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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.

Weather's Wrath : Rainfall

A LIFE FILLED WITH DILEMMAS FOR STREET CHILDREN DURING THE MONSOON SEASON!

Balaknama reporters Kishan, Aslam, Shabir, Naz Parveen, and Hansraj

The rainy season, though filled with happiness for all, poses challenges for children even in this joyful weather.

Every year during the monsoon season, there is a natural process of rain, but sometimes intense rainfall leads to situations like flooding. Floods create complexities and challenges in people's lives. This year too, some states are facing floods, even in areas where they never occurred before, burdening the residents with hardships.

As an example, the story of Ankit, who resides in Gurgaon, sheds light on the experiences of underprivileged children during the rainy season. Ankit's family isn't financially well-off, but he helps his father by selling vegetables. Ankit goes to school in the morning and assists his father on the cart after school. Ankit shared that heavy rainfall affects their flour (maida) negatively, and sometimes, when the rain is too heavy, water damages items like potatoes, flour, and chilli. These spoiled items can't be sold, leaving them with no income. Before the rain, there are strong winds and dust storms, which settle on food items, making them less de-



sirable to customers. Consequently, the family faces losses, and they return home with empty hands and no earnings.

This illustrates that the rainy season imposes additional challenges on the lives of economically disadvantaged children. It is crucial for society to come together to provide support, ensuring these children have access to quality education, healthcare, and formal assistance.

Aarti, a 14-year-old resident of Sector 76, Noida, revealed that she and the children around her mostly live in makeshift settlements. When the rainy season arrives, their major issue remains that water fills up everywhere in the settlement, and the ground becomes quite muddy. This leads to the emergence of insects like worms, ants, and even snakes.

Aarti and her family must constantly be cautious of snakes, as they often appear during the daytime. They don't have a safe space where these snakes won't enter, and sometimes, snakes even find their way onto their sleeping mats. To protect themselves from snakes, they need to stay awake until 2-3 in the morning. Whenever snakes appear at night, Aarti's entire family and their neighbours use smoke to drive them away, allowing them to sleep at night. Those family members who can't sleep at night due to fear of snakes try to rest during the daytime.

Khushi, a 13-year-old living in Jaipur, shared that she is currently studying in the fifth grade. These days, the weather changes frequently, and it's difficult to predict when it will rain and when it won't. Some-

times, heavy rain occurs before school starts, preventing her from attending. Occasionally, the weather remains bad throughout the day, but when it's time for school to end or when she's on her way to school, it starts raining heavily, resulting in waterlogged streets and paths. As a result, most children's shoes get wet, and some even end up playing in the water, splashing it on each other, leading to illnesses. Due to wet shoes, some children are unable to go to school the next day.

When the Balaknama reporter spoke to most of the children in Noida, 17-year-old Anushka, who resides in a makeshift settlement, shared that the majority of the children in the vicinity are facing problems due to heavy rainfall. The water accumulates on the

streets due to rain, and this water seeps into the makeshift settlements as well. When the rain stops, they scoop out the collected water using containers, which damages the belongings stored in their homes. Water also enters their sleeping mats, making it impossible for them to sleep. Additionally, their food items like flour, spices, and vegetables get wet, causing many families to go hungry as they can't cook properly.

In Lucknow, Balaknama journalists visited a settlement where many children are involved in scavenging and breaking waste materials. The children explained that they collect scraps like metal, iron, plastic, and waste from nearby markets, streets, and villages. They bring these scraps

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IN MUMBAI, CHILDREN ENGAGE IN PEELING CASHEWS, EARNING UP TO 300 RUPEES A DAY

Bureau Report

In every state, different tasks are associated with the culture and practices of the region, whether performed by adults or children. During the fifth National Convention of Children's Organizations in Gujarat, Balaknama journalists attempted to learn about the lives of children in their surroundings. Divyansh,

who now resides in Mumbai, shared that just like in other states, children in Mumbai also engage in the task of peeling cashews. Companies provide this work to children in their homes, which they carry out alongside their parents.

Peeling the skin from cashews is a task that requires a knife and a catcher. The skin needs to be removed from the ca-



shews, and the nuts need to be separated. Holding the knife and catcher while peeling the cashews can lead to finger pain and even blisters on the hands. To peel the cashews, children grip the knife with a piece of cloth and work on the nuts. After peeling a kilogram of cashews, they earn around 24 rupees, and they can manage to earn up to 300 rupees a day from this work.

Due to a Lack of Support from their Father RUPESH EARNS BY CLEANING BUSES AND SUPPORTS HIS SISTER'S EDUCATION



Talkative Reporter Rupesh

Street and Working children are ready to take on any task to support their households. Similarly, our Balaknama reporters visited the slums of Badshahpur and learned about a 15-year-old boy named Rupesh. Rupesh works in the school bus cleaning service. Originally from Nepal, Rupesh and his father came to Haryana due to financial constraints in Nepal. His father started driving an auto-rickshaw here. While Rupesh used to live at home, his father would drive the auto-rickshaw.

Rupesh's father often scolds him and doesn't provide him with any education opportunities. He neither sends him to school nor to a tuition centre. Rupesh's father doesn't give him any money even on festivals like Diwali and Holi. This is why Rupesh had to take up the job of cleaning buses. He starts his work at 8 AM and returns home around 3 PM. Rupesh told us that he has a younger

sister who is studying in the 11th grade. He earns around 10,000 rupees a month, of which he sends 5,000 rupees to his sister every month so that she can continue her education. When asked by our Balaknama reporters about his aspirations if given a chance, Rupesh said he wants to become a driver.

CHILDREN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO WATCH A FILM BY THE DM OF WEST DELHI

Bureau Report

Watching films is something everyone enjoys. In today's times, we often take breaks from work to watch movies. However, for children who live on the streets and work, this was a unique chance to watch a film in a cinema hall. The film "Ponniyin Selvan Part 2" was screened for 15 children from the Chetna Foundation, organized by the DM of West Delhi, Mr Prince Dhawan. The film, though its title may seem peculiar, was equally captivating to watch. The movie primarily depicts the conflict between the Chola and Pandya empires.

