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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.

## CHILDREN SHARED THEIR DREAMS ON THE OCCASION OF CHILDREN'S DAY

Reporters - Kishan, Sangeeta, Aanchal, Aslam, Ravi

Through our Balaknama Newspaper, one must have been able to deduce that our street and working children even when constantly surrounded by problems and challenges find something to smile about even in the littlest of things. As we all are aware, Children's Day is celebrated on the 14th of November. Earlier it was celebrated on the 20th of November however after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru on the 27th of May in 1964, seeing his love for children, the date was changed to his birthdate. Nehru's incalculable love for children led him to believe that the children of one's country are the architects of its future and to keep one's future safe, everyone must strive to better the future of these children. Children's Day reminds all the citizens of India that safeguarding the rights of chil-

dren and guiding them to the right path is the moral duty of all of us - only then can a prosperous country emerge. On this day, the citizens of India pledge to provide equal opportunities and rights to all children. On this day, Government as well as non-government schools plan for creative and entertaining games, acts, shows and programmes for their children. On the event of Children's Day, our Balaknama reporters asked our street and working children about their dreams. They asked the children what they were doing to fulfil their dreams and what their plans were. A 15-year-old girl living in the Noida slums told us that she studies in the 8th grade in a governmental school and after returning from school she helps out with the housework. She told us that she focuses on her studies and wants to get educated and become a great doctor and treat the poor for



free and says that her family supports her dream however she fears that their age-old traditions and practices will bind her to her house due to the fact that women in her community aren't allowed to leave their houses to work outside but to fulfil her dream she has to leave the house somehow and sometime if she wants to become a doctor. She feels that her parents won't allow her to leave the house for doing so as her older

sister also studied well and had a dream for herself but she eventually was prohibited to leave the house as their community's traditions did not allow for a woman to leave the house. Thinking of this the girl stirs day and night wondering if she can ever attain her dream or not. A 10-year-old boy living in Jaipur named Sahil (changed name) told us that he used to study in his village and went to a government school as well however

during the pandemic lockdown their family did not even have enough money to feed themselves due to which they had to migrate to Jaipur. After reaching Jaipur the parents quickly found work and got busy and did not know where the nearest school was. Afterwards, when the child was found by the NGO members, he was helped to get enrolled in school and now goes to school daily and studies in the seventh grade. He wishes to get educated and join the army to protect his country. He tells the journalists that his family members support his dreams however the amount that is earned in a day gets entirely spent the same day to sustain the family. He knows that if he gets training for the army, it will require a lot of money which the family does not have whatsoever and desires that receive some help from somewhere or someone so he can accomplish his dream of joining the army.



### SOHAIL WORK AS A BUTCHER UNDER COMPULSION

Talkative Reporter Ankush, Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Our reporters went on a tour of Badshahpur village and were surprised when they interacted with some children. The children told the reporters about a boy named Sohail, aged 10 years old. The boy does the work of cutting meat and has only his mother in the house. As there was no earner in Sohail's house, he had to leave school and work as a butcher. It was found that all the children get meat from Sohail's shop. He works at a place full of bad smells. One day the children saw that Sohail had nicked his finger while cutting meat. Sohail does not like doing this work but he forcibly has to as there is no one to earn in his house. When our journalists talked to Sohail, they found that he has a big dream and wants to become a very successful man.

## CHILDREN DO WORK, BUT THE OWNER DOES NOT GIVE THE PRICE FOR THEIR HARD WORK

Talkative reporter Mukhsina  
Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Our Balaknama reporters went on a tour of Ghata village, where they interacted with the children. There, they found that every child is engaged in some sort of labour. The children work at grocery shops, medical stores, and even clothes shops. The children complain that their owners treat them very badly and even after the month is over, the owners do not pay them on time. The shop owners keep on delaying their salary and even the repeated efforts of the child do not lead to any changes. The owners threatened to fire the children to dismiss their demands and show very rude behaviour towards



them. The children often feel ashamed. After listening to the problems of the children, the journalists made them aware of the immediate action that can be taken if they face

misbehaviour which is calling the child helpline number 1098 and lodging a complaint against the person/offender. The children aspire to become police and army officers.

# POLLUTION BECAME FATAL FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WORKING ON THE STREETS

Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Pollution has become a serious problem. All the people nationally as well as internationally are being impacted by this. All living and non-living factors have come under its grip and its side effects are easily visible all around. The shelters for the street and working children are situated near the factories where a lot of dust is released, due to which these children living on the roadside and their families have to face a lot of difficulties. Sometimes, the level of pollution increases to the point that children have

to take a leave from school. Drinking water also gets polluted and the children have to consume this very contaminated water. As a ramification, the children get serious diseases like typhoid, jaundice, cholera, gastric problems, etc. and their health is seriously affected. Their parents are daily wage earners and they work hard to ensure that their children's education expenses and the rations of the house are met. Due to working and living in so much pollution, the children and their families contract diseases that can prove fatal. Children's brain function

is also hampered due to pollution, leading to them being left behind in their studies. Recently everyone celebrated the festival of Diwali with great pomp where children to elders and everyone lit crackers, due to which the level of pollution has suddenly spiked to a great extent. People who have to live on the streets are thus facing severe difficulties as their food gets contaminated due to pollution. Many times the whole road gets covered with haze, due to which the people living on the road also get into accidents. It is a request to keep pollution in check.



