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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.

FORMER MEMBER'S EXPERIENCES

100TH EDITION OF BALAKNAMA

Talkative reporters Jaikishan, Abhishek, Usha, Kishan, Aanchal, Sangeeta, etc.

It is a very happy moment for us because today we are publishing the 100th edition of Balaknama. On this happy occasion, today we are introducing you to such members who were once involved in child labor and spent most of their time on streets related works and started their journey of empowerment with Balaknama team. They have been on various posts such as talkative reporter, editor, writer, advisor, etc. with Balaknama. The experiences of the entire team member associated with Balaknama inspire us for hard work and resilience. Let us know the experiences of our former members who are making a mark in society by reaching a great height in their life and are an example for other street and working children like themselves.



My name is Deepak. I have been living in a slum in West Delhi for many years. A few months after I was born, my parents migrated to Delhi from Bihar. My mother passed away due to health problems when I was 3 years old. I started to work at a factory from a young age so that I could afford a one-time meal. That's when “Balaknama” newspaper entered into my life. I joined Balaknama and started studying. Over the years, I have served as the “Talkative Reporter” “Writing Reporter” and distributor for Balaknama. Presently, I work as a teacher and inspire children to become leaders and Balaknama reporters. It feels that Balaknama started yesterday when I look at the 100th edition of the newspaper. I wish that Balaknama newspaper fulfills the dreams of many more street and working children and helps them to reach a high position in society.



My name is Shambhu and I have been associated with Balaknama since I used to sell cucumbers at the railway station. Those were extremely painful days when I had to sell cucumbers every moment by avoiding the police. On one hand, there was a fear of contractors and on the other hand the fear of the police. But what could I do, the situation was such that if I did not work, my family could not meet the daily expenses. Life had come to such a point that it seemed that I would continue to do child labor for the rest of my life. Then a new ray of hope came into my life, which you all know by the name of “Balaknama. I was a talkative report for quite a long time with Balaknama. After that took over the post of editor of Balaknama and participated in (TDEX) in Chennai. Presently I am a teacher where I empower and provide educational classes to street-connected children. I am very happy that today the 100th edition of Balaknama is being published; this newspaper has illuminated the lives of many children. A lot of children are stuck in the dark pit of child labor. Even I spent my childhood as a child laborer. Let's focus our attention on a kid who fulfilled his dream to get an education and become a leader.



My name is Jyoti. I hail from Uttar Pradesh but have been in Delhi for the past few years. My family didn't own a house and I have spent my life living under flyovers and staying in open shelters. Due to the poor financial condition of our family, I had to do odd jobs from a young age. I used to work as a ragpicker and even beg at Nizamuddin Railway Station. I also got involved in drugs. One day I met a Balaknama reporter and slowly got integrated into their team. Balaknama has provided me an opportunity to move ahead in life and I have been a reporter for this newspaper for quite some time now. I am happy that Balaknama is publishing its 100th edition and I consider myself grateful to be part of the Balaknama family.



I am Vijay Kumar. I used to work at a shop in the wood market in Delhi when I was 8 years old with my brothers and relatives. As I grew older, I got involved in

more dangerous activities. I used to carry huge bundles of logs on my shoulder and carry them to the 3rd or 4th floor physically for a nominal payment. The earnings were not enough to make ends meet. I used to stay in a slum area near a railway station. About 14 years back, I met a CHETNA team member who used to teach children under the tree. I also started studying with other children and my interest in studies started increasing and I wanted to pursue higher education. As the editor of Balaknama, I also raise the voice of street and working children in front of everyone in London. At present, I am working as Assistant Project Coordinator with CHETNA NGO. I am very happy that Balaknama is publishing its 100th edition



My name is Ravi and I am sharing with you my experiences with Balaknama through the 100th issue of Balaknama. Even though today I can read and write to a certain degree and can differentiate between good and bad, it was not always the case. When I was young, I couldn't read

or write. My life was similar to other street children and child laborers. Then I joined Badhate Kadam federation and attended a residential workshop on leadership building where I learned in detail about child rights. Later, I became a reporter of Balaknama and continued my association with Badhate Kadam federation. Through CHETNA organization, I got the chance to work with a lot of street-connected and underprivileged children and I inspire these kids to move ahead in life towards a brighter future.



I am Saurabh. When I was 12 years old, I used to work at a Fortune shop with my friend in Noida. I was busy with shop duties the whole day and wouldn't get time to even study. I used to deboard items from trucks and autos and carry them to the shop throughout the day. That's when I was introduced to CHETNA organization and Balaknama newspaper and they dragged me out of the dark pit of child labor. Today, I help kids who are involved in child labor for varied reasons. I am proud that we are releasing the 100th edition of Balaknama newspaper. It is because of the efforts of Balaknama newspaper and CHETNA organization that I work as a teacher now and provide help to child laborers and street children.

Members of “Badhte-Kadam” also shared their experience



Vikas (name changed) Before joining Badhte Kadam, I used to take care of my younger siblings and when my parents go to work, I also used to go to pick the junk and garbage and feed my younger brother with the

THE MENTOR SHARED HIS EXPERIENCES ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE 100TH EDITION OF BALAKNAMA



Dear reader Many thanks to all of you. From 2003 till today, you all have always stood with Balaknama as a constant supporter and well-wisher. Thousands of children have been empowered so far through Balaknama and we have witnessed them progressing in life. We have seen many issues and topics raised by Balaknama coming in discussion on the international level and it is certainly a very happy moment for CHETNA that the participation of children through Balaknama is ensured at every stage. With the passage of time, Balaknama made an international identity and was highlighted in more than 1000 news channels and print media. The members of Balaknama got a chance to participate as trainers in more than 60 residential leadership workshops. Hearty congratulations to all on the publication of the 100th edition of Balaknama. Hopefully, the words “street and working children” will no longer be there and there will be no need for this newspaper, but as long as any child is on the street, Balaknama will continue to do its job diligently.

