taken to the hospital but hospital also refused to admit the child. Seeing these children started raising slogans and then media was called". Children told media,

"Children get hit every other day by fast running vehicles and they do not even stop to see the injured child. People run away after hitting the child as there is no traffic policemen in that area". Children said to Balaknama Reporter, "We want that authorities should immediately take this problem into account and find out some solution for it".

POOJA, A STREET CHILD GIFTED HER BIRTHDAY TO PEERS

Talkative Reporter Pooja, Reporter Chetan

15 years Pooja stays in Valmiki camp of West Delhi. She is one of those children who works hard the whole day and complete their studies. She goes to school and is also Balaknama's Reporter. Pooja knows how Street and working children survives and what kind of problems they

face. Pooja tell all children around about the importance of studies along with work. Pooja said, "There are many children in Valmiki camp who does not even have clothes to wear. I thought why not to give some of my clothes to them and help them. So I called them to celebrate my birthday and gave them my clothes during the party".

Balaknama Reporter asked,

"Why did you give them your clothes on your birthday only?" Pooja replied, "I wanted to help them but at the same time I didn't want them to feel that I am having pity on them. I am also among one of them and when someone shows pity on us, we feel very bad. I help these kids in whatever way I can. Seeing these kids happy makes me happy too". She added, "Being a small kid,



the way I have helped these kids, others can also help these street and working children so

these can get clothes to wear. I have started helping kids when will you?"

Working like parents at 12, she take cares of siblings



Talkative Reporter Kaseena,
Reporter Chetan

As we know that parents take care of their children well and give them love and affection for their growth but in this case we see a different situation. There are some parents who give birth to children but put their burden

on their own children only and they leave for work. When children attain the age of 12, they are given the responsibility of handling their younger siblings and taking care of the home too. That is why these children do not grow up physically.

11 years old Kaseena of Kamla Nehru Camp is also



performing such role. She is bringing up her four younger brothers and sisters. Kaseena said, "I wake up in the morning and cook food for everyone. My parents go out for work. After that I take care of my siblings. My younger brother is just 2 years old so I have to carry him on my lap all the time. I have to bathe them all

and then give them food. My whole day goes in doing all work and I do not get time to out somewhere".

She added, "And If I do not do all this work, my parents abuse me". This way when parents burden their children too much, their physical growth stops which is not good.



She lives without parents

Talkative Reporter Muskaan,
Reporter Chetan

Every child has the right to stay with their parents with all love and care. This is news of an 11 years old girl, Alka. When children are not left with any support in society they become very lonely. Alka do not have her parents. She lives with her aunt in Shaheed camp. She does not go to school, just roams here and there and plays with her friends the whole day. Alka told the reporter, "Getting educated is important. I also feel like going to school when I see other children going school but I cannot do anything". Alka does not get things of her choice. Alka may be living with her aunt but she feels lonely without her parents.

DRUNKEN FATHER PUSH HIM TO WORK

Talkative Reporter Ankit,
Reporter Poonam

This is the story of 13 years old Ankit who stays with his parents and 2 siblings. Ankit's mother remains ill and his father works as a laborer. His father does not give a single penny at home and waste it on his drinks. So, a while back Ankit left his home in Patna and came to Agra. He stays in Valmiki slum near electricity house. He has started polishing anklets here for his family's expenses



and is able to earn Rs. 2000 per month. Balaknama Reporter

Poonam went to meet Ankit after knowing his story. Ankit

told the reporter, "I work in Surya M.O.S Royal Company which provides us the powder and acid to clean the anklets. First we put acid in a cap and dip anklets in it. Then we rub these anklets by brush with our hands which gives them their shine". He added, "If I will not work then how will my family survive, how I will bring medicines for my mother. My siblings will also remain hungry". Reporter told Ankit, "1098 is toll free childline number where you can ask for any help".

STREET YOUTH UNITED AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

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compromise for sexual offer.

Male Youth-I was in Noida and was attending marriage of one of my guest. There when we all friends were sleeping, a boy came and asked if he can also sleep with us. When we allowed, he started taking sexual advantage. He opened our pants, and touched our private parts. Then we realized he is not good boy, and we changed the place.