## CONTAMINATED WATER IS OFFERED TO DRINK EVEN AFTER PAYING MONEY

Talkative Reporter Sandeep  
Balaknama Reporter Aslam

After meeting the children of Badshahpur, our reporter talked to them about their problems, and the children shared that the water that comes to their house is very polluted. They were informed that their landlords take money for water every month and if they don't provide the payment on time then the landlords cease the water supply in their houses. Despite paying money the children's houses get contaminated and dirty water in their houses. It is also the reason why families need to buy 20 litres of water bottles for drinking purposes. Sometimes they

have to fulfil the needs of the house such as cooking, washing clothes, bathing etc. with this dirty and contaminated water. In this regard, the families once tried to present their problems to a senior official but the landowners threatened and silenced all of them. On the same issue, the journalists were informed that the children and families had a serious discussion with the landowners and told them that if they did not get clean water, they wouldn't pay for it - the result of which, the owner grabbed their collars and threatened them and even has physically hit them a couple of times on the only demand of clean, potable water.

## DIFFICULT TO SURVIVE DUE TO INCREASING POPULATION

Reporter Aanchal

The way inflation is increasing in India, every person belonging to the lower class is facing difficulties and due to this, our street and working children are also very upset. Looking at the problems of the present times, our Balaknama journalist, during his visit to Lucknow saw that a child along with his father

was trying to earn money by setting up swings in every street and locality with a bag full of equipment. When the journalists had a conversation with them, they came to know that these people are doing this work because they don't have any other means to earn a livelihood. These small children through doing this small work, help their parents. They carry swings

to the street and communities so that the children there can play on these swings and they can earn some money by charging 5 rupees per ride. Due to the increasing population, all the jobs are gradually decreasing, because of which these people are ready to do anything to earn a living, which is also making life difficult for our street and working children.



## CHILDREN TRAPPED IN HOUSEHOLD PROBLEMS

Talkative Reporter Kamini,  
Balaknama Reporter Sangeeta;  
Lucknow

We all must be aware that everyone has to face some difficulty or hardship in their life, be it momentary or prolonged and each person tries numerous things to put food in their belly. A similar situation is of our children in Lucknow. When our Balaknama reporters went to a support group meeting and chatted with the children to understand their problems, two little children came up and talked about their lives. These

children said, "Our father is a barber and he also maintains a slipper shop nearby where we help him. We arrive at the shop at 9-10 in the morning and leave by 9-10 at night. Earlier in the summer, this work was bearable but it has been very difficult in the winters due to us vending out in the open and the cold winds making us feel cold." The two children also said that it is something they don't have a choice in as it is necessary to help their father to support the household expenses; which also leads them to not being able to go to school.

Talkative reporter Usha and  
reporter Kishan

Balaknama reporter tries to know about the problems faced by the slum dwellers in Noida Sector 115 slums from the talkative reporter Seema (name changed) of Balaknama. Seema shared that the area she lives in is extremely vulnerable and dirty and there are around 50-60 slums and each rented room/Shanti has a monthly rent of around Rs.2000. Lack of water is a major problem in this slum, water comes but the owner starts the motor in the morning and all the household work has to be done in the handful amount of water. There is no toilet in the slum and children and adults have to go for open defecation. There is a government toilet 100 meters away from this slum, where water comes but the toilet worker does not clean it there, switches off the water motor, and keeps sleeping outside the toilet. When children and adults living in slums go to the toilet, they take a small bottle of water with them. Sometimes it hap-

## WILL WE BE ABLE TO STAY HEALTHY LIKE THIS?



pens in slums that water does not come for many days due to motor failure and the amount of water that can be filled in the morning is not sufficient for household chores and falls short. When we had to go to the toilet, we would not have any water left, that's why we children could not carry water. Most of the children have

to defecate without water and when the water comes the next day, then they can clean themselves well. Due to lack of water, the toilets remain very dirty and the children are not able to stay healthy and are also falling ill. When the checkers come to check the toilet, the employee cleans the toilet and turns on the water.

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number

**1098**

Police Helpline Number

**100**

## LACK OF SEWER SYSTEMS A MAJOR PROBLEM



Talkative Reporter Gulfasa,  
Balaknama Reporter Kishan;  
West Delhi

In the slum community of West Delhi, our Balaknama reporters during a support group meeting inquired from the children about their problems and talked to them in detail. Each child came up one by one to discuss their issues when a young girl told us, "The place where we children live is a community

of 400 - 500 huts where a large sewage drain is located however there is no provision of a sewage channel or sewage system in our community. The slums we live in a located at a lower ground level and the motor supplying water to the community is often jammed by the residents leading to the supply pipes being damaged and all water facilities coming to a halt. This results in our community not having any functioning sewer channels

and the entire area starts to smell horrible and mosquitoes and fly infestations start to pick up the pace that ends up sickening a lot of the children of our area. Sometimes due to the water supply bursting, the slums start to quickly fill up with water and the water level often reached the knees and sometimes to the shoulders even. Due to houses flooding in this scenario, many families have ended up losing their important documents in the process like Aadhar Cards, Ration Cards, PAN cards, etc. From this sewage water, sometimes snakes and scorpions also emerge which add to further threat, along with the many shards of glass in the water that stab our feet. Draining the water out often takes 2 days. It was with much difficulty that in our community we gathered a thousand rupees from every household to get a new pipeline installed however the pipeline was never installed and all the money disappeared.