Sanjay Gupta
Director CHETNA NGO,
Mentor Balaknama
Newspaper

money received from that work. Then a few days later I joined “Badhte Kadam” federation and I learned to
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WHY DO WE HAVE TO HIDE OUR GENDER?



Talkative reporter Huma and Reporter Sangeet

While visiting the settlements of Lucknow, our Balaknama reporter came to know something about which you will also be stunned. Our reporter met a boy who is actually a boy but looked exactly like a girl because of his extremely long hair. When the reporter talked to that child and asked, "Why do you have such long hair?"

The child shared "I can't get my hair cut even by mistake because whenever there is a fair, I participate in street-play with my father in that fair by climbing on a rope and my father does my makeup to make me look like a girl. Only then can we get a little bit of money. The child said, "I have also requested my father to get my hair done many times, but the father refuses to cut my hair because when we perform in street plays, people

consider me as a girl when they see me decorated in long hair." But the sad thing is that children around me tease me but due to compulsion I have to bear all this." The reporter asked the child "If we help you to get admission in the school, will you go to study?" Then that child said "no, I will not be able to go to study because if there is a fair anywhere, then I would have to perform in street-play with my father and due to the situation of covid, suddenly sometimes we have to go to the village also. If I study, then my household expenses will not be fulfilled, the money that I get from this work, the same money covers the expenses of my entire house and if I go to study then my household expenses will not be able to cover that's why due to the responsibility of running my household expenses, I am unable to study.

PUTTING ONE'S LIFE AT RISK

Talkative reporter Nikki and Reporter Aanchal

Whenever you pass through any street, you will see that many children are found flying and cutting kites. But now this habit is increasing day by day in children. Children get so engrossed in the game of flying kites that without caring for their lives, they jump down even two stories in the process of playing, because of this there is a fear of falling and getting hurt. But children are not ready to understand this and children enjoy kite flying games so much that they don't even understand right and wrong. Now even parents are not able to explain to their children. Balaknama reporter also found that till now the children from 13-14 ages are engaged in the game of kite flying, but sadly now even small children are slowly joining this work.



Not only this, because of kite flying, children also did not pay attention in their studies. When the journalist asked the children, "What do you all do after cutting kites?" The children said that "some kites we keep for flying and some kites sell to another child for around ₹5 to get some money and we eat snacks with that money.



FEAR OF SNAKES - WHERE DO WE GO?

Reporter Mahi and Aanchal

The street and working children under the Daliganj Bridge are unable to do any work with a sigh of relief for a moment. Our Balaknama reporter Aanchal met the children during a visit

to Daliganj and interacted with the children. She came to know that the children live near a big river called Gomti. The children are scared of the river as a lot of snakes come out of the river and enter their houses. They have to sleep in

fear of the snakes at night and always stay vigilant as the snake bite can kill them. People are unable to catch the snakes as they may bite them. There are more snakes than humans in this place but we can't do anything about it.

FORMER MEMBER'S EXPERIENCES

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read and write. After joining "Badhte Kadam" I got enrolled in class 1 and today I have graduated to class 4. After joining Balaknama, I learned to write news related to street and working children and at the same time learned to investigate the news.



Shalini (name changed) Before joining Badhte Kadam, I used to do my household chores like cooking, washing clothes, washing dishes, etc. My friend was associated with "Badhte Kadam" federation. One day I asked my friend "Where do you go?" So my friend told that "I am associated with Badhte Kadam federation and help children there in child rights, leadership qualities, school admission, etc. Then I also eagerly joined the same. I never went to school before joining balakanama because when I was always occupied with my housework only, with the help of Badhte kadam I got enrolled in class 3 in open basic education. I got to know about Balaknama newspaper. It is a unique newspaper which publishes only children's related topics and issues.

CHILDREN EAT LEFTOVER FOOD BY PICKING IT UP FROM THE DUSTBIN

Reporter Pooja and reporter Kishan

Our Balaknama reporter visits the various settlements and talks to the children to discuss about their problems. Reporters also bring the problems of the street and working children (who sell socks, toys, flowers, balloons, etc. on the streets or beg and pick up junk and garbage) to the government and society so that these children also become a part of the mainstream society. But have you ever thought that even after doing all this work, if they do not earn, then what should they do? In this regard, our reporters held a meeting with



street and working children living in Noida. The children actively participated in the meeting and also talked about

their problems. Children told that brother, there is a market a little far from our house where children sell toys, flowers,

balloons, etc. Those children go 4 to 5 kilometers away from their home to do this work and they work there the whole day away from home to sell goods and come back to their home by ten o'clock in the night. Sometimes these people bring food from their home to eat, but sometimes it happens that their goods are not sold much and they do not even have enough income that they can buy any food items. In such a situation, these children are forced to ask for food from the people roaming in the market and those who throw the remaining food items in the dustbin which includes Tikki, momos, chowmein, and fill their stomach.

GIRLS SHOULD ALSO GET EQUAL RIGHTS

Talkative reporter Sunil and reporter Aanchal

You must have also heard about this campaign "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao", but the truth is that people have still not been able to eradicate the discrimination of boys and girls from their minds.

Balaknama reporter spoke to the children during a visit to the settlements of Lucknow, and it was heard that if the



girls go a little far from their house to play, their parents run to slap them.

At the same time, they never let the girls out of the houses. These girls are forced to obey their parents. Some girls even told that this strictness is always with them. If boys do this work then they are not told anything and neither do our parents ask those questions and queries.