Male Youth-I was taken away by grown up boys on station roof. They started doing sex. I tried to call people around, but no one came to rescue

Female Youth: There was a boy on bike, and he said something that after hearing, I and my friend were literally shocked. He asked "are you wearing your underwear?" Is being a girl such a shame? Anyone can ask anything?

Female Youth-One day I was going on road and saw a boy on scooter. He said he

wants to talk to me. I started moving but he was running his scooter side by side. I was so scared thinking if I disobey his offer he may harm me by acid attack or do something else.

Male Youth-There was a boy who uses to sleep over station roof, as police beats him if he sleeps on platform. Lack of shelter was main issue for his abuse. And when boys do substance abuse, they never realized pain of being sexually abused

Male Youth-Many types of abuses happen. Like forcibly asking to hold penis, hugging, make us uncomfortable, making indecent gestures, talking openly about sex, abusing by threat.

Female Youth-Sexual abuse mainly done by men, some women also do. It is done by our relatives, neighbors. It happen at work place, while we go on road, stalking, indecent talking, touching inappropriately.

Male Youth-It is a myth that sexual abuse is only by use of genital organs, it is done

many other ways.

Female Youth-Sexual abuse ruins us completely, not only us but even our future generation. Hence we want any NGO or helpline to ban this completely to save future generations.

Female Youth-Every girl should learn self defense in today's world.

Female Youth-We should organize monthly or quarterly meetings with girls and women, and must ensure men to be present in the meeting. They will get awareness in the meetings.

Male Youth-Children should not get victim of sexual abuse any more, and those doing it must correct themselves.

Male Youth-In schools, the topic on sexual abuse should be taught.

Female Youth-If we want to overcome this issue, we need to work on root cause. We need to go to all those girls who are still unaware of these issues. What we are discussing in this close room must be discussed in

public, where listeners should be boys, girls, or any one. We should agree to a point, that we all will raise voice if something happen wrong.

Female Youth-We need to be aware that sexual abuse should not be taken lightly. Hence if we change this in our mindset, it can be stopped.

Some of the solutions suggested by street and working youth were following.

Talk to those boys who have conservative mentality and say that sexual assault cannot happen with boys.

We should conduct such type of meetings with Police also so that they know that boys also face sexual assault and they should file such cases.

There should be counseling centres for these people who do sexual assault to keep them busy and to educate them about the pain suffered by sexual assault victims.

All girls should undergo self defense classes to protect themselves.

We should make a system where girls do not remain silent and raise their voice against such acts.

Communication networking should be made strong.

Children should fight together against sexual violence.

We should break the silence which makes us weak and should raise our voice.

Lot of discussion is important.

We have taken part in such a meeting for the first time. We can do such meetings on a larger scale in front of everyone so that those boys who harass us should know that we will not remain silent now.

We should help those who need help.

We can write about our stories so that people would know about our struggles.

We have to bring collective awareness to tell people that they are not alone; there are many people with us who will help us collectively.

Girls Courage makes Bholu happy

Talkative Reporter Bholu,
Reporter Jyoti

Most of the time parents force their children to work. They send their children to work due to the pressure of their own bad habits as if children are their source of income. Some parents consume alcohol and for that they need money so they send their child to pick rags so that they get money to buy alcohol.

This is also a story of such a kid. 12 years old Bholu stays with his parents under Sarai Kale Khan flyover and his father sends him to pick up rags. His mother also picks up rags. Bholu's father is alcoholic so he does not let him study and forcefully send him to pick



rags asking him to get money for him so that he is able to buy his alcohol. Bholu said, "I have

to pick rags and beg the whole day to get money for my father and he spends all my earned money on his alcohol due to which at times my siblings also do not get any food to eat at night. He does not let any of my brother sister study".

Jyoti, National Secretary of Badhte Kadam met his father and said, "Why do you not send your children to study? If you would not send your children to study, I will call childline and will get you arrested for this". Hearing this Bholu's father got scared and said, "I will send my children to centre everyday to study and when they will get admission in a school, I will send them to school also". Bholu became very happy hearing this.