## CLEANLINESS WILL HAVE TO BE BROUGHT THROUGH HABITS, NOT BY WORDS, ONLY THEN WILL INDIA BECOME A CLEAN COUNTRY

Talkative reporter Rita  
Balaknama Reporter Anchal

Nowadays the whole world is raising the slogan that we will make our country clean, but the reality is quite opposite. One can see very easily the many people throwing garbage everywhere, whether it is household garbage or packets of food items, bottles of water or beverages; people throw it anywhere. When the journalist of our Balknama talked to the street and working children living in Lucknow on this subject, they saw similar things also exist there. People throw the wrappers of any eaten thing anywhere, due to which gradu-

ally the garbage is starting to accumulate and spread. The children complain that the illiterate people are called "Gawar", but at least they keep their houses clean. They either burn the garbage or throw it in the bin. Despite the government having kept dustbins everywhere, there are many people in our country who do not care to throw their garbage in them. We proudly say that we live in a golden country but as a citizen here, we are not aware of how to keep it clean. When every person living in India will become aware of his cleanliness, then our country will truly become a clean and golden country.

## GOD IS PLAYING STRANGE GAMES WITH US



Talkative Reporter Mamta,  
Balaknama Reporter Aanchal;  
Lucknow

Sometimes, God tests us, humans, while we are already in a difficult place. A similar situation has occurred in Lucknow with our street and working children. We came to know of a child of approximately 5 to 6 years of age who was playing by himself when he was at-

tacked by a stray dog and got badly hurt because of it. This attack then led to the child receiving several stitches all over his body and is still in the hospital due to it. After learning of the matter, our reporters tried to gather the full information from the child's neighbouring children and found that the stray dog was beaten by the community and chased away. Children and their guardians

claimed that some or the other child is chased and bitten by stray dogs each day, but due to them not paying attention, a child like this has been hospitalised in such a critical condition. An oversight like this had such a major consequence that a child is in a possibly fatal condition today; if the guardians would have paid any more attention, things like this could have been avoided.

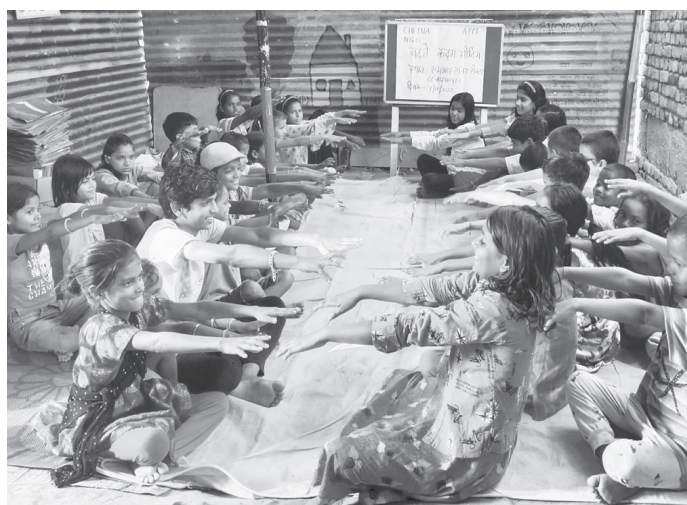
## GIRLS AND SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE UPSET BY THE OBSCENE ACTIONS OF BOYS

Talkative Reporter Nitesh  
Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Our reporter went on a tour of Badshahpur village where the journalists interacted with many children. One of the children shared that boys and girls have different schools but both schools fall on the same path. When they go to school in the morning, the boys tease the girls in front of the school and write the notes on paper when the classes end. Sometimes the boys take the girls out of school after lunch and even bunk their classes to do so. Our journalists tried to know what action the school administration took when they came to know about the issue. The

headmaster and teachers of the girls' school complained about the boys' school and even called the police. When the police arrived and were stationed, none of the boys dares to go in front of the girls' school and from the next day onwards, all of them go to school on the same path. Our journalists then made them aware of the child helpline number i.e. 1098, in case someone is aware of molestation or the girl herself has been a victim of molestation or is being harassed, then she can call 1098 immediately. When our journalists asked them what they want to become when they grew up, the children laughed and replied they want to become teachers.

## WICKED PEOPLE MADE CHILDREN A MEANS OF SELLING LIQUOR



Talkative Reporter ~ Adarsh,  
Balaknama Reporter ~ Aslam

Balaknama reporter visited 140 slums in the Palda area of Gurgaon and during the visit, reporters interacted with the children. Some children were very scared, then when our reporters explained to the children, the children said, "There are some people here

who get the children to sell liquor. Some children say no to selling liquor and some children under compulsion say yes to such work, then these people make big promises by persuading the children that if there is any problem, they will always be with the children, will give money and also save them from the police. Those children who refuse

to do this work, these people beat them and threaten that "If you do not sell our liquor, I will send you and your family members to jail, so children do everything according to their words in fear. These people give just a penny to each child to sell liquor. If any gentleman explains to the children to do not involve in this work, then these goons threaten that person also. If by mistake this thing reaches the police and the police come to that place to investigate, then before the arrival of the police, the person selling the liquor comes to know in advance and he hides the liquor and drives away the children also from there. Then the policemen investigate and they do not find anything. Then the next day, the work of selling alcohol to the children starts again, due to which the children are not able to study and fall into the wrong company since childhood.