INNOCENT CHILDREN TROUBLED BY THE FIGHTS OF DRUG ADDICTS AND ALCOHOLICS



Reporter Usha and reporter Kishan

You will often see children washing dishes, giving food and tea at hotels, dhabas, and restaurants. These innocent children are forced to work in hotels and dhabas to meet the daily needs of their homes. Wherever we work, we have to listen to the owner of that place. Even if we make any mistake while working, it is

the owner who tells us our mistake and also allows us to rectify it. But through this news, we are going to tell you about the owner of such a hotel, who does not run in his hotel. When our reporters talked to some kids working in a hotel in Noida Sector 115, the 10-year-old Shiva (name changed) shared that I have a friend who works in a hotel to wash dishes. He washes dishes in the hotel

from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm and gets Rs.6000 per month. This money covers the expenses of his house.

The problem is that whenever my friend makes a mistake in washing the dishes or the dishes are not cleaned, the owner scolds him, as well as the people who come to eat, also use abusive words, and sometimes even beat him. Seeing this, the owner does not say anything. In his hotel, along with eating food, people sit and drink alcohol. Those who sit and drink alcohol, they get drunk and ask for food according to the plate. Then if the chefs who make food in the hotel refuse to give them food, those drunk people not only beat all of us but also beat the owner of the hotel. Whenever there are fights, we have to run and escape. The owner of the hotel also gives a bribe of 5000 rupees every month to the police. Because of this, even the policemen do not say anything.



INNOCENT CHILDREN FORCED TO SET UP SHOP BY PAYING THE BRIBE

Bureau report

Usually, shops of momos, tikkis, burgers, chicken soup, eggs, etc. are found in front of liquor showrooms/shops. Many children sell these goods by setting up their carts in front of liquor shops. Our reporter saw that at one place people were drinking alcohol sitting near the carts of these children. The reporter went and talked to those children, and then the 15-year-old boy told that "we put a cart here and this is a government place but some

people bring liquor from the shop and come to our cart and drink alcohol. Because of this, when sometimes the police see people drinking alcohol, they beat them, they also beat and abuse us, due to that we suffer a lot and genuine people also do not come to our shop and buy the things. If we want to run a shop, then we have to give bribes to the police and then we can also make people drink liquor at our cart secretly. We have to pay ₹ 1000/monthly to the police and then only we can run our small shops here.

CHILDREN COMPELLED TO PERFORM DANGEROUS TASKS

Talkative reporter Maya and reporter Sangeeta

Street and working children do all kinds of work to run their homes. For this, they even risk their lives. No matter how extreme the danger is in if they try to face every danger. When our Balaknama reporter did a community visit to the Madiyav contact point in Lucknow and saw some children who were standing with sharp objects in their hands. When the reporter asked those children "where are you going with this sharp object?" The children told that "We are going nearby, there are some bamboo shops and trees a little away from our home. By tearing these bamboos, we make a temporary roof for our home." The reporter said that there is extreme danger in this, if the sharp object slips out of your hand, then you can also get hurt. So children said that "yes definitely there is extreme danger, but we cannot do anything. We have to pay for the daily expenses of our home as our parents are unable to earn much. They get their salary hardly in a month, due to which it is very difficult to run the daily household expenses." The reporter asked the children



that do you get paid for doing this work? And how much money do you get for doing daily work? So the children told that "we get money here according to the daily work and with this money, we help in the expenses of our home, that's why we have to do this work."

Talkative reporter Kajal and reporter Aanchal

Sometimes we get so upset with our problems that there is no way out. But have you ever thought that what passes on a person who is surrounded by troubles from all sides? When our reporter Aanchal tried to

FEAR OF HOMELESSNESS AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

Reporter Maya and reporter Sangeeta

Children and their parents are already so upset because of the lockdown. Now they have become even more worried. You must be thinking about what could be the problem. So this problem is of the slum of Lucknow, where the reporter went to conduct a support group meeting with the children and had a word with them. During the meeting, when we tried to know the problems of the children, most of them told that there is a railway line near our hut and now the movement of trains has started on it. Railway officials had come and were talking about removing the hut so that no accident should happen. He also said that living near the railway track



is extremely tough and not free from danger. That's why we are scared. Where do we go if we want to? We do not even have our land that we can live there too. We are already so upset and ever since the railway officials have said that we will have to move

the hut from here, we have had sleepless nights. Where will we go now and where will we stay? There is a lot of worries thinking about this, but if the government makes arrangements for us to live, then we will not have any problem vacating this slum.

CHILDREN FORCED TO DEFECATE IN OPEN BY TAKING THE RISK



know about their problems with the street and working children living under the Daliganj Bridge in Lucknow, she came to know that there is no toilet nearby. That's why most of the children defecate outside due to compulsion and some children

go to the toilet far away. The problem with defecating outside is the fear of being hurt by stray pigs, snakes, scorpions, dogs, etc. The children shared that on the way to the toilet; many such people are always consuming drugs and also make obscene

comments on girls. Some children also got molested sometimes. They neither see the girl nor the boy, they just start teasing and misbehaving. Due to this, we are now very afraid that they could do something wrong with us. After talking to the children, the reporter realized that now the children have decided in their minds not to go to the toilet. When the reporter talked to other children and tried to understand their feelings, it was found that parents hardly let them go out of the house. Now what should they do and where should they go to the toilet?

