

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.

Through a rally STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT WAYS TO PREVENT AIR POLLUTION

Reporters: Sabir, Sarita, Hansraj, Kajal, and others

Taking note of the serious state of air pollution, Balaknama reporters have assessed the situation of street and working children concerning the increasing air pollution currently. They explored the difficulties these children face. During their visits to various places, children living and working on the streets shared their problems caused by air pollution. Reporters visited a settlement where most people are engaged in sorting and recycling waste. A 10-year-old living in this settlement mentioned that most of them work in waste segregation and recycling in the settlement. In this settlement, most people leave in the morning to earn money, and children from the settlement accompany their parents to

assist them in waste segregation. Some children even go alone. The child mentioned that those who collect waste often gather materials like iron, plastic, wires, etc. Sometimes, copper wires are hidden within thick plastic cables, and they need to strip them, or if they don't, they burn the wires. Consequently, toxic black smoke rises into the sky, posing a risk of pollution. When the plastic is completely burned, the copper wires are separated and sold separately after cleaning.

A 12-year-old girl residing in West Delhi shed light on the issues arising from pollution. She mentioned how pollution is escalating day by day in the area, making the streets hazy rather than clear. When she goes out to sell toys in the morning, the pollution in the lanes is so severe that visibility



reduces, and her eyes start watering, causing discomfort. Moreover, with the excessive haze, sometimes it's difficult to notice fallen wires in the lanes, posing a risk of tripping over them. Additionally, during her morning sales, she observes that various vehicles move at high speeds, contributing to pollution. The toxic fumes from different types of vehicles and the prevailing air quality make the mornings quite chilly, leading to

coughs and colds.

An 11-year-old girl living in Gurugram highlighted the increasing pollution's impact. She shared how as pollution rises, they encounter numerous difficulties. It sometimes feels like this is just the beginning, and there's a high possibility that pollution levels will surge in the future, especially considering the burning of fireworks during Diwali. Though Diwali is celebrated on November 12, 2023,

children and adults have already started igniting firecrackers, indicating a potential increase in pollution levels post the Diwali festival. Consequently, breathing difficulties are increasing due to higher pollution levels, and this problem might exacerbate further.

After learning about the increasing pollution in several slum areas of West Delhi, it was revealed that most slums lack proper toilet facilities. All the residents, adults, and children living in these slums are compelled to defecate in open spaces due to the absence of toilets. A 15-year-old girl residing in one such slum mentioned that pollution often increases due to the accumulation of waste in open areas where people tend to defecate. As a result, children living in these areas frequently fall sick due to the pollu-

tion caused by the accumulated waste.

A boy living in Sector 49 of Noida mentioned that near their residence, there's a large drain, receiving waste water from several villages. People throw garbage in this drain, polluting the water significantly. Consequently, various insects and mosquitoes breed in these polluted waters, posing severe health risks to the children. Diseases like dengue and malaria are spreading among the children due to different types of pollution.

During discussions with reporters regarding pollution, a 17-year-old girl living in a slum area with her parents mentioned that rampant construction of buildings near their locality has led to an alarming increase in pollution levels. The pollution during morn-

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GAS CYLINDER BLAST ENGULFS 25 SLUM DWELLINGS LEAVING HOMES IN RUINS AND CHILDREN TRAUMATIZED

Raj Talkative Reporter
Aslam Balaknama
Reporter

The recent incident under discussion pertains to a significant fire outbreak that has had a profoundly adverse impact on the working children of our community. During a recent visit by our correspondents to the GMD Contact Point, discussions were held with these working children to gain insights into the event. As described by the children, a few days ago, a woman in our locality was prepar-

ing food when a sudden gas leakage led to the explosion of the gas cylinder. This explosion triggered a devastating fire that quickly spread and engulfed approximately 25 huts in its path, leading to the unfortunate destruction of many households.

As a result of this calamity, numerous families have lost their homes, and the children's living conditions have become a cause for concern. The fire did not spare the hut where these children usually attended their lessons,



causing their educational pursuits to come to a screeching halt. The flames consumed everything in their path, including textbooks, school bags, furniture,

bedding, and even the meager savings kept within these homes.

During the incident, the children made a distress call to the Fire Brigade, and the fire

was eventually brought under control after approximately an hour. However, by the time the firefighters arrived, the fire had already wreaked havoc on their homes and belongings. The aftermath of this incident has left many families in despair, with limited resources to rebuild their lives.

The children, in particular, are profoundly disheartened as their study materials, possessions, and living conditions have been decimated by the fire. Some individuals also

sustained injuries while trying to extinguish the fire. This unfortunate event has also affected our educational center, which has been entirely consumed by the blaze.

As we grapple with the magnitude of the situation, we are uncertain about the best course of action to take. The children are in dire need of support to restart their education and maintain their livelihoods. It is their fervent hope that the government or any willing parties may come forward to assist during this challenging time.

STREET CHILD CRICKET WORLD CUP 2023 CHAMPIONS RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION OF STREET CHILDREN, BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS

Bureau Report

The Street Child Cricket World Cup 2023, organized by Street Child United, aimed to promote children's rights and participation by overcoming gender barriers. The event, held in Chennai from September 23rd to 30th before the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, sought to uplift the rights and welfare of children living on the streets, providing them with an international platform to showcase their talents.

This unique tournament became a powerful platform, with 24 teams representing street child cricket from various countries including India, England, Burundi, Hungary, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Nepal, Rwanda, Burundi, Mexico, Sri Lanka, South Africa, among others. These teams advocated for several social issues such as gender equality, child rights, and participation.

These children, facing adversity and challenges, are now representing their

countries on the cricket field, demonstrating that they are more than their circumstances. Chetna, a social organization working through Childhood Enhancement Training and Action, represented India in the tournament. All these children demonstrated relentless efforts and preparation for this significant event.

