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# BALAKNAMA

UNIQUE NEWSPAPER FOR AND BY STREET CONNECTED 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.

## MENSTRUATION: A CURSE FOR STREET AND WORKING GIRLS; NEEDS INTERVENTION

Talkative reporter Vanshika and reporter Kishan

Religion is the first thing which is separating our diversified people. Girls are still discriminated on their monthly menstruation. There are people who still don't want to talk on this topic and girls are fighting with so many problems due to unawareness of proper menstruation. Though they have little knowledge about it but not properly and small knowledge is dangerous. In order to know about it's awareness, our reporters decided to talk about it to the street and working girls only. They interacted with some girls who are rag pickers, house helpers and beggars. A workshop was organized at their place in which almost 200 girls of age 9 to 18 years participated. The topics covered by our reporters in the workshop were:

- What are the problems girls go through during the menstruation time? Are there any remedies for it?
- How is their family member's behavior towards them when they are menstruating?
- What do they use? If napkin then who buys it for them and at how much cost?
- How many times do they need to use washroom in a single day? Where do they throw their used belongings? Are they reusable?
- How many days do they bleed for? What is the number



of days they don't bleed?

- Have they ever taken doctor's suggestion for their menstruation?
  - What are the different names for it? Do you feel unsafe at this time of the month?
- Covering all the topics, girls said, “Menstruation occurs because it is disorder which goes out of our body in form of blood every month.” Few said that it is the diseased blood of our body which needs to be excreted out. A 10 years old girl said, “We got monthly periods because it is a type of curse. I have been told by my mother that we get this due to our sins.” Another 12 years girl said, “When I got my periods for the first time, I have been told that this is the worst thing we can talk about and we should not talk on this topic to anybody. It is disrespectful for our parents.” Telling about the different name given by them, a 14 years old girl said, “When my

period's dates are nearby we used to call it like, 'Khatre ki ghnati, lal mehman aa gaye, red light, mahavari and periods. We use these names so that other people may not know about our dates. We have been told not to enter the kitchen, other's homes, temples, mosques and also not to touch the eatables. If somebody gets to know about them, they will make fun of our parents.

Telling about the usage, girls said that they have to get ready for their menstruation cycle for almost 3 to 4 days before only. They said, “We collect our old clothes which are no more of our use. We use them during our monthly cycle and throw them after use. Some girls don't have old clothes so they wash the same cloth again and again and use it each and every month.” Some girls said, “We use napkins which we ourselves have to buy from our nearby medical stores. We buy

it in Rs 50 to Rs 80.”

When our reporter asked the girls who beg, rag pick and beg, they got to know a different problem which they have to face during the menstruation. They said, “We don't know when and which month will we get our periods.” During this workshop our reporters summarized that at present girls are getting their periods at the age of 9 or 10 only. These young girls don't even know about it due to which they stain their clothes. Travelers passing by use filthy words by looking at them like this. They don't have clothes at their work place so they can't use anything. When they reach home during night, then they get to know about it. After knowing they don't leave their homes due to which their earning is badly affected. Their family's condition is also affected. Girls living in the market or door houses, said, “We buy

napkins from our earning but sadly we have use it in open areas only as we are not allowed to use public toilets. The guard says that we don't clean the washrooms after use. We need to use washroom at least 6 times a day during our menstruation for which we have to pay Rs 30 to the guard.” During the workshop our reporters summarized that the families with 5 to 6 girl child must have to carry an amount of Rs 500 per month for public washroom only. Sadly when they don't get to use public washrooms, they had to throw their napkins in the open areas only. Telling more, a 16 years old girl said, “We use mud stove's ash with clothes for making the napkins for our usage. At times, we use wooden dust too.” Girls selling flowers said that they use flowers in their monthly cycle.

After knowing everything and summarizing, the head of the CHETNA organization, Mr. Sanjay Gupta decided to participate in the India Habitat Centre, MHM India Submit meeting. All our reporters also participated in this meeting. In this meeting, topics like girl's health and menstruation were kept forward. On which different organizations came up with the problems girls are facing. Our head, Mr. Sanjay Gupta also shared his thoughts on which other organizations also interacted and tried to find

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## WATER SHORTAGE AFFECTING CHILDREN'S HEALTHY LIFE

Reporter Shambhu

This news belongs to a slum of Noidaa sector- 37 where children and their families have to live in shortage of each and everything. Everything can be managed at a time but shortage of drinking and clean water can't be managed. Let us tell you properly. On interaction with the children of this slum, we got to know that there are lots of buildings



near their slum area. The workers stay in the constructed building for long time with their families until the work is completed. Problem is that the water which these workers use for washing purposes and bathing, is drained out of the drain system in which slum children take bath and use for their regular needs. Sadly, there is no water facility near this slum. Though there is a temple near them but

whenever the children go there for filling water tanks or buckets, people scold and beat them. They hardly manage to collect water for drinking purposes but use this dirty water for their regular needs. Children are tired of using this dirty water as this is affecting their health and growth that's why they appealed to water board for proper water facility in their slum so that they can get rid of this problem.

## EDITORIAL

Greetings!

