

Want to support  
Balaknama?

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

# BALAKNAMA

UNIQUE NEWSPAPER FOR AND BY STREET CONNECTED CHILDREN

Balaknama is the newspaper presented by Street and Working children themselves to fight for their own rights and problems because they are being completely ignored.

## YOUNG MINDS SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING IN THE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP FOR STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporters-  
Hansraj, Sarita, and  
Kishan

From November 29th to December 3rd, 2023 a residential workshop organized by CHETNA NGO in Jaipur, facilitated children from Jaipur, Delhi, and Gurugram in participatory activities addressing the issues faced by street and working children. This five-day workshop primarily focused on imparting knowledge about leadership qualities, children's rights, and pertinent laws concerning them.

During this workshop, children formulated residency rules and formed six committees, including cleanliness, food, health, entertainment, discipline, and time management. Each committee was assigned specific tasks, fostering active participation from both children and representatives from the facilitating organization.

Moreover, discussions about the current status of street and working children were held. The children were divided into four groups to undertake different tasks: the first group presented the children's situation through mono-acting,

the second conveyed it through drama, the third through collage-making, and the fourth through drawings. Various games were incorporated into the activities, such as the 'how many brothers' game, changing leaders, dropping the glass by saying a specific word, and crossing the rope with closed eyes, among others. Furthermore, diverse entertaining activities were organized in the evening, followed by children retiring to their rooms for rest. These activities formed an integral part of the workshop, culminating in a cultural program scheduled for the final day of the workshop. Children were expected to showcase what they had learned from these activities, incorporating those lessons into their behaviour and delivering their presentations on an open platform in a commendable manner.

Mantshan from the slums in Delhi shared, "When I went to Jaipur, I learned about leadership qualities there. Even when I used to come to the learning centres to study regularly, I was familiar with the traits of a leader. However, in Jaipur, I learned more about



what specific qualities a good leader should possess, like being educated, courageous, respectful, abstaining from addiction, and being patient. Before going to this workshop, I used to sometimes use inappropriate language with both younger and older children, and I used to get upset about every little thing. But now, I've improved that habit. I've become a better leader." Fareen, residing in Jaipur, shared, "When I played the rope game in session, my eyes were closed, and the directions were getting changed. Many people were guiding me the wrong way to go, but the rope wasn't even there. From this, I learned that though there are many challenges in life, we should face them boldly, without fear. Now, I don't trust anyone blindly. If any mishap occurs in my slum, I don't be-

lieve it until I see it with my own eyes. After the workshop, whenever Balaknama reporters come here, they ask us about the current situation of children. Earlier, we didn't know what the current situation meant. But after Jaipur, during the workshops, I always pay attention to what the children are doing and quickly report it during meetings."

Asif, living in Gurugram, shared, "When I used to live in my slum, I never got the chance to go on a big stage. But when I went to the workshop, on the final day, there was a culmination of the workshop in that competition, we were called on stage. It was my first time on stage, and I was scared initially. But after a while, my fear disappeared, and I answered the questions well. The good thing is that when I came back home and

went to school, one day, they were showing a film related to drug addiction to me and all the schoolchildren. After the movie, they asked several questions, and none of the children answered. Eventually, I answered. As a reward, I received a geometry box, a pencil, and a copy, which made me very happy. The interesting thing about this incident is that I received this prize by going on the school stage, and my fear of the stage had already vanished during the workshop."

These experiences from different children in different locations show how a leadership workshop has significantly impacted their perspectives and behaviours.

Badhshah, a 12-year-old from Gurugram, shared his thoughts on his experience in Jaipur and what he learned. He mentioned, "I don't currently attend school; I come to study with my elder brother. Once, I learned about children's rights from my brother, but I wanted to know more about what those rights entail. Unfortunately, I had to go home due to some urgent work, so I couldn't learn more about those rights. Lat-

er, when I went to Jaipur, I learned about the various rights children have, such as the right to live, security, development, and participation. Learning about these rights made me very happy, and I realized that children have rights too, which we can demand." Ramji, from Shivaji Park Basti in Delhi, mentioned, "When I went to Jaipur, I learned a lot. The thing is, when we are in slums there's no facility for a toilet. Whether it's an adult or a child, everyone has to go out in the open to relieve themselves, and as a result, we face a lot of foul smells and dirt. Even in our village, there's no toilet, so we have to go out in the open there too. But when I went to the Jaipur workshop, we were provided a separate room with a bathroom. I had never experienced using a proper toilet like that in my life. Going to the bathroom there made me very happy, and being able to do it with the door closed and complete privacy felt safe. Besides this, I enjoyed the workshop in Jaipur, and I'll always remember all the activities that happened there throughout my life."