## WE AGREE THAT THERE ARE MANY PROBLEMS, BUT SHOULD WE IGNORE HAPPINESS BECAUSE OF THAT?



Talkative reporter Mamta and Balaknama reporter Aanchal

If we talk about being happy, then we should not wait for any big moment, sometimes

even small moments give us great happiness. You are also aware of the condition in which our street and working children live, but there is one thing, despite living amid

so many troubles, they create new happiness on their own. When the reporter of Lucknow visited many places and saw that almost all our street and working children are making arrangements to feed themselves in one way or the other. During our visit, we found some children who were going somewhere very well-dressed and beautiful. When we talked to them, we came to know that there is a park near their house and all those children are going there for a walk. When we had a conversation with the children about this topic, they told us that if there is no place nearby where we can play, that is why we can play and jump in this park near our house and this park also have swings for children. Along with that, those children also shared that there is a ticket of Rs.10 to enter the park and use all the swings. We agreed that we have many problems, but in the wake of all these, we should not sacrifice our happiness.

## CHILDREN TAKE THEIR FIRST STEP TOWARDS KEEPING THE ENVIRONMENT CLEAN BY CELEBRATING AN ECO-FRIENDLY DIWALI



Reporter Aanchal

Our street and working children hardly have a smile on their faces as they are very upset with the condition they have. Despite facing so many difficulties, they do not show their emotions to anyone. Looking at the condition of these children, our Balaknama

journalist interacted with our working children. While interacting with the children, it came to light that this time Diwali was rather enjoyable for the children because they used very few firecrackers this time and have not contributed too much to air pollution. The children are aware of the importance of a healthy en-

vironment and know that we already have too much pollution and we don't need to increase it anymore. Therefore all the children avoided burning crackers this Diwali so that the environment does not get polluted further. Everyone would know very well that every festival comes only once a year and we all should celebrate it with love and happiness and not by polluting the environment. The festival of Diwali is anyway considered a symbol of light by eradicating darkness. Therefore, on this beautiful festival of Diwali, which spreads light, we should all celebrate it with happiness with our neighbours and friends by cleaning our homes, decorating, lighting diyas and making good dishes and not by burning firecrackers.

## DISTRESSED CHILDREN- MOSQUITOES MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO SIT AT HOME EVEN DURING THE DAYTIME

Talkative reporter Khushi, Reporter Sangeeta Lucknow

As we all are aware that dengue mosquitoes originate in filth and garbage and when these mosquitoes spread in large numbers and bite us, people fall ill. The same is the situation of Secretariat Basti of Lucknow at present. Our reporters held

a meeting and tried to know the problems of the children and found that they majorly live in such filth. Everywhere there are piles of waste and people put their garbage outside their homes - due to which the breeding grounds of mosquitoes are increasing every day. Now there are so many mosquitoes that it has become difficult

for them to sit at home even during the day. Various insects also originate from this filth, keep entering the houses of these families. It was informed that once a big snake also came out of it and they are very scared after seeing it. Finally, it was noted that there it was another place to dump the garbage which lead to everyone throw-



## CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF EIGHT AND TEN COMMIT ROBBERY BY FORMING A GANG

Talkative Reporter Raja Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Our Balaknama reporters went on a tour of Ghata village where the journalists learned through the children that some of the children living in the settlements form gangs and steal from the big factories. All these children steal from ten o'clock in the night to midnight in the summer and from four o'clock in the morning to seven in the winter. They sell iron worth at least 2000 rupees a day. These children then procure big cigarettes and fill dry intoxicants like ganja into them and consume them. There is no old member in their gang and are three to four small

children, whose age is between 8 to 10 years. Many times, they have been caught stealing in the company and the company members have called their family members and have beaten them up quite a lot. Not only this, but the company has also taken a photo of each of these children and kept it with them. When these children are caught stealing, they stop for a couple of days and then continue again. The family members of all these children are not able to admit them into the schools because they do not have any legal documents and now these children are slowly ruining their future by getting stuck into wrong habits.



## ADDICTION IS RUINING CHILDHOOD

Talkative Reporter Muskaan, Balaknama Reporter Aslam

As you must know that most people and children also take drugs. One day our Balaknama reporter went on a tour of Badshahpur Gurugram. Then during a support group meeting with the children, a child told that "In our community, children also consume drugs and other substances like gutka, beedi, tobacco, cigarette, liquor, ganja etc. and some children drop out of school and they get intoxicated. Then a girl said, "My father drinks a lot of alcohol and also fights a lot in the

house. Because of my father's drinking addiction, my mother has to do sewing work to bear the expenses of my studies, but when my mother earns money, my father snatches money from mother and if my mother does not give money so father used to beat mother with wood and utensil and used to drink alcohol after snatching money. Sometimes he used to come after drinking alcohol at night and used to beat my mother and also used to sell my school books and drink alcohol. Sometimes in intoxication, he locks the mother in the room and there is not even a grain to eat in the house. Then a day came that my father passed away due to excessive drinking, now my mother and I live at home and my mother works as a tailor". Balaknama reporters explained to the children that "Children, in the future, you have to bring honour to our society and you all have to stay away from these things". Then Balaknama reporters asked the children if you get a chance, what would you all like to be? Some children said, I will join the army and some girls said, I will open a beauty par-



ing their house's waste right outside the doors.