**Greetings!! Balaknama is one of the unique newspaper of street and working children. We are blessed to deliver the 82nd edition of the newspaper to you. Through the medium of the news and stories we have printed in our newsletter, we want the society to know about the present situation of our financially weak society. They are being tortured and hurt. We are sad to inform you that our street and working children are begging at red lights, starving and sleeping without any shelter. Not only this, but girls are fighting for their safety and well-being. There are children who are willing to go to school but are not able to. Facing such problems, street and working children want that these all things should be not present in our country. As soon as we all get free from these things, we can proudly say that now we are safe in our country. We will be totally free that day. Please be in touch like this with us and street and working children.**

Thank you,  
Balaknama Team

# WILL THE PARENTS' THINKING EVER CHANGE?

Reporter Deepak

Our Balaknama reporters organized a meeting with the street and working children of West Delhi in which children participated with huge motivation and courage. Children shared their day-to-day problem which they have to deal with. Telling about the problems, children told about a slum where girls are being doubted for their character due to which girls are not able to interact with boys properly. They are being afraid and ashamed of being doubted. This is due to their parent's old thinking. They think that if a girl is interacting or playing with a boy then she might be

in another kind of relationship with him. For them there is no friendship between a boy and a girl, there only can be a relationship. Girls talking about themselves, said, "Why does our parents thinking is like this? Why they can't allow us to play with each and every one? Our government



says that girls and boys are equal. Being a child, we have equal rights, then why does our society is not treating us equally? Why they only doubt us? Why not boys are being doubted for their character?" A girl living in the slum said, "If we talk to any boy, our parents beat us. Not only this, they fix our marriage with them. They don't care about our age. We are very tensed and irritated due to this problem. We want that our parents thinking should be changed for us. They should not judge us for interacting to any boy. We will only be able to achieve something in our life if our parent's thinking is changed."

## PARENTS FORCE CHILDREN INTO CHILD LABOUR

Reporter Poonam

We are getting serious shocking news from 'The City of Taj'- Agra. Children are getting indulged into child laboring more and more. The number of children making marble statues was around 10 and few days later it increased to 20. At present, there are almost 20- 25 new children who are indulged in the same work. Though the reporter was shocked to see the number of children getting indulged into child laboring but the more shocking thing is why each and every children is coming there for work? After interacting with the children, our reporter summarized that they are there due to their parent's old thinking and less awareness. Their parents think that their

future will be more bright and easier if they will learn to make marble statues and patterns. In the age of learning and playing the kids have been forced to work. There are children outside this area who can't even hold one small piece of marble and then there are these working children who are working on it. Sharing about their experiences, they said, "During our work, when we are trying to give shape to the marble, the dust enters our mouth, eyes and nose which cause numerous health issues for us. The metal machine we use for our work is also very heavy in weight due to which we always fear of getting hurt. We may cut our hands or other body parts if the machine falls off mistakenly. We know this situation as it occurs often



here with the children who are new here." Listening to them, you must be thinking that they must get some huge amount for their work but sadly NO. When our reporter asked them about their payment,

they replied, "We hardly get to earn Rs 2000. When we properly learn this work, our owner will increase our salary. Sadly, instead of teaching us, our owner uses us for his other works too. Suppose there is

a heavy marble on which we have to work, our owner tells us to carry it. When we are unable to handle it, he screams on us. We children don't have any other option than listening to his scolding." Telling about their relationship with their parents, they said, "We don't even expect any type of care and help from our parent's side as according to them if we won't learn this work then we have to cry and beg for whole life. When we share about our owner's behavior they say that it's his work and we should adjust ourselves. They think that if we will learn this then we may get to work in big companies in future after which we don't have to wander here and there. Listening to this, we forcefully have to work."

## MENSTRUATION: A CURSE FOR STREET AND WORKING GIRLS; NEEDS TO BE CHANGED

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out the way to get rid of these problems.

### Suggestions of Obstetric Gynecologist

Balaknama reporter Shanno met Obstetric gynecologist, Dr. Shruti Agarwal. She talked on different topics like:

- Why girls of young age of 9 to 10 years are going through menstruation?
- When periods are painful what should girls do?

Dr. Shruti telling about the different reasons said, "In girls of age 10 to 15, the eggs are being released in the uterus through fallopian tube. The lining of the eggs and the blood is far thick than the normal blood. It is because it helps in the development of the fertilized egg. When the eggs are not fertilized by the

male sperm they are secreted out in the form of blood from the girl's body. There are names for this like Mahavari, monthly cycle, rajodharam and periods. This change occurs in each and every girl's body. This is normal procedure for monthly menstruation. Some girls may feel lower abdomen pain and cramps. At time girls may feel Pre-Menstrual Cramps, PMCs. This blood ends flowing as soon as the eggs are fully secreted out of the body. I would suggest that girls taking medicine during the menstruation cycle should not take any medicine with doctor's suggestion. If the pain is intolerable, one should visit the doctor." Another things she informed us is, "Minimum age of menstruation is 10 years. If any girl is getting her periods before that, than she should visit a doctor for routine

checkup. Another thing is if girls or women are getting their monthly period on the gap of 28 to 30 days then it is normal but if their dates are changing may be increasing or decreasing then also it is improper and they need to visit a doctor soon." Dr. Shruti Agarwal helped us to cover different topics and gave us the right and full knowledge about menstruation cycle. If any girl or women wants to know more or visit the doctor, she can contact her without any hesitation.

