

Want to support  
Balaknama?

Give news lead and send in your suggestions and contributions to the given address - 31 Basement, Gautam Nagar, New Delhi - 110049  
Ph. No. 011- 41644471  
editorbalaknama@gmail.com

# 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.

ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL STREET CHILDREN'S DAY

## MORE THAN 300 STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN PARTICIPATED IN STREET TALK SEASON-6

11 children shared their inspiring stories that touched the hearts

Balaknama reporters: Kishan, Sangita, Anchal, Jubeda, Aslam

In the world, nearly a million children are forced to spend their lives on the streets. These children, born into poverty, lose the most beautiful moments of their lives as they grow up on the streets. In India alone, more than 400,000 children are forced to live on the streets. These street children have no official count. Street corners are their playgrounds, and traffic lights are the means of survival. Sometimes these children try to earn some kindness by cleaning your car's windshield, while others just reach out their hands in hope upon seeing you. As these children spent most of their time on the streets, they lose the most beautiful moments of their lives. Amidst the noise of traffic and the dust of the streets, their emotions and tears go unnoticed. Every year on April 12, International Street Children's Day is celebrated worldwide. The key to celebrating International Street Children's Day is to raise awareness and take action to improve



the lives of street children. By working together, we can make a difference in the lives of these vulnerable children and create a better future for all. As in previous years, this year too, on the occasion of Street Children's Day, CHETNA NGO organized the Street Talk Season 6 (a live talk by street-connected children) program at the Little Theatre Group Auditorium in Delhi. The chief guest of the program was Ms Nidhi who is a member of the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights and MsSurina Narula representative of Consortium for Street Children, apart from this there was a representative of UNICEF India, NGO part-

ners beneficiaries and team members, and media, who participated in the program with 300 street and working children.

The program was started with a brief introduction shared by Mr Sanjay Gupta, director of CHETNA NGO about Season 6 of Street Talk (a live talk by street-connected children). He shared that "These children have come from different states of India, such as Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana, and they will share their life journey of struggle, resilience and future aspiration which can inspire many other children to do better in their lives. It is a great achievement that all the



children from different cities have gathered on the occasion of International Street Children's Day, he added. Member of the Delhi State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Ms Nidhi, congratulated all the children and said that when I was listening to all the children, my eyes became moist. Seeing the courage and determination of the children, I felt that all these children will definitely overcome their troubles and hardships and reach a good position in life. My prayers are with all the children and we will always remain committed to any support that the Delhi State Commission for Protection

of Child Rights offers to the children. If any child wants to share their concerns regarding school admission or in any way, they can call the commission directly for help. She also shared the contact number of the commission with all the children.

In this series, MsSurina Narula from the UK said, "When 30 years ago we all raised our voice that there should be a day for the rights and respect of street and working children in the whole world, nobody considered it right." But after our struggle, everyone got a day on April 12, which started to be celebrated as International Street Children's Day. On this occasion, children living on the streets get a chance to voice their opinions and reach out to people. During the program, 11 children from different cities shared inspiring stories related to their lives.

Kabir (name changed), who is 14 years old, and from Rajasthan, said, "I live on the streets." When I asked my father about it, he said, "We live on the streets, and this is our life." With teary eyes,

cont. on pg. 2

## ARRIVAL OF SUMMER LEADS TO THE PROBLEM CAUSED BY INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Talkative Reporter- Kamini  
Balaknama Reporter- Aanchal

Infectious diseases are a continuous threat to human life and it poses a major challenge in front of science to overcome these challenges which are increasing day by day. Let's try to find out in the present scenario how infectious diseases are challenging the life of street-connected children in Lucknow and are proving to be dangerous for them. During the visit of our reporter, when the reporter spoke to a few of

the children and told them that day, chickenpox is spreading. Due to these children are in major trouble. Children said that in our slum areas, the maximum number of children are infected with chickenpox. Due to this, our parents are in major trouble. This disease is spreading gradually in our communities and we are scared because of this because it has been told that this infection is not stable in one place and it's a kind of airborne disease. So, every individual is in danger. Along with that, the children



also told their sisters how they can protect themselves from this disease. Raising awareness among all the children we told them if anyone around them has this disease then, in that case, maintain their distance from such person and avoid talking to them. In this way, we told the children to be careful and at the same time also advised them that all these diseases are caused by dirt, so advised them to keep their surroundings clean, so that all these diseases do not affect them.

# THE NOISE OF WEDDINGS MADE IT DIFFICULT TO PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

Reporter Anjali and Balaknama reporter Aanchal

Nowadays there is a season of marriages, due to which marriages are taking place in many places, similarly, it is happening in the areas of our street working children, in every 10-12 days someone or the other is getting married in their areas. Due to this, children are busy and happy as well. To indulge in the happiness of the children when our Balaknama reporter visited their area and asked them what is happening in their area then children told them that sister nowadays weddings are happening in

our areas, sister here in every 5-6 days someone's wedding is happening and we are enjoying this a lot because in our area whenever the wedding happened whole night DJ has been played and we happily dance the whole night and sleep in the morning. While talking to the children, we also asked the children, have your exams been done? To which the children replied sister, our exams are still going on. But sister, you tell us this wedding season does not come every time so we are enjoying it but we are also focusing on our exam preparation. We asked the children now you said that we dance all night and then



sleep in the morning, so when do you prepare for the exam, do you have any routine, or have you made a timetable? So, the children said that

sister, the timetable has not been prepared but we take some time out for studies. We also asked children whether their parents know that they

are taking some time for their studies. So, the children said, sister, yes whatever happens in front of them, they know everything. This means, if we speak broadly, then the children have become so engrossed in marriages that they are not giving that much time which they are supposed to give for their bright future, which can prove to be very harmful in their future. The parents of the children will also be a part of this, because this is the time of exams, on these days the children's full focus should be on studies, but they are attending marriages and are paying very little attention to studies.