## CAN LEARNING URDU ENHANCE THE PURSUIT OF COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE?

Balaknama Reporter-  
Hans Kumar

Ten-year-old Salman (changed name), whose father works as a labourer in Lucknow and whose mother engages in household chores, including sweeping and cleaning. Additionally, the boy has an elder sister who also performs cleaning tasks in near-

by homes. Due to the father's work commitments, he stays away from home in Lucknow, impacting the mother's health, often resulting in neglect towards Salman. This, coupled with bad company, reduces his school attendance. Consequently, Salman's parents upset with his negligence, begin sending him to a nearby ma-



drasa, desiring him to receive education only in Urdu. When teachers from the concerned school questioned Salman's elder sister, Firoza (changed name), about Salman's irregular attendance, she initially evaded the issue but eventually had to reveal the truth when pressed by the teachers. This led reporter Hans Kumar to

learn that despite facing significant challenges, Salman had reached the fifth grade in school. Yet, he was being expelled from school and directed to a madrasa for Urdu education. The question that arises is whether we can truly comprehend the importance of holistic education by solely learning Urdu.



## CHILD ABDUCTION EN ROUTE TO SCHOOL UNDERSCORES ROAD SAFETY URGENCY

Talkative reporter-Babloo,  
Balaknama Reporter-Hans  
Kumar

Child abduction is not a new occurrence in our civilized society; we often hear such incidents. This time, the incident involves a boy residing in Shaheed Camp Delhi who was waiting for an e-rickshaw near the nearby traffic light to go to school, as usual. Suddenly, a few people arrived in a van and forcibly tried to pull the child into the van. When the child struggled and attempted to free himself from their grasp, the assailants tried to render him unconscious by giving him some medicine and forcefully stuffed him into the van. Witnessing this entire sequence of events, a woman standing nearby began raising alarm. Enraged by this, the unknown perpetrators not

only did not spare the woman but also caused her injuries before fleeing the scene. Reporter Babloo reported that this child is the only child of his parents, and this entire incident has deeply traumatized his parents. They are both extremely distressed.

## GREED HINDERED EDUCATION: PARENTS DENIED CHILDREN EDUCATION FOR MONEY'S SAKE

Balaknama reporter - Hans  
Kumar.

Rohan (changed name) resides in Shivaji Park. His father is addicted to substances and consequently remains at home. Rohan's father wants both Rohan and his elder brother to work and earn money so they don't have to work themselves. On one hand, Rohan's elder brother collects garbage from streets or nearby houses to sell, contributing nothing towards household expenses and often quarrelling with family members. On the other hand, Rohan also collects recyclables, aiding his mother with household expenses. However, his father often



fights with Rohan's mother, steals money, and spends it on alcohol, leaving the family in a dire situation where Rohan's mother has to take loans to manage household expenses. Rohan is very interested in studying and wishes to enrol in a nearby school, a desire shared by his mother. However, his

father prevents his enrollment and forces Rohan to engage in collecting garbage or other laborious tasks. Consequently, Rohan supports his younger siblings and family expenses but remains distant from education due to his parents' greed for money, causing immense hardship.

## "Parents as Hurdles in Children's Education: A Major Obstacle"

Reporter - Kajal  
Talkative reporter- Kamal

During a field visit to a slum in Jaipur, Child Reporter Kajal sought insights into the challenges faced by children in the community. One such revelation came from an 8-year-old named Kamal, who expressed a strong desire to attend school, akin to other children he observed heading to school each morning. Despite



this aspiration, Kamal finds himself tasked by his parents

to gather recyclable waste as a means to contribute to the

household income. Detailing the family's involvement in collecting recyclables from various sources, including bottles, plastics, and glass, Kamal highlighted their practice of selling these items after segregating them. He noted an average daily earning of around 50 to 70 rupees from this endeavor. His heartfelt wish remains to pursue an education rather than engaging in recyclable collection.

## IN THE SWAY OF ADDICTION, CHILDREN ARE CHOOSING THE PATH OF THEFT

Talkative Report-Anjali,  
Balaknama reporter- Hans  
Kumar.

You might have seen how some children resort to theft to fulfil their personal needs. Talkative reporter Anjali disclosed that in one of the slums in West Delhi, a group of children steals money and items from shops near their homes. Anjali explained that these children were caught stealing two thousand rupees from a shop a few days ago, but

they were forgiven, assuming they were just kids. However, despite this, they continue their activities. When Anjali delved deeper, it was revealed that these children engage in theft because they are addicted to some form of substance abuse. They use the stolen money to buy these addictive substances. Though they generally don't receive money from their homes, if they do, they spend it on intoxicating substances. The children revealed that the



leader of their group, named Shyam (changed name), manages and consumes these addictive substances himself. He encourages others in the group, especially those who don't attend a school or loiter around, to indulge in substance abuse. Now, these children have developed a habit of consuming tobacco and spitting on girls after chewing it. They oppose their parents if they stop indulging in substance abuse and start quarrelling with them.

## DELEGATING WORK TO A CHILD TO REPAY DEBTS: A CHALLENGE ENDANGERING EDUCATION

Bureau Report

Kajal (name changed), a 9-year-old resident of Shakurbasti, used to work at home before she began attending alternative education classes at the Chetna NGO. The NGO's efforts led to Kajal's admission to the school, and she started going to school regularly. Her parents allowed her to go to school for a few months until her elder sister's marriage was fixed.