### Shelterless children being tortured

This news belongs to Sarfabad and Amrapaali. Many families were happily living there from past 10 years but due recently they received a notice regarding leaving that place with the information that

they have been occupied this place illegally. They have received the notice in which this is written that the 50m long belt of sector no 117, 109, 117, 118, 116 and 732 of Khasra, Jahidabad has been illegally occupied by them. Government has to take legal actions against them if they will not leave this place soon. Also, they will be charged under the section-3 and a FIR will also be written. After reading this notice, parents were in tension thinking about their families. The nearby slum people told them not to worry as they have been received such notices many times before also but nothing has been done till date. Listening to them, parents were out of tension and slept well in the night. But they didn't know that this time government is serious and actions will be taken against

them. On the next morning, they woke due to the noise of heavy C.B vehicles and policemen. There were many government workers too, who started breaking up the slum without thinking about the consequences poor people has to face off. Children sharing their feelings said, "There was lot of our belonging which was damaged. Our parents requested a lot but they didn't allow them to take our things. At present, we don't have any shelter to stay due to which we have to stay at footpaths. Not only this but our parents way of income also stopped. That's why we request government to inform us at least one month before any action to leave any place so that e poor people can manage to shift from one place to another and can hold our belongings so that we don't have to suffer in future."

# STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN APPEAL FOR THEIR FREEDOM

Talkative reporter Nandini, Toheed and reporter Shambhu, Deepak, Jyoti, Poonam and Kishan

Our reporters have brought something different and unique this time. They have visited different places like South Delhi, East Delhi, West Delhi, Agra, Gurugram, Noida and Lucknow and found the current situation of the street and working children of our country. You people must get to see them on your daily pathways near red lights, selling or begging. Have you ever thought that how much did they have to face in their daily life for their survival? When our reporter interacted with them and asked about the problems they have to go through in their day-to-day life, they replied, "We have to stand under the scorching sunshine for hours in order to sell our items. The money we earn is then used for fulfilling our sibling's stomach." Telling more, the girls said, "We work under compulsions as house helper but people

try to take advantage of us. We have been harassed many times." Sharing their stories and problems many children interacted with our reporters.

## Present condition of street and working children

Working as a beggar at railway stations, doing the work of rag pickers, selling things at red lights, tolerating the torture of local public and policemen, dressing like transgender, working as house helpers, being harassed, showing games inside the trains, getting indulged into the dark world of intoxicants, selling roses near metro stations, running away from home, being shelter less, working for their survival, wandering in search of clean water to drink, tolerating the torture of drunk men of the slum, getting indulged into gambling, pasting stones inside the homes for full day on the fabrics, getting



married at a very young age, looking after their siblings for whole day, working as rag pickers inside the buses, showing god's statues for begging, spending summers without electricity, cleaning the jungle, defecating in open areas and jungles full of poisonous insects and snakes, giving money for safety to neighbours, girls sleeping on the footpaths, working as laborers, wandering here and there for selling things, begging for food and in fact searching for food inside the dustbins. These are the



few things which street and working children has to face in their day-to-day life. In order to get rid of these problems, children have given few suggestions for future development.

## Suggestions for better future

There is a lot of garbage and pollution in our India hence we want that India should be clean and green in the upcoming year. Each and every child should get the chance to go to school so that we can make a violence free country. In order

to get a better environment, trees should not be cut down. People should plant more trees and plants. Children like us should be given proper children rights with all the safety and facilities. Street and working children should be given the facility the shelter and food. No child should sleep on footpath in the upcoming years. Our government should work more for our country's development and support it's youth. Nobody should wander in search of drinking water. Our country has celebrated 73rd years of freedom but our citizens are still not free. The country will be fully declared as independent when each and every citizen will be safe and free from such problems, including the street and working children too. The day when each and every child will go to school instead of working at hotels, dhabas, shops, buildings or anywhere else, that day our country will be properly independent.

## SHOPKEEPERS AND CO-WORKERS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GIRLS' COMPULSIONS



Reporter Jyoti

Our reporters have visited some areas of South Delhi to know the condition of street and working children. According to a survey we did, there are almost 20 - 25 girls from Nizamuddin dargah, Ali Gaon and Nehru Nagar, who are involved in child laboring. They do cleaning of the big shops and malls for which they earn Rs 800 from

single shop per month that's why they have to work in almost 2 to 3 shops. Telling about their compulsions and problems, girls said, "From our experience we can say that there are many girls who are getting harassed by their co-workers, boss or guards. There are shops where we are not treated properly. During the morning shift i.e. 8 am to 9 am., owner and guards are mostly inside the shops only and they

use offensive words for us which we don't like. At times there are empty cartoons left inside the shops. When we ask the owner or workers for taking those empty cartoons with us to sell them at pawn shops to earn some money, that time also their behavior is very rude and filthy towards us. Instead of replying us in yes or no they tell us to go with them for one night stand. We girls are really fed up of such things." Sharing their compulsions, they further added, "We have to do this work under compulsion. We do this work so that our family members don't have to starve, so that we can fill their basic regular needs and most importantly for our siblings who are studying. We only want that such thing should be stopped. We are also humans. At least we are working and earning. They should pay us for our work rather than those rude and obscene behaviors.