The film featured Aishwarya Rai in a significant role, which brought much joy to the children when they saw her on screen. This film screening event was not only arranged by the Chetna organization but also supported by the Delhi



Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), bringing children from various areas of Delhi along with their parents. This was a first-time experience for these children, who live and work on the streets, to watch such a grand movie on a big screen.

Whenever there was an exciting scene in the film, the entire cinema hall resonated with the children's applause. Witnessing the happiness of these children brought a sense of fulfilment to everyone.

After watching the film,

all the children shared their experiences. Saniya mentioned that watching a film on such a big screen felt like a dream come true.

Tarun said, "We live at home and do household chores. We couldn't even think about watching a film in a cinema in our dreams. Thanks to DM sir, we got the opportunity to watch a film, and we enjoyed it thoroughly." Through this film, all the children were filled with joy and expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Honorable DM Prince Dhawan.

DUE TO THE PARENTS, THE GIRL'S FUTURE WAS RUINED

Bureau Report

When the reporters visited the slums, they discovered that there are some girls whose parents force them to work outside. Such an incident came to light when the reporters talked to a girl. She told us, "I am currently studying in the 12th grade in a government school. But after the 8th grade, the officials of the school started demanding money from us, which my parents couldn't afford to give me. I had to ask for money from the neighbours and give it to my school to continue my



education. The school fees were also increasing, so my family refused to give me money and said that I don't need to study anymore. If you want to study, then work yourself. We can't afford to give you money anymore. Don't go to school from tomorrow. Start working with me in the slums." It was because of this that all the dreams of that girl were shattered. At present, she works in a park doing cleaning and cooking. She says that it's better

not to have such a family. If they had supported my education, who knows, I might have had a good job and fulfilled my family's dream. But my family put me to work doing cleaning and cooking instead of letting me study. This caused me to miss out on my education and my dream remained incomplete. There are many other girls like me who have gone through all this. I want strict action to be taken against such parents.

A LIFE FILLED WITH DILEMMAS FOR STREET CHILDREN DURING THE MONSOON SEASON!

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to their settlements, separate them, and store them. Their biggest challenge arises during daily rainfall, which causes considerable issues. These families and children have to protect the waste materials from rainwater, but they lack enough space and proper resources to do so. Rainwater damages the collected materials, undoing days of hard work.

When Balaknama met children from various places in Delhi, they shared that this year's rainfall is significantly higher than before, and they haven't witnessed such intense rain or water accumulation on the streets previously.

Alongside this, many children also shared the challenges they face during the monsoon season in their daily lives. A 12-year-old named Ankit revealed that battery rickshaws are parked near his house. When people charge these

rickshaws, water seeping in causes electric shocks in the battery rickshaws. He has experienced electric shocks himself on one or two occasions.

A 10-year-old named Saniya mentioned that water starts dripping from the roof of her house, which makes her parents leave for work while she spends her entire day cleaning up the water that accumulates wherever it drips. She doesn't even have space to sit at home.

Saraj, aged 13, and his mother Madina shared that when it rains heavily, labourers like Saraj who work in construction have to stop working. This leads to his parents staying home, and they don't earn any money on such days. This financial struggle makes it difficult to manage daily expenses and meals.

8-year-old Riyazul shared that due to heavy rainfall, water enters homes and they get flooded. This causes his fa-

ther to get delayed for work and sometimes he arrives late, which results in the owner firing him.

11-year-old Imtiyaz mentioned that during rainy times, the prices of vegetables and fruits increase. His father works as a rickshaw driver, and due to the rain, nobody wants to take rickshaws. This creates difficulties in their livelihood.

Farheen and Jannatun (Farheen's mother) explained that due to rain, the drains get clogged, wood placed outside becomes wet, making it challenging to cook food. Water dripping into the house requires them to stay awake at night to remove the water.

To prevent water accumulation on the streets and address such future problems, appropriate initiatives need to be taken. This could involve cleaning the streets, inspecting the condition of drains, and creating safe areas for children.

DESPITE CHALLENGES, THE STORY OF STRIVING TO CONTINUE EDUCATION

Balaknama Reporter Shabir Sha

Salute to Aman's courage, who doesn't give up even in serious situations. Aman, a 14-year-old resident of the JDA Basti (settlement), is an epitome of determination despite the odds. He resides with his grandmother, mother, and younger brother in the JDA Basti. Aman's father is no more due to excessive alcohol consumption. His mother works as a ragpicker and struggles to make ends meet. Aman was born in Jaipur, but his family originally came from Gujarat in search of employment. Due to family connections, they settled in Jaipur.

Although the challenges in the slums are many, Aman has faced numerous difficulties from the start. Aman shared that after his father's death, their ancestral land was taken by relatives. Currently, they live in his grandmother's house. Aman aspires to have his own home. He has documents, but he has never attended school. His mother faces a

lot of difficulties, especially financial ones. Aman takes care of all household chores. He mentioned that his mother goes to work early in the morning, and after helping her prepare food, he goes to the center for studies. Aman explained that his mother's widow's pension was not active, but with the help of Chetna NGO's educator Sachin Pratap Singh, they were able to fill out the application form. Unfortunately, despite his intelligence, Aman is still compelled to work. He mentioned that sometimes when he sees his mother struggling, he thinks about working. But he can bear all hardships except giving up his studies. He is determined to continue studying despite all challenges.

This story shows that even amidst adversity, Aman is determined to continue his education. His example proves that if children have the courage and determination, they can overcome any obstacles and pursue their education.