Taking leave from her school, Kajal attended her sister's wedding, only to discover that her mother had already borrowed a significant sum of money from her uncle, which was further increased for her sister's wedding expenses. Post the wedding, her uncle started demanding repayment from her mother, who helplessly stated that she didn't have the money as she had recently arranged her elder daughter's wedding. He then suggested that they

put her to work in the houses to repay the debts, saying that everyone in their family does household work, and she could contribute by working day and night. After a brief hesitation, her mother agreed, saying that if she got the money on time, it would be fine. Her uncle assured her that they would provide the money on time. As a result, she was sent to work in the houses, missing out on her school, to repay the debts, altering her life drastically.

## AFFORDABLE HUT RENTS COMPEL SETTLEMENT RESIDENCY



Talkative Reporter- Raja  
Balaknama reporter- Kishan

When reporters from Balaknama visited the 400-household slum in Gurugram, a 13-year-old boy living there introduced himself and hinted at the problems in the settlement. He mentioned, "I go to school in the fourth grade every day and attend classes

at Chetna organization Education Club after school. Our parents work as laborers, and the money they earn supports our household expenses. We live in these hut settlements, and the biggest problem here is the behavior of the landlord. There are around 400 families in this settlement, and everyone engages in various jobs.

But the reason all families reside here is that the rent for a room is approximately between 4000 to 5000 rupees per month, while we get a hut for 2000 to 2500 rupees per month. That's why we live in these hut settlements. The behavior of the landlord here is quite bad; when he comes to collect rent from most people, he uses foul language and repeatedly threatens to evict the huts. Ultimately, people are forced to listen to him. Something similar happened to us once. One day, he started using abusive language and even began throwing our belongings outside. My father couldn't tolerate this and filed a complaint with the police. However, even after filing a complaint, he was released within a few hours, and he hasn't changed. He often behaves like this with people."



## TRAGIC ATTACK ON FIREWORKS-LADEN VEHICLES INJURES MANY STREET CHILDREN

Talkative Reporter-Yaseer,  
Balaknama reporter- Hans  
Kumar

A talkative reporter from Shakurbasti named Yaseer reported that there has been a concerning trend among the local children regarding firecrackers for the past few days. They seem to randomly throw firecrackers wherever they want. One day, a van was passing by on the road, and some mischievous children were playing with firecrackers nearby. During this time, one child lit a firecracker and threw it into the van, where some children were sitting. As a result, the clothes of those children caught fire, causing severe injuries. Realizing the severity of the situation, the children who were playing with firecrackers immediately fled the scene.

The reporter mentioned that these three or four children have formed a group and often engage in such activities. They are also involved in fights and violence within the neighbourhood. Yaseer sadly shared that among the children injured by the firecrackers, there was also his brother who sustained injuries on both hands and legs, suffering severe burns. Due to their injuries, these children are finding it challenging to attend school, and consequently, their parents have forbidden them from going to school. As a result, their education has been severely disrupted. They can neither play nor study properly, and their regular movements have been restricted. Now, all the children are worried about how they will pass their upcoming exams without proper study.

## SIBLINGS' CARE IMPACTING STUDIES: CHILDREN UNABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL



Talkative Reporter- Lakshmi,  
Balaknama reporter- Hans  
Kumar

Priya (name changed), a girl of about 9 years residing in Shivaji Park, studies in the

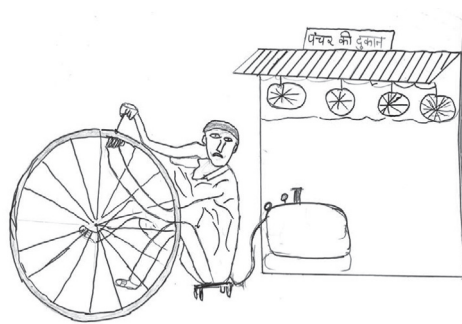
fourth grade but is presently unable to attend school. Admission to her school was a struggle; previously, she used to go with her parents for garbage picking. After coming in contact with

Chetna's organization, they managed to secure her admission to the fourth grade. However, before the exams began, her mother fell ill, and her father, engrossed in alcoholism, paid no attention to the family. Priya has two younger siblings at home, and her parents strictly warned her not to go to school but instead stay at home to take care of her siblings. Reporter Lakshmi mentioned another girl named Ankita (name changed) who also couldn't appear for exams this time because she has a younger sibling at home. Her parents ask her not to go to school but to stay home and look after her younger sibling. Such incidents continually disturb the mind and compel children to stay away from school.

## CHILDREN ARE CONSUMING DRUGS THROUGH BICYCLE SOLUTION TUBES

Balaknama Reporter: Shabir  
Talkative Reporter: Adil

During a visit to a slum in Jaipur, Balaknama reporter Shabir informed children about the Balaknama newspaper when the talkative reporter, Adil, revealed that some children in their slum were getting high. When the reporter asked in detail why and what type of substances the children were using, Adil explained that two children are living near my house who work at the cycle shop,



making puncture patches. Due to their family's poor financial condition, they have developed a habit of sniffing the solution tube used to

patch the tires. This means that these children have developed a habit of getting high from the solution tubes. Although their families try hard to stop this habit, they secretly indulge in this behaviour. It's concerning how many places these solution tubes, used to repair tire punctures, might be getting used by children as a substance for getting high.