## "INNOCENT CHILDREN EXPLOITED FOR WORK"

Reporter Kishan

During a visit, our reporter saw two children working inside a hotel. When our reporter tried to interact with them, they ignored him and ran away. After few regular visits, they finally interacted with him. Telling about themselves, they said, "We belong to Sorakha village. Due to poor financial conditions

our parents forced us to work here. We both stay here and our family stays in the village only. During our starting days of work, we used to get tired soon and after working for full day our body used to pain a lot. Due to this, I used to get scolding from our owner. Few days later, he called another boy from our village and now we both do the work together. Though I still have to work a lot but our work is partially shared." Telling about their salary and disappointment, the children further added, "Even after working for full day from 9 am to 11 pm we are not getting paid for our work. We hardly get to earn 3000 Rs per month that too not on time for which we have to beg to our owner." Sharing about the bad experience and rude behavior of their owner, they further said, "The owner of the hotel uses children like us for his work as he has to pay less to the children and we can't even argue or fight with him. He knows very well that managing a staff with more number of people and elder person would be much tougher than now."

## SALUTE TO THESE COURAGEOUS GIRLS

Reporter Deepak

This story belongs to the street and working children of East Delhi who work for their survival, so that they can fulfill their basic needs. According to information, we got to know that these children don't have any playground where they can enjoy their childhood that's why they have to wander here and there to spend some hours outside the homes. Though they have a park near hem but whenever children go there to play, there is a faggot person who kidnaps young



innocent girls and shows them obscene videos. Girls were very unhappy and irritated because of him. Instead of getting afraid and sitting at homes, our young girls

decided to fight against him, for their freedom. They knew that, that person always find young and alone girls to harass them. In order to fight against him and save themselves,

they decided to always be in a group of 4 to 5 girls. Not only they stayed in a group but they also fought against him. After some fights, they won and the person never again tried to harass them. After seeing each and everything, girls wished for separate parks for them to play. They wished for it so that they can also enjoy their childhood like any other kid. They said, "We know that this is not at all easy but somewhere you all know that how badly we girls are being harassed. We only want our safety nothing else."

# LANDLORD READY TO TAKE LIFE OF CHILDREN

Reporter Poonam

According to information there is a slum in Agra where people are being forced to steal electricity. When our reporter visited the slum she got to know that there are more than 400 to 500 homes in the slum from which mostly have their own houses and rest are paying to their landlords for the rent. When our reporter tried to

interact with the parents, they denied saying even a single word. Then she went to meet children, they also did the same thing. Then she told them about herself and made them understand that she is there for helping them. Then few children came in front and said, "There is no work at this place. Our parents earn very hardly that too only for our survival. Most of us live on rent and pay



Rs 3000 per month. If we have to pay extra money for light then it will be very difficult for us to live here. For one time we may pay the bill too but our landlord asks for more money. Government give electricity 4 Rs per unit but asks us Rs 8 for the same due to which we are forced to steal electricity. We, children have to pay for it. While stealing the electricity, our parents join a wire to the

boxes which are at ground in our slum. Though they tightly fix the wires but there are few wires which may not have tightly fitted due to this we children has to live in fear of getting shocked. That's why we children want that landlord should not take advantage of our compulsion. He should not ask for more money from us then only we will get rid of this problem."

## NO PUBLIC TOILET USAGE; PEOPLE STILL DEFECATE IN JUNGLE



Talkative reporter Tabassum and reporter Shambhu, Noida

The name of the slum of this news has been kept suspicious for the safety reasons of the people. It is there from almost 7 to 8 years still there was no public toilet in the slum due to

which people used to defecate in open areas. Happily, our government has provided them the facility of toilet but sadly people of the slum are still going to the jungle and open areas for defecating. In order to know more, our reporter visited the slum, during which we got to know that there are

total 6 washrooms in the slum – 2 for males, 2 for females and 1-1 for handicapped male and female. But shockingly and sadly, males are not following the rules there. They use female washrooms and don't even flush them after use due to which females and children are facing problems. Some females said, "Our government has provided us the facility of washrooms after so many years but we are not able to use them." On interacting with children, they said, "There is a care taker for the washroom which has been assigned the work by the government only. He also does not say anything to the males breaking the rules. According to us, female and children toilets should be in other direction so that we don't have to defecate in open environment."