## WITH THE INCREASING HAVOC OF FOG, WHERE TO ESCAPE



**Bureau Report**

We keep hearing in the news that the pollution index is running very high after Diwali. The air has become too toxic to inhale due to pollution and the slum dwellers living under the flyover are greatly affected by this. These people are unable to escape from the increasing pollution

in any way and almost all the work is done outside their houses, whether it is making food or washing clothes or going somewhere for business. These people do the work of Beldari, Labor etc. on the roads themselves to make their living. Even children do not remain untouched by this increasing pollution and are quickly falling prey to it. Ra-

jkumari, (changed name) living in Sector 62, told that her eyes started stinging on the evening of Diwali. Although due to this she does not have too much trouble, she could feel the presence of the gunpowder in the air. Along with this, Mona, (changed name), told that there is a garbage heap next to her house, in which the next day so many firecrackers, burnt paper and polythene was lying as if most of the firecrackers were bursted there and the people started feeling problems in breathing. Mona too wanted to light the crackers, but due to her financial condition she was unable to do so and later she was also happy that she did not contribute to the increasing pollution.

## CHILDREN TROUBLED BY THE INCREASING OUTBREAK OF DENGUE

**Talkative Reporter- Anjali, Balaknama Reporter- Anchal**

Presently, Dengue is spreading extremely fast in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, due to which many people are falling prey to it. The statistics show that children are most susceptible to it. Whoever is coming in contact with this strain of dengue, their condition is worsening quickly. When our Balaknama journalist from Lucknow talked to the children about this epidemic spreading, the children told that many children in their locality are suffering from



the disease. This disease has slowly spread into the entire colony and people have come in contact with it. Dengue has

not been a trouble to the state to such an extent as it is now and, in their colony, both the parents as well as the children are admitted to the hospital these days. The children shared that except for the corona pandemic, no other disease has spread in their colony to date, and the children were never admitted to the hospital previously. The children of the colony are very cautious about this and are cleaning their surroundings, applying mosquito nets or mosquito coils before sleeping and other things to prevent the spread of this disease.

## EDUCATION IS STILL OUT OF REACH FOR MANY WORKING CHILDREN



**Talkative Reporter Anjali, Balaknama Reporter Anchal**

Education is a right for all people, it is important and it is necessary however it is a shame that even today there

are loads of children whose lives have not seen a day of education. When our reporters talked to a few of such children, it was found that the children had actually been going to school before however

after conditions for their families turned for the worse and all the house's responsibilities came on top of their shoulders, they had to leave their schools and education in order to support their families. A child told that due to growing older his family removed him from school, and another told that due to none of his peers attending school, he too left. The children came forward and voiced their issues as to why they left school or didn't attend school at all. In response, our reporters talked to the children and explained to them that they work as it is however it is also important for them to receive an education and thus they should dedicate some time to schooling or education as well because if they miss the opportunity to study now they may never be able to study in schools due to age gaps and restrictions.



## START STRONG RELATIONSHIPS FROM HOME ONLY THEN WE CAN MAKE GOOD FRIENDS

**Talkative reporter Rita and Balaknama reporter Anchal**

There is no scope for any discrimination in relationships, be it a brother-sister relationship or a friendship. Working children are very honest with their friends and try to always maintain their relationships and after interacting with the children on this topic the journalists came to know from a girl that friendship is a relationship that can only occur between two girls and if a girl befriends a boy, then people start speaking and assuming the worst about

them. Our reporter then made them understand that there is nothing like this and they can befriend any human being, whether it is a parent or a boy or a girl. Along with this, the children were told that they should start this from their homes. If their sister is burdened with a heavy task, then her brother should help her and if the brother is burdened with a big task, the sister should help him. Along with this, they should also remain a friend, so that there is no discrimination in a sacred relationship like friendship.

## THE CHILDREN HAVE DECIDED TO STAY AWAY FROM SOCIAL MEDIA



**Talkative Reporter Mukhsana, Balaknama Reporter Aslam**

Balaknama reporter visited 200 slums of Badshahpur and during the tour, our Balaknama journalists saw that most of the children are using Instagram, some children are using Twitter and some are using Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube etc. and spending most of the time. Seeing this, our Balaknama journalists gathered the children and asked, "Children, what is the benefit of using social media?" One child said, "I use Instagram and make videos on Instagram and I have a thousand fans on Instagram and I have many girlfriends with whom I talk at night." Balaknama journalists then further asked "How many hours a day do you guys use the phone? So, the children said

"So someone replied that they use the phone for 4 hours, then someone said that they use the phone for 8 hours. If we see an average, then these children are spending more than 5 hours a day on social media. Then Balaknama journalists explained to the children that "You will have some friends on social media who can blackmail you by taking your information and if you make any video and upload it on social media, people will be able to see your face and later they can misuse with your videos and use your face for any other pornographic video as well. Apart from this, there are also hackers who can make your details public. All the children listened to this and promised that "from today onwards we will stay away from phone and social media as much as possible and study".