These children, who have faced numerous challenges since childhood and have contributed to supporting their families through various endeavors, are now using cricket as a tool to transform their futures. They are practicing diligently under dedicated coaches, honing their skills, and fostering camaraderie.

Initially identified from various neighborhoods in Delhi, 40 resilient and hardworking boys and girls were selected. Following a rigorous selection process, a final group of 4 boys and 4 girls were chosen to represent in this event. These young participants



embarked on a transformative journey to Chennai, transcending their city limits, experiencing invaluable interactions with people from diverse corners of the world for the first time.

Sharing her experience, 14-year-old Farzana expressed, "Though I always enjoyed playing different games, I never actively participated in cricket. I held an internal belief that cricket was predominantly a male-dominated sport. This notion restrained me from

trying it as I feared ridicule from people around me. This extensive training not only enhanced my cricketing skills but also instilled confidence and empowerment in me, dispelling my hesitation."

Speaking about this exciting opportunity, the team captain stated, "We are thrilled to represent India in the Street Child Cricket World Cup. Cricket is not just a game for us; it's a means to break free from the cycle of poverty. We aim to show the world that irrespective

of our backgrounds, we possess the talent and determination to succeed."

"Street children are akin to 'सड़क की गुगली' always prepared to work hard and succeed given the right opportunity. In the last three months, we have witnessed a profound transformation in the group of 8 children selected from 40. They have emerged as leaders within their cooperative groups and communities, challenging gender stereotypes, showcasing unwavering determination in adverse situations, and exhibiting unwavering courage to overcome obstacles. They are ready to display their talents on this international platform," remarked Sanjay Gupta, Founder of Chetna Organization. Social organization Childhood Enhancement Training and Action have played a crucial role in supporting and nurturing these children's dreams for this international event, providing them with necessary resources, coaching, and guidance.

CHILDREN ARE SUCCUMBING TO NEGATIVE INFLUENCES DUE TO EXTENSIVE MOBILE PHONE USAGE

Reporter Shabir Sha and talkative report Ajay

When the journalist, Hansraj Kumar, visited the Shivaji Park area in Delhi for a balcony report, the local reporters informed him that there is a boy named Vivek (changed name) living in the area. He is 13 years old and studies in the seventh grade. His admission to the seventh grade was very difficult. He used to go to school daily



and after studying at school, he would go to the study center of the Consciousness Foundation daily.

He has some friends who own mobile phones, and they spend most of their time on their phones. Vivek used to spend time with his friends on Sundays, and gradually, he started falling victim to their bad company. Slowly, he abandoned his studies and began spending all his

time on the phone, watching videos, listening to songs, and browsing various websites. His behavior towards his elders also became disrespectful, and he started hitting his younger siblings without any reason. One day, when he was looking at his friend's phone, his friend jokingly pushed him, which made him furious. He went home in a rage and started using foul language against his parents, demanding a phone.

STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT WAYS TO PREVENT AIR POLLUTION

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ings has intensified so much that even buildings just 500 meters away are barely visible. Dust and debris fill the air, affecting the cleanliness of the area and causing health issues among the children due to the escalating pollution.

When the reporters from "Balaknama" engaged in extensive discussions with children from various locations such as Noida, Lucknow, Delhi, Jaipur, and Gurugram, the majority of the children highlighted that pollution is continuously increasing. Now that the wedding season has begun, although festivities like DJs and drums add to the enjoyment, the loud DJ music at wedding processions often leads to various disturbances for the people living near-

by. Moreover, the amplified sound due to DJs exacerbates noise pollution, posing an even greater threat.

Noor (changed name), residing in Noida, shared that in their village, when DJs are played at wedding processions, the noise level is so high that it significantly contributes to pollution. The excessive bass from the DJs sometimes causes nearby houses undergoing repairs to develop cracks and collapse. Therefore, they appealed to ensure that DJs, drums, and similar instruments are played at weddings but at a volume that does not inconvenience those living around. To gain a deeper understanding of escalating pollution, reporters reached an area in Jaipur predominantly filled with factories.



Conversations with some children revealed that the vicinity was surrounded by factories where various operations like spinning, belt-making, bread production, plastic manufacturing, etc., were

conducted using machines. These factories emitted toxic smoke due to burning certain waste materials, resulting in a hazardous cloud spreading across the environment and creating foul-smelling clouds

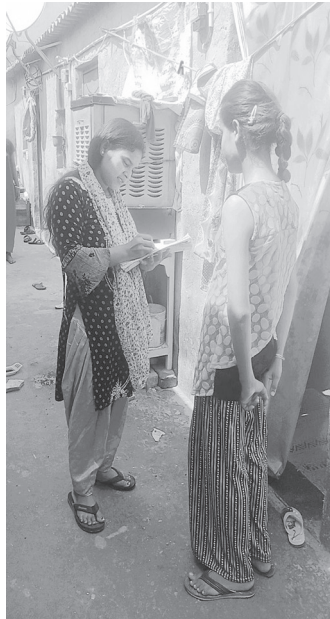
in the area. This made it difficult for people to venture outside, risking illness due to the smoke and its adverse effects, particularly affecting children.

Taking steps to address the increasing pollution, members of the group organized rallies in Delhi, Gurugram, Jaipur, and Noida. In Noida, the activists, riding in a van, approached people in areas like Sector 18, Sector 27, and Sector 37, conveying the message that the rising pollution was disproportionately affecting young children. They urged everyone not to indulge in unnecessary activities that contribute to pollution, to maintain regular cleanliness in their surroundings, and to ensure safety by wearing masks.