## FUN GAMES: BALANCING RESPONSIBILITY AND ENJOYMENT FOR DISCIPLINED LEARNING

Talkative reporter-Yasir,  
Balaknama reporter- Hans  
Kumar

Armaan (name changed), a 9-year-old resident of West Delhi slums, usually grazes goats there every day. One day, like always, he went with some friends near the nearby train service centre, where there was ample grass and vegetation for the goats to graze. As they got tired of grazing, mischievous thoughts crept into their minds, and they decided to play tag. They started engaging in various games, one after another.

Amid these games, they began wrestling. Armaan, who had won several times in the initial rounds, faced off against his older friends aged 13, 14, 15, and 16. Collaboratively, these friends managed to overpower Armaan, resulting in his inability to cope. Consequently, Armaan ended up with a broken arm. Upon visiting the doctor, it was revealed that Armaan's hand would take about two to three years to fully recover. Consequently, the joy of play for these children turned into a punishment after a short while.

## CRIME AGAINST A MINOR, CULPRIT UNDER POLICE SCRUTINY



Balaknama Reporter: Shabir  
Talkative Reporter: Gulista

In a nation where girls are revered as symbols of strength, the occurrence of such an incident stands as a stark indictment of our civilized society. This forces us to deeply contemplate the genuine safety and security of the country's future. Recently, an incident of rape that shamed the society came to light where Gulista, a talkative reporter from a slum

in Jaipur told that Kamli (name changed) who has been living with her mother in a rented house in a slum for about 10 years. And the landlord also lives in another house built nearby. She is a very simple girl and studies in class 7. The landlord used to order tea from the girl from the tea shop every day when the girl's mother protested against it. He threatened to vacate the house. In this way, the girl would bring tea to the landlord every day

and he would molest the girl but the girl did not tell anyone due to fear. Then one day he lured the girl with five rupees and asked her to bring tea inside the room and then raped her. And the landlord threatened the girl not to tell anything about it to anyone. No one in the colony was aware of this. When the girl went to school after a few days and the teacher there saw her sad, she was very scared. When the teacher asked her, she started crying and felt guilty. After informing the teachers about the incident, the school teachers lodged a police report and handed over the culprit to the police. If only! If Kamli had raised her voice against the teasing in the beginning, perhaps she would not have become a victim of rape. Even today, many girls are becoming victims of such incidents, but due to shame and social pressure, they do not express their pain.

## COMPELLED TO BEG FOR FOOD: CHILDREN STRUGGLING TO EAT

Balaknama Reporter: Hans Kumar

While on the way to Valmiki Camp in Delhi, Balaknama reporter witnessed a child running behind cars begging for alms. Suddenly, the child got exhausted from running and sat by the roadside. Unable to resist, our reporter, Hansraj, approached the child and sat beside him. Initially startled and scared, the child tried to flee, but upon realizing that Hansraj was a child reporter, he approached him. When asked for his name, the child disclosed that his name is Shiva, aged 5. He hails from a family of four, including his parents and an elder sister. Each member of his family performs different tasks; his sister collects garbage while his mother segregates waste. Shiva himself begs, and his father works as a labourer in nearby factories. Shiva revealed that



he neither has a proper shelter nor enough food to eat. Despite his desire to attend school, the family's financial condition prevents him from doing so. Consequently, he resorts to begging for survival.



## COMPELLED CHILDHOOD: SORTING THROUGH GARBAGE FOR RECYCLABLES

Balaknama Reporter: Shabir

While touring the Narsinghpura area slum in Jaipur, Balaknama reporter Shabir observed two children collecting plastic boxes, glass bottles, and similar items from the garbage on the way. When the Balaknama reporter asked the children their names, they introduced themselves as Sapna and Rohit (names changed). The reporter attempted to understand why they were collecting scrap amid so much filth. The children explained that their mother is missing, their father is addicted

to drugs, and neither of them works. Instead, they steal the money even from their grandmother, who receives some money, by fighting with her. They live with their grandmother and collect scrap to give it to her, who then sells it at a shop. By doing this, they manage to earn around 40 to 50 rupees every day, which they use to arrange meals at home. With a great deal of sadness, the children expressed that despite having parents, they feel like orphans and are compelled to scavenge for scraps to meet their and their grandmother's needs.