DURING THE SUMMER VACATIONS, ADARSH IS WORKING TO SAVE MONEY FOR HIS EDUCATION

Talkative Reporter Adarsh and Balaknama Reporter Aslam

You must be aware that the summer holidays are here. During these holidays, the goal of these children is to cover their entire year's expenses by working this month. Our reporters spoke to a boy named Adarsh. Adarsh is 16 years old and a student in the 11th grade. Adarsh works in a mall doing cleaning work at 10 AM in the morning and returns home at 10 PM at night. Adarsh told us

that initially he was given very labour-intensive work. The mall owners kept assigning him tasks like lifting and arranging goods throughout the day, and he worked like this for a whole week. The owner gained trust in Adarsh and decided that since Adarsh stays free throughout the day, he could attend to any customer who comes in. Adarsh is very happy because his month is about to end and he will receive a salary of 10,000 rupees, which will help him continue his 11th-grade



education. Adarsh's father works as a labourer, and the income he earns only covers household expenses. Adarsh has always determined that he will become a great person for his family. This is why he has had a strong desire to study since childhood. He also has an older sister who is now 18 years old. She has to work hard to save money for her wedding by depositing every penny to her family, a situation Adarsh hasn't personally experienced. Now that he has grown so

much, he feels ashamed to ask for money from home. This is why he works and earns during the summer holidays. He uses the money he earns to buy books, pay school admission fees, and other expenses for his upcoming classes. Our reporters asked Adarsh what he would want to become if he gets a chance. Adarsh replied, "Brother when I grow up, I want to become a very successful businessman. My dream is to provide all the comforts to my family."

SWING PROVIDES RELIEF FOR CHILDREN IN THE HEAT

Reporter: Kishan

You must also be experiencing the increasing heat day by day. Our reporters spoke to the children living in the slums about the heat, and a 10-year-old child shared that the intense heat is becoming unbearable. "We live in a rented room. When we use the fan inside our house, we get a little relief. But even the fan blows hot air. Deeksha, who lives in a jhuggi (shack), explained that due to the scorching heat, they don't feel like doing any work. "We stay at home and take care of our siblings. parents go to



work. Our entire jhuggi is made of tin. The intense sunlight falls

on the tin, and it makes us sweat continuously. After sweating, our bodies start itching. This leads to boils and blisters. We don't have enough money to buy a cooler, and we don't even feel like sitting inside the jhuggi." Due to this, we go and sit in the shade of trees around us. The reporters asked the children how they spend their time, and a 10-year-old boy replied, "We can't go anywhere in this harsh sunlight. So, we have made a swing for all the children of our jhuggi basti on a tree. The swing is hanging right here, and we children spend our time swinging on it."

CHILDREN HELPING THEIR PARENTS DURING SUMMER VACATION

Reporter: Kishan



Earning money through work is essential in everyone's life. However, education is the most crucial aspect that we should prioritize. This holds true for both children and adults. In this report, we will share how children are assisting their families at home during the summer vacation. Reporters visited various neighbourhoods in Noida to meet children and learn about their activities during the vacation. A 16-year-old girl who lives near the street was interviewed. She resides with her mother and has started working in a factory to pack pipes during the summer break. The girl's

mother had taken loans from some people to build their house, which has not been repaid yet. As a result, the girl leaves home at 8 AM for work and returns around 5 PM, then continues to assist with household chores. She dedicates her evenings to completing school homework. Her main wish is to repay her mother's debt as soon as possible.

WILL THESE CHILDREN GET JUSTICE?

FAMILY MEMBERS WILL GIVE THEM ANOTHER CHANCE TO STUDY

Talkative reporter Anker and Balaknama reporter Aslam

After the announcement of the 2023 results of the Haryana Board, a sense of restlessness is growing among the children. Some parents have threatened them that if they don't get good marks, they will be forced to quit studying and start working. This is causing fear in the children's minds rather than aiming for good grades. Some children have also failed in compartment exams, but their families believe that they have failed because of using phones so they are not sending them for further studies and not allowing them to appear for further studies. When they see these children crying, their parents tell them that they often use their phones and now they're crying, so it means they don't care about their studies. In such situations, these children are waiting for another chance so that they can continue their education. They want another opportunity so that they can move forward towards success. The children have revealed



that the school's curriculum is organized after 6 months. As a result, they have to study for half a year and most of their syllabus remains unfinished, leading them to face difficulties in the board exams. According to them, if they are given a chance to study throughout the whole year instead of just half a year, they will be better prepared for the board exams. In this way, these children are not only expressing concerns about their own situation but also highlighting the social and educational importance of this issue. It is their voice that granting the right to quality education can secure

the futures of thousands, even millions of children, and provide them with an opportunity to achieve success in the future.

**CHILDREN'S HELP
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number

1098

Police Helpline Number

100

NAUSEATING STENCH FROM DRAINAGE AFFECTS CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Reporter Kishan

The vicinity around our house is plagued by numerous drainage ditches, leading us to face several issues. Journalists in Noida had a conversation with some residents of a slum, including a resident named Kishan. Kishan, whose name is changed for privacy, shared that their slum is located adjacent to a massive drain. This drain carries contaminated water and waste from their village and surrounding areas. The drain's water is dirty and filled with garbage.

In front of our slum, there are a few more shanties where people rear pigs. When the pigs die, these residents dispose of them in the same polluted drain. The water from



the drain flows by our shanty and sometimes gets trapped in a corner near us. This leads to an unbearable foul smell. The drainage remains uncleaned for years, contributing to the problem.

Whenever we cook food in our shanty or even when we try to sleep, the stench from the drain makes it almost impossible to live comfortably. The pungent odor becomes

a part of our daily lives, and we are forced to tolerate it. Unfortunately, due to this drainage issue, the children living in the slum often fall sick. They have to endure this foul smell as a part of their reality.

The terrible stench emanating from the drain has become a pressing issue for the residents, severely affecting their health and quality of life.

DEMANDING JUSTICE, DEV EARNED RS. 1500 TO 2500 DAILY BUT WAS FORCED TO QUIT SELLING COCONUT WATER DUE TO BULLYING

Talkative Reporter Dev and Reporter Aslam

When reporter Aslam engaged with the children of Badshahpur in Haryana, he came across a boy named Dev., he is 16 years old. He used to sell coconut water by the roadside. His work was thriving until certain individuals, who couldn't stand others' success, interfered.