STRUGGLING ADOLESCENTS IN PURSUIT OF EMPLOYMENT: SEARCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH HARD WORK

Balaknama Reporter Aslam

When Haryana reporter Aslam visited the slums of M.R. Tower, he discovered that some underage children were resorting to the wrong path in search of work. Because of their young age, no one was willing to employ them, and if someone did hire them, they were not paid well. Therefore, these children working on the streets use their wits and take on jobs by using someone else's identity cards, such as Aadhar cards and PAN cards. When our Balaknama reporters spoke to these children, one child, Amit, revealed, "Once, I started working in a shop, and the owner initially promised me a monthly salary of 10,000 rupees. However, as the month was about to end, he said that



I would only receive 6,000 rupees because I'm only 14 years old. He took advantage

of this and gave me only 6,000 rupees." Then, a friend of mine who was the same age as me was working in a clothing store using someone else's identity, and he received 14,000 rupees a month. So, I also work by using someone else's identity card. I show my neighbor's Aadhar card to work because our faces look similar. That's why the shopkeeper hired me. However, the customers who come in say that I'm underage. But I tell them that I'm older than 18 years. To be honest, children are put to work at a young age, but they are not paid well. That's why they use someone else's identity and, here, some children even work for Zomato and Swiggy deliveries using others' IDs and earn a good amount of money every month."

SELF-SUSTAINING AMBITION: VIVEK'S DECISION TO BEAR HIS OWN EXPENSES



Talkative Reporter Vivek Balaknama Reporter Aslam

Today, I want to share the story of a child who had to leave his education for a particular reason. When our Balaknama reporters visited the slums of Badshahpur in Haryana, they met a very talented boy named Vivek, who is 16 years old. When they asked Vivek why he had to discontinue his education, he explained, "When I was studying in

the 10th grade, my family didn't have enough money to buy my school books. This compelled me to work part-time. As a result, I used to reach school late and couldn't concentrate much on my studies. Many times, I received harsh scolding from my class teacher, who would threaten and reprimand me severely." "In our school, we were fined Rs. 10 if we took leave. One day, I didn't have the money to pay the fine, and my mother didn't

have any money either. So, I went to school without paying the fine. When my teacher asked me for the fine, I told her that we were facing some financial difficulties at home, which is why I couldn't bring the money. Upon hearing this, my teacher said, 'If you can't afford the fine, then don't come to school.' So, Vivek stopped going to school and is now studying on his own. He also works as a part-time sweeper in the PG (paying guest) accommodations. At first, he was quite embarrassed to do this work, but he felt compelled to do it, remembering his teacher's words. As time went by, Vivek became more accustomed to the work, and now he doesn't feel any shame in it. He performs the work efficiently. Vivek says, 'I will save this money and continue my studies. I want to fund my entire education on my own.'"

VIVEK'S FAMILY IS COMPELLED TO LIVE IN SECLUSION DUE TO HIS FATHER'S ADDICTION TO ALCOHOL

Balaknama reporter Sarita

Vivek is currently only 11 years old and is very troubled by his family's environment. He revealed that his father has an addiction to alcohol and resorts to violence against everyone. He sells household items to fund his drinking habit.

One day, due to a severe fight between his parents, his mother decided to leave with her three children and find a new place to live. His father couldn't afford the rent for



their shack, so he returned to the village. He has been

searching for his wife and children, but they haven't met him yet. Due to his father's inappropriate behavior, they now have to hide from him. His mother works in a building and also tries to educate children. Vivek shares "I have to assist my mother with her work because I have two younger sisters. Then, I go to Chetna NGO for education. I will be enrolling in school soon. After that, I will continue my studies, fulfill my dreams, and bring honour to my mother's name."



PEOPLE IN THE SLUMS DISTURBED BY PILES OF GARBAGE

Insha Talkative Reporter Sarita and Aslam Balaknama Reporter

People living in the slum areas face numerous challenges. Children have shared that there is a large open ground in front of our slum, where people come to dump their garbage, causing a significant stench. This odor is quite distressing for us, and it makes it difficult to breathe. Moreover, the filth in the vicinity is leading to a rapid spread of diseases such as dengue and malaria within our slum. Even when we approach the owner of our slum and express our concerns, our pleas often fall on deaf ears. People continue to dispose of their waste in the open, and during

the monsoon season, the entire area gets flooded with water, carrying the garbage into our slum. If people refrained from dumping their garbage outside our slum, we would be able to live in a clean and hygienic environment, free from the threat of diseases.

Children wish for a resolution to this problem, as the accumulated garbage will eventually become a mountain, and we, the residents, will have to bear the consequences. Unfortunately, no one is currently making any effort to remove this garbage. The municipal authorities seem to be turning a blind eye to the issue. We earnestly desire that the government intervenes to address this problem.

ANKUSH: ASPIRING FOR EXCELLENCE DESPITE ORPHANHOOD, DREAMING TO BECOME A TEACHER FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN

Talkative Reporter Ankush Balaknama Reporter Aslam

When our reporter Aslam visited the slums of MR Tower in Haryana, he came across a child who is an orphan. When he was very young, Ankush lost his father to cancer, and his mother passed away in an accident. Thus, Ankush is an orphan, and he has no one in this world but his maternal uncle. When our Balaknama reporters interviewed Ankush, he shared his story: "My name is Ankush, and I live with my maternal uncle and his three children. Since my uncle already has three kids of his own, he can't afford to send me to school. That's why I go to Chetna NGO to study. There, a teacher and teaches me Hindi very well. With her guidance, I've learned to read Hindi. I dream of going to school. I hope that when my maternal uncle's children grow up, I will be able to attend school as well. Right now, I am like their caretaker. I look after them and feed them twice a day. If I don't take care of them, my uncle won't even give me food,



and who knows, he might even throw me out. That's why I take care of his children and also go to study. When his children grow up, I hope to go to school." In my uncle's house, no one else takes care of them like I do. I look after his children, go to school, and then feed them. So, I want to get a chance to study and become a teacher. I want to educate poor children."

**CHILDREN'S HELP
LINE NUMBERS**

CONTACT THESE TOLL FREE
NUMBERS IF YOU FACE ANY
PROBLEM.