## THE INCREASING INCIDENTS OF GOATS GETTING RUN OVER BY TRAINS ARE CAUSING DISTRESS TO CHILDREN

Talkative Reporter - Kamini  
Balaknama Reporter - Aanchal

During our visits, we often see children doing some kind of work to feed themselves, whether it be small or large tasks. The condition of our street and working children is so bad that they are willing to do even the smallest jobs just to fill their stomachs and lead a good life. Looking at the current problems, when our Lucknow-based reporter visited several places, various



problems of children came to light. However, one problem

was common among all children. When we talked to the

children on the streets, they told us sister, you also know that we live near the railway line, which causes us many problems. Every day, animals that live in our homes die by coming under the train, which causes us a lot of damage. When we talked to the children continuously about this issue, it came to light that people in the area where these children live raise goats. When the goats go in search of food, many of them get run over by the train and die. The children

also said that we had already informed the authorities earlier that these repeated incidents of goats getting run over are causing us a lot of damage and their number is increasing day by day. Every day, someone's goat in the colony gets cut by the train. We nurture the goats and then sell them and we get some money. But if it dies, we bury it. If the goat is big, we sell it at a higher price, but because of this train, everything gets ruined. This causes a lot of damage to our parents.

## MORE THAN 300 STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN PARTICIPATED IN STREET TALK SEASON-6

From pg. 1

Kabir shared that he works as a ropeway and swings operator from one city to another, and he can't make friends because he doesn't have a fixed place to live. He works all day and takes care of his younger siblings. His father sells drugs, and he was his informer. One day, Chetna's team member met him and asked if he wanted to study. Kabir told her that "I don't have enough money, and she said not to worry because she teaches for free. So, I started going to the centre and started studying there. Along with my studies, we also played cricket and other games, which felt good. I started liking to study, and now I study and lead other children at the education centre.

Anjali (name changed), who is 13 years old and struggled with difficulties on the streets, has become an inspiration for thousands of girls today. She shared that she used to live in a village with her four siblings

and parents. Suddenly, her house caught fire, and they started living on the streets. One day, she and her family met Chetna's team members, who helped them get into a government temporary shelter and encouraged her to study. She started studying and excelling in her studies. Now she wants to become a teacher and inspire other girls to study.

13-year-old Kamini (name changed) revealed that she had been begging for a living since the age of 10. She shared that "When I used to beg, I had to face many difficulties. People used to abuse me, stare at me with dirty looks, and sometimes even touch me inappropriately. One day, team members of Chetna NGO asked me why I didn't come to the centre to study. I teach children for free. That day, I became very emotional and decided that I would definitely go to study. I started going to Chetna's centre to study and gradually stopped beg-

ging. I bring my sister to the centre, and I want to become a teacher".

13-year-old Imran (name changed) said that I have four younger siblings. My mother died due to a serious illness, and after a fight with my two elder brothers, they left us. Because my father's foot was amputated, I had to take on all the responsibilities of my family. I run a tea shop and serve tea. I take care of my younger siblings with my father. I am grateful to Chetna for giving me the opportunity to study at NanheParinde Mobile Education Van. I love reading, and I take my brothers with me. I want to become a doctor and serve my community.

12-year-old Irshad (name changed) shared that "I live in a slum in Delhi and work in colouring the straps of flip-flops slippers. I only get 100 rupees after working for 12 hours, and the whole day is spent colouring the flip-flops. One day, I met Chetna's representative and I told her that

I don't go to school, so she called me to the centre. When I went to the centre, I saw many children playing together. I liked it, and I started going to the centre. Didi got me admitted to school, and today I study in the sixth grade. I am the monitor of my class. I am very happy that I did not lose courage and reached school by struggling. I want all the children living on the streets to go to school and study. Similarly, children shared the stories of their lives and struggles and expressed their happiness on the occasion of International Street Children's Day. The little ones also presented a motivational dance performance.

At the end of the program, the guests facilitated the children by giving prizes and while addressing the children said that we take concrete steps to address the root causes of children's issues and provide support to those who are currently living on the streets. This includes investing in

programs that provide shelter, education, and healthcare services to street children, as well as working to prevent children's issues such as poverty, lack of access to education, and inadequate social support systems. Furthermore, they urged to strengthen laws and policies to protect the rights of street children and to hold accountable those who exploit or abuse them. Street children must be treated with dignity and respect, and given the opportunities and support they need to thrive.

The member of the commission shared the helpline number with the children and motivated the children that if any child has any kind of problem, they can contact them and take direct help from the commission and talk to them. On this International Street Children's Day, let us commit to taking action to ensure that all children, regardless of their circumstances, have the opportunity to grow and succeed.

# SOME CHILDREN AVOID STUDIES AND SOME ARE NOT ABLE TO STUDY DUE TO COMPULSION

Talkative reporter Santoshi and reporter Sangeeta Lucknow

Nowadays, children often hide their faces from studies and if even have a little work they need to do then they give the excuse that they have to do a lot of work, because of which they are not able to go to school. But some children are such that no matter how many responsibilities come upon them, they never hide their face away from their studies. They work hard for their work and also work very hard for their studies. They try to study whenever

they get time. When our Balaknama reporter went to organize a support group meeting and spoke to children and tried to know about their problems and asked them how many children are going to school. A few children said that we go to school and some told that sister we don't go to school. A few children shared their problem that sister children are unable to go to school because of household chores and some children because of their younger siblings are unable to go to school. One child told my sister that I went to work



in the morning along with my mother and come in the evening. Earlier I had a brother so he uses to help in managing the expenses but now he is married due to which he doesn't give me money at home now I help with the household expense I really want to study but now my family members will not allow me to study because as now we are 2 sisters, we both need to work to help our mother. That's why we can't go to school and when I get time sometimes, I come to Sir to study. If I don't get time, and I can't come to study, then I study at night.