Dev set up his coconut water stand on a piece of

land owned by local people in Haryana. These locals had also established shops along the road. Whenever Dev attempted to set up his stall, these individuals threatened and intimidated him, claiming that he shouldn't conduct business there. They warned him that the land was government-owned and he shouldn't set up his stand. This continued intimidation made Dev fearful, affecting his business.

Despite Dev's explanation



that he wasn't encroaching on their land, the locals didn't listen and even physically assaulted him. After that incident, Dev stopped selling coconut water at that location. Earlier, Dev used to earn Rs. 1500 to 2500 per day, but after he was forced to leave, his earnings significantly dropped. Dev now manages to earn barely Rs. 1000 per day.

Dev's alternate location for his stall led to a substantial loss in income. He used to earn around Rs. 1000 daily, but now

it has dwindled. Dev tried to negotiate with the individuals who were causing him trouble, offering to pay them Rs. 500 per month, but they still refused to let him continue his business. Dev lamented that his prosperous business was ruined by these actions, and he was unable to use the land he had acquired for his home due to the intimidation. Dev's story highlights the difficulties that can arise due to bullying and intimidation, affecting livelihoods and futures.

MOHAMMAD CELEBRATES FESTIVAL WITH MONEY EARNED FROM JOB AT SHOP

Talkative Reporter Ashraf and Reporter Aslam

Ashraf Improves His Brothers' Future by Sacrificing His Own When reporter Aslam visited the slums of Badshahpur in Haryana, our young reporters discovered a boy named Ashraf. He is 17 years old and the oldest sibling in his family, which made him responsible for the household. Seeing his three younger brothers' education, Ashraf had to take up aluminium work. His mother also began working due to their situation. One day, Ashraf's mother fell severely ill. She contracted tuberculosis in her spine. All the money the family had saved went towards her



treatment. There was no money left for even basic necessities. Consequently, Ashraf took up night-time delivery work to repay debts.

Ashraf dreams of finishing his debts quickly so he can provide education for his younger brothers. His mother's illness and his family's circumstances forced him to work hard. His father passed away during his childhood, which kept Ashraf away from education and his dreams. He now devotes his life to educating his younger siblings. He says, "If my brother's study, I consider it as if I've also studied. If I put them to work, my significance as an elder brother would diminish. So, let them study and achieve great success. I have no regrets about my compromised future. As long as I'm alive, I won't endanger my brothers' future."



INFLUENCE OF BAD COMPANY LEADING CHILDREN TOWARDS WRONG ACTIVITIES

Bureau Report

Children can often be seen wandering on the streets and lanes around us. A significant number of these children are unfortunately trapped in the clutches of addiction. Why do these children engage in substance abuse? What leads them to such behaviour? Are they indulging in these activities willingly or being coerced? To understand this, our reporters conversed with children from the slums of Jahangirpuri in West Delhi.

One story we encountered was that of Dilkhush, a 15-year-old boy living in the slum., shared that every day near Indralok Park involved in drug abuse. Among these children, a few engage in activities that are detrimental to their well-being. Dilkhush often joins his friends in the park for outdoor play. Many of his friends there are involved in various bad activities such as smoking, consuming alcohol, and using drugs.

These friends of Dilkhush introduced him to these addictive substances. They pushed him into trying drugs and compelled him to engage in inappropriate conversations. They showed him explicit images on their mobile phones, which had a negative impact on him. After being exposed to these

images, Dilkhush started feeling better, and gradually, he succumbed to the influence of his peers.

Dilkhush's friends taught him how to indulge in these substances, which gradually turned into an addiction. He started spending his days in the park with his friends, viewing explicit content and consuming drugs. Neither his neighbours nor his family were aware of his habits, as he used to secretly indulge in these activities away from home.

One day, Dilkhush's father happened to witness him indulging in substance abuse on his way home. This incident shattered his father, and he confronted him. DHe confessed that he had learned these habits from his friends. His father took immediate action and separated him from these negative influences. With the guidance and support of his family, Dilkhush slowly transformed himself and left behind his past addiction.

This story highlights the power of the bad company and how easily impressionable children can be led astray by their peers. Dilkhush's recovery underscores the importance of parental involvement and guidance in helping children make positive choices and stay away from harmful influences.

CHILDREN, GETTING LOST IN THE TRAPS OF LOVE, ARE RUINING THEIR LIVES

Talkative Reporter Suman and Reporter Aslam

We are aware of the meaning of love. Love involves understanding each other, expressing one's emotions, and comprehending their feelings. Love comes in various forms, such as the love between siblings, the love of parents for their children, the love between husband and wife, or the affection shown by others towards someone, which is known as unrequited love. Love encompasses all aspects of romantic relationships. The sentiment of romantic love is also associated with sexual attraction.

During a Support Group meeting in Noida Sector 70, a girl was noticed with cuts on her hands caused by a blade. This sight left the reporters astonished. How could this happen? After the meeting, the reporters spoke to the girl and asked her how she got those cuts



on her hands. She was quite scared and hesitant to reveal the truth. The girl fabricated several lies, claiming that she got injured while playing at her home, which caused her to fall. The reporters were sceptical because the cuts were clean and straight, indicative of being caused by a blade. To find out more, he talked to other children as well. The girl's friend revealed that she was in love with a boy who used to reciprocate her feelings. However, he

no longer loves her; he loves another girl now. Due to this, the girl cut her own hands out of heartbreak. When asked if her parents were aware of this, she initially lied again, saying that her father knew. She claimed that she fell off the roof while playing. The reporters suggested visiting her house to verify, which frightened the girl. She finally confessed to the truth when they persisted.

Not only this girl, but most of the children in the vicinity were entangled in similar situations, and parents seemed to pay no attention to such matters. The teacher from the school and the reporters, coming together, explained to the girl that these matters hold little significance at this stage of life. You are meant for studying, playing, and growing. They assured her that she wouldn't get involved in such matters anymore. The girl promised to leave these actions behind and focus on her studies.