Child line Number

1098

Police Helpline Number

100

DUE TO THE LACKADAISICAL TEACHING APPROACH OF A TEACHER, 25 STUDENTS EXPELLED FROM SCHOOL

Bureau Report

The students disclosed their predicament to Balaknama reporters who visited a makeshift settlement near a Noida. They expressed their unhappiness at having abandoned their school education. The young students shared their stories, revealing the reasons behind their absence. One of the students recounted his family's journey, explaining that they initially resided in their village. However, due to the lack of employment opportunities, the family moved to Noida, where the child's father found work but struggled to manage household tasks. Therefore, the student's mother and siblings joined the father in Noida, and after initially

residing in the makeshift settlement, they eventually moved to a rented room. The father, determined to provide a better education, enrolled both of his sons in a private school. Initially, the teachers at the school were dedicated to their students' learning, but the situation changed when new teachers took over. The new teacher's approach shifted, as they predominantly wrote notes on the blackboard, causing all students to copy them down, and then the teacher would engage with their mobile phones. Regardless of whether students understood the content, whether they were completing their assignments, or whether they were attentive, the teacher paid little to no attention. Disturbed by



this scenario, the students informed their parents, who in turn approached the school management. The parents' intervention led to the school expelling the students. This act

of expulsion was not limited to just these two students, as it quickly became a precedent for an additional 24 students who also withdrew from the school. Alarmed by

the students' grievances, the school principal took immediate action to assess the quality of teaching in the class. The principal then visited the class to observe the teaching standards. Afterwards, the principal had a conversation with the students. Subsequently, the teacher scolded the students harshly, neglecting to provide them with the attention they needed. Frustrated by the lack of teaching and the teacher's behaviour, the students and their parents collectively decided to request the removal of their names from the school, feeling that it was the most reasonable course of action. This led to the removal of 25 students' names from the school's records, ultimately securing a transfer for the affected children.

CHILDREN TROUBLED BY WEATHER EXTREMES: ILLNESS TAKES A TOLL ON EDUCATION AND FAMILY FINANCES

Balaknama Reporter Aslam

When our young reporters discussed the impact of changing weather with the children, one boy, Shivam, explained that changing weather brings numerous difficulties for them. As the weather shifts, they try

to adapt but often fall ill. Rohit shared that changing weather often leads to fevers, necessitating visits to the doctor. Lack of financial resources prevents these children from seeking medical care, as they earn their living at night and manage their daily expenses

with those earnings. Consequently, they resort to home remedies when they fall ill. Fear of exorbitant hospital bills also deters these children from seeking professional medical care. Parents worry about the high costs of hospitals, and this fear leads children to

use home remedies to self-treat when unwell. Raqeebul explained that he too recently suffered from a high fever, causing him to miss school. If he missed school, his teacher scolded him, claiming that a fever typically lasts for only one day, yet he would take three days off. Teachers also

imposed fines on them. The changing weather in their region has led to several children developing low platelet counts due to water scarcity, putting them at risk of major diseases like typhoid. As a result, both their education and their parents' income suffer.

CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS: IMPACT ON THE HEALTH OF WORKING CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporter Hansraj, Sarita, Aslam, Kishan

Weather changes every six months, and with each change, the problems of children working on the streets intensify. Let's delve into this story to understand what challenges changing weather brings. Rohit, residing in Gurgaon, shared that most children in his neighbourhood support their families by selling toys and other items in the market across from their homes. The scorching sun during this season is so intense that children fall ill. These children do not have enough money to seek prompt medical care. In Delhi, a 13-year-old girl described how the current weather fluctuations make it difficult to adapt as the heat can suddenly intensify, or the weather can become extremely cold. These weather variations lead to various illnesses like coughs and colds.

A 10-year-old boy in Jaipur stated that many children in their area play in the parks. He witnessed a 9-year-old boy begging for food from someone in the park. When the child was threatened and chased away, he

went to another man. The boy, in a dejected tone, explained that he doesn't have a mother, and his father is unemployed. This compels him to feed himself in this manner. Dilip, living in Noida, mentioned how their jhuggi (shanty) gets extremely hot when the weather changes, causing their shanties to become unbearably warm. Due to the intense heat, the water inside these shanties becomes

too hot to drink. They buy ice from nearby vendors and put it in their water to cool it down. Drinking the hot water doesn't quench their thirst. Rahul, living in Gurgaon, reported that the fluctuating weather causes many children to fall ill, as the temperature variations result in physical discomfort such as coughs, colds, fever, and general unease. The children wish not to take leave from school due to

their illness, but the changing weather makes it challenging for them. Arvind, a 16-year-old supplying water in Noida, expressed his struggles, stating that carrying water bottles from house to house is a tedious job. The relentless heat makes it even more challenging, and the work becomes even more physically demanding. A 17-year-old boy near Delhi's railway tracks shared that

the extreme heat is making it difficult for everyone to endure. The boy studies in the 8th grade and reported the intense heat at his home, which persists even after using a fan. Some children ride bicycles to school, and some walk on foot. The school is about one and a half kilometers away. When the children return from school, they encounter scorching heat, causing them to sweat. The changing weather affects the health of many children day by day.

Tamanna, residing in a slum in Delhi, noted that getting sick due to changing weather is common, and there is a local clinic in her slum where medical care is provided for free. Most people in the slum rely on this clinic. When these people fall ill, they come to the clinic for treatment. However, due to the current weather changes, many children and adults are falling ill. For the past few days, the clinic's staff has been on leave, and the clinic is closed. This has left a significant portion of the community unable to access medical treatment. These individuals lack the resources to seek medical care elsewhere.

PARENTS POSE HURDLES TO SIBLINGS EDUCATION, IMPEDING JANVI'S PROMISING FUTURE

Balaknama Reporter Sarita and Talkative Reporter Janvi

Janvi (pseudonym), a 12-year-old with four siblings, aspires to a promising future. Being the eldest sister, she takes care of her younger brother and sister while her parents' work. Due to financial constraints, her parents do not send her to school. Her mother insists that there is no need for education; managing the household and family responsibilities is sufficient.