# NATIONAL CONSULTATION AND CONVERGENCE ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Reporters Ravi and Aslam

Hello friends, it may be that many of you know and it may also be that there are many people who do not know, but I want to tell all of you that from November 23rd to 27th, four reporters of Balaknama visited Bhubaneswar, participated in a national level meeting at the Sports Development Service Hostel located in Orissa, in which all four reporters represented their state and community and learned a lot about child safety. First of all, I would like to inform you that the purpose of this meeting is to end child sexual abuse in India and in this meeting a total of 64 youths from 12 states participated. During this meeting, the children were told through which means and who are the people who sexually abuse and exploit the children and how all these things can be avoided. In today's story, we are sharing with you the information about some of the things discussed in the meeting so that you people can also know these informative things and



information. So, let's read today's own story in which the children came to know that the abuses that happen to children are of many types such as physical abuse, mental abuse and emotional abuse and there can be many other types. And to do all this, people use many types of things such as children being exploited through social media and online mediums. Apart from this, most people would know any child who is ever abused and 95% of children are those with whom the wrong deed has been done by someone known to them. Along with this, a session was given to all the young friends, in which both boys and girls were kept in separate halls and

the children have informed about their private parts as well as their safety. It was also explained to the children that if any person touches their private part inappropriately, it is absolutely wrong and children should raise their voices against it and tell their trusted person. It is important for children to know about all these things because many times they lack information and due to this any accident or exploitation happens to a child, then during a legal action, the child can defend himself properly. Because of not being able to keep his word, even a criminal can escape from the law. Along with all these sessions, special

care was also taken for the entertainment of children, in which 64 children from 12 states presented cultural programs of their respective states, in which folk songs and dance and many patriotic songs were performed by them. In the next part of the program, the children were also told in detail about the POCSO Act, what is the POCSO Act and why it was made and what are the sections and punishments for the persons who exploit the children and their rights. After explaining all these things to the children, then they were also told about the ways to avoid all these things, such as not talking to unknown people on social sites and if someone

bullies them on any kind of social site, so, complain about it to your family members. Along with this, it was also told that you can also report such cybercrime online. Along with this, it was also explained to the children that if any kind of sexual abuse or exploitation happens to them, then it is not their fault because they had trusted someone but that person has betrayed their trust by breaking their trust. Apart from this, at the end of the meeting, many eminent speakers and stakeholders also participated in the meeting, including CWC Chairperson Orissa, Treasurer of NACG, Retired Judge Orissa Court, World Vision Organization Representative, Mountain Children Foundation Uttarakhand Representative, Open Learning System Orissa Representative, Child in Need Institute West Bengal representative, NCPDR chairperson, social activist, etc. were present and in front of whom full discussion of the meeting held for 2 days was kept and many big and important issues were identified.

## CHILDREN ARE SHOCKED TO SEE THE ACCIDENT HAPPEN IN FRONT OF THEIR EYES

Bureau Report

Today, the reporter interacted with working children living in about 400 hut slums located next to railway tracks in West Delhi to know their problems. A 12-year-old girl told that in their slum area exists a railway track and next to this slum is a park about 600 meters away, where children in the age group of 7 to 17 years go by themselves to play. However, children below 7 years of age cannot go to that park because it is too far from the children's residence and sometimes dogs also chase them while going alone to that area. This is also the reason why these children play next to railway tracks or on railway tracks.



The children who can hear the sound of the train move away from the track before the train arrives but when some children cannot hear the sound of the train or see the

oncoming train, then those children continue playing on the railway tracks. As soon as any brother or sister sees a train coming from the front, they immediately remove the

children from the railway tracks. If not, there would have been many accidents with most of the children playing on the railway tracks. The people living in these slums drink alcohol on a daily basis and fight and quarrel in their own houses and sometimes ask their family members to kill them from the oncoming trains in anger. A week ago, as it was informed, a few children were playing beside the railway tracks when suddenly a person came very angrily from his house and stood on the railway track. Seeing that person standing, the children thought that he

was standing there knowingly and when the train will arrive, he will definitely move away. The children then continued playing and when the train arrived, he jumped in front of it, was crushed by the train, dying in the spot. At that time, the children were standing at the same place where that person died after being hit by a train and seeing this incident happen in front of their own eyes, they got very scared. After this incident, the children were unable to sleep at night and if they tried to sleep, that incident kept coming to mind. They also informed us that they fell ill after this incident and now they are afraid of going to the toilet at night.

## CHILDREN CALL OUT TO THE NOIDA AUTHORITIES, DEAD ANIMALS TO NOT BE THROWN ON OPEN GROUNDS

Balaknama Reporter Aslam

As the weather changes, different allergies and diseases spring forth and the children are the most susceptible to these as they do not and cannot stay in one room all day. They have to roam around, study and play at every given moment but if the places they can play in are inexistent and the ones that are, have become a garbage dump for the people, what



should the children do? It is a common practice in our country to throw garbage at any empty street or roadside

but if the same were to be done with dead animals and they were buried on the same grounds that the children play

in, that is majorly concerning. Our Balaknama journalists are trying to expose this. Imran (changed name), a slum dweller of the Noida sector 82 reported that there is no place left in their locality except for one empty plot of land where he included, all the children go to play however, the people around have buried their dead animals in the same plot and goons in the area now stop them from playing in the area. When the children and their

community members tried to discuss with the locals of the place and explained that these animals being thrown or buried in the open rot and smell and have turned into an infestation grounds for diseases near their slums, the goons in the area verbally abused and threatened them to go away and let them do as they please. It is our sincere request from the Balaknama team to the Noida authority to take apt action on such cases.