THE HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES ARE MANAGED BY SUPPLYING MILK



Reporter Kishan

Due to the father's alcohol consumption, the children in the house have to struggle with various difficulties.

Similarly, the Balaknama reporter met a boy to learn about his problems. During this interaction, a girl revealed that a 16-year-old boy lives next to their slum. His

mother is not there in their house. They have a father and an elder brother. The elder brother's father goes to do manual labour and whatever money he brings home from his work, he gives a minimum amount to the family and mostly spends the rest on alcohol. As a result, the elder brother takes up the job of delivering milk from 5 in the morning till 5 in the evening in various companies. He earns around 2000 rupees per month from this work, which is used to cover household expenses. The elder brother also works and helps out at home.

A LOOK AT THE PROBLEM OF HOMES AFFECTED BY CHICKENPOX

EVERY HOUSEHOLD HAS ONE OR TWO CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM CHICKENPOX

Talkative reporter - Sofina
Balakanama Reporter - Naaz Parveen

In the C-4 Lawrence Road area of West Delhi, when the Balakanama reporter spoke to the children, a girl revealed that suddenly children in her area are getting a fever. Similarly, every day, two or three children are falling sick. The children are greatly troubled by the heat. Due to the summer heat, there is no water supply for 5-6 days. As a result, children fetch water from the temple. Fetching water in the sun leads to fever

and cough along with the heat. Due to the availability of different water sources, children are developing chickenpox. In every household, one or two children are developing chickenpox. Because of chickenpox, children are left without clothes. If they wear clothes, the wounds hurt them. This causes the children to cry. Children want to play, but their parents scold them. Because if children go out to play, other children might also develop chickenpox. Due to chickenpox, children are unable to study as well.

SHAKURBASTI COMMUNITY FACING PROBLEMS DUE TO A LACK OF WATER



Talkative reporter Rukhsar
and Balakanama reporter Naaz Parveen

Balakanama reporter visited Shakurbasti in West Delhi and talked to the children there. One child mentioned that there's

a lot of trouble with the water supply in Shakurbasti. Children cross the railway track to fetch water. There's a railway track where a train without an engine stand. However, the path to the water is the same path where the train stands. This causes a lot of

trouble for the children. When fetching water, children have to crawl under the same train track. Sometimes, they even get hit on the head while coming out. Due to such injuries, their heads get cut. In Shakurbasti, there are more children from the Muslim community. That's why they don't provide water to anyone on Fridays. This situation makes the children even more distressed. On Fridays, every child in Muslim households needs to take a bath. Due to the lack of water, preparing food at home also becomes difficult for the children. They can't bathe, and they can't read their prayers.

CHILDREN FALLING IN TO THE WRONG COMPANY ENGAGE IN THEFT



Talkative reporter- Danesh
Balakanama Reporter - Naaz Parveen

In a neighbourhood of West Delhi, when the Balakanama reporter talked to the children, one of them revealed that children in their neighbourhood are getting involved with the wrong crowd. Many children here are getting spoiled. Three children together stole a phone worth 20,000 rupees from their uncle. Later, the uncle reported the incident to the police, and the police began searching for them. Eventually, the children

were apprehended. After the police arrived, the two children were taken to the police station and were severely beaten. One of them was a 13-year-old boy who lied to the police, claiming he didn't commit the theft. He mentioned another boy's name, implying that he wasn't involved. However, the police still took them into custody. The health of the other boy was deteriorating; his sister was taking him to the doctor. That's when the police caught him. His sister insisted that her brother didn't commit the theft, but the police still took him.

FORCING INNOCENT CHILDREN INTO THEFT-A MATTER OF CONCERN



Talkative reporter Sonu
Balakanama Reporter - Naaz Parveen

When the Balakanama reporter visited the Balmiki Camp in West Delhi and talked to the children, one child revealed that there are three or four children in the Balmiki Camp who are falling into the wrong company and heading down the wrong path. Among them is a 17-year-old

boy who instigates the other younger children to commit theft. Just a couple of days ago, the eldest among them, who was involved in this, told a younger child to commit theft, but he warned the child not to mention his name if caught. This child went to a factory and committed theft. However, as he was heading home, an uncle caught him and started beating him. The child, out of fear, revealed that his older brother

instructed him to commit theft. This older brother is the one who initially suggested theft to the child. The older brother finds out that his name has been disclosed. In response, he goes to the younger child's home and severely beats him.

DREAMS GROUNDED: RESPONSIBILITIES AND POVERTY DEPRIVE ROHIT TO HIS RIGHTS

Balakanama Reporter Shabir Sha

Balakanama reporter Shabir spoke with 11-year-old Rohit and discovered that Rohit lives near Vidyadhar Nagar Dargah with his parents. Rohit shared that his father drinks alcohol excessively and the influence of alcohol often leads to daily arguments. Sometimes, his father even falls on the road due to the effects of alcohol and sleeps there. Rohit himself helps his father back home with great difficulty while he is under the influence of alcohol. Rohit's mother is disabled and begs for a living outside the dargah. He mentioned that he

also begs his mother outside the dargah, which helps sustain their household expenses.

Rohit also disclosed that they don't have enough money for basic necessities like footwear, which results in burning feet during the hot weather. He further explained that due to his father's addiction to alcohol, they are burdened with debt, causing immense distress to the family. Previously, they used to live in a neighbourhood, but his father's alcohol addiction resulted in losing their home. This is why they are now forced to live here.

When the Balakanama

reporter informed Rohit about our education centre, he expressed his desire to study as well. He observes other children going to study every day. However, he understands that his father won't allow him to study, especially since his mother is disabled. He also mentioned that he watches over his mother's well-being. Rohit does not have any official documents. When asked about his future and dreams, he remained silent, seemingly devoid of any aspirations.

Perhaps the uncertain environment or lack of security has robbed Rohit of his ability to dream.