## ARE YOU ANSWERABLE TO THEM?

Reporter Poonam

According to recent information we got to know that there is no facility of washrooms in the slum areas of Agra due to which families living there are facing too many problems. Female, specially, are facing more problems than the males. People go to jungle in order to defecate. After investigating for some time, we further got to know that they are facing this problem from past many years. Children fear from going to the jungle during the night time in fact during the day time they are afraid of snakes and poisonous insects. Sharing about their experience, children said, "We have to face many problems in our day-to-day life and we are used to it now but this is the only problem which we will never get used to. There are lots of insects and snakes which we have seen. Not only the insects or animals, but humans too are the reasons for our problem. There are few male who drunk and stay inside the jungle between the bushes to harass the girls or women who there to defecate." In order to clarify the above statement, our reporters interacted with the girls and asked, "What are the problems you people has to face when you go to the jungle? Do people harass you?" The girls replied, "Yes, it is true



that there are drunken men who wander there and harass us. We don't like their behavior. They use filthy words for us due to all such things we fear while going to defecate. We always live in a fear of getting raped or badly harassed." Sharing about their views, they further added, "Due to all such things, we only want that government should provide us the facility of public toilet in our slum. We know that it is not that easy but it is not impossible though. Many people came here to us and make fake promises to build washrooms but till date no construction has been started. Though we want to express our feelings and share everything but we are not able to share each and every problem which we used to face due to this unavailability of toilets. Do we girls of slum areas don't have the right to live a safe life? Are we different from other girls?"

## CHILDREN AFRAID OF STRAY DOGS APPEALED FOR SAFETY TO NOIDA AUTHORITY



Talkative reporter Bharti and reporter Shambhu, Noida

During a visit in Noida, children said, "Our school is far from our home due to which we have to cross ring roads, highways and busy roads. Traffic can be stopped but stray dogs are the most irritating and intolerable hurdle of our way. At times when children pass by the stray dogs they run behind them to bite them. There are lots of children whom they have bitten. Telling more, children said, "Dogs bark on them whenever they

step out of the home for taking groceries or for playing. Due to these stray dogs we have to take long routes to school and back. Not only this at times, we had to take help from our parents and friends. Even after so many things, we are not able to handle them." After listening to them, one of the social worker, Iram, came in front and interacted with them. When she got to know the whole story, she mailed the Noida Authority and waited for a positive response. Then also nothing happened. Children are getting afraid due to dogs. Children want

that Noida Authority workers should do something for them so that they don't have to live their childhood in fear and can easily go to the school.

## WILL POLICE BE THERE FRIEND IN THIS PATH?

Talkative reporter Priyanka and reporter Poonam

Our reporter organized a group meeting with the children living in Agra during which we got to know that most of the families do the work of making hunters. They said, "Our parents work really hard for earning money. From that money they bring the material for making hunters and again work hard for making it. This hunter is the only way of earning for our family. Before, it was too good but at present this business is in loss." Telling more, they said, "We used to sell hunters near the 'Taj Mahal' as the number of buyers is much more there. But sadly, policemen are now behaving rudely with us and are not allowing us to sell in that



area. They were not like this before. Not only is the hunter but the raw material which our parents bring from the market also getting wasted." Sharing their feelings, they further added, "We have to feel lot of pain and pinches of the pins while making one single piece of hunter but nobody will ever

understand this. Even after all this, we are not losing our hopes because we know that it's the only way of earning and surviving for our family. It's our humble request to all of you and policemen too that if you are not buying hunters from us that's fine but please don't behave rudely with us."

# WILL THEY EVER FLY HIGH?

**Talkative reporter Imran and reporter Shambhu, Noida**

During a group meeting in Noida sector-71, our reporter got to know about their problems. Though each and every child is facing different problem but one child from them informed something very shocking. This news belongs to a 12 years old boy, Imran who lives in Noida sector-71 in a slum with his family. Being financially weak, he studies in a social service center not only this but he is the brightest student from his slum. Telling about himself, he

said, "There is a drain near our slum from past many years. When our landlord started the work of car washing this drain was not this big and deep but at present there is a lot of garbage and plastic inside it which is blocking the proper flow of drainage. Due to which when J.C.B came to clean it, the size of the drain also increased. The size was increased thinking that it may help the water in proper flow but sadly, it is becoming the reason for parent's tension. There is no proper electricity facility in our slum, even if the light come the voltage is



so low that the fan does not work properly. In order to fight the summer, we have to come out of our homes during

the night time too. There is a tree on the bank of that drain; people prefer to go there as the air flows well at that position."

Children are not in favor of this drain as they are facing problems due to it. Telling about the accident, Imran further added, "Few days back I fell inside that drain. It is so deep that I was unable to come outside it on my own. As it is so dirty, the garbage and the dirty water went inside my mouth when I was trying to rescue myself. Somehow I was saved. But till date my health is not good. I had to vomit for many hours. We children want that this drain should be covered so that no such accidents would happen in future with any other child."



## CHILDREN SCREAMING TO GET RID OF THEIR PROBLEMS

**Talkative reporter Priyanka and reporter Shambhu**

There is a small pond between the 300 houses in the slum of Gurugram. People use this slum for their bathing purposes and washing their clothes. There are some toilets near it too. Sadly, when people use the pond water for any purpose, the water starts flowing towards their slum due to which everything gets dirtier and wet. During the investigation we found that the pond is at the higher region of the land as compared to the slum that's why water is flowing back towards the slum. This dirty water does not only cause drain blockage but also is providing shelter to different flies and insects. Due to all these things, children and their parents are much tensed.