GIRL REACHED HOME SAFELY WITH HELP OF BALAKNAMA REPORTER

Talkative Reporter Poonam,
Reporter Jyoti

Reporter Jyoti conducted support group meeting with children of Saansi camp where 12 years old Poonam, Badhte Kadam member also Balaknama's talkative reporter participated in the meeting. Poonam told Jyoti, "Many girls came to our place at the end of Navratra festival when girls are called to be worshipped. Amongst them I saw a girl roaming around here and there whose name was Pooja. I went to speak to her. Pooja said, "I came here along with other girls to receive Prasad but I am lost now. I do not know how to go back to my home and started crying". Poonam said, "Try remembering the direction



from where you came. I will try to drop you at your home. After sometime she could remember that she stays near Badarpur Border. She was not able to tell anything more. She was so scared that she kept saying that

I came with my friend and got separated by mistake. Please help me".

Poonam said, "I started searching for her home towards Badarpur. When I found Pooja's home, I saw her mother crying in front of her home. The moment she saw Pooja, she came running, hugged her and asked where she was. Then Poonam said to Pooja's mother, "You should not send your daughter alone anywhere. What could have happened if she was not found? What would have you done? Already fast moving trains pass through Saansi camp, if she would have met with an accident then? Pooja's mother said to Poonam, "Thank you dear that you saved my daughter. I will not send my daughter alone anywhere".

Chikungunya their own ways

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we sleep in very filthy area which stinks very badly so we are saved from these diseases".

16 years old Sunil who stays under flyover said, "We apply mobil oil at night while sleeping to keep away the mosquitoes from them. Children who do not apply mobil oil also get saved from mosquitoes as they sleep under flyover where vehicles pass at high speeds. The high volume of air created by them and the fumes released from these vehicles kill the mosquitoes. That is why we are saved from vector borne diseases".

He added, "But children who stay in colonies and work there are unsafe from these diseases. M.C.D has also not paid heed to this problem this



time.

Earlier medicines to ward off mosquitoes were used to be released in the surroundings but nothing of this sort happened this time due to which people are

falling prey to these diseases. These diseases would not have taken a face of epidemic if the authorities would have taken care of this problem earlier only and those medicines would have been released".

CHILDREN PUSHED TO DRUGS DUE TO PARENTS' NEGLIGENCE

Reporter Jyoti

Children get into bad habits due to parents' negligence at times. Similar thing happened with 12 years old Hakeem who used to study in class 6th in a Government school but due to parents' ill behavior towards him compelled him to go to station and pick rags. Slowly and gradually he went into substance abuse while staying at railway station. When Balaknama Reporter got to know about Hakeem from a kid, she went to talk to him. She asked Hakeem, "Why have you left your school and have started taking drugs also?" Hakeem replied with tears in his eyes, "My parents does not give me any money to buy pencils and copies for school so what do I do?? So I decided to move to station to pick bottles and started selling them at junk shop to earn some money. I get good food also from trains".

He added, "The only sad thing is that the elder boys staying here at railway station force us to consume drugs and



if somebody refuses to take drugs they beat them and even sexually abuse them whether it's a girl or a boy. Police also harass us". Reporter Jyoti told Hakeem, "You may be getting good food here or some money also for your needs but children here get into drug addiction so it's better if you go to school and if there is any problem, I will talk to your parents". Hakeem told Jyoti, "I promise that I will not go to station to pick rags rather I will go back to school to study".

**CHILDREN'S HELP
LINE NUMBERS**

CONTACT THESE TOLL FREE NUMBERS IF
YOU FACE ANY PROBLEM.

Child line Number

1098

Police Helpline Number

100

HATS OFF TO CHANDAN'S BRAVE EFFORTS

Reporter Shambhu

12 years old Chandan stays with his parents in Choona Bhatti of West Delhi. His mother works in others' homes for handling house expenses. She is able to earn Rs. 3000 per month from this. Chandan used to study in class 6th in government school and used to come first in his class. He was always ahead of everyone and helped other kids too. Once a child was playing on swings in the park and suddenly fell down from the swing. Seeing this Chandan ran towards him and saw that he was badly hurt. Chandan immediately took him to the hospital where doctors bandaged him and gave him tetanus injection along with some medicines.