**CHILDREN'S HELP
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number
1098
Police Helpline Number
100

THE HOUSES OF THE SETTLEMENT BURNT TO ASHES IN THE FIRE IN THE GARBAGE HEAP



Reporter Babita and reporter Sangeeta

People living in the slum of Lavkush Nagar in Lucknow work as rag pickers and collect garbage from homes. They bring garbage and throw it in their own settlement. Due to this a pile of garbage has accumulated in the entire settlement. There is no place to take out the garbage. The garbage has become so much

that the people living in the settlement now have to collect the garbage from their houses and burn it daily. Not only does this fill people's homes with smoke, but it also puts children at risk of burns and also causes environmental pollution. The flames of burning garbage took a terrible form when the woman living in this settlement collected the garbage and burnt it, but could not pay a little attention and she went

somewhere. Due to this, her house caught fire, and at the same time, the fire engulfed adjacent houses, and both the houses were burnt to ashes. The small children living in the houses became very upset and scared due to this incident. Due to such a dense settlement, the fire brigade vehicle could not reach there and there was no water tank nearby so that water could be arranged quickly and the fire could be controlled. Somehow the people of the settlement put out the fire together. In which from elders to children were included. But now the problem has arisen that their place of residence has ended and the whole family including children has been forced to live in the open in the harsh winter. They do not have enough money to build a hut again.

SAHIL IS THE ONLY SUPPORT OF A DISABLED MOTHER

Reporter Surya and reporter Kishan

This story is of a 9-year-old boy Sahil who lives in Noida in a rented room with his two sisters and mother. There used to be many fights between Sahil's mother and father. One day his father drank a lot of alcohol and lay down on the train track to commit suicide. When Mother came to know about this, she ran after her on the railway track to save her father. She could not save her husband, but her leg was cut off by the moving train and her mother became handicapped with one leg.

Now Sahil's mother has got a plastic leg installed. His mother sells pens sitting at one place in the market of Noida Sector 18. Sahil also goes to school at 9:00 in the

morning and after coming from school at noon and having food, then at 1 o'clock goes to study at the center run by CHETNA NGO.

After coming from there, he goes to sell socks in the market of Sector 18. Sahil tells that "When he goes to the market to sell socks, some people take the socks and scold and abuse him. Sahil goes to Ashoknagar Market in Noida to get socks. There are two types of the sock (thin and thick) available, both of them have different prices; Thin sock is available for Rs.35 a pair and thick socks are available for Rs.40 a pair. By bringing both types of socks, I sell thin socks for 60 rupees and thick socks for 80 rupees in the market, and with that money I help my family to run daily family expenses.



CHILDREN EAGERLY WAIT FOR THE FAIR

Reporter Mahi and reporter Aanchal

You must have heard that saying that we should always be happy. But this saying doesn't fit for our street and working children all the time. Street and working children wander from door to door in search of some work so that they can feed two rotis (bread) to their younger brothers and sisters. So let us introduce you to these children who live under one of the flyovers of Lucknow. Their condition is becoming very pathetic. When the Balaknama reporters visited the place, they came to know that soon a fair was going to be organized in Daliganj in which children were working to sell cups. This fair is held once a year and in this fair, the street and working children do some work, whether it is to set up a fruit cart or sell balloons or sell toys as they earn some money from this work in the fair. Grop of children shared that in whichever month this fair takes place, the expenses of our house go very well in that month. We want that this fair should be held every day so that we earn something

every day and we do not have to face a shortage of money. But where does this happen? The income earned by working in the fair ends in a few days and the condition of our house becomes as before and to meet the expenses of our family, we do different types of work so that we can have one time meal.

WE ARE READY TO DO ANYTHING FOR THE HAPPINESS OF OUR PARENTS

Talkative reporter Mahi and Reporter Aanchal

Almost from most of our news, you must have realized that if we talk about the routine of street and working children, then most of their time is spent in completing many types of work and their life is getting involved in child labor. We are introducing you to some such children who are indulging in forced child labor at the age of getting an education and participating in sports. Balaknama reporter met street and working children living under Daliganj Bridge in Lucknow and tried to know their problems as well. When the reporter talked to these children they discussed in detail many types of problems. One of the problems that all the children were repeating over and over again was that-



Children were involved in selling balloons at traffic lights. When we discussed this topic in detail with the children, it came to know that these children do the work of selling balloons at traffic lights throughout the day, but they hardly earn anything because now people do not buy balloons generally. As you would also know that a balloon is available for around

5-10 rupees, the children told that "If we start selling balloons even from about 8:00 in the morning, they hardly able to earn 70-80 rupees by the evening. Then the reporter asked the child "If you earn even 70-80 rupees by hard work, then what do you do with that money? The children told, "We give some money to our parents and some money we keep for eating small snacks so that if we get hungry while selling balloons, then at least we can eat something worth ₹ 10 and let the energy come into the body and we can start working again." The children shared their grief in talk and said "If they are not able to get education due to poverty and helplessness, then at least do some work for their own life so they can able to keep the parents happy and now this is the only hope they have."

SHOULD WE TAKE CARE OF YOUNGER SIBLINGS OR GET AN EDUCATION?

Reporter Ravi

Friends, as soon as you hear the word child, then obviously things like love, affection, fun, walking, eating, playing, etc start coming into your mind. This is also true because it is not only to ensure the rights of the children, but it is also important for the better future of the children and keeping them healthy. All these activities play a very important role in the physical and mental development of children. In today's news, we will tell you about some such children, whose parents work as laborers and they stay away from home the



whole day. When parents leave for work, the children themselves take care of their younger sisters and brothers. Whereas those children themselves need care. But due to the absence of parents at home, children have to take care of their younger siblings. Sometimes children do not

even know that their younger sisters and brothers are facing any kind of trouble. And they cannot do anything to relieve them from their suffering. Because of this, not only their younger sisters and brothers are living their life in many kinds of trouble, but even the little older children who take

care of the small children are deprived of their basic rights like education, sports, nutritious food, etc. Many times the children also bring their younger sisters and brothers to study at Nanhe Parinde Mobile Education van run by CHETNA NGO, due to which neither those children can study, nor participate in any other activities. These children and parents have no other way. Because these people live on rent in Noida. The income is not enough to meet the expenses of the family with the earnings of one of the parents. So both the parents have to work which has a direct impact on the lives of children.

WILL WE CHILDREN EVER PLAY IN THE PARK?