However, Janvi dreams of becoming a successful individual through education, earning well to secure her future. Despite completing

fifth grade, she is not allowed to continue her education due to her responsibility towards her younger siblings. Our Balaknama reporter Sarita informed Janvi about our NGO's contact point, where underprivileged children are admitted and provided with education. Janvi is encouraged to join and pursue her studies for a better future.

7-YEAR-OLD SCHOOLGIRL GOES MISSING ON HER WAY HOME, FOUND UNCONSCIOUS SUBJECTED TO UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Bureau Report

During a meeting with children from the Habibpur slum settlement in Noida, Balaknama reporters attempted to learn about the issues facing these youngsters. One of the children, 14-year-old Rajni (pseudonym), shared a concerning story about a recent incident where a 7-year-old girl from their own school went missing and was subjected to an alarming incident. Rajni recounted how, just a few days ago, a girl from their own school had been kidnapped and subsequently rescued after an extensive search. Rajni also informed the journalists that the missing girl used to attend school every day along with her friends. However, on that particular day, her friends left for home before her, and the girl was left alone at school.

She eventually left school by herself and on her way home, an unknown person suddenly grabbed her. All her friends had already reached home by then. Her family became concerned when she failed to return home on

time. However, the girl's sister initially assumed that she might have gone to her friends' houses for a while, as she sometimes did before coming home. With time passing and evening setting in, the family's worry intensified.

The parents of the missing girl both worked, and they usually returned home around 7-8 PM. When her mother asked her sister about her whereabouts and was told that the girl hadn't returned yet, her parents decided to go to the homes of her friends to inquire about her. The friends informed the parents that the missing girl had left school later than usual that day.

Anxiety grew as they could not locate her at her friends' homes or at school. The parents also called the school to check if she was still there, but to their dismay, she wasn't. The parents continued searching on the streets, but they couldn't find her. Her father mentioned that she often visited her friends' houses and sometimes took a little longer to return, so they initially thought she might have gone there. They hoped she would return home to play



or come back when it got dark. As more time passed, and it got later into the night, they became increasingly worried. The parents were now desperately looking for their daughter. During this time, they were frantically searching the streets, hoping to find her. However, they could not locate her.

Desperation grew, and her parents decided to visit her friends' houses again. They encountered a similar response from the friends, who had no information

about her. That's when her father noticed her sitting at a particular spot. He approached her, and they were finally reunited. The parents were relieved to see her but extremely concerned.

The girl's mother, in particular, became worried and anxious, and the fear in the girl's eyes was palpable. Her father advised her to calm down, eat something, and then ask her about her experience. The mother did her best to console the girl and feed her. After a while, she asked the girl about

where she had been and what had happened.

The girl's mother noticed swollen lips, marks, and injuries on her face, as though someone had assaulted her. The girl's condition was distressing, and she was visibly frightened. The girl's mother repeatedly asked her to recount her ordeal, but she was so traumatized that she couldn't provide any details.

The girl's father, meanwhile, advised her mother to let the girl relax and eat first. The parents were aware that the girl's condition was distressing, but they were relieved to have found her.

During the reporters' interaction with the children, Rajni shared that there was an underlying sense of fear among all the students, as many people came and went around the school premises. The children were unsure who they could trust or recognize, leading to apprehension about their safety. The incident highlighted the need for parents to pay close attention to their children and not allow them to go to and from school alone.

SCHOOL CHILDREN'S EXPLOITS: TOBACCO USAGE ON THE RISE

Bureau Report

The difference between good and bad behavior is well understood by everyone. However, the extent of misconduct by children, especially in the wrong company, can be quite surprising. A 14-year-old boy living in Delhi has revealed that many children are engaging in inappropriate activities while attending school. Currently, children are increasingly indulging in problematic behavior within schools. Some children receive money from home for various chores and items, which they sometimes use to buy intoxicating substances. These children come to school under the influence of these substances and often indulge

in such behavior near the school restroom. In my own eighth-grade class, there is a 16-year-old boy who regularly brings gutka, cigarettes, and tobacco, among other things, to school. Sometimes he hides them in his socks, and at other times, he conceals them in his bag. However, most of the other children are aware of his actions. One day, a 17-year-old boy was caught smoking near the school restroom by another student who promptly reported the incident to a teacher. The teacher questioned the boy, but he resorted to falsehoods. In response, the teacher scolded him. After school, the boy who had reported the incident was confronted by the student who had been using substances,



and he physically attacked him. Although he was severely beaten, no one intervened. The aggressive student had become so unruly that he continued to assault his peer until some individuals finally stepped in to stop the fight. The boy who had reported the incident had

incurred significant injuries. He later reported the matter to the teacher, leading to a meeting with the parents of the student using substances, after which he was expelled from school. He no longer attends school. This situation highlights the seriousness of

the issue of children engaging in harmful activities within schools. Addressing this problem requires taking positive steps to provide children with appropriate social and educational resources to steer them away from substance abuse. Furthermore, educating students about the dangers of substance abuse within the school setting and fostering cooperation between schools and parents is crucial. In conclusion, it is essential to implement various social and educational programs in high schools and within the community to prevent children from falling into the traps of substance abuse and enable them to focus on their education.