Chandan said, "When I used to go to school, I used to help children but now I don't go to my school because when I went to village for last rites of my father, my name was cut from school. Since then I have not been able to go to school. Then after some days I came back to Delhi with my maternal uncle and aunt. I started picking up rags to earn something". He added, "When I met CHETNA's worker and told them that I wanted to go to school so they promised that they will get me re-admitted in school. Now I can think of going to school again. I am happy that I am getting an opportunity to study again after getting associated with Badhte Kadam federation. Now I will be able to study along with my work".

STREET GIRLS: MOST VULNERABLE TO SEXUAL ABUSE

Balakanama Bureau

14 to 18 years old girls staying at Old Delhi Railway Station are getting trapped in dangerous drug addiction. Balakanama reporter spoke to 20 girls who are involved in drug abuse and consume some dangerous drugs. 17 years old Anuradha (name changed) said, "We consume drugs like hashish and smack. We get these opiates from a person in Chandni Chowk. The person who sells these dangerous drugs has a very different appearance. Only we know this guy and we pay Rs.300-Rs.400 for a small quantity of hashish and smack. After buying these drugs, we sit at one place and smell it".

16 years old Kanchan (name changed) said, "We are around 20-30 girls who consume drugs". Reporter asked, "Why do you consume drugs?" She said, "After running away from our homes somehow we start living at railway stations. We learn consuming drugs from the girls who are already into it. Unintentionally also if we get to consume these drugs, we get badly addicted to them and we go to any extent to get these drugs. We have become so addicted to these drugs that we consume smack and hashish even when we are hungry".

She added, "We fall victims to various types of exploitation because of this drug abuse. Older boys who stay at railway stations lure us and make us consume drugs. Then they take us to cinema halls and sexually exploit us there. We do not even remain in condition

of stopping them after intoxication. On regaining our consciousness we realize what happened with us. These boys sexually exploit other girls also at night when they are sleeping. These activities are increasing more and more and these girls become more vulnerable after consumption of drugs".

Reporter tried explaining these girls and said, "Why do not you leave drugs?" 15 years Sapna said, "We try a lot but we are not able to leave drugs. Our head pains a lot if we do not consume drugs. If we don't eat for one day that will work for us but if we do not get drugs for a single day we feel as if we will die. So we go to any extent to get drugs. We have tried a lot to come out of this trap but we are unable to do so".



Balakanama Bureau

In the name of good education, 35 small children were lured but later made to sell things at Delhi's traffic lights. Balakanama Reporter spoke to the children working at Traffic lights.

Reporter asked those children, "Why do you work on traffic lights?" 16 years old Manish (name changed) said, "We do not work out of our own wish. We have an owner in Bihar who lured our parents by saying that he will make us study in Delhi and will give us money also".

15 years old Pawan (name changed) said, "Bhaiya, our families are very poor and do not have much knowledge so

INNOCENT CHILDREN LURED IN NAME OF EDUCATION

our parents came in his trap and sent us to Delhi with him. We are kept in Kotla right now where children make their own food and from 6 in the morning to 10 in the night they go to sell things at different traffic lights.

Their owner sends these children to different traffic light with full planning. We are divided in various groups and each group is given one traffic light to

sell various products like dusters for cleaning cars, mobile chargers, toys etc."

Rahul (name chaged) added, "We have to carry the selling material weighing 8-9kgs for selling at different traffic lights. We get tired carrying all the material.

The moment a car stops at traffic light, children run towards it to sell their material. All products have

different costs. These way children sell their material".

15 years old Amar (name changed) said, "There are days when Police beat us and do not let us sell our material on traffic lights, that day our owner beat us and abuse us for not able to sell the material. Then we have to do over time to earn money so that we can send money to our families each month".

"STREET CHILDREN DO NOT BECOME RAG PICKERS TO FUND THEIR PORN ADDICTION"

Talkative Reporter Rahul,
Reporter Shambhu

There was news recently in a popular daily English newspaper that children staying in Sarai Kale Khan do rag picking to fund their porn addiction. Refuting these allegations, members of Badhte Kadam spoke to rag picking children on this issue.