# DIRTY TOILETS ARE A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR CHILDREN, COMPLAINTS DON'T GET HEARD

Talkative Reporter Rohit,  
Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Safe and clean water is a necessity for all. It is used in cleaning, bathing, washing, toilets, etc. and without it these things come to a halt. Our Balaknama reporters visited the MR Tower to ask the children about their problems where every child said that their major problem is the extremely dirty water and due to the water tanks in the houses being open, large quantities of mosquitoes breed there and sometimes larger insects also get into the water. When they complain



to their landlords, they find that the cleaning is done once

a year and never again. When the children try to open their

faucets to drink water, they find it pouring out insects due to which the families have to buy water from the shops to drink. The children's mothers work in houses as domestic helpers where they carry water to their homes to drink and cook for the families. Another concern that the children raised was the toilets in the area which smelled extremely bad and were absolutely unusable due to the filth and smell. If someone ever cleans it, some drunk goes to relieve himself at night, smashes the bottles inside, doesn't use water, and spreads filth everywhere. This

once led to a child's foot being stabbed by the shattered glass. When complained about this to the landlord, the landlord warned everyone but did nothing, which led to another reason why no one in the area wants to clean their bathrooms and toilets or use them. It was also informed that many people relieved themselves in the open while the women and children went inside farms to do so. The children when asked what they wanted to become in the future told that some boys wanted to become drivers and some girls wanted to become sports persons.

## THE CHILD BECAME A VICTIM OF AN ACCIDENT DUE TO THE BURSTING OF FIRECRACKERS

Talkative reporter Anjali,  
Reporter Sangeeta Lucknow

As we all know that Diwali is a festival of lights and is celebrated with great enthusiasm by lighting up houses however most people celebrate their Diwali by bursting crackers. While everyone knows that burning firecrackers on Diwali not only cause pollution but also causes accidents. It is often that someone's hand or leg gets burnt while bursting firecrackers. On the occasion of Diwali, a similar accident happened with the children of Lucknow. Our Balaknama journalist met the children during the community visit and talked to them to know how their Diwali went. They then came to know that a child's leg was burnt while bursting firecrackers and he is now having a lot of difficulty in walking. He has not yet



received treatment as their father is ill and the mother is the only one who bears the responsibility of all the family members and is not able to manage the household expenses alone. Due to lack of money, sometimes even the ration of the house is not available and because of this, they are still not able to get the treatment done for the child's leg. Thankfully, it is slowly healing on its own.

## BALAKNAMA REPORTERS GOT TO KNOW THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE CHILDREN

Talkative reporter Anjali,  
Balaknama reporter Aanchal

Although we try to know our street and working children through one-on-one interactions or other meetings, this time we gave the children an opportunity to speak freely about what they want to speak. The children shared that they are happy that there is someone who cares for them and wants to talk to street and working children. Along with this, they also seemed to be aware of the information about the four rights of the children and claimed that before joining Badhte Kadam, they did not even know that there is a children's helpline number and an organization called Childline 1098 which they also came to know about this through us; now they can call on that number in case of any problem. Some children shared their feeling that many



people come to them and give them some kind of food or drink or clothes to wear, but no one asked what their actual

problems are. The news of their situation being covered in the Balaknama newspaper gave them great pleasure.

## RAILWAY STATION BECAME A DEN OF DRUG ADDICTS AND GOONS, LOOTING AND STEALING IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

Bureau report

Our reporters were passing through the railway line of Delhi when they saw a girl picking up junk on the railway line. While talking to them, the 16-year-old, Damini (name changed), said, "We work as rag pickers at the railway station because people living in slums next to the railway also throw their household waste next to the railway tracks. And people travelling by rail also throw garbage on the railway tracks and we collect the same from the tracks." The problem is that this railway line is going a long distance and there is a railway station 1 kilometre away from the slums but that station is closed. There is a hangout of drug addicts at that station. Those drug addicts are so intoxicated that they don't even have their senses. If they don't have money to do drugs, they start snatching money from local people. They also commit shoplifting. Children working on railway tracks also reach that place to collect scrap. If addicts catch sight of children while picking scrap,

they hold those children and threaten to kill them by showing them knives or blades. We children are dear to our lives, that's why children leave even junk with drug addicts and whatever money or any other thing is found in their pocket, they also give it, if not given, then they also fight with the children. Often such children get trapped in the clutches of these drug addicts who lack information about the actions of drug addicts and those children who have this knowledge do not go to that place and come back earlier. The trains coming to the railway station also stop at this railway station and the people who get down at this station, seeing that lonely person, attack him too and snatch his mobile, money, bag etc. If any person does some cleverness, then without thinking anything, these addicts hurt the people with blades, knives etc. and snatch everything and throw it into the dense forest. Children request to officers that authorities should be guarded this station so that the passengers and children can be saved from this.

## THE SOCIETY INFLUENCES THE MIND



Talkative Reporter Shalu,  
Balaknama Reporter Aanchal

The environment one lives in greatly affects the way one perceives things, be it good or bad. A similar condition lies in the Vinayakpura dwelling of Lucknow for our street and working children.