## ENTHUSIASM FOR EDUCATION AMONG STREET WORKING CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporter - Sarita

In Haryana's Badshahpur, many children are working hard on the roads, among them is Simran (changed name), a child who studies with dedication and continues her education despite adverse circumstances. Simran, aged 8, is in the second grade. Recently, her entire family, including her parents, were going to a wedding in their village, but Simran refused to go so that her studies wouldn't be interrupted, ensuring she didn't fall behind in her curriculum. Simran is so dedicated to her studies that she doesn't take a single day off and goes to school every day. The only day she takes off is when there's a government holiday. Due to her dedication to her studies, she has decided to stay at her aunt's house nearby so she can continue



her education without going back to her village with her parents, ensuring her studies don't face any obstacles. During a discussion with Balaknama reporter Sarita, it was revealed that she directly goes to her study centre after school. She is also very interested in art. Overall, she excels in everything she does. Her dream is to become an officer when she grows up, so her parents don't have to live in a slum and she can live in better homes, and wear good

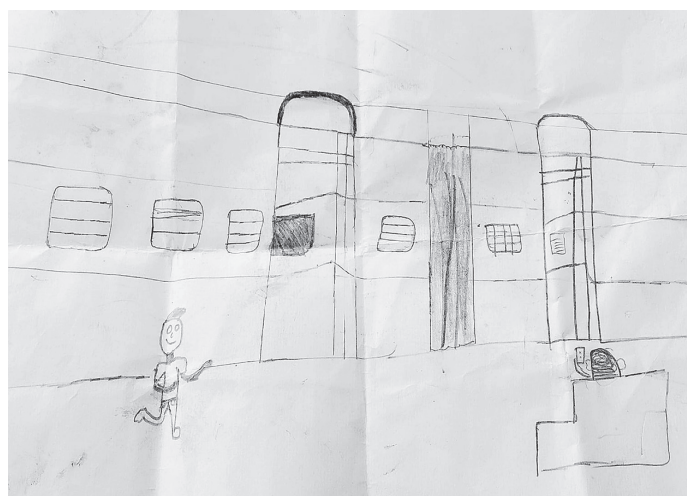
clothes. She listens to her teachers completely, completes her schoolwork diligently, and maintains discipline in school. Whenever there's a dance competition at school, she actively participates. She is the fastest learner in school, praised often by her teachers. They say they are proud of girls like Simran who understand the importance of education at such a young age and attend school daily. They wish other children also attend school regularly.

## KIDS STEALING PHONES AND CASH FROM HALTED TRAINS AT RED SIGNALS

Talkative Reporter - Dilshad and Balaknama reporter Hans Kumar (Delhi West)"

When our child reporter, Hans Kumar, went to Zakhira, he was told by a child there that there are many children in their area who steal mobile phones, money, etc., from trains stopped at red signals. He mentioned that apart from stealing, the children also consume drugs, and many times, when the stationary train suddenly starts moving, the children

often get injured. Some time ago, a child's leg got severed while attempting a theft, and as a result, he couldn't go to school. The children there mentioned that such incidents happen every two to three days, and it's not just the fault of the children but also of their parents who leave them unattended on platforms, which leads to accidents involving trains. These children form gangs and indulge in fights and wrongdoings, and if anyone informs



their homes or authorities about their stealing, the children get beaten up by their community. When the matter escalates to adults, fights erupt between households. With the money obtained from stealing, these children consume cigarettes, bidis, and other addictive substances, putting them at risk of various diseases like cancer. Even though their parents forbid them from indulging in such habits, these stubborn children refuse to listen.

# STREET-DWELLING WORKING CHILDREN EARN THEIR LIVELIHOOD BY PERFORMING STREET ENTERTAINMENT

**Balaknama Reporter: Shabir**

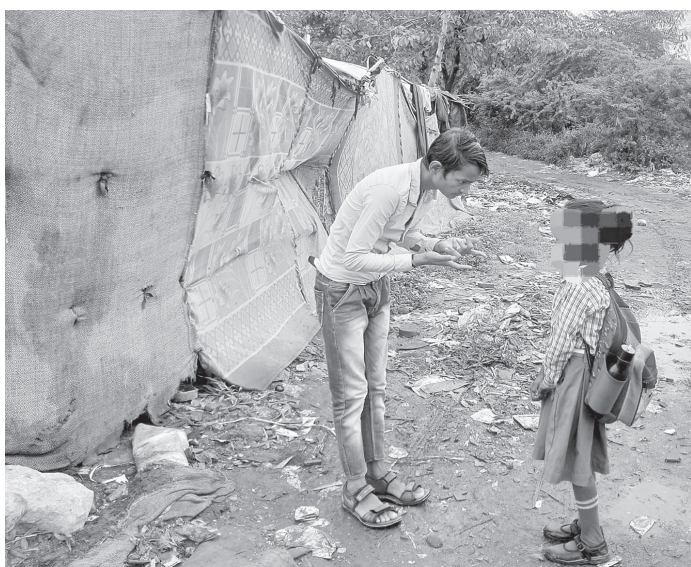
Children living on the streets engage in various jobs to sustain themselves. However, besides their different chores, they also face various challenges. While Balaknama reporters were passing by, they noticed some children at the roadside entertaining people with a DJ, along with their parents. After their performance, when reporters spoke to the children, they explained that performing street entertainment is their

means of livelihood. They start their day around 9:00 AM and perform in different places until around 8:00 PM. They carefully choose locations where they expect a larger audience, such as markets, outside schools, etc. Sometimes, while setting up their entertainment items, if someone denies them permission or asks them to leave, they have to move on. They carry items like needles, iron rods, ropes, pots, and a DJ to showcase their acts. They perform acts like walking on a tightrope, balancing a pot on



their head while walking on a rope, and even performing tricks with a needle in their eye or balancing the iron rod on their throat. Each act presents its challenges; sometimes, there's a fear of slipping while walking on the rope, or the danger of the needle poking their eye. Despite these risks, they continue their performances and ask for contributions from people. With earnings ranging from two to three hundred rupees a day, they manage their daily expenses."