It is affecting their lifestyle and health too. Telling more, the children said, "At times when the people uses flush in the toilet near the pond, the dirty water gets mixed with the pond water and flows in the slum which is very stinky. Due to this we are not able to breathe properly. In order to get rid of this problem, our parents made a way for passing of this dirty water using some plastics so that the dirt does not gets collected on single place. This way is useful for normal days but in rainy season, we again have to face the same problem due to heavy flow of water. That's why we children want that either the pond's level should be shifted or something should be done for us so that we can also live a safe and healthy life."

## STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN HARASSED BY PUBLIC

**Reporter Kishan**

During the visit we got to know that there are children who come from diversified background like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and many more states. After coming here, they wander here and there in search of work with their parents. Not only for work, but they have to wander for finding a shelter too. There are children who have to stay home alone in order to look after their siblings. Telling about their work, children said, "Looking after our siblings is tough for us at such young age but there is another problem which we can't deal with. There are some local people who torture us when our parents



are not at home. They ask us to bring their groceries, food or water bottles. On denying they torture us and beat us too. That's why unwillingly we have to work for them. When we told about it to our parents they said that we are here for earning and fulfilling our stomach not for fighting

with someone. They told us to ignore the local people. Now you people tell here should we go and hide? Don't we have any right? Are we for labor purposes only? We children does not much but we are only request for some kindness and our parents to understand our problems."

**Reporter Poonam**

Our reporters organized a group meeting with the Badhte Kadam members of Agra. As always, children shared their problems which they are going through in their present life. Some children said, "There are many children in our slum and all are working but not even a single child is seen their wandering or playing because they all work inside their homes with their parents. The work they do is very painful to them." Telling about their work, one



## FAMILY'S CONDITIONS BECOMING A REASON FOR CHILD LABORING

## WILL GOVERNMENT HEAR THEM?

**Talkative reporter Afsana and reporter Shambhu, Noida**

After the visit of Noida we got to know that there are many slums where there is no water facility due to which children and their family members has to cover a long path in order to fulfill clean drinking water. As you can see in the image, there is a water board pipeline near the drain. That's the only water facility spot in their area so far. So people from many



cont. on pg. 6

10 year old boy said, "We get cut pieces of blouses, sarees, suits and other garments from the company. Our work is to paste the stones and other materials on the patterns of the garments." The work is not at all good for their eyes. Telling more, another 12 years

old girl said, "When we work for more than 4 to 6 hours on a saree or jeans, our eyes gets watery and whole body aches badly. We also want to play and enjoy our childhood like other children but don't have any other option due to our family's condition."

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

**CONTACT THESE TOLL FREE  
NUMBERS IF YOU FACE ANY  
PROBLEM.**

Child line Number

**1098**

Police Helpline Number

**100**

# DRAIN HOUSE FOR CHILDREN

Reporter Poonam

There are almost 600 houses in the slum areas of 'The city of Taj', Agra. Almost each and every parent is working in these families and has to leave their children home alone for their work. They have to leave early in the morning and come back around 8 or 9 pm in the night. That's how they are surviving in the world. Through some sources we got to know that there is drain near these slums

which is almost 20 to 25 feet deep. There have been many children who had fallen inside it mistakenly. Sharing about their lifestyle, the children said, "As you already know the depth of this drain, you can understand that is anything goes inside this drain mistakenly, it can't come out." Telling about the main issue, they further added, "When it rains heavily, it gets filled and the dirty water starts floating on the streets and inside our



slum too. At times it enters into our homes due to which all our belongings and eatable get dirty and rotten. We want to get rid of this problem. We no more can handle this as we already have many problems to deal with in our day-to-day life." Appealing for some help, they said, "We want that either the flow of the drain should be shifted to somewhere else or some kind of facility should be provided so that it should not over flow."

## WILL THEY BE ABLE TO CLEAN THE JUNGLE?

Talkative reporter Dheeraj and reporter Shambhu, Noida

Our reporters visited few odd places of Noida during which they found some odd news. You will be shocked to know that this story belongs to a much known society i.e. Amrapali. There are almost more than 700 slum homes made up of tarpaulin sheets. The place where their homes are belongs to a jungle. Yes it was a bushy jungle people themselves have cleaned it for their survival. Sadly, they are still living in a jungle only as they have only cleaned the area where their homes are built. People have gardens in their backyard; they have jungle in their backyard. There are numerous types of poisonous snakes in the jungle. Telling about their lifestyle, a 10 years old boy, Dheeraj said, "At times, snake enters our homes



too. That's why we live in fear even inside our home." Another girl, Neha said, "Our homes are made up of tarpaulin sheets, snakes may enter from a small hole also. That's why we fear in eating any item too. Our parents cook food in the morning and leave for work with us. The cooked food is kept on

the floor only that's why we have to be very careful while eating anything." Asking for some help, children said, "We children want that either the jungle should be properly cleaned so that we don't have to live in fear or our families should be provided with some kind of shelter facility where we can survive with safety."