These children live in such adverse conditions that it greatly affects their behaviour. Our Balaknama reporters visited this place and talked to the children to find that the children's guardians in the community are involved in all sorts of vices, be it fighting, arguing, drinking, or gambling,

leading to, as the children informed, other children and youngsters falling prey to the same habits as their guardians. When asked about what the guardians do if they see their children commit such activities the children explained that the children are very cautious and never do these things in front of their guardians as they're aware that if they are caught they will be beaten up and reprimanded. Listening to the children, the reporters realise that the children are replicating what their guardians are doing but at the same time, they are fearful of their guardians and thus, comment on such acts in hiding. To put it simply, the guardians here lie at fault as the children will do what they see.

# RAGPICKER CHILDREN GET BOTH EXCITED AND CONCERNED ABOUT THE FESTIVAL OF DIWALI



Talkative Reporter Nisha, Balaknama Reporter Kishan

When Lord Rama returned with his wife Sita and his brother Laxmana from Lanka after defeating Ravana, the denizens of Ayodhya lit up the entire state with diyas and this, after Lord Rama's 14-year-long exile, Diwali was celebrated. However now, Indians celebrate Diwali in new and different fashions like the refurbishment of houses, new clothing, praying, and even bursting firecrackers. Our Balaknama

reporter visited a few of the slums in Delhi and found that the working children of the area were busy garbage picking and were asked how they celebrated their Diwali. Ragpicker Dinesh (name changed) told us that there is no rest in their work and they have to work each day for the whole year however Diwali is the time of your when they get a break and celebrate joyfully with their families and burst firecrackers too. They start bursting crackers 10 days prior to Diwali and they easily find different types of

crackers like "Chakri, phool-jhadi, bullet," etc in common shops. When the locals burst firecrackers, sometimes the sparks fly into the garbage which leads them to be on guard so that it does not happen. This also implied that they need to take care of their garbage 10 days prior to Diwali and sometimes they even have to sleep near their garbage to protect it from sparks and causing a fire. Another child told that they also celebrated Diwali with diyas and prayers and he too has to do these things before each Diwali. They leave their work on Diwali and return to their hometowns for prayers and celebration however, each time they leave they are concerned about their garbage catching on fire due to the locals bursting crackers nearby. He also informed that after the locals burst crackers some of their garbage caught on fire leading to heavy losses. They informed me that they find Diwali enjoyable and they do not have to worry about and face these things.

# CHILDREN AWAY FROM EDUCATION TO PROVIDING LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT TO THE FAMILY



Talkative reporter Santoshi and reporter Sangeeta Lucknow

As you all know that due to the bad financial condition of the home, the parents are often worried and along with them, the children also get very worried about the financial

condition of the house and try to help their parents. For this, they start doing some work or the other. Something similar has happened with our children of Lucknow as well. When our Balaknama reporter went to conduct a reporter's meeting and tried

to know the problems of the children, a girl told that "I go with my parents to help them in their work. My parents are labourers and I sometimes help them in lifting bricks or lifting cement to help them in their work and do many similar types of work. My sister and I cannot go to school because of helping our parents. When we were in the village earlier, we used to study but since coming to Lucknow, we are not able to go to school we want to study very much, but we have not got admission to school, and because of this, we do not go to school and help our parents in their work so that they can bear the expenses of the household.

# CHILDREN AREN'T ALLOWED TO PLAY

Talkative Reporter Rahul, Balaknama Reporter Kishan

Our Balaknama journalists visited the slums of Noida to find the purpose of empty plots of land in the communities and how they are utilised. Salman (name changed), a resident of Noida explained that the plot of land that he and his peers have been playing on and are playing on his land owned by



the government and they play cricket, badminton, tag, kho-kho, etc. The problem with

this arrangement is that the villagers from the community have arrived on this plot of

**चेतना द्वारा सड़क कामकाजी युवाओं को स्वरोजगार हेतु 15 सिलाई मशीन का वितरण**

**यदि आठ लाख तक कमलने वाले इंडियन्स तो क्यों दें वे आयकर**

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## BALAKNAMA IN THE LIMELIGHT

- Chetna NGO distributed sewing machines to the street and working girls for self-employment smiles on the faces of the girls!
- Professors and students of the Department of Dietetics and Applied Nutrition, Amity University Haryana sensitized the children on malnutrition, cleanliness and vaccination, deworming etc. through street plays.
- Children learned leadership qualities in a 4-day residential workshop.
- On the occasion of Children's Day, the street and working children of Gurugram visited the police station, during this, the children took a pledge from the police to themby tying a rakshasutra on the hands of the police personnel, along with this they got to know the functioning of the police.
- Under "Friendship with Childline Week", Childline Mathura organized a kite competition with children to create awareness about child rights. The purpose of this program is to make people aware of child rights.

# TINA HAD TO SUFFER FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLIGENCE



Talkative Reporter Tina, Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Our Balaknama reporters visited the Jalvaayu Towers where they got to know of a girl Tina (name changed) who got herself affiliated with an organisation that she knew nothing about. She told us that one day an older boy and girl came to her locality and

talked to the children about a new organisation that they had opened across the road. After taking the children there, they were given lots of toys and goodies. After seeing this, the children of the Jalvaayu Tower community crossed four roads each day to visit the organisation centre and ate different kinds of foods each day, received clothing and toys, etc. There. She went to the organisation for a week however soon after, she was hit by a car which resulted in her face being injured. The organisation did nothing to help the child after the accident and the family had to bear the expenses of the treatment. Balaknama journalists explained to the children that they should not carelessly join any organisation without knowing about it beforehand based solely on the gifts and benefits they claim to provide you.

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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.