FEARFUL ENVIRONMENT AMONG STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN DUE TO DEMOLITION NEWS

Reporter Raj Kishor

Residents near the Jalwayu Tower slum told Balaknama reporter that discussions about demolishing the slums are happening everywhere. Street and working children were also discussing the demolition. This has created an atmosphere of fear all around. When the reporter talked to a boy named Kalu, he revealed that a tempo driver was announcing through a loudspeaker that

the slum should be vacated by the 15th Nov, otherwise the responsibility of the belongings would be theirs. Let us tell you that there is a very large and filthy slum in front of the Sector 54. In this slum, street and working children live with their families. These children work in waste disposal, begging, and putting up radios. The families of these children are not educated. When we talked to Rashmi Khaton, she told us that there is

demolition here every three months. We already pay the rent, but still, we have to face many difficulties. I go to clean utensils and sweep in houses. I have two children who go to school, but now this demolition news has put us in trouble. Due to the demolition every third or fourth month, we have to leave. Life here is quite difficult. There is also a problem with water inside the slum, but despite all this, their slums are demolished from time to time, even



after paying rent. Through Balaknama newspaper, we request the government not to cause trouble and problems to street and working children

in this way, because they also want to come into mainstream society through education and contribute to social development."

ADVERSE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH DUE TO ACCUMULATION OF GARBAGE NEAR WAZIRABAD



Reporter: Raj Kishor

Balaknama reporter, while interacting with children living near the red light area in Wazeerabad asked about their problems. The children shared that the accumulation of garbage near the zero-bar causes a lot of distress for them. The garbage not only

emits a foul smell, making everyone uncomfortable, but also affects their health. When the journalist visited the area near the contract point, they observed some children selling stationery items like pencils, copies, and books on the red light. Curious, the journalist inquired about their work, and the children

explained that since there is no earner in their family, they sell these items to make a living. The journalist asked if they were not interested in studying, to which they responded that they indeed want to study, but due to financial constraints, they are unable to afford education. The journalist informed them about a conscious organization that educates underprivileged children and suggested that they could come to the NGO's contact point in the morning or evening for study sessions. This way, they could pursue education and support their families simultaneously. Encouraged by the idea, the children expressed their willingness to attend the study sessions and mentioned that they would also work to contribute to their household income while pursuing their education.



DUE TO INCREASING POLLUTION, CHILDREN ON THE STREETS AND THOSE ENGAGED IN LABOR ARE FALLING SICK

Balaknama Reporter Sarita, Talkative Reporter Rimjhim

When a reporter visited the Goga Colony slum in Gurugram, talking to a girl named Rimjhim revealed that due to rising pollution in our area, children are getting sick. Diseases like dengue and malaria are spreading, and everyone is getting intravenous drips at the hospital. Contaminated food and water are causing illness among street and working children because they are not getting access to clean meals and water. As a result, they are becoming progressively more unwell. Some children are so severely affected by the illness that their condition has become critical, and the threat of death looms

over them. The water is also becoming contaminated, and consuming it, along with preparing food, is causing us to fall ill. The water tank outside our slum is filled with debris and small insects. Due to our helplessness, we are forced to drink this water. The caretakers of our slum don't even clean the tank, leading to the accumulation of dirt and the breeding of insects. People from outside our slum come and throw garbage, contributing to the increasing filth. The garbage pile has become so large that we can't even clean it. Street and working children request a solution to their problems so that they can live in cleanliness, have access to healthy food and clean water, and avoid falling ill.

ANSHIKA: FEELING UNSAFE DUE TO ONGOING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Balaknama Reporter Sarita and Anshika

Twelve-year-old Anshika is distressed by the inappropriate behavior she experiences. When her parents are away at work, she stays at home with her older sister. One evening, when there are no vegetables at home to prepare dinner, she goes to the market in the lane to buy them. The vegetable vendor touches her inappropriately. Anshika is completely uncomfortable with the vendor's behavior. Due to fear, she is unable to



share this with her parents. She has only confided in her older sister. Anshika's sister is afraid that if she tells their parents about the vendor, they will be angry and may even beat them. Therefore, she remains silent. One day, Anshika's sister informed me that her sister is afraid to leave home and feels unsafe. Even on the way to school, Anshika sometimes encounters the vegetable vendor, causing her to skip school at times. Anshika is feeling insecure, living in fear, and there is no one to help her.

CHILDREN FORCED TO HIDE AWAY FROM ADDICTED FATHER



Reporter Sarita

In our country, there are many harmful substances, among which alcohol addiction is a very harmful one. Due to the wrong company, fathers of street and working children fall into the trap of addiction. They indulge in domestic

violence against their children and wives and even resort to beating and abusing them. They misuse their wives' earnings for their addiction, sometimes resorting to selling household items and playing gambling. Their children and wives are forced to hide and live in fear, to the extent

that the husbands search for them like crazy, forcing these people to stay hidden. As a result, they don't allow their children to play outside, so that their husbands don't find out. The mothers engage in household chores like sweeping and dishwashing, and the children are not even sent for education. They don't even send them to our center, fearing that their fathers might catch them. This situation instills fear in the children, and they are so scared that they don't speak to anyone about it. This negatively affects their education, and these children end up being confined like prisoners at home during their learning age. This issue was shared by a girl from our center who used to study here previously.



CHILDREN ENGAGING IN THEFT AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE DUE TO WRONG COMPANY

Balaknama Reporter Sarita

"When a reporter visited the Goga Colony in Gurugram, some children revealed that there are kids in slum who have fallen into bad company. These children, while going to school, stop on the way to steal pipes, rings from gutters, and sell them. With the money earned, they indulge in substance abuse. Although these children claim to be going to school when at home, they do not attend. Instead, they engage in theft and substance abuse on the streets. Approximately 3 to 4 children, aged between 10 to 12 years, are involved in this activity. The area where they commit theft has many discarded rings, and it is also quite dirty. Nevertheless,

these children venture into the filth, pick up the stolen rings, and sell them. Once, some children witnessed them stealing rings and informed Chetna NGO Madam about it. Madam spoke to these children, explaining to them that they should not engage in theft here because the owner of this land can harm all of you. Despite the dirty rings causing infections and numerous boils on their hands, these children continued with their activities. After our Madam's intervention and guidance, these children no longer engage in theft but instead attend school with dedication. They study with enthusiasm at school and come to the Chetna NGO center for further learning after school.