Talkative reporter Khushi and Reporter Kishan

We all know that physical activities like yoga, workout, exercise, etc. have an important place in our life to stay healthy. Due to the lack of open ground in most of the house, we enjoy playing, doing yoga, exercising, etc. in the public park near us. But have you ever thought that there are still many such areas where there are no parks nearby and due to the lack of parks; children are not getting the opportunity to

play freely and do physical exercise? Similarly, our Balaknama reporter discussed their problems with street and working children living in Noida Sector 70. Some children live in slums in a small rented room and some of them live on the side of the road. The 11-year-old boy said, "There is no ground to play in the area where we live, so we are compelled to use the mini space in front of the home. We play Kho-Kho, Badminton, chasing games, etc but when we children are playing badminton, if the

shuttlecock accidentally falls in someone's house, then those people do not return the shuttlecock but scold us and sometimes use abusive words. Because of this, we get depressed and get imprisoned back in our home." Sharing her experience like this, a 15-year-old girl said, "The village where we live is very big and there is a park in that village but it is 1 kilometer away from our house, whenever we have to go to the park, we have to take permission from our parents and our parents refuse as the park is 1 kilometer away because it is too far and parents are concerned about the safety of the children. Our parents refused us to go to the park because they didn't want us to face any problems while going to the park. There is an empty government ground at some distance from our home and we children request that the park should be constructed on that ground so that we do not have to face so much trouble and we children can play well in that park."



LUCK GAME

Reporter Ravi

Let us introduce you to a brave girl through Balaknama, who is an example for all those people who always complain that God did not give this or that, such people always curse their luck. We should never rely on luck and try to change our destiny ourselves. Friends, this story is of Rambai (name changed) living in Noida Sector 126. Rambai's family hails from Ballia, Bihar. Rambai's family was living on rent in Delhi's Harkesh Nagar for almost 35 years. Rambai's family consists of five sisters and one brother, out of which two elder sisters are married and all the other sisters and brothers are younger. His mother died 3 years ago due to illness. His father is also very old and he works as a vegetable seller. Now Rambai's family lives in Noida for the last 1 year. Rambai share that due

to not being able to pay the rent of the room during the lockdown, she had to come here from there. Before coming here, Rambai studied in class 5 in a government school in Harkesh Nagar. But when the lockdown was imposed, her father's work was put on hold. Gradually the room rent debt increased due to which her family had to leave the house at Harkesh Nagar. Rambai's father goes to Okhla Mandi Delhi every morning with a cart and from there comes back to Noida Sector 126 with vegetables. Rambai cleans the vegetable thoroughly and then her father goes to sell the vegetables in the market in the evening. Apart from taking care of her sisters and brothers, Rambai also does all the household chores. Now Rambai has also started coming to study on the Nanhe Parinde mobile education Van. Rambai loves to study.

STREET CHILDREN SHIVERING FROM COLD IN THE ABSENCE OF WARM CLOTHES



Report by Vijay

Children are forced to live in the open in the slums near Ghata village in Gurugram. Their parents do menial jobs. They have to face many challenges once winter sets in.

When Balaknama reporters went inside the slums, they saw many children just wearing a single T-shirt. They had no warm clothes to wear. On asking the children they said that they didn't have warm clothes to protect

them from cold. Children experience extreme cold due to a lack of adequate clothing. One of the kids named Jatin, who was 8 years old on being asked if he was feeling cold as he was only wearing a T-shirt, answered that he was feeling cold as he didn't have warm clothes to wear. He was wearing torn old clothes. He further added that because of poverty he had to wear these clothes. He also said that they haven't received any Government support. On walking a little further, they met a girl called Sheela who said they don't have clothes to wear in winter. Will the local administration distribute warm clothes to the poor clothes to fight the cold?

INNOCENT CHILDREN ARE GETTING SICK DUE TO FILTH AND DIRT



Reporter Vijay

In a part of Gurugram city, where many slums are built, the people and children living in the slums are very upset due to the garbage lying in the open spaces. Many families live in these slums. Recently a center has been opened by Chetna NGO to teach the children living in the slums and the children pass through this path and come to the center to study. But when those children pass that route as there is no other option, then there is such a foul smell that it becomes difficult to even breathe. It seems that perhaps all the garbage is brought here and separated and there is also dirty water on that road. There is also a small pond made there, there is very little water in it, but that water is very dirty as if this pond is never cleaned.

Some people living there also go for open defecation due to which there is a very foul smell. Children also say that our parents leave early in the morning for work and all the children play outside and sometimes we eat outside. But we do not feel like eating there at all because due to the dirt, there are many flies outside and those flies come and sit on our food, due to which we are not able to eat enough food. Not only this, sometimes, after eating that food, many children also vomit and they become ill. All the children living in the slums want that this garbage should be picked up from here and the water of this pond should be dried or some such arrangement should be made so that the smell of that dirty water does not spread out and we too can play outside in the open and have fun.

CHILDREN ARE SACRIFICING THEIR EDUCATION UNDER THE CARE OF ANIMALS

Talkative reporter Babita and reporter Sangeeta Lucknow

As you all know after the lockdown, many children have been involved in work and the children of Lavkush Nagar contact point of Lucknow have also become victims of this child labor. When Balaknama reporter talked to the talkative reporter Babita, she said "Some children in our settlement are not able to go to school and the family members of the children have



goats farming. These children risk their lives and climb trees and pluck leaves for the goats with an ax. These innocent

children are unaware that if their feet slip, they can fall from a tall tree and get hurt. When Balaknama reporter asked the talkative reporter "Don't you go to school?" Children told that "No, we do not go to school because our parents go to work in the morning and our family has goats farming and we children have to bring fodder to feed them due to which we cannot go to school and we stay at home and go to feed the goat."