## DUE TO THE PARENTS, AMAN'S FUTURE GOT RUINED



Talkative Reporter-Aman Reporter -Aslam

When the reporter Aslam visited the slums of Badshahpur in Haryana, he got to know that a 12-year-old boy named Aman works as a housekeeper in a paying guest accommodation. When our reporter met him and

spoke with him, Aman revealed that he has not been enrolled in school by his family since childhood, nor has his elder sister or brother been educated. Because of this, no one in his family is literate. He grew up in neglect, and his family paid no attention to him. His younger brother stays out all day and

comes home at midnight, while his sister, who is now 10 years old, could not get admission to school because she did not have any knowledge of the same. If his family had enrolled her in school since childhood, she might have been educated today. Because of his young age, Aman is not employed anywhere, but he managed to tell the owner of the PG accommodation where he works about his circumstances. Aman added that "For this reason, the owner of this PG kept me working here. The owner is very strict and makes me do cleaning work all day, even cleaning the bathroom. If I refuse, he threatens to fire me. Nevertheless, I started working there properly and I was very much in need of the job. I met a colleague there who had come from Nepal. He was also working with me in cleaning and he is 14 years old. His name is Jivesh. We both work together and are good friends. I don't like working in cleaning in the PG, but if my family had educated me, maybe I wouldn't have to work here and who knows, maybe I would have had a better job.



## EVEN CHILDREN HAVE BECOME ADDICTED TO CHEWING BETEL LEAVES AND TOBACCO

Talkative Reporter: Mamta Reporter: Sangeeta Lucknow

So, we all know that our little children when they see older people in addiction, they start doing the same thing as well. Whether it is good for them or not, the children in the Lucknow communities have similar conditions. When our Balaknama reporter visited the communities of Lucknow and organized a reporter meeting and tried to know their problem, a girl told her that her sister and some children

come here whom themselves have started getting intoxicated after seeing elders getting intoxicated. The whole day they eat tobacco and when they don't have sufficient money then they rag-picking and sell plastic bottles, and the money earned from it, they eat tobacco and paan masala from it. But those children are unaware of the fact that if they take too much intoxicant then they can also come under the grip of many diseases and their livers can also get damaged. It can also harm their health.

## WHAT DOESN'T POVERTY SHOW AND GET DONE?



Reporter Kishan

Working all the time has permanently become the life and aim of our working children. Journalists of Balaknama visit many places and meet working children to share their problems with you in detail. This time, we came to know about the new ways children find for work through support group meetings in sectors 45, 76, 115 etc. of Noida. Children told their problems through support group meetings and (changed name) Divyansh said, "I live in Noida and I am studying in class VI. I have a friend from school and he also studies in my class. When there was a 7-day holiday in the school due to severe cold in the month of January, instead of spending time at home, my friend and I used to go with my

father to cut the grass in the government park. We used to do grass-cutting work from 8 in the morning till 5 in the evening and after working from morning till evening we used to get 400 rupees." By working like this, he was helping his father in household expenses.

## PLAYING RISKY GAMES CAN PUT CHILDREN AT RISK, AS SOON AS THEIR PARENTS GO TO WORK, THEY GO OUT TO PLAY

Bureau Report

Sometimes the parents make such mistakes for which our street and working children have to compensate, now whether the mistake has been made knowingly or unknowingly. When our Balaknama reporter from Lucknow went for a visit to know about the problem of children, they saw that a child was walking on a pole to play on the side of the road. We explained to the child that if you fall, they will get hurt and if by mistake you fall on the road, any

vehicle can hit him. Through this way, when we had a conversation with this child, the child said sister, we come here to play every day and till today all of this has never happened to us, so how will it happen today today I have come alone to play. By the way, my friends also come to play with me. By the way, my friends also come to play with me. The child was so engrossed in playing that he did not even listen to us and kept climbing up such a tall pole. We told him that if you come here to play on the side of the road, then his parents do not forbid him.

So, this child said, "sister, we come after telling our parents that we are going to play on the side of the road. Though my friends also come to play with me. The child was so engrossed in playing that he didn't pay much attention to what we were talking and still, he kept climbing on that pole. We asked him if you come here to play on the side of the road, and then his parents did not forbid him. To which the child replied sister, we do not inform our parents that we are going to play on the roadside. So as soon as they leave, we come here to play and

when they come back, we go home. It has been understood from the words of that child that, when parents go out of the house for work, he takes advantage of this opportunity and goes to play anywhere, and before their arrival, he returns home after playing. He goes so that his parents do not come to know about all this, but if the parents of this child do not pay attention to it, then it can be in danger. Because we saw that he was hanging while playing on the roadside. If he falls, he will get hurt very badly.