## THE GIRL INTEGRATED INTO EDUCATION THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION



**Talkative reporter-Nisha, Balaknama Reporter: Shabir**

Chetna organization is actively working in different states like Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. The foundation primarily focuses on the education and holistic development of street and working children. For instance, for children without

identity cards, the foundation helps complete the required documentation. Also, for children not enrolled in school, the foundation facilitates their admission. During a meeting in Delhi's neighbourhood, a 12-year-old girl shared her story. She revealed that before joining the Chetna Foundation, she used to be occupied with household chores like

dishwashing, laundry, and cooking. Her entire day was consumed by these tasks, leaving her with no thought of education. One day, while she was engaged in household work, Chetna Foundation workers approached her and asked a few questions: her name, whether she was currently studying, and her daily activities. She replied that she didn't attend school as her name wasn't registered there, and she spent her entire day doing household chores, leaving no time for education. Hearing this, the workers informed her about their educational initiatives and invited her to join them. The girl agreed, promising to visit them from the next day onwards. Gradually, the workers started teaching her. They patiently taught her Hindi and English, and eventually, they arranged for her enrollment in a school. Since then, she has been studying in the fifth grade and aspires to become a doctor. The girl expresses her gratitude for the opportunity to study."



## PAVAN HAS OVERCOME THE HABIT OF ADDICTION

**Balaknama Reporter: Shabir**

During a visit to a slum in Jaipur, Balaknama reporter Shabir encountered Pawan (name changed), a resident of the area. The interview with the young Pawan revealed a positive change in his life. The 13-year-old shared that he used to buy gutka and tobacco worth around 10 to 20 rupees daily from three shops in the slum.

When there was no money, he would steal it from home, sometimes even taking tobacco from his father's

pocket. He mentioned a significant turning point when an educator from the learning centre run by CHETNA Ngo explained the harms of smoking and addiction in a life skills workshop. They emphasized that children should not consume gutka as it affects the roots of the teeth, causes cavities, and can even lead to oral cancer. That's when Pawan decided to quit chewing tobacco, although initially, it seemed impossible for him. However, he gradually managed to overcome the habit.

## 22 CHILDREN NATIONWIDE VOICE VIEWS AT DELHI'S CHILD RIGHTS SUMMIT

**Balaknama Reporter- Hans Kumar**

In Delhi, a Child Rights Summit was held where 22 children from across the country participated and voiced their opinions. Organized by CACL, RLHP, and HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, the two-day "Child Rights Summit Interface with Police Representatives" took place on November 20th and 21st at the Indian Social Institute, Lodhi Road. The primary objective was to bring the issues of children engaged in child labour to the attention of policymakers. A total of 22 children from various organizations participated, representing states like Karnataka, Jharkhand,

and Delhi. In this summit, two children, Hans Kumar and Kanchan from Chetna NGO, participated. During the summit, the children discussed the reasons behind child labour, citing factors such as parental influence and personal habits. They engaged in activities and discussions, fostering unity among themselves. The children voted on different issues around them, assessing whether events like child marriages or instances of child labour were right or wrong. They discussed these matters, participated in voting, and discussed the outcomes. Subsequently, on the following day, more



discussions and voting were conducted on various issues involving the children. They delved into understanding organizations like CACL, discussing its inception, functions, and detailed operations. Additionally, they

learned about environmental pollution, its causes, possible remedies, and who holds more responsibility for exacerbating pollution. Further, they were informed about Article 26, and through video presentations featuring children from

various countries, they collectively brainstormed and chose team names - 'Tufaan' and 'Prithvi.' Games were played, and interactive sessions were held, where the children answered questions related to their rights. Their active participation and insights regarding child rights were commendable. At the culmination of the event, each child received a gift and a chart paper on which they were asked to write down the main reasons behind child labour and ways to eradicate it. They were also provided with blank paper to express their needs and requirements. Following these activities, the summit concluded, and the children departed for their homes.