HOW WILL THE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN SON AND DAUGHTER BE ERADICATED?



Report by Huma and Sangeeta

When our Balaknama reporter spoke to street and working children in Lucknow an age-old issue concerning the Indian society came to light.

The girls told the reporter that they are expected to do meager work throughout their lives confined to their homes. Their mothers force them to do different housework ranging from

cleaning the house, cooking food, washing clothes among others. On the other hand, their brothers aren't told to do these jobs. Their mothers want to make them skilled in all the household chores as they will be required to perform these tasks at their in-laws' place. This is how girls are systemically discriminated against. Apart from being responsible for household chores, they are also responsible for managing their younger siblings at home. Due to this, they are not able to devote time to their studies. The girls want to be treated in the same way as boys so that they move forward in life.

THE LIVES OF CHILDREN ARE BEING AFFECTED BY THE BAD ENVIRONMENT

Report by Nikki and Aanchal

Our Balaknama reporter held a meeting with the children and discussed their problems. The children told the reporter about the bad environment around them. It has a lot of impact on children's lives as people learn from their immediate environment. A positive environment has a positive impact on the children, whereas a negative environment has the opposite impact on the children. After having spoken to a lot of children, we concluded that police are regular visitors to the area and the parents of the children drink and gamble openly. Children are



worried about these things. Some children have started to drink and gamble like their parents becoming a part of the environment around them. These children have no idea the negative effects of being addicted to gambling and drinking. The children need to be placed in a better environment where they can focus on education and not fall prey to bad habits.

DO GOOD HAVE GOOD



Talkative reporter Anjali and Reporter Kishan

This news is from Noida Sector 115 where Balaknama reporter held a reporter meeting with 55 street-connected children and discussed with the children that "Did any child help any other child" then 11-year-old Rakhi told "I live in Noida Sector 115 where I live in a rented room with my parents and there are 6 members in my home, mother, father, three brothers and one sister. The place where we live in a rented room and is very small and due to this all the members of our family are not able to accommodate in one room, we have to take two rooms and the rent of those two rooms is 5000 rupees. We all work on rickshaws selling

bananas; we have 5 rickshaws on which mother, father, and two brothers sell bananas separately I and my younger brother sell bananas on one rickshaw. We all do the work of selling bananas, only then we can meet our family expenses. When I sell bananas, many people and children come to the cart every day to beg. Whenever small children come to my handcart to ask for money, I do not give them money and give them two bananas in exchange for the money. If I give them money, then those children misuse that money, like taking drugs, gambling, etc. That's why I give them bananas to eat. When I tell this to my mother, then my mother is also very happy and I am also very happy by helping someone in need.

No electricity in the poles, the settlement is immersed in darkness

Reporter Sunil and reporter Aanchal

As you all know how important it is to study. But only those people can understand this, who understand its importance. Those who could not study due to any reason do not know the importance of studies. Our reporter held a meeting with the street and working children living in Lucknow Basti and talked about the problems they faced, then they came to know that these children live in their huts on the side of the road and they have to face a new problem every single day. While interacting with the children,

one of them told that there are big electric poles in front of our houses but unfortunately there is no electricity on those poles. When some people had come to install these poles, we felt that this would light up the front of the houses and we would be able to sit outside and study. But later it was found that there was no electricity in these poles because of which we are not able to study. If we try to study inside the house, there is nothing except darkness. The world teaches us a lot about studies that it is very important to study, but what about those children who do not even have a light.

HOW TO PREVENT POISONOUS SNAKES FROM ENTERING OUR HOMES

Report by Manu and Kishan

Noida is a place that is filled with forests. Among the forests, many villages can be found. Our reporters visited one of the villages. They tried to understand the problems faced by children living in these villages in detail. One of the children said that there are a lot of snakes in the forests which cause a lot of problems. Our reporters couldn't believe it at first, so they asked another child who reiterated the same problem. The reporters couldn't believe it this time too and asked another child and after this child said the same problem, they eventually believed them. It seemed to be a big problem. There was a need



to know about the problem in detail. The children told the reporters that they live in rented houses with their parents. Their parents go out to work in the morning, only returning in the evening. They have been told by their parents not to leave their house, so, they spend time at their house

watching TV or playing on their mobile phones. Sometimes, snakes enter the house and sit in a corner of the house. Sometimes the snakes climb on their beds and they are scared. They try to scare it away with no success and they have to rely on smoke to scare it away.

CHILDREN SADDENED AFTER HEARING THE NEWS OF THE THIRD WAVE OF CORONA

Reporter Sunil and reporter Aanchal

Very painful days have gone by for a long time which made the life of street and working children worse than hell. We are talking about the same pandemic which had arrived in the year 2019. When children remember the moment of what they have gone through, they get scared even by its image. Everything was going well in his life, and then they got the news that once again the corona pandemic has started spreading its feet. Children, who work on the street, at home, or in a hotel or shop are bothered about this. Our Balaknama reporter Aanchal found the children living in Vinayakapuram Basti of Lucknow and informed them that now the corona pandemic is increasing again. You guys take care of yourself and do



your work by wearing a mask. Walk a distance of two yards even in the crowd and be as careful as you can. Start doing it now. Hearing this, the faces of those children were saddened. When we asked those children what happened, why did they get so sad? So the children were disappointed and said that after hearing this news, we remembered those days, which we can never forget even if we

try to. At the same time, those children also said that due to this epidemic, where they used to go out to work in homes, they did not even allow them to enter inside and used to drive them away from outside. They also said that do not come here until this pandemic is over. We pray to God that this epidemic does not come again as our life has now been managed with great difficulty.