## WATER UNAVAILABILITY; PEOPLE FORCED TO DEFECATE IN OPEN AREAS

Talkative reporter Riya and reporter Shambhu, Gurugram

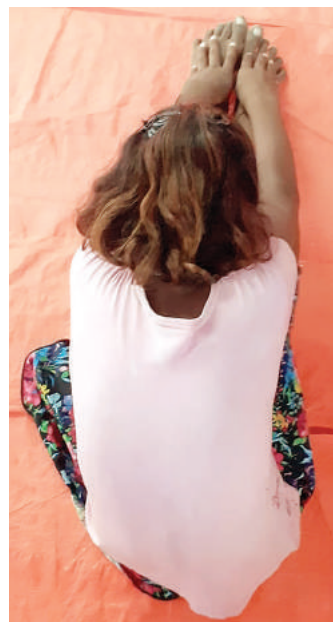
During a normal survey, we got to know something about the Gurugram. Our reporter found that there is a slum with unavailability of water due to which children and their parents have to defecate in open areas only. On investigating more, we got to know that there are public toilets for everyone but people are not using them as there is not water facility. Problem is that the amount of water used in the slum is more than the amount they have been provided. They somehow manage water from their nearby pond for their washing and bathing purpose.

They still have to wander for drinking water. Sharing more, they said, "We prefer to defecate in open areas as we don't have to waste our water in flushing unlike toilets. With this we have saved lots of water quantity of our pond." On further interaction, a girl said, "We girls have to face many problems while defecating in open areas. There is a ground near our defecation place where boys go and play. They use filthy words and do obscene acts while looking at us. We girls are much afraid due to such things. That's why we girls want that there should be proper arrangement of water in our slum so that we don't have to face such things."

## CHILD APPEALED FOR SAFETY

Reporter Kishan

Our reporters organized a group meeting with the street and working children of Noida in which children shared about the recent problems they are facing. Telling about the problems, a 14 years old girl said, "As you all know that our parents came here with our family in order to survive. They are here so that they can earn to fulfill our basic needs. For this they work really hard. They leave our home in the morning and come late in the night. Due to which we children are home alone for whole day." Telling about recent accident, another 10 years old girl, Mahima, said, "One week back, when I was coming back to home with my friends after playing outside, one van came and stopped near us. One man came near to me and offered me chocolate and asked to go with him. See this I and my friends got nervous and we started crying. Seeing this, my maternal uncle came outside and started shouting



on that man he started running towards me. Seeing him, that man ran away in his van with his other members. Though our slum people tried to follow that vehicle but were unable to catch them. Due to this our parents and other children are afraid. That's

why we children want that some security should be provided to us during our home alone so that we don't have to live in fear and can live in a safe environment."

## WILL GOVERNMENT HEAR THEM?

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slums go there for filling clean water due to which many people are not able to fill water even after walking for long time. The pipeline is at such a dangerous place that if by mistake a child falls he will directly goes into the deep drain. Girls sharing more, said, "Due to an incident we now come along with our other family members to fulfill water. Before we used to come alone but for our safety we don't come alone now." The reporter then asked the incident, the girls first denied but on interacting more they finally told about it. A girl said, "4 days back when I came there for fulfilling water two boys came on a motor cycle and snatched



my stall. Not only this, they used filthy words for me due to which I and other girls are now afraid of going there alone. I screamed loudly due to which many people came outside of their shops and homes and that's why I am safe. After which, our parents

have decided to send us here in a group of 5 to 6 person so that if in case we again has to face such problem then we will be in a group." All girls expressing their feelings said, "If there was water facility in or near our slum then we don't have to face such harassment."

# CHILDREN MOVING TOWARDS EDUCATION IN GREED OF VEHICLE

Talkative reporter Riya and reporter Shmabhu, Gurugram

Last year in Gurugram, we have admitted 41 street and working children in the school but sadly only 16 children prefer to go to school daily. Shocking? Let us know about it in details. After knowing this, our reporter went to that area and got to know the three main reasons due to which they had to leave their education. First is, their parents go out for work due to which they have

to look after their siblings during the day time. Second is the unawareness regarding schooling and education of children. There are some parents who think that their children won't get anything even after studying so much so they don't allow them to go to school. And the third reason is the distance. The children stay far away from the school due to which they had to travel a long distance in order to go to the school and coming back to home. Children living at this place said, "If some vehicle is



provided to us we can attend our school on daily basis." Telling about the fake promises and hopes, one child said, "Last year few social workers

came for a function and our principal was also there. They promised that if the number of the children attending the school is increased he will

surely provide us the facility of school vehicle soon but till date nothing happened. We, children are not the defaulters. The school is so far that we cannot manage attending it on daily basis. We know that is some vehicle is provided for us then surely more children will go to school again. Through the medium of this news it is our humble request to the administration that please provide us the facility of vehicle so that we can also study and have a better future."



## GIRLS APPEALING FOR STRICT ACTIONS AGAINST BOYS

Reporter Kishan

This story belongs to a slum of Noida. Our reporter got to know that there is beer shop near the slum where different people come for buying or drinking beer. People drinking there uses filthy words for the girls passing by due to which girls and other females are afraid of passing by the shop but sadly they don't have any other option. Telling about their experience, girls said, "Due to this beer shop, there

are fights on the daily basis in the slum. This problem occurs mostly on Wednesdays because this shop comes on the mid-way of Wednesday market. There are some boys who not only use filthy words but follow them too due to which we are very afraid. That's why we girls want that some strict actions should be taken against such boys and such sops should not be near any public residential area or slum for the safety of females."