NEGLIGENCE LEADS TO THE DEATH OF A GIRL

Bureau Report

To maintain good health, it is essential for all of us to take care of ourselves. If we neglect our well-being, it can lead to illness, becoming a significant problem. Recently, a 13-year-old from Shakurpur, West Delhi, shared an incident with a journalist. The boy informed the journalist about the sudden death of a girl living in a nearby slum named Khushi. She was 9 years old and studying in the third grade. After attending school, she used to come to the center for additional learning. Although she went to school daily, changes in weather caused her to fall ill. For some time, she had a fever, which would subside after a while. When her condition

worsened, her family took her to local clinics and doctors, but she didn't find relief. Eventually, a swelling developed in her throat, leading to the formation of an abscess. The girl stayed at home for a few days due to this condition, but after two days, the swelling increased, making it difficult for her to eat or speak. Concerned, her parents took her to a nearby hospital, where doctors recommended immediate admission and 12 hours of injections every 2 to 3 hours. Faced with this situation, her parents hesitated to admit her and decided to bring her home. The neighbors suggested taking her to the nearby AIIMS Hospital. When her parents took her there, due to the saturation



of patients, the hospital staff informed them that it would take 2-3 months just to get the paperwork done. They advised the parents to take her to another hospital. After pleading with the hospital staff, the parents managed to admit the girl by paying Rs. 1000. Once admitted, her treatment at AIIMS began. The doctors performed an operation on the abscess in her throat,

which required cutting it from the side. Unfortunately, during the operation, excessive bleeding occurred, and the girl's condition deteriorated. Witnessing this, the doctor informed the girl's family that she could survive only for a few more days. Suddenly, when her mother went to feed her at night, after the doctor's visit, the girl's condition worsened, and she passed away.

LEAVING HOME FOR THE JOURNEY OF EDUCATION: CHILD'S DETERMINATION TO FULFILL DREAMS



Balaknama Reporter Aslam

When reporter Aslam from Haryana visited the slums of Ghosola, he came across a child who was living in someone else's home due to ongoing conflicts in his own family. The child shared his story with the reporter, explaining that his family had left their village and moved

to the city due to his father's work. His mother had to work as a domestic helper in other people's homes to make ends meet. They managed to enroll him in a government school, and he started studying. As he excelled in his studies and progressed to higher grades, his mother's attitude began to change. She insisted that he stop studying

and start working because, according to her, he had received enough education. As a result, his older brother had dropped out of school in the eighth grade and started working. However, the child was determined to continue his education until graduation. But his mother constantly pressured him to quit studying and focus on work. This created conflicts at home, and the child's mother continued to demand that he work. Frustrated by the situation, he decided to leave his home and is now working while trying to study in parallel. He explained that his mother had wanted him to work in Delhi, but he felt deeply saddened by her resistance to his education. The constant arguments at home led to his decision to leave.



THE RESIDENTS ARE TROUBLED BY THE PILE OF GARBAGE IN FRONT OF THEIR HOMES, MAKING THEIR LIVES MISERABLE

Bureau Report

When reporters met the children of the slums in Noida Sector 62, their attention was drawn to a massive heap of garbage. Upon inquiring with the children living in the slums, one girl revealed that for the past few days, people have started dumping trash here daily. This has resulted in a foul stench emanating from the garbage. The waste includes scrap from the garbage factory, leaves from trees, and waste from nearby flats. Initially, the garbage used to be dumped at a different location, a large ground where sanitation workers would clean it. However, due

to Dussehra celebrations, the ground was cleared, as a fair is organized there every year. Consequently, the authorities decided to dump the garbage in front of our slum for a few days. When these people came to dump the garbage, they initially did so in front of another gate, but when we objected, they moved to an empty space in front of another gate. The spot where they began dumping the garbage is right in front of our gate. Unfortunately, the first time they did this, no one was home, as we were all at school. Upon discovering this, our family members complained to the authorities. The workers assured them that the garbage would be removed in a few days, but even after Dussehra, the garbage remains untouched.

Due to daily dumping, a significant pile of garbage has accumulated. Now, even the residents of our slum discard their waste in the same spot. This has led to an increase in dirt and an unpleasant odor around our homes. Even while cooking, the foul smell is pervasive, making it challenging to eat. We hope that the authorities will promptly stop dumping garbage in this area and clear the existing heap.

CHETNA NGO'S IMPACT: STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN ENROLLED IN SCHOOL - EXCELLING IN CONDUCT, LANGUAGE SKILLS, AND MORAL EDUCATION!

Reporter: Raj Kishor

Balaknama Reporter Raj Kishor visited and met children living in slums near Jalwayu Tower slum. He was amazed to learn that, with the help of Chetna NGO, children like Badshah and Shubham, who used to work in these slums, have now been admitted to the Government Model Sanskriti Primary School nearby. Along with Badshah and Shubham, Monu and Armaan shared that a math competition was organized in their school, and they won a geometry box for their excellent performance. These street and working children are full of enthusiasm and energy. When the reporter



asked them about what happens inside the school, the children explained that various activities are conducted besides studying, such as drawing, playing games, and going for outdoor trips. The children love school. There are many trees and plants in

their school. The teachers also teach them with a lot of love. We get lunch in the afternoon, and there are coolers in every room of the school. Street and working children, who endure severe heat inside the slums, are not only receiving education

but also gaining knowledge of good behavior, language skills, and moral education in school. Now, street and working children, by receiving education from school, can fulfill their dreams. Street and working children, entering the mainstream of education, can play a crucial role not only in the progress of their families but also in the advancement of society and the country.