## THE UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN IS BEING ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY



Reporter Kishan

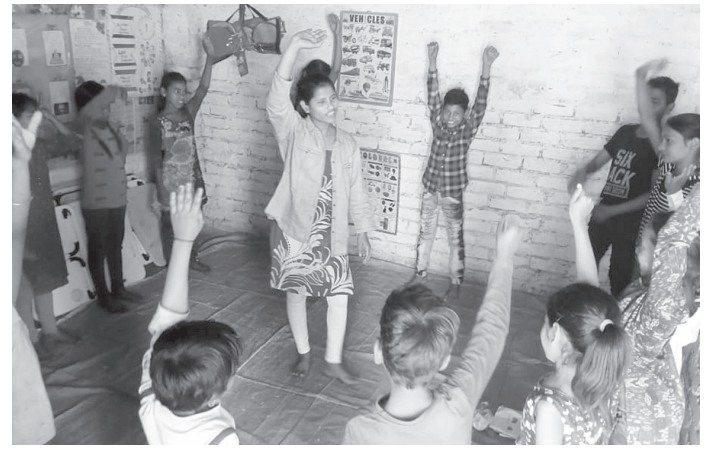
The use of technology is increasing day by day. If we talk about children, the bad impact of technology is increasing on children. The effect of technology is visible in the families of children. Due to this, not only children

are learning wrong things at an early age, but their development is also being affected.

Journalists visited a community in Noida where most of the rag-picking work takes place. When journalists talked to the working girls, the girls told that most of the

adults and children work as scrap workers in this slum. These children go out alone and some children with their parents from early morning to pick up the junk.

Some children have rickshaws, so they go by rickshaws and those who do not have rickshaws also go on foot and all the children come back home by noon. Because sunlight affects their health, and they do not feel like picking junk. All these children come home and use their mobiles and get so engrossed in playing free-fire games that they do not think about their future and do not think about their health. Children get so lost in mobile phones that they start ignoring the words of their parents too. If the parents start saying something about this, if they start beating, then the children do not go to work and start watching mobiles all day long. If you say something, it doesn't have any effect.



## DUE TO THE CHANGING WEATHER, CHILDREN ARE FALLING SICK

Talkative Reporter Kamini and Balaknama reporter Aanchal

During the arrival of the summer season, our street-working children started becoming victims of the scorching sun. Because our street and working children most of the time live in open spaces in summer, they face more difficulties. At present when we asked the children about the problems they often face, they told, sister as you can see, due to changing weather we are facing a lot of challenges because we live in an open space so whatever happens whether it's rain or

scorching sun we have to face everything. Along with that, the children also told that suddenly the temperature rises due to which we children often suffer from diseases like colds, coughs, headaches, and stomach aches. Because of this we often face trouble. Earlier when we suffer from such diseases they will heal within 3-4 days, but now they almost take around 1-2 weeks. When we continuously talk to children on this topic, it also came to light that this disease is spreading slowly, due to which the children of the surrounding area also fall prey to it.

## CHILDREN ARE FORCED TO LIVE AMIDST HEAPS OF GARBAGE AND FILTH

Talkative reporter Kamani and Reporter Sangeeta Lucknow

Our street-working children do not have any place to stay nor do they have any home. They stay wherever they find a place, and despite this, they often face several problems.

The children of the communities of the Lucknow area also have a similar condition when our Balaknama reporter did a support group meeting and spoke to children then few children shared their problems with us and told that sister the place where we stay there is garbage behind it All the huts there, all the people throw garbage there. Because



of this when the wind blows, it stinks a lot. We are unable to have food due to which our health deteriorates. We are infected with different kinds of diseases.

Nowadays due to garbage, there are many mosquitoes

and we are unable to get proper sleep. Due to many mosquito bites, small pimples come out and we feel very itchy. This bothers us a lot. It is difficult, due to which we have to stay here under compulsion and have to live like this.

## ONE DAY OF STUDYING CANNOT MAKE YOU AN EXPERT

Bureau Report

You know this thing very well that the one who gets everything easily does not know its value. And one who does not get anything easily, asks the price of it. So, he will tell its value and what that thing means to him. Our street and working children also do not get anything easily. Then whether it is ration to fill the stomach or education to make a bright future. When we talked about this topic and the problems of children, we asked if there is any such problem which you have to face every day and due to which you have become very upset. Hearing this, the children said sister, there are many types of problems that we have to

face every day. But there is one problem that we have to face every day. Telling their problem, the children said sister, we children are now 16 to 17 years old, but whoever comes, taunts us that we have become so old that we cannot read or write anything. Even our parents taunt that these people were taught from the beginning but still, they do not know how to read and write. We have become very upset because of these taunts. You tell us what to do if we do? That's why we asked the children whether their parents taught them from the beginning. Do you not know how to read and write? The children said, sister, why study and write? From the very beginning, some people used to come to our colony to teach for four-five days and then go away. In that too, we used to go outside to work in our homes. Our parents keep saying all this just on these four-five days of study. You tell me, until we go to school, how would we know anything? Regarding this study, our parents, and the people of our neighbourhood unnecessarily taunt us that these people have studied from the beginning, but if you ask them to write something now, they will not be able to write. Sometimes, after listening to all these taunts, we get so upset that we move away from that place because how do they know that education is not for 4 days, it takes years to become a successful person.

## SALUTE TO AMIT'S COURAGE

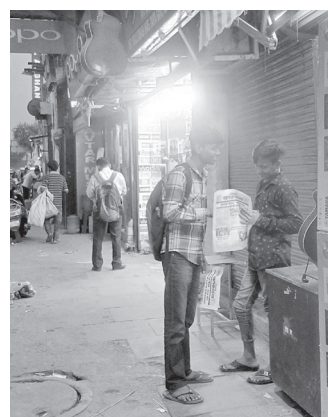
Talkative Reporter Amit, Balaknama Reporter Aslam

When our Balaknama reporter went to Badshahpur, we came to know that a 14-year-old boy named Amit was studying in seventh standard. Due to his father's old age, Amit also had to do cleaning work in the hospital. Amit found it very difficult for a few days, but as Amit kept learning the work, he started enjoying working and he started doing the whole work with dedication. The condition of

his house became very good, but one day Amit's leg got injured.