AN INSPIRATIONAL STORY

SALUTE TO AMIT'S DEDICATION TO EDUCATION AND SHOULDERING FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES



Reporter: Amit
Balaknama Reporter: Aslam

Street and working children face immense challenges and responsibilities at a young age due to the burden of familial duties. These duties often force them to start working at a very tender age, as their survival depends on it. Our reporters learned about a 10-year-old boy named Amit, who was studying in the first grade. Although Amit wasn't performing well academically, his family constantly scolded him for it. His family even enrolled him in coaching classes, which sparked Amit's interest in studying. Due to his newfound

dedication, Amit began excelling in his studies. Now in the third grade, he's capable of solving math problems meant for fifth graders.

Amit's father runs a tea stall and also engages in other small businesses like selling cigarettes. After school, Amit has to assist his father at the tea stall, which leaves him little time for his studies. Amit pondered over a solution - he realized that if he convinced his father to let him study instead of helping at the tea stall, it might give him the opportunity to concentrate on his studies. However, due to his father's age and inability to manage the stall alone, Amit continued to support him. Amit felt that if he didn't stand by his father, who would?

As a result, Amit spends half of his day at the tea stall and later, around 11 PM, he begins studying. To manage his time effectively, he created a daily schedule that allowed him to assist his father and study as well. Amit found that whatever he reads sticks with him the second time he goes through it. Despite his difficulties, Amit has set a goal for himself: to become a high-ranking police officer and take good care of his father. His father's struggles have inspired Amit to dream big and aim for a brighter future.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS: "DON'T NEGLECT YOUR CHILDREN" - IS IT RIGHT OR WRONG?

Bureau Report

Being parents is a significant responsibility as children are born due to us. As parents, any wrong action on our part can harm our children. Whenever children need something, they turn to their parents. From taking care of children to their education and shaping them into good or bad individuals, parents contribute the most. In today's busy life, parents often tend to reduce their attention towards their children amidst work and household responsibilities. Due to this, they might not notice the changes occurring in their children, which can lead to their downfall. In such situations, children often start associating with the wrong friends or people, leading them down the wrong path.

The beginning of such negative influences is slow, making it difficult for parents to understand initially. By the time parents realize, it might be too late. Hence, it is essential for parents to pay attention to their children alongside their work commitments.

We spoke to those young companions from Noida who are ruining their lives due to bad company, and their parents are unaware of it. Some children mentioned that in their locality, parents leave for work in the



morning, and the children stay at home. Most parents have smartphones, and if there are two phones, they take one with them, leaving the other at home.

As parents leave for work in the morning, they are unaware of their children's activities throughout the day. In this locality, most of the girls aged between 13 to 17 have their own smartphones. They gather at a place, chat on their phones, and converse with their boyfriends from the same locality. One 13-year-old boy from the same locality, whose sister is involved

in such a company, shared that he knows his sister is getting into bad company. When he advises her or threatens to inform their parents, she beats him and falsely accuses him of wrongdoings. These girls from the locality tend to do household chores together and then gather to chat with boys. Many of their parents are unaware of this because after returning tired from work, they have their meals and rest, and they remain unaware of their children's activities throughout the day.

BOYS FORCED TO DRESS AS GIRLS FOR BEGGING

Talkative reporter Ajay and Balaknama reporter Shabir Sha

When Balaknama Reporter Shabir visited the JayasinghpuraKhore area, he discovered that in this locality, boys are made to dress as girls and engage in begging. Upon questioning a boy named Ajay (changed name) and his friends about this matter, they revealed that it is true. Boys aged 5 to 10 are made to dress as girls and sent out for begging. Parents, especially during festivals, apply makeup to boys to make them look like pretty girls, and they are sent to beg in the streets and neighbourhoods from 6 in the morning to 8 in the evening. Once the designated time is over, the children return home on their own.

When the reporter asked Ajay



and his friends if they enjoy this work, Ajay responded that they don't like it. They mentioned that they are often teased by other children, who taunt them for dressing as girls to beg for alms. The children expressed their disappointment and revealed that it was their parents who force them into this practice.

SCARCITY OF CLEAN WATER: STRUGGLE FOR THE PEOPLE AND CHILDREN OF THE BASTI



Balaknama Reporter: Shabir Sha

Water is essential for life, and people say "Water is life." However, despite having water, not being able to use it is a significant issue. Reporter Shabir visited JayasinghpuraKhore Basti Jaipur to understand the water problem by speaking with the local children and residents. The local residents shared that due to the salty water coming from the government taps in the Basti, children and families cannot use that water. When the children drink this water, they fall ill with various diseases. The residents mentioned that they have to buy a bucket of water for 10 rupees daily. The children

explained that sometimes they earn money by begging or doing odd jobs like garbage collection, and they give those

earnings to their parents to buy water for drinking at home.

When the Reporter asked a girl named Sanjana living in the Basti about the impact of this issue on children's education, she explained that children pay more attention to fetching water than to their studies. This is because the water supply arrives in the morning and evening once a day. When children are studying, they worry that they might miss the water supply vehicle, so they cannot focus on their studies. The uncertain timing of the water supply in the morning affects their education negatively.

ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR, STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN AWARENESS THROUGH STREET PLAYS

Balaknama Reporter: Shabir Sha

On June 12, in the Basti JayasinghpuraKhore area, the Alternative Education Center operated by Chetna Foundation organized a street play on the theme of 'Mental Harm' on Child Labour Day. Through the medium of street plays, the children conveyed the message that

child labour is a crime and should be stopped. They emphasized not involving children in child labour as it affects their mental well-being and hampers their education. During the program, Sub-Inspector Kamal Meena from the local police station told the children that if anyone mistreats them or forces them into child labour, they can dial

100 or visit the police station to report it. The police always support the interests of the children. He encouraged the children to stay away from child labour and inspired them to study at Chetna's education centre regularly and attend school. In addition to this, the sarpanches (village headmen) of the Gond tribal community and the Singiwala community

also contributed to connecting each child in the Basti area with education for a better future. Through the medium of street play, awareness was raised among about 100 beneficiaries about the negative effects of child labour and the mental harm it causes. Local police Sub-Inspector Kamal Meena assured support for the well-being of the children.