# CHILDREN COMPELLED TO GO OUTSIDE TO DEFECATE



Reporter - Kishan

While discussing various issues related to children, it is observed that the majority of problems significantly impact girls. During conversations

with children residing in the slums of West Delhi, it was revealed that there was a restroom three months ago, and even now there is one, but for some reason, it's closed. Let's find out why



## WRONG COMPANY LED TO SCHOOL SKIPPING

Bureau Report

"You might be familiar with the notion that when a child engages in mischievous behaviour like fights, using foul language, or other disruptive actions, the blame is initially put on the parents. However, as the child grows older, the situation tends to deteriorate. Divyakant, residing in Delhi, is 14 years old. Currently, he works in waste collection with his elder brother and no longer attends school. Let me explain how Divyakant missed school. Initially, he was enrolled in school at the age of 5. He used to go to school regularly, but due to his parents' preoccupation with work, they couldn't pay much attention to him. Moreover, the area he lived in was quite hazardous, with people around frequently using foul language. As he went to school in the morning and returned by noon, he often joined his friends to play. However, in their play, both he and his friends started using

foul language, which influenced him negatively. His parents couldn't devote much attention to Divyakant. As he grew older, complaints started emerging from school that his academic performance was deteriorating, and he was getting involved in fights, hitting other children, and using foul language. Upon hearing this, his father tried to counsel Divyakant and gave him another chance, warning that if such behaviour continued, he would be taken out of school and made to work. For a few months, things were fine, but Divyakant soon reverted to his previous behaviour. During a parent-teacher meeting, Divyakant's parents were called. Upon complaint, his father withdrew him from the eighth grade, and he was put to work alongside his elder brother in waste collection. Now, Divyakant is engaged in waste collection and sorting. With the money he earns, he has also started indulging in substance abuse."

this restroom was shut down. How are children coping with this difficulty? In the slum area, the restroom has been closed for three months. Now, children are forced to go out in the open for defecation. Inside the restroom located in the slum, there are 60 seats, but it was quite challenging for the lone workers to maintain cleanliness. Moreover, people living in the slum don't pour water into the restroom." Presently, the restroom attendants have stopped cleaning the restroom, which forces children to go outside for defecation. Girls from the slum area mentioned that when the restroom closed, they used to go into the dense forest to defecate. However, the forest was cleaned a few days ago, and now the biggest issue is where to go for defecation. The children appeal for the prompt resolution of the problems faced by the restroom attendant, so the restroom can reopen as usual.



## CHILDREN SELLING DIWALI ITEMS IN JAIPUR'S MARKETS

Balaknama Reporter: Shabir

While Diwali is a festival of joy for all of us, the happiness and excitement among children are unique. Meanwhile, in the markets of Jaipur, other working children are seen selling rangoli, posters, cotton, and lamps. These children are compelled to do these jobs due to poverty. When Balaknama reporter Shabir spoke to the children, a child named Sanjay (changed name) revealed that after school hours, he

and his younger sister set up a shop by the roadside in Jaipur's market to sell items for Diwali. They try to attract customers by shouting, yet they manage to earn only around ₹50 in a day. Sanjay expressed his disappointment, saying that when they set up their shop on the roadside, the police chased them away. Sometimes, they can only sell items worth ₹10 to ₹20. He mentioned that many children like them are also selling Diwali items in the market.

## KIDS QUARREL AT SCHOOL, ACCIDENTALLY INJURING THE TEACHER WHILE THEY INTERVENE



Talkative Reporting: Dilshad Reporter-Hans Kumar

In a concerning incident at Zakheera, children engaged in a school altercation armed with sharp weapons, resulting

in a series of unfortunate events. One child recalled a dispute among peers on October 3 during a holiday break, escalating from a trivial matter. The involved children, roughly 16 years

old, exchanged remarks about possessing sharp knives, leading to an unintended injury when one child wielded a knife, accidentally grazing another's hand. The situation intensified, culminating in multiple injuries, including an unintended slash on a teacher's face when attempting to mediate. Despite the intervention attempts of other teachers, the children fled and reignited the conflict shortly after, with threats to enter each other's homes. This further escalated into a confrontation involving knives and stones, resulting in severe injuries among the children. These incidents are distressingly recurrent, compounded by the lack of parental intervention, contributing to a worsening situation.

## DIWALI JOY FADES AS CHILD DISFIGURED BY FIRECRACKER ACCIDENT

Talkative reporter- Joheb Ansari

Despite the ban on fireworks in Delhi due to rising pollution, Diwali night saw rampant firecracker usage. This not only deteriorated the pollution levels in Delhi but also resulted in a devastating incident involving Sonu, an 8-year-old child residing at Nehru Camp. During a playful moment, Sonu's brother accidentally tossed

an explosive firework at him, causing severe facial injuries. The impact of this incident has deeply affected Sonu, who now fears looking at himself in the mirror and refrains from interacting with anyone. Presently, Sonu's condition is critical, and he's admitted to the hospital. Moreover, Jyoti, a 12-year-old girl from Nehru Camp who attends classes at a centre run by an organization,

was celebrating Diwali with her friends when one of the firecrackers they were lighting exploded in her hand, causing significant damage. Jyoti is currently wearing a plaster cast on her injured hand and is distressed by the incident. Both these events have left the children of Kamla Nehru Camp frightened, and they have vowed never to engage in lighting fireworks again.

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

CONTACT THESE TOLL FREE  
NUMBERS IF YOU FACE ANY  
PROBLEM.