Then Amit had to leave his job and stay at home. Amit's injury started increasing a lot and soon Amit's leg swelled up a lot. When Amit showed it to the doctor, the doctor told him that he had cancer in his leg and there was not enough money in his house to get his leg fixed. After a few days, his leg had to be amputated and Amit is differently abled today.

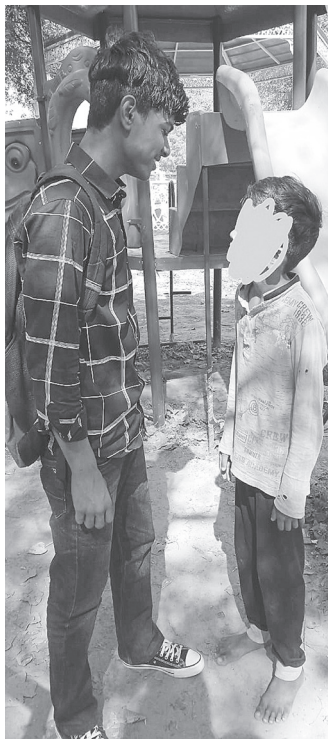
When the Balaknama jour-



nalist met Amit in his house and talked to him, Amit told,

brother, I wanted to die but my family members have kept me alive. So now I stay at home and I can't do any work right now. When my family members get the money, they will get me a prosthetic leg, so that I can work in a shop. I wanted to become a big man by being educated, but now my condition has become such that neither I can study nor I can do any work. But I did not lose hope I will help my family members by doing some work by getting an artificial leg fitted.

# ATUL IS FORCED TO WORK INSTEAD OF STUDY



Talkative Reporter Atul, Reporter Aslam

As you would know that as your age keeps increasing, you need to do some work. Similarly, our reporters came to know about a 15-year-old boy named Atul, who is a Class X student. He has just given his 10th exam. But his parents feel that he is too old and should start work. Atul is very angry that instead of education, his family members ask him to work. Atul told our journalist brother, as you know that if my family members do not teach me, then what work will I do now? But his parents feel that he is too old and should be put to work. Atul is very angry that instead of teaching,

his family members ask him to work. Atul told our journalist brother, as you know that if my family members are not educating me, then what work will I do now? I haven't even passed class 10 yet. My dream is to clear 12th and get a good job, but my family members think that I am no longer capable of studying and now I have to work. I don't want to work and want to do a good job after studying. My family members are not supporting me at all in this, now tell me, what should I do? When I tell my elder brother, he tells me that now you are old enough to work, you cannot do anything after studying, you go somewhere and start working.

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number

**1098**

Police Helpline Number

**100**

## CHILDREN UPSET WITH THEIR LIVES

Talkative Reporter Suman  
Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Balaknama journalist Aslam of Haryana visited the 200-hut slum of Palta Dhani. There, our Balaknama journalist came to know that there are some children who used to go to school earlier but due to the bad economic condition of the household, these children now do to the work of water filling. Some people do not hire them

because their age is between 15 to 16 years and people who do need labor hire young children to work. The owner of a Biseri bottle seller gives 6000 rupees a month to all these children and only with this money will the household expenses of these children be met. However, these children are very sad because they want to study but they have to struggle so much from such a young age.

## CHILDREN TROUBLED BY PROBLEMS AT HOME



Talkative Reporter Mamta and  
Reporter Sangeeta Lucknow

As we all know that our street and working children do not get any facilities easily, and because of this they keep wandering from door to door. Parents keep on wandering and their small children wander along with them too. Wherever they find a small place, they start living there

and when they start living there, they have to face many problems like water problems, electricity problems, and many similar problems have to be faced. The situation is similar with the street and working children of Lucknow. When our Balaknama journalists and reporters went for a meeting with the children and tried to know about their problems, the

children told, "Sister, there is a lot of electricity problem here and it has not been available for many months due to which there are a lot of issues. Earlier it was cold so there was not much of a problem but now summers have started which is causing a lot of issues. Now it starts feeling a bit too hot and at the same time mosquitoes have become too many and they bite throughout the night due to which we are not able to sleep properly. We have to go out for work early in the morning and due to more mosquito bites, small pimples are formed due to which it starts itching a lot. We can also get dengue and we can also fall sick. Now we have been told that when we give thousand rupees, then the electricity meter will be installed and then we will get electricity. Now our parents are not able to work that much, nor do they get enough money to pay for electricity every month. Firstly, the expenses of the house are running with great difficulty, and on top of that, the electricity bill will have to be paid."



## INFECTIOUS DISEASES CAN BE SEVERE

Bureau report

Nowadays, various types of diseases are emerging, and our street and working children are falling victim to them because they stay in open spaces. When our Balaknama reporter spoke to the children about this topic, the children revealed that nowadays the disease of measles is spreading and most of the children in the neighbourhood have been

affected by it. The children also revealed that if a child falls ill, they are given treatment, but they are not allowed to go outside the house so that no other child is infected. However, when a child gets measles here, no treatment is given, and no attention is paid to it. When we talked to the children, they said that if any child gets measles here, they play in the open and roam around outside. There is no restriction on children. That is why we asked the children if their parents don't say anything to them. The child said that when the parents are at home, they don't say anything and the poor children have to go out to work. And the children also told us that this disease is spreading in the neighbourhood due to this carelessness. Because it is a disease that spreads everywhere without staying in one place, even healthy people fall prey to it. We asked the children if their parents don't say anything to them. So the child said that if the parents take care of the children properly and talk to them, we don't think that sick children would wander outside like this.