VICTIMS OF SOCIAL EVILS: CHILDHOOD OF GIRLS FILLED WITH THE EFFECTS OF DOWRY AND CHILD MARRIAGE



Talkative Reporte Maya
Balaknama ReporterKajal

Different types of social evils are on the rise in society, and it is becoming challenging to put a stop to them. The unfortunate reality is that parents themselves are making their daughters victims of these social evils. When Balaknama reporter Kajal attempted to understand

the problems faced by girls living in a neighborhood in Jaipur, they revealed that in our society, marrying girls off (dowry) during their childhood is associated with our society's religious beliefs. Hence, the entire society perceives it as a religious act, and relationships for girls are decided in their childhood. Moreover, when a senior member of the

family passes away, the family considers it auspicious to conduct a wedding on the day of the funeral feast, and the girl's marriage is solemnized on that day. In return, while finalizing the girl's relationship, the boy's family demands a substantial amount of money in cash.

Suman (name changed) mentioned that the most significant issue is that a girl's marriage is arranged in her childhood, but when she grows up and is sent to her in-laws' home, her family demands money and jewelry from the boy's family. The boy's family tries to fulfill this demand, and the girl's journey to her new home is not completed until the demand is met. It feels like our parents are making a business deal for us, and until now, girls in society have not been able to escape from this tradition.

STRUGGLING ON THE UNKNOWN PATH OF DESTINY: CHILDREN'S STRUGGLES FILLED WITH LACK OF FACILITIES AND PROPER SUPPORT

Balaknama Reporter Shabir Sha

Similar to several slums in Jaipur, there is a makeshift settlement of a JDA (Jaipur Development Authority) official, where lives a ten-year-old boy named Aakash. His story, like that of millions of children, compels us to reflect on our administrative system. When our Balaknama reporter spoke to Aakash, he shared that his family came from Gujarat, and he works on the streets near the settlement selling tea. His father works as a sweeper on the streets. Aakash mentioned that he used to assist his father in sweeping work earlier. However, since his help wasn't significantly contributing to the family's livelihood, he began selling tea instead.

When asked about his family, Aakash mentioned that his mother had passed away. He lives in a jhuggi (shanty) with his father and two younger brothers, making

a living by selling tea. He earns around 1500 rupees per month. Aakash revealed that his younger brother helps his father in making brooms. He further described the challenges of living in a jhuggi, especially during strong winds and rain. Regarding school admission, Aakash informed that he had never attended school because his name was never registered in any school. He doesn't possess any documents related to school admission.

When questioned about the other children in his settlement, Aakash said that many children live in the jhuggis around him, engaged in different tasks like begging, making brooms, selling balloons, etc. Aakash mentioned that his father drinks alcohol. How many more children like Aakash are forced to live a life filled with challenges due to lack of awareness, facilities, and proper support?

"TOILETS: A STEP TOWARDS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN



Talkative Reporter Anas,
Balaknama Reporter Aslam

As you may know, good health enhances physical and mental

strength. When we don't have good health, our strength diminishes significantly. Similarly, when our young reporters visited the Emar

Towers area in Gurugram, they were informed by a 13-year-old boy named Anas that there is no proper sanitation system in his school. The toilets that were built for the students in our school have deteriorated over time, and many of them are now broken and emit such a foul smell that no child wants to use them. Moreover, in case of emergencies, these children either have to take leave from school or use the dirty toilets which lack water and cleanliness. The condition of the bathrooms is so appalling

that students go to a field behind the school premises to defecate.

Furthermore, during conversations with other children from the same community, it was revealed that the person responsible for cleaning the bathrooms receives a monthly salary of ₹50,000, but he only sweeps the outer areas and neglects the inner cleaning. As a result, the bathrooms become extremely dirty. The school has a total of 10 bathrooms, and all of them are in a terrible state.

They emit a bad odour, the roofs are damaged, and there is no water in the taps. The entire bathroom area remains unclean, deterring anyone from using them.

The children request that a new and well-maintained bathroom be constructed in their school premises. They hope for a person who takes care of proper cleanliness and hygiene for the children's health and bathroom upkeep. If not, the children will be forced to use open spaces for defecation during emergencies.

BADHTE KADAM FEDERATION LEADERS HIGHLIGHTED THE ISSUES OF EDUCATION DEPRIVATION

Balaknama Reporter Shabir Sha

On May 26, 2023, a workshop was organized at Institute of Development Studies by National Action and Coordination Group (NACG) for Ending Violence Against Children, focusing on solutions and support for the issues faced by children working on the streets of Jaipur. During this workshop, Smt. Sangeeta Beniwal, Chairperson of the Rajasthan State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Sanjay Gupta, Chairperson of Naig, and Director of Chetna NGO, along with NACG representatives from 11 states, participated.

During the meeting, officials of the Commission

and the presence of members were made aware of the problems faced by school admission issues and Aadhar card-related problems. Balaknama reporter Mo Shabir Sha shared his thoughts, mentioning that there is a school near the kachchibasti of Vidyadhar Nagar. When they took the children there, the school officials said that due to the lack of documents, they wouldn't admit them and that even I don't have an Aadhar card. Therefore, I also couldn't get admission in the school.

Chairperson Sunita Beniwal listened to the problems of the children and provided potential solutions, along with assuring efforts to connect children with education and social services.

THE STATE CHILD PROTECTION COMMISSION ORGANIZED A THREE-DAY SPECIAL AADHAAR CAMP

where 125 children obtained identity through Aadhaar cards



Bureau report

On May 26, 2023, during a meeting with the National Action and Coordination Group for Ending Violence against Children, held under the auspices of Chetna NGO in Jaipur, the issue of children lacking Aadhaar cards was raised. Due to the absence of

Aadhaar cards, these children were being denied admission to schools and were unable to avail other social schemes. The Commission was made aware of these problems. Considering this issue, the Commission, in collaboration with Chetna NGO, organized a three-day special Aadhaar camp for the first time.