GIRLS ARE TROUBLED BY THE OBSCENE REMARKS OF BOYS



Talkative reporter Rajkishore and reporter Vijay

In Gurugram, where there are more than a thousand slums, and some children of these slums study in a nearby school. When we spoke to these children, especially the girl students, we were told that some boys harass them when they go to study and pass obscene comments on girls. When they told this to their parents, they would come to

drop off the girls for a day or two at school. But what can the parents also do if they come with the girls every day how will they be able to do the work? That's why these naughty boys trouble us as they got the opportunity. We all don't like

this and we feel very scared. It seems that anything wrong can happen to us. We are not even able to study properly because of these naughty boys. Our dream is to stand on one's own feet by studying and can eradicate the poverty of the family. Similarly, Roopa (name changed) told us that we should not be treated like this and strict action should be taken against them so that this does not happen to us and we can be happy.

PEOPLE THROW GARBAGE IN OPEN-DRAIN DUE TO LACK OF GARBAGE CART

Reporter Prince and reporter Kishan

Have you ever thought about how much trouble one can face if there is no garbage bin or place in your area to throw the garbage? This news is from that sector of Noida where there are about 100 tarpaulin made homes. Our reporters visited that place and tried to know the problems of the children as well. Raju (name changed) shared that as you all know that in a day to day life there are a lot of waste things got collected and that extra waste material has to be thrown in the garbage bin. But the problem is that the garbage vehicle does not come into our area because our area is very inside from the main road and the garbage vehicle only visits the outer road and we do not even get to know this. Then our



reporters asked the children that if the garbage vehicle does not come, then where do they throw their garbage? The children told that there is a big drain in front of our house so the people living in the area throw garbage in that drain. There is a lot of garbage that gets collected due to the large number of people throwing

garbage. Due to the collection of garbage in the drain, there is also a lot of filthy smell and children also fall ill. Our parents have talked to the driver of the vehicle to come to our area, but those people came once or twice and then stop coming, but we are compelled to throw garbage in the open drain.

CHILDREN COLLECT MONEY BY DANCING IN MARRIAGE AT THE BEHEST OF PARENTS



Talkative reporter Maya and reporter Aanchal

Almost all of you must have seen the wedding/procession and also attended it. But have you noticed the children who come from outside and are dancing in these processions? Have you ever guessed why

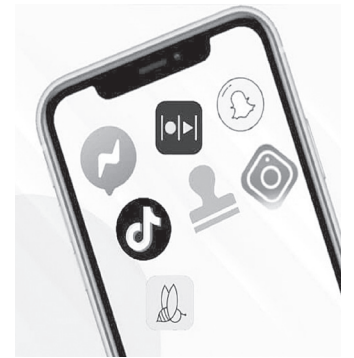
these children come to the wedding procession? So let us introduce you to the children who do this work. Our reporter tried to find such children who dance in anyone's wedding processions. When our reporter talked to him, it came to know that these children come to the marriage procession so that

they can collect money and return to their home and give this money to their parents. Our reporter also asked whether no one recognizes you all and does not drive you away? The children told us that no one is even able to recognize us then how will they drive us away? We wear nice clothes so that no one can recognize us and people think that we have come from somewhere outside. The children also shared that their parents only send them to go and collect the money. Many times the police uncle has also tried to catch us, but we hide somewhere, due to which he could not catch us. Children have to avoid the police because the crowd is not allowed to go to the wedding right now. But still, we are compelled to take this step to earn money.

MOBILE BECAME A MATTER OF CONCERN FOR THE PARENTS

Reporter Vijay

In Gurugram's Chakarpurvillage, mobile phones have become a big headache for parents. According to the parents, the phones were given to assist in online classes and study purposes but the children are not able to focus on studies as they are playing games on their mobile phones. Classes shifted to the online mode due to the closure of schools by the Haryana government during the winter season. You can find the children playing games or watching YouTube videos on the pretext of attending classes. Children are not giving any attention to studies. A lot of the new age online applications like TikTok among others are not only affecting their studies but playing with their future.



Children are using these applications during studies. Due to this children are not only falling behind in their studies but are also unable to complete work on time. The parents had bought the phones for the convenience of their children. But these phones are depriving the children of studies. This is the reason mobile phones have become a cause of headaches for parents.

PLANTING TREES LEADS TO PURE AIR

Report by Aanchal and Anjali

You must have heard that the life of a small child is fragile. The child brings into his life whatever he gets to see or hear. Therefore, the first responsibility of showing the right path to the child lies with the parents and then with the teachers. Our Balaknama reporter Aanchal met with the children who stay in Vinayakpuram Basti in Lucknow. Aanchal, our reporter saw some kids, aged between 6 to 7 years, who were carrying pots with plants in them. She asked them from where did they get these plants from? She also inquired about the broken pots. The children smiled amongst themselves and said that this pot was discarded by a lady and that they will grow a plant in this pot by adding water so that it gives us oxygen. They were told by the teachers in their school that planting trees is a good deed. That's why whenever they find plants like these, they plant them near their house. It grows up to give them oxygen and shade.

GIRL PLAYING THE GAME ON MOBILE CAUGHT IN THE FIRE

Reporter Babita and reporter Aanchal

You must have heard that only parents can make a beautiful future for the child. It is in the hands of the parents whether to put their child to work or send them to school for studies. When the child is young, the child learns only what is in front of them. This news is about the children living in Lavkushnagar Assamese Basti of Lucknow. It is a matter of one day that a girl named Rabiya (name changed) was playing the game on her mobile sitting in front of a fire in her own house and she was so



engaged in playing the game that she did not even feel that there was a fire in front of her. It is burning, or let's say that the girl did not pay attention to that fire and that fire showing its wonders caught her clothes,

due to which the entire cloth of Rabiya's left leg was burnt. If there was cotton cloth, it would not stick to his feet and not burn so quickly. But she was wearing a terry cot cloth, so when it got burnt, it was completely stuck in his leg and almost her whole leg was burnt. There was also a shortage of money on her parents and because of which she was treated as such. We would like to alert the parents of all the children by telling them about this shocking news because this incident can happen to any of your own children as well. Mobile addiction can become a threat to children's lives.

STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN DREAM OF DOING JOBS AFTER STUDYING



Reporter Huma and reporter Sangeeta

Many children have missed their studies due to the lockdown and they are engaged in some kind of work with their parents or elder siblings. At the same time, some children are studying along with work. These

children belong to the basti of our Daliganj contact point in Lucknow. When we went there to have a support group meeting and tried to know the problems of the children, some children study along with work. During the conversation, we asked the child, what do you do? So that child told that "I go to school in the morning

and when I come back from school, I do electronic work. We told that child that there is a lot of danger in this. So that child told, there is a lot of danger in this, but what to do, we have to run the expenses of the house and we will also learn something from this work. If not, then how will our household expenses go? Due to the lockdown, we have got a lot of problems. With great difficulty, we have got work now. There was a lot of difficulty in running the household expenses and then we told that child that if you have to leave studies because of work, will you leave studies? So that child said that no, I will not leave studies, no matter how much work comes, I will study along with work. I want to study and do a job. That's why I don't miss school and study at home by taking time out.

GAMBLING ADDICTION BECOMES A CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Report by Vijay

Gambling by the people in the slum area of Jalvayu Tower is becoming a cause of concern. The women often complain that whatever money that their husbands make is spent on gambling or alcohol which leads to fights in their homes. When our reporter met people for further investigation into this matter, she was told by a girl named Ruby that her father doesn't do any work but spends the whole day gambling. They go to work for a day or two and with whatever money they have earned, they use it for gambling. Ruby also mentioned that her father is addicted to gambling to such an extent that he doesn't care about his family's well being which leads to a very poor atmosphere at her house. Gambling addiction has led to strained relationships in the family. Ruby's father doesn't



fulfill basic responsibilities and her mother isn't able to do much to improve the situation. The drunken father beats her mother and his children when they go to seek an explanation for this behavior. He also quarrels with the neighbors. In this way, 10 to 12 families are on the verge of destruction. Our reporter Rajkishor asked around nearby people and they confirmed that gambling is rampant here and the main reason for problems in families. If the man of the house understands his responsibilities well, then the family will get out of trouble and move ahead in life.

INNOCENT CHILDREN WHO BECAME VICTIMS OF DRUG ADDICTION

Reporter Vijay

We tell you the story of a child living in the slums of Gurugram who became addicted to drugs at such a young age. We are keeping that child's name and local address confidential. We came to know that the child gradually learned to have alcohol after watching his father taking the same. When his father used to drink alcohol every night after returning from his work and sometimes the liquor remained in the bottle, then when everyone is asleep, the child would drink the remaining alcohol from that bottle. In this way gradually he became addicted to alcohol. When his friend came to know about this, his friend made him understand that you do not take intoxicants, intoxication is harmful to us. But even after all the efforts by the friend, that



child would get intoxicated again. Because of this, his friends are very upset. His friend says that it is not a good thing to do drugs in front of any child. People should not take drugs in front of children. If all people know and agree with this, then no child will take his step towards drugs because children often learn from the people around them.

CHILDREN FORCED TO PLAY IN A SMELLY PLACE

Reporter Shiva and reporter Kishan

Our Reporters were passing through a place in Noida, when they saw some children playing in a lot of dirt. Seeing this, the Reporters went there and saw that children are forced to live their lives in the slum of Noida Sector 65. 12-year-old Omprakash (name changed) said, "the place where we live there is no free space to play. There is an empty space next to the slum, where we children used to play. But the problem is that there is also a market next to that place. The people of the market throw garbage at the place of play, due to which there is a lot of smell. The problem is not only this, but people living in the slum also come to that place to urinate and we are forced to play at that place. While playing,



sometimes we also get stained with those feces and urine, due to which there is odor. Due to the filth in the settlement, we also fall more ill. When we

are sick, we also have been beaten by our parents. But seeing all this, our contractor does nothing. We have to face this problem every day.

GIRLS DISCONCERTED BY PEOPLE DEFECATING BY OPENED THE DOOR

Reporter Vijay

This news is from Gurugram, where some people living in slums go to defecate with the opened door of the toilet and they do not pay any attention to the passer-by. Here toilets have been built for the people living in slums and doors are also installed on those toilets. But some people go to the toilet there, they do not even close the door. A center has been opened for the children near the same toilet and small children



and young girls also come to that center to study. When girls come and go through that road or play outside the center, they are often witnessing that people are urinating with opened doors. Girls don't like

this behavior at all. Many times the contractor of the slums was also told about this that they should refuse all those people to defecate with opened door, but the contractors are probably not able to convince them. The girls say that this problem should be solved so that we do not have any problem in commuting on the way and there is no hesitation in playing outside the center. The girls also told that we are very ashamed to see people in such conditions.

FEAR OF HOMELESSNESS AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

Reporter Maya and reporter Sangeeta

Children and their parents are already so upset because of the lockdown. Now they have become even more worried. You must be thinking about what could be the problem. So this problem is of the slum of Lucknow, where the reporter went to conduct a support group meeting with the children and had a word with them. During the meeting, when we tried to know the problems of the children, most of them told that there is a railway line near our hut and now the movement of trains has started on it. Railway officials had come and were

talking about removing the hut so that no accident should happen. He also said that living near the railway track is extremely tough and not free from danger. That's why we are scared. Where do we go if we want to? We do not even have our land that we can live there too. We are already so upset and ever since the railway officials have said that we will have to move the hut from here, we have had sleepless nights. Where will we go now and where will we stay? There is a lot of worries thinking about this, but if the government makes arrangements for us to live, then we will not have any problem vacating this slum.

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

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