## ASHISH'S BOSS HELPED HIS'S MOTHER

Talkative reporter Ashish,  
Balaknama Reporter Aslam

When Haryana's journalist Aslam visited Palra village, our journalist came to know that some children do packing work. When the journalists talked to all those children, one of the eldest boys whose name is Ashish and his age is 16 years. These children do packing work from 6 in the morning till 6 in the evening.

When Balaknama journalists talked to him, he told his brother, we do this work of packing because we get 8000 rupees a month for do-

ing packing work and also get food. Our household expenses are managed through this work. That's why we like this packing work. Because it does not require much effort in this work. We have to pack empty items, vegetables, fruits, etc in foils and keep them in a tray while sitting. We like this work very much because in this work we have to work very little. We have to pack empty items, vegetables, fruits, etc in foils and keep them in a tray while sitting. We like this work very much because in this work we have to work very little.



The owner here is very nice. Talks to all of us lovingly and also gives us food. Once Ashish's mother was admitted to the hospital because of illness, then Ashish's family members brought his mother home due to lack of money. But one day his boss saw that Ashish's mother's health was not in good condition so he admitted her to the hospital and helped Ashish's mother a lot.

Ashish says Brother, if my boss does not help me at that time, then who knows whether my mother would be with me today or not?

## CHILDREN FACING PROBLEMS DUE TO FIRE IN THE SLUM

Talkative reporters Mamta and reporter Sangita

As we all know, our street and working children face various types of problems. They become quite disturbed because of that. Similar is the situation for children living in difficult circumstances. When our Balaknama reporter went to arrange a reporter's meeting and tried to know about the children's problems, the children revealed that a few days ago, a fire broke out in their slum. As a result, one slum was completely burned down, and if the fire had not been extinguished quickly, many more slums could have caught fire. However, all the people came together and managed to put out the fire quickly, but the fire caused a



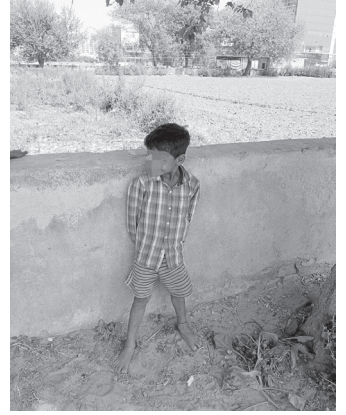
lot of damage to us. Our ration and water supplies were all destroyed, and we had to face a lot of problems to open our fast on

that day. We had to go to other people's houses to open our fast during Ramzan, and the place where we slept was also completely destroyed. Now we are facing a lot of problems, and we are also very worried about how we will be able to rebuild our slum. Because we do not have so much money, we can build our slum properly in one day. It costs around 9 to 10 thousand rupees to build one shelter. Now our parents don't have enough money to build a decent house in a day, which is causing us a lot of problems. If our house also breaks down, then we start collecting money a few months ago so that if our house breaks, we can build another one. When we immediately have to build a home, there are a lot of problems.

## IT IS MY COMPULSION TO STEAL VEGETABLES FROM THE FARM TO FEED FAMILY

Talkative Reporter Tanmay, Balaknama Reporter Aslam

As you must know that no person can survive without food. When our Balaknama reporter went on a visit to Palda Village, they saw that three children were plucking vegetables from an unknown farmer's field. When we talked to them, they said "We do not have vegetables to eat in our house, so our parents ask us to pluck greens, radishes and green vegetables in this field. When we pluck vegetables from here and take them home, only then vegetables are cooked in our house, otherwise, we have to eat dry chapatis. But if the owner of the farm sees us plucking vegetables, he beats us a lot



and sometimes locks us in a room. Our father and mother do not earn enough money to pay for our room's rent and our food due to which we have to steal vegetables from the fields. All we want is that our parents can earn more money and we can eat vegetables."

## CHILDREN ARE FORCED TO REMOVE LEATHER FROM SHOES AND SANDALS TO FILL THEIR STOMACHS



Talkative reporter Mamta and reporter Sangita, Lucknow

As we all know, our street and working children face many problems and sometimes it happens that they are receiving a good education, but there are so many problems at home

that they are forced to leave their studies. The situation is similar for the children in some of the slums of Lucknow, when we went to conduct meetings with children and during a community visit, a child showed us how some of the children are working. Children were separating the leather and plastic of sandals and shoes and keeping them separately. When our Balaknama journalist approached the child and asked him why they were doing this work and what they would do with the separated materials, the children explained that they sell the materials and give the money to their parents to run the household smoothly. This way, they are helping their parents to run the household without any difficulties. This is the way they keep supporting their parents.

## SITTING IN THE SCORCHING SUN AND MAKING PAPER FLOWERS, THESE BUSY CHILDREN HAVE NEITHER THE WORRY OF THE WEATHER NOR THE FEAR OF FALLING ILL



Talkative reporter Kamini and Balaknama reporter Anchal

Children who live on the streets no longer worry about the cold, heat, or rain. They have learned to adapt to every season because they have no other choice. The reporters

of the Balaknama met some such children, whose courage deserves to be saluted, and we must learn something from these children. When the Lucknow reporters went out in search of the problems of the street and working children, they met two children who

were making paper flowers sitting in the sun. When journalists asked them what they were doing sitting in such scorching heat, the child told them, "Didi, we are making flowers to play with." The journalists asked the children why they were making flowers in such intense heat and told them that if their health deteriorated or they fell ill from sitting in the such scorching sun, what would they do then? The children, without paying attention to this fact, said that they always play in the sun like this and have never fallen ill, so why would they fall ill today? The conversation with the children made it seem like they had so much confidence in themselves that no matter what the weather was like, they could not be affected by any illness. The children were so busy playing that they were making paper flowers in such intense heat.