**CHILDREN'S HELP
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number

1098

Police Helpline Number

100

CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF EDUCATION DUE TO DISPLACEMENT

Reporter Shabir Sha and talkative report Ajay

Child reporter Shabir recently visited various slums in Jaipur. During his visit, he encountered a slum of around 20 huts situated on the outskirts of a street in Jaipur. He conversed with the children residing there to understand their problems and experiences.

One 10-year-old child mentioned that for the past six

months, they've been living in this slum, having originally hailed from Chittorgarh. Their parents work by collecting date, palm leaves from Chittorgarh's Kapasan market and selling brooms in different places every six months. Sharing their difficulties, the child expressed their biggest issue being harassed by some people due to living on the roadside.

Since making brooms generates a lot of waste, these individuals often deride



them, insisting they vacate their huts, claiming it's not

good for others. The child sadly admitted that while

they desire to attend school, the continual displacement between cities every six months hinders their enrollment. Consequently, their life revolves around living with family, helping out, and caring for their siblings. Children in such dire circumstances often pose a poignant question: who is responsible for these circumstances, and why are they still deprived of education and mainstream society's benefits?

THE STRUGGLE CAUSED BY DISTANCE TO SCHOOL



Kajal reported and talkative report Kartik

Life for children in streets and working communities is filled with various struggles. However, the challenge becomes more complex

when the nearest school from their neighbourhood is three to four kilometres away. Reporter Kajal discovered this information about a slum in Jaipur, where children are deprived of education due to the distance of the school and

the weak financial condition of their parents. During her investigation, Kajal spoke to the children, and a boy named Pradeep (changed name) shared, "Our school is approximately 3 to 4 kilometres away from our slum, and to reach there, we have to cross a highway. That's why I cannot go to school alone. My parents leave for work early in the morning as we have a lot of debt on us. Due to this, we cannot arrange for any transportation like a rickshaw or a bus for commuting to school. Sometimes, to support the family financially, I also beg, scavenge, or polish shoes. He expressed his strong desire to attend school but lamented that if only there was a school nearby, he could surely attend regularly.



CHILDHOOD TRAPPED IN THE DRUG TRADE

Reporter Shabir Sha and Talkative report -Golu

Drug addiction doesn't just ruin your childhood; its impact can last your entire life. When it starts during your childhood, the consequences can be severe. Recently, reporter Shabir learned that children in a slum in Jaipur were being coerced into the drug trade. Shabir spoke with Monu (changed name), a resident of the slum, who revealed that due to their weak financial situation, his uncle involved him in this business.

During the conversation, Monu mentioned that he sits at a suitable spot in the street, keeping an eye out for the police. If they approach, he alerts his boss, allowing them to hide the drugs. When asked if he's afraid of doing this work, Monu said he was initially scared, but now he

isn't because many kids in the neighborhood do this, and his uncle supports him in this work. He mentioned earning about 300 rupees a day from this, but it comes with significant risks and various problems. In the scorching summer, with no shade where he sits, he has to endure the harsh sun all day, getting only half an hour for meals. While this business operates from morning till late night, demand for these intoxicants increases as the evening progresses.

Monu also shared that when rushing to provide information for their drug trade, he sometimes makes mistakes due to the unhealthy environment, leading to exploitation. The entire neighborhood's young ones have been ensnared in the filthy web of drugs, losing their innocent childhood in the process.

FORCED CHILD LABOR IN MAKING BANGLES BUSINESS



Reporter Kajal and Talkative Reporter Sonia

While Jaipur is famous for its bangles, countless children are compelled to engage in bangle-making (child labor). This came to light when reporter Kajal conducted a visit to a slum in Jaipur, attempting to understand the problems and experiences of the children there. It was then that a girl named Radha (changed name) revealed that many children in the slum work by fitting glass

into bangles, doing so to assist their families in dire financial situations.

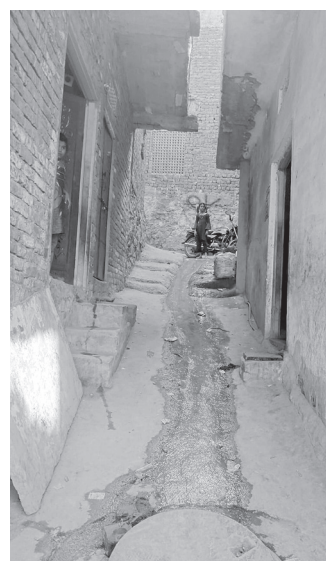
In this work, they earn around 22 rupees for fitting glass into a bangle. Thus, nearly every day, a child uses their small fingers to fit glass into two bangles. When the reporter asked Radha where they get the raw materials for making bangles and how much they have to pay for them, she mentioned that they don't have to pay for the bangles or the glass. Instead, the contractors

who get the bangles made give them these materials and take the finished bangles, paying the children for their labor. It's a tragic irony that the city known for these items sees numerous children losing their childhood, forced into child labor due to familial financial difficulties.

CHILDREN DISTRESSED BY CONTAMINATED SEWAGE WATER

Reporter Shabir and talkative reporter Najir.

In a slum in Jaipur, there's information about filthy sewage water flowing outside on the roads and lanes. To assess the situation, reporter Shabir spoke to the children. A boy named Raju (changed name) mentioned that in our slum, dirty sewage water keeps flowing in various places. Due to the lack of cleaning of the drains for a long time, now filthy water flows in every lane of the slum, causing a lot of inconvenience for us in our daily movements and



emitting a very foul smell. Some people in the slum have repeatedly complained to the local councilor about this issue, but we haven't received any response. Sometimes, the water in the lanes gets so dirty that we have to take longer routes to reach school, and occasionally, when we are short on time, we have to navigate through this filthy water.

During elections, all the politicians come to our slums and make big promises, but now, the situation is such that for almost a year, even the local councilor is not paying heed to our concerns.

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.

Balaknama thanks Sardar Nagina Singh Ji & Family and Abhinav Outsourcing Pvt Ltd for helping us in publishing our newsletter. You can also help us with publishing. 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.