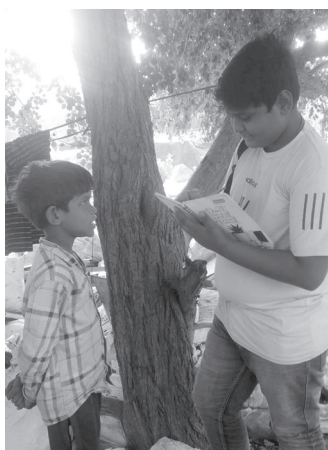
Child line Number  
**1098**  
Police Helpline Number  
**100**

# ONE WHO HAS NO ONE, HAS GOD

## Bureau Report

Some say that some people take advantage of a person's mental condition for their benefit, whether it's extracting work or turning a blind eye to their problems. Here, we are going to talk about a girl who lives in a slum in Jaipur. When the Balaknama reporter met her and learned about her situation, the girl, sharing her story, said, 'I am currently 14 years old and live with my grandparents in the slums of Jaipur because my mother is no longer alive; she passed away. After my mother's death, my father kept me with him

for a few years, but after some time, he remarried. Before the marriage, I was happy with my father, even if I had less to eat, I tolerated the hardships. But when my father got married, the woman who came here kept me with her for a few days, but I always called her 'aunt'. She repeatedly told me to call her 'mother', but when I met my real mother who gave birth to me and saw her die in front of me, my heart didn't testify to call this woman 'mother'. Because of this, the aunt told my father, and he also asked me to call her 'mother', but even then, my heart didn't agree. Later, my father left



me with my grandparents, but at that time, I felt quite bad, and I started thinking about it a lot. When I started

living with my grandparents, I thought they would take care of me well and educate me, but after my mother's death, my father separated me, and I kept thinking all the time. Because of this, my grandparents thought that my mental condition was quite weak and that my mind had gone mad, so they took more advantage of me. They didn't send me to school and sent me to work in a small house. I used to do household chores like washing utensils, cooking, etc., but my dream, which is still unfulfilled, is to study well. But they say, whoever belongs to no one, God is theirs. The

lady where I currently work is quite educated, and when I told her my story, she said to me after hearing all this that I shouldn't do anything that would cause trouble for my family, but I want to give them a good response after getting an education. Whenever I go to work, my madam quickly finishes the work and also teaches me. And when the madam goes to work, her children also help me study, and this way, some happiness comes into my life. Now I will continue to study, and for those who deceived me, I will give them a stern response based on my education.

## HOW DID VISION STOP IN BOTH EYES?



### Talkative Reporter-Rani Reporter: Shabir

"Have you ever inquired about the ambitions of children living and working on the streets? Despite their initial fervour for progress, why does this enthusiasm tend to diminish over time? During a reporting visit to various slum areas in Jaipur, an encounter with a visually impaired girl unfolded. Despite her complete loss of vision, she

communicated eloquently, almost mechanically. Conversations with her and her parents revealed the cause of her blindness. Presently aged 10, she resides in a rented room in the slum. At birth, she was sightless in one eye but could perceive the world through the other. As she advanced from one grade to the third, her parents enrolled her in school. However, one day while walking home amidst heavy

traffic, a speeding bicycle collided with her, directly impacting the eye through which she used to see. The forceful impact reddened her eye and triggered tears. Alone at that moment, witnesses of the accident intervened and reprimanded the cyclist, who swiftly fled the scene. Upon reaching home, she recounted the incident to her parents. Swiftly, her father sought medical assistance and shared the situation with a local doctor. After a thorough examination, the doctor recommended immediate treatment at a larger hospital. An operation was conducted on her eye at the larger hospital. Regrettably, post-operation, her sight in the functional eye couldn't be restored due to severe damage from the bicycle handle's impact. As a result, she is presently deprived of vision in both her eyes."



## MORE SORROW THAN HAPPINESS ON DIWALI

### Talkative Reporter: Amit, Balaknama Reporter: Shabir

Balaknama reporter Shabir conducted a tour of various slums in Jaipur to understand the experiences of street and working children regarding the Diwali festival. During the interaction, the children expressed their fondness

for Diwali but highlighted the difficulties they faced during this festive period. They mentioned how the residue from firecrackers often ends up inside their shanties, posing a risk of fire. Additionally, the noise from the firecrackers causes disturbances even during their sleep. Subsequently, talkative reporter Amit shared a poignant anecdote, expressing a sense of melancholy during Diwali. He recounted the story of his friend Sanjay (a changed name) who couldn't afford firecrackers. Despite his financial constraints, Sanjay found joy in watching others burst firecrackers. However, amidst the festivities, an incident occurred nearby where someone placed a bucket over a lit firecracker, causing it to explode, and a piece of the heated bucket hit Sanjay's feet from a distance of about 10-15 meters. Sanjay sustained a severe injury on his foot due to this unfortunate incident. Due to the unavailability of immediate transportation like a bike, Sanjay was transported to the nearby hospital via a battery rickshaw. The severity of the injury required Sanjay to undergo treatment, resulting in four stitches on his foot. This incident drastically transformed the joyous aura