Jyoti, National Secretary said in children's interest, "I also used to pick rags earlier but I dint even know that time what a porn film was. We never had information of our surroundings". 14 years old Rahul said, "We children work to feed ourselves. We never have any such thought in mind which can land us in trouble. We work really hard to make arrangement for our food. This is really wrong to say that we pick rags to watch porn movies".



He added, "Our life would be badly affected due to such news. We will be more prone to various types of exploitation now as we go far off places to pick up rags amongst different

people. We are already looked down upon by people and after such news they would be sure that we do rag picking to watch porn movies. This will have worse effect on our

lives. Now on seeing us people would think that we are doing this work for funding our porn addiction and they would try to take our advantage. People will not understand our helplessness rather those who are involved in such acts would approach us and say, "Leave rag picking. We will show you the porn movies". We are now always under the fear of getting sexually abused. Girls who go for rag picking will receive abusive remarks by these people and will become victims of sexual abuse. Every person will now consider us bad and will think that we work for watching porn movies. The news has created our wrong image in

people's eyes. This is bad and we are highly disappointed by such news".

15 years old Raja who stays in a night shelter says, "We can still say that older boys are involved in such bad habits but we cannot say that they also pick rags to watch such stuff rather they fall prey to such things under influence of wrong people who are already involved in watching porn videos". He added, "If you really want to know why we have to pick rags then work then find out at ground level. Then only you will realize the reality that we work to feed ourselves and not to watch such videos". Children who pickup rags are really hurt the way the news has been produced in front of people and they completely refute all allegations and disagree with it.

Delhi Government can do stray dog's census, then why leave us?

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for census of street and working children”.

“You will be shocked to know that members of Badhte Kadam Federation conducted a sample survey on 4th November, 2015 to know the count of street and working children in Delhi”. During the survey, 1320 children came in counting, out of which we could meet 618 personally (they got wrong slip marked) and 483 children refused to talk. 219 were found during observation visit whose faces kept changing as they keep shifting from one place to other for work.

Out of total 618 children, 220 girls and 398 boys are living on streets in which 99 children are of age group of 0 to 5 years, 241 children are of age group 5

to 10 years, 203 children are of 10 to 15 years and 73 children are of age group of 15 to 18 years. Majority of children are of the age group of 6 to 15 years.

Out of the children who are victims of Child Labor, 155 children are rag pickers, 64 children begs, 64 children roam around here and there, 52 children work in restaurants and Hotels. Apart from this 35 children work in Big bungalows, 15 children sell flowers, 13 children balloons, 7 children peanuts, 3 children sell clothes, etc.

342 children talked about the duration of their work in which 50% children work for around 5 to 9 hours, 23% work around 9 to 15 hours.

Balaknama urgently appeal Delhi Government to initiate the census of street children in

Civic body conducts dog census in South Delhi

POPULATION CONTROL SDMC has given the work to Human Society International India which will finish the task in two months



the city.

What street children says on this?

15 years old Javed said, “It is good that authorities are conducted dog's census to know about their population but what about us? We are also living among them only. The way these voiceless cannot express

their pain, we also cannot tell our pain to anyone. We want our census to be done so that we also get some identity”.

16 years old Nagma said, “Many a times dog bite people roaming here and there so it is good that after conducting their census they will be put in a safe place and they will

not harm anyone. We want that authorities should think about us also and our census should be conducted. May be it will help in stopping child labor, count of those children can be done who are pushed into trafficking, we can know how many children are put to different work”.

14 years old Rahul said, “This is good that dogs should be protected so that public does not harm them but what about the oppression faced by the girls and boys on streets?”

15 years old Aakash said, “Authorities have not conducted any census of street and working children to know their population, to know how we are surviving. Our authorities should talk to us and should take care of our needs also”.

BALAKNAMA- MOMENTS OF COURAGE AND GLORY

SHARING SOME OF THE PICTURES RELATED TO THESE MOMENTS WITH YOU



This edition is for limited distribution. All pictures are published in this edition after children's their approval.

Balaknama is written originally in Hindi by children reporters. This is translated version of Hindi and translation assistance is taken from adults ensuring the original feel intact. Translated by Richa Somvanshi.