## CHILDREN GETTING AFFECTED BY DIRTY DRAIN

Reporter Deepak

During a group meeting of our reporters with the street and working children of East Delhi, we got to know that there are some people who are indulged in drink and gambling. They drink and shout on children playing nearby. Sadly, there is a drain near there playing area. Telling briefly, a young boy Rahul (changed name) said, "Few days back when I was playing with my friends, a drunken man came and started screaming on me. He pushed me into the drain and I fell down. Other people saw this and run towards me in order to



save me but luckily there is so much of garbage in the drain that it has now formed a thick layer on it due to which I did not reached to the dirty drain water and my neighbours and

friends were able to save my life." Children facing problem said, "If somehow that drain gets covered and cleaned then we don't have to face such problems in our life again."

## COMMITTEE MEMBER'S TORTURE MAY TURN INTO A HURDLE IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Reporter Jyoti

We have got shocking news from Lajpat Nagar and Sarojini Nagar market. There are many children who got admissions in the school

with the help of some social workers. They used to sell things in the market during the day time after the school for their family's survival. At present, they are not happy with their work. On



interacting they said, "There are some committee members who come during the day time of our working hours. They ask for money from us. On denying they torture us and take all our belongings with themselves. In order to get rid of this problem we have changed our work place. Before we used to go to the Lajpat Nagar market but now we have decided to go the Sarojini Nagar market. Even after that we are not able to get rid of this problem. In fact, we are facing more problems here. There we used to face one committee but here different committees come during the day time. They come and throw all our belongings or snatch it from us. We are afraid that due to all such things we have to leave our education."

## CHILDREN GETTING DEPRIVED OF STUDIES DUE TO HOME SHIFTING

Talkative reporter Mehak and reporter Shambhu

Our reporter organized a support group meeting with the street and working children who shared about the current problems and their day-to-day lifestyles. Telling about the problems, they said, "The main problem is we don't have any shelter. At times we go to our village and then when we are out of cash, we again have to come back to the city. We come here and work for our survival. Due to all these reasons we are not able to continue our studies properly. Our parents do the work of laboring because of which we can't stay at a single place



for long time. Whenever and wherever the contractor calls, we have to shift there only." Sharing about their stories,

one 12 years old girl, Mehak said, "I used to live in Banaras where I was studying in class first. As soon as my parents

got the phone-call from the contractor, we had to shift from Banaras and from then I had to leave my education. At present, I live near Botanical Garden. Luckily, there are some social workers who come here and teach us. Though at present I am able to get educated and other children too but we are always afraid that we will again have to shift and then our education will again get affected. That's why we children want that our parents should get some kind of work so that they don't have to shift from one place to another. By this, we will be able to complete our education and may have a better life in the future."

# SALUTE TO THE WORKER'S COURAGE

Reporter Deepak

In the today's headlines we got to know that there were some street and working children who were denying going to the school due to their busy schedule of working. Their parents were also not so aware towards education. All they like was their work and the money they earn. Their parents didn't know that their lives will be changed soon. Working for few years, they met some social workers and pushed them towards education. Though

the workers had to give their 2 to 3 months for making them understand the importance of education but lastly they did it. At present, we can proudly say that there are almost 50 children who are interested in going to school at present. They have been admitted in the government schools. Children who used to work and carry workload on their shoulders are now carrying their school bags. Seeing them the workers and their parents were very happy. Our reporter then interacted with some school going children,



they said, "We love to go to the school now. We only want that children working like us should get indulge in studies and look forward in their lives. If we will study today then we will not have to the work our parents are doing today. We may have a tough life but surely a better one from now." It is our team's humble request that same like the social workers if you can also help any street child then please come forward. It will hardly cost you something but will surely make a big difference in someone's life.

## RAIN-A HURDLE FOR STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN

Reporter Shambhu

During a group meeting of talkative reporters of Noida Sector- 37, our reporters got to about the recent problems in their areas. One of which is the rain. Due to heavy and

continue rainfall, street and working children are facing problems in their day-to-day lives. They have made their homes with the tarpaulin sheets as they are living on the government's land. Sharing their bad experiences, they

said, "When it rains during the night time, we have to wake up and spoil our sleeps as we as well as our clothes get wet. During the heavy thunder and stormy rainfall, our eatables are also spoiled due to which we have to starve

for few days. We can't even leave this place as we don't have any other place to move on. If we take a room on rent, then it will be tougher for our parents to pay the rent that's why we have to stay here only." Requesting for some

kindness, the children further added, "It is our humble request to the government to provide us the facility of door house in our area so that we don't have to suffer like this and get live a better and safe life."

# BALANAMA AND BADHTE KADAM IN HEADLINES

We are sharing some photos related to these moments with you.



Balaknama thanks to the Diamond Sponsor, Sardar Nagina Singh Ji, for helping us in publishing our newsletter. You can also help us for publishing.

This newsletter is for limited delivery only. All the pictures are printed by the approval of the children.

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 Vibha Shakya.