## HOW CAN GIRLS FIND THE COURAGE TO MOVE FORWARD?

Bureau Report

When they hear taunts from their family members, their self-confidence decreases and they feel defeated. In this modern era, while girls are achieving success in every field, there are some people in society who instead of encouraging girls to move forward and boost their morale, say that they can't achieve anything.

These girls may only be cleaning dishes at home and going to others' homes to clean their utensils after marriage. This is their present and it will remain the same in the future.

They have to hear thousands of taunts like this every day, but when their own family members give them such taunts, it hurts their hearts. This is because they do not expect such things from

them. When the girls were asked about what they wanted to become after studying, they said that they want to do a lot but their family members make them feel every day that they cannot do anything. As soon as they hear this, their courage is shattered and their dreams seem very far away because they don't see the support of their loved ones. If they ask for support, their family members reply that no



daughter in their community has ever achieved anything, so how can they do it? After

listening to their words, our confidence decreases and we feel discouraged.

## HARDWORKING CHILDREN OF LUCKNOW'S NEIGHBOURHOOD, ARE PLASTERING HOMES MADE OF MUD WITH CEMENT TO MAKE THEM BEAUTIFUL

Bureau Report

Everyone dreams of having a good home. Everyone wants their home to be nice and clean. Whenever a guest comes to the house, they should be amazed by seeing it. Our street and hardworking children also have such dreams. Although they may not have big houses, they are working day and night to make their mud houses beautiful. A girl living in Lucknow's neighbourhood was cleaning her house and plastering it with cement to make it in proper structure. When she told a reporter about how they are trying to plaster their houses with cement to make them look good and also to avoid having too much mud inside, they will also make proper slaps in their house. This



child said that they understand that we may not be able to make a concrete slab like a proper house, but by doing this, there will be a little change in our house and it will start looking a little cleaner. The children also

passes by our neighbourhood, they leave with their mouths covered, which we don't like to see. That is why we are cleaning our homes and surroundings so that if anyone passes by our neighbourhood, they won't make any face.

## THE FAMILY'S SITUATION HAS FORCED THEM TO BEG FOR EVEN TWO MEALS A DAY

Reporters Mamta and Sangita

Our street and working children have to face all kinds of problems, whether big or small. They have to endure and deal with all sorts of problems. Some of the children from slums also face similar circumstances. When our child reporter went to conduct a reporter meeting and asked the children how many of them go to school, most of them raised their hands and said that they go to school. However, there was another child who said that he cannot go to school. Our child journalist made an effort to learn about that child's problem, and the children revealed that their families go to work in order to earn money, but they spend all the money on alcohol instead of providing for the home. There is no money to cook food at our



house, and whatever money is earned, it is all spent on alcohol. After drinking, they beat my mother and do not even give her money, which is why we do not have any food at home. That is why we go to bed hungry. Due to this reason, I am forced to go and beg so that I can give money to my mother and she can make something out of it.

Whatever money we receive from begging, we keep a little bit for ourselves and give all the rest to my mother. This is why I am not able to go to school because I go begging instead. I really want to go to school, but if we go to school, nothing will be made in our house and we will remain hungry. That is why we are forced to beg.

## CHILDREN HAVE TO WORK TO FULFIL THEIR DESIRES

Reporters Anjali and Sangeeta

As we all know that children who live in good homes have all their desires fulfilled, and they get everything they ask for, whether it's food or clothing. But our street and working children are not able to fulfil even their small desires. If they ask their parents for something to eat or wear, their parents are unable to provide it for them because they don't have enough money to fulfil their children's desires. As a result, the children are forced to start working. This is the situation for many children in street situations. Our Balaknama reporter went to conduct a community visit and saw many children sitting



together and selling cucumbers and some green vegetables. When the reporter asked these children why they were doing this work and whom they gave their hard-earned money to, they said that they do not give this money which they earn from selling vegetables. Whatever we feel like eating, we buy it with this money and eat

it. If we give the money to our parents, then when I feel like eating something, I will have to ask my parents for money. When we ask them, they will say that they don't have any money. Because of this, we are forced to do some kind of work and we get a little money, and whenever we feel like eating something, we eat it.



## RESPONSIBILITIES FELL ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE CHILDREN AFTER THE WEDDINGS OF THEIR ELDER SISTERS

Bureau Report

In households where daughters are given the lowest status when the daughters leave, the house becomes empty. Daughters bring joy to their homes and as soon as one daughter leaves after getting married, the home becomes empty and vacant. Many working children have said that our lives have become very difficult since our elder sisters got married. Since Kanika's elder sister got married, she has been having a lot of difficulties. She has to do the household chores and also go to other people's homes to

work. Even the boys are more troubled than the girls when their sisters get married. Until the elder sisters were there, they never did any household work, and after they left, they were left with the responsibility of doing household work and taking care of their younger siblings. Sometimes they even have to cook, which hinders their studies. Children have also said that today we are realizing what difficulties we have to face if our sisters are not at home. When a person is present, we do not realize their importance, but when they leave, we realize how much they meant to us in our lives.