The purpose was to ensure that children could be admitted to schools during this session. The three-day special Aadhaar card camp commenced on June 14 and ended on June 16, 2023, in Prem Nagar Kachhi Basti, Jaipur. The Chairperson of the Rajasthan State Child Protection Commission, Smt. Sangita Beniwal, inaugurated the camp and personally handed out Aadhaar cards to the children to help them establish their identities. During this three-day camp, conducted in collaboration with Chetna NGO, approximately 125 beneficiaries were directly and indirectly benefitted through 10 alternative education centers. The aim was to address the issue of children lacking Aadhaar cards and to ensure that they could access education and other social benefits.

TRAPPED IN THE TREACHEROUS PATH OF ADDICTION AND BAD COMPANY, MUSTAQEEM'S CHILDHOOD WAS ENSNARED

Talkative Reporter Mustaqeem, Balaknama Reporter Shabir Sha

Balaknama reporter from Jaipur Shabir embarked on a journey through the neighbourhoods of Jaipur and introduced children to the Balaknama newspaper. It was then that 11-year-old Mustaqeem revealed that in some neighbourhoods, older boys befriend younger boys and introduce them to the habit of substance abuse. Some time ago, I too had fallen into the clutches of such bad company and developed a habit of substance abuse.

My parnetworkin aaratar and heavy zari work. Due to both of them being occupied with their work, they couldn't pay much attention any me. My

parents wanted me to study, and they even enrolled me in the alternative education centre of the Chetna Foundation running in the neighbourhood. However, without informing them, I would sneak out of the house with my friends involved in bad habits and start smoking bidis and cigarettes. When my family found out about my addiction, they were deeply worried.

They asked the activists from the Chetna Foundation to help me. From that point on, every morning, when I wasn't home, the activist would come to pick me up. When my mother and sister couldn't find me in the neighbourhood with my bad friends, my sister would take me back from there. At the



centre, my sister would teach me and engage me in studying and playing all day.

The educator there explained to me that substance abuse has a severe impact on mental health,

leading to stress, headaches, and dangerous illnesses. One day, my sister explained in a life skills workshop at the centre why one shouldn't indulge in substance abuse, which motivated me to

gradually give up the habit. Initially, on days I didn't indulge in substance abuse, I would feel nervous and restless, but this problem started decreasing gradually. It took me 4 to 5 months to completely quit the habit, but today I no longer indulge in any kind of substance abuse. Now, I am very happy. This year, I got admitted to the school. I go to school every day and study.

However, I wonder how many children like me might be in this world, who have become victims of substance abuse due to bad company during childhood. I want to inform those children about the harms and diseases caused by substance abuse so that they can protect their childhood from its clutches.

"HIDDEN PERSONALITIES OF ANGER: THE STORY BEHIND GOOD AND BAD DEEDS"



Bureau Report

Some individuals easily succumb to anger over trivial matters. However, understanding why one should avoid anger and the potential consequences of excessive anger can be enlightening. Your anger may arise due to personal issues or external factors, and giving in to excessive stress or anger can harm your mental well-being. While releasing your anger might provide momentary relief, the long-

term effects on your mental health can be damaging. Anger can negatively affect both the heart and the mind, and it is said to be like a matchstick that burns the person who tries to ignite others.

In a Delhi slum, reporters interviewed some children living near the railway tracks to learn about their experiences. A 13-year-old girl shared that in her community, people tend to get angry over trivial matters. Frequent quarrels and fights arise among them,

leading to heated arguments near the tracks. Unfortunately, such anger-driven conflicts can escalate to the point where physical harm and even death occur. For instance, an uncle in the neighbourhood, fueled by alcohol, engaged in a violent argument at home. His mother scolded him for his behaviour, which led to a fight between them. Driven by rage, the uncle began physically assaulting his wife and children, resulting in tragic consequences.

Witnessing incidents like these, some children also adopt aggressive behaviour. Such patterns repeat every day, causing fear among the children. However, people continue to express their anger, despite the potential consequences. When lives are lost due to these outbursts, the responsibility often falls on the surviving family members, burdening them with added responsibilities. Ultimately, there remains no one to provide help for the family.



INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF FOUL ODOUR: FROM DIRT TO HEALTH

Bureau Report

During a visit to the slums of Noida, the reporter explored a narrow lane filled with stagnant water and bricks placed in between to create a pathway through the water. The reporters interacted with the children living in the slum to understand how so much water had accumulated in this lane without rain. A young boy explained that most people

here live in rented rooms, and the water has been standing for months due to clogged sewage pipelines, leaving no outlet for the water to drain. All the residents in the rented rooms contribute to the accumulation of dirty water, including wastewater and even sewage, causing inconvenience when they navigate through the water, resulting in a strong, unpleasant smell that is making them sick.

To address this issue, the reporters approached the landlord, who responded by saying, "If you want to live here, then stay like this; otherwise, you can leave." The residents are compelled by circumstances to continue living there. Their parents work as street vendors, selling vegetables in the nearby market, and loading their produce onto rickshaws to set up their stalls. However, due to the lack of facilities in the vicinity to unload the rickshaws, they are left with no choice but to reside in this dire situation.

CHILDREN ARE STILL FORCED TO GRIND SPICES ON GRINDING STONES

Bureau report

In today's era, very few people are left who grind spices on a grinding stone. Most people now use mixers to grind spices, lentils, or other things. There are still many people who are not even aware of mixers, and those who are aware think they are expensive. As a result, they still grind spices or lentils



on a grinding stone. They also grind other things on a grinding stone. When our Balaknama journalist held a

reporter's meeting and visited the community, he saw a girl grinding spices on a grinding stone. When our Balaknama

journalist approached the girl and asked her if she feels pain in her hands while grinding spices, the girl said that when we grind spices, our hands start to hurt a lot. The skin on our hands gets cracked from grinding every day, but we have no choice but to grind. If we don't grind, our parents get angry, and we are forced to grind spices on the grinding stone.

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

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

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