## ON AN EMPTY STOMACH, GOOD AND BAD DON'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Bureau report

Children shared that due to a lack of work, every person is forced to sell drugs in one of the slums. Most parents come to the city to earn money and leave their children alone in the city for a few days. This has a big impact on the children, and they are forced to do all kinds of work to fill their stomachs. Journalists discussed the problems in detail with children living in a slum near Noida. A 13-year-old girl said that there is a 15-year-old boy living alone in our slum. The journalists reached out to the boy and talked to him. The boy said I live alone in this place and my parents live in the village. They came here to work, but they didn't get any work, so they went back to the village and left me alone here. Because there was no work in the village either. Near this slum, there is a market where I wandered for many days in search of work, but I didn't get any. However, while roaming in that market, a guy asked me to help him sell cannabis. At that time, I



was only concerned about my empty stomach, and I started doing this work. I come to this market at 9 am every day and sell small packets of cannabis for 50 and 100 rupees. I earn 300 rupees every day. Sometimes I get caught by the police, but somehow the owner gets me out of trouble, and then I start doing the same work again.

# PARENTS FULFIL THEIR DESIRES WITH THE MONEY EARNED BY THEIR CHILDREN

## Bureau report

You must be well aware that everyone is forced to do some work to fulfil their desires. Similarly, our working children start doing some kind of work by looking at the condition of their home so that they can improve the situation of their home. When Balaknama reporter visited to know the problems of the children and tried to talk to them to know their problems, the children said, "Didi, you already know how troubled we are as children." Seeing the trouble of our parents, we go out of our homes to

do work at a young age, so that we can help our parents. During the conversation with the children, we asked them, "What kind of work do you have to do to help your parents?" Each child said, "Didi, we can go out and do all kinds of work to help our parents." Then we asked the children, "Do you keep the money for yourself or give it to your parents?" The children said that whatever money they receive, they give it to their parents so that their family's situation can improve. Then we asked the children how they feel about helping their parents.



The children said that they feel very good that they are not able to go to school and involve in work. During the

continuous conversation with the children on this subject, it came to light that the children give the money earned in a month to their parents, but their parents use the children's earned money inaccurately. They drink alcohol with it or spend it on their friends. On one hand, parents are fulfilling their desires with their children's earned money, while on the other hand, children are sacrificing their desires and giving their earned money to their parents in the hope that some change can be brought about in the deteriorating situation of their home.

## WE ARE NOT MAIDS, PLEASE ADDRESS US BY OUR NAMES



## Bureau report

Every person believes that they don't like to go where they are not respected. When we talk to someone with respect, we also expect them to speak to us nicely. So, think about how someone would feel if they are not only not respected but also not addressed by their name. Through our visits, we talk

to many children, ask about their problems, take their opinions and also find out about their wellbeing. Most children say about their day-to-day life situations, some share their happiness with us and some share their sorrows. The situation of children in Lucknow is similar. When we asked them about their work, some children said that their

work is going well. But they also told us that wherever they go to work, they face a difficulty which they don't like at all. Wherever they go to work, people address them as maids, which children don't like to hear at all. Then we asked the children, "Don't you tell them your name?" The child replied, "No didi, whenever we go to work or are put to work, we first tell them our name, and then discuss other things. Yet, those people address us as 'kamwali' (maid). They think we work, but that doesn't mean our name should also be 'kamwali'. We also have some dignity and self-respect. When these people call us by that name, it feels like we don't have any dignity at all."



## WHAT WERE THE DAYS OF CHILDHOOD: - NO TENSION, NO STRESS

## Bureau report

No matter how many problems we have, we only realize them when we become adults and wise. In childhood, we don't

even know that problems are also a part of our life. If we fall into their trap, then we only get tension, nothing else. Whether it is tension at home, tension of studies or tension of outside work, etc. When we see the problems of our street and working children, we are surprised that these children live among so many problems but do not show any sorrow on their faces that how much trouble they are in. When we talked to children and asked them if they ever thought that they would have to face problems in life? So, the children said, "Didi when we were young, we used to have a lot of fun, play and be carefree. We never knew, thought or even saw any problems. But since we've grown up, we've realized what problems are, they have no fixed address and can come up anywhere. The child said that now we feel that our childhood was the best. If only we could get another chance to live those days again, we could live even better, because growing up means having bigger responsibilities."

## THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE BUILDING ARE TROUBLED BY THE ALCOHOLIC TENANT, BUT THE OWNER ONLY CARES ABOUT MONEY

## Reporter Kishan

In any corner of the country, you will find people who drink alcohol. People living near habitual drinkers also have to face many problems. Balaknama Journalists visited a building in Noida and asked a 9-year-old girl what happens in that building as most of the children were scared? The girl said that she lives in this building with her parents. The owner of this building lives several kilometers away. He comes every month to collect money, but one person in this building is responsible for fixing any problems that arise. He also collects the rent every month



and gives the money to the owner when he comes. But the problem here is that an uncle drinks alcohol every day and creates a ruckus in the building. They keep fighting and using foul language until mid-

night and it affects most of the children living in the building, causing them a lot of trouble in sleeping. They cannot even sleep properly and often get late for school in the morning. Our parents have also spo-

ken to the landlord, who says "Okay, I'll come this month and get his room emptied," but despite saying that, he comes and goes every month. The person who drinks alcohol always finds some new excuse and then starts living there again. After the landlord leaves, the same chaos starts again. Sometimes he even crosses the limit; we children play on the rooftop and he keeps drinking alcohol there at night, and sometimes even breaks glass bottles of alcohol there. During this time, many children living in the building have also been affected, but the landlord is only interested in money.

You can also support in the publication of the Balaknama newspaper, For more info please contact : [info@chetnango.org](mailto:info@chetnango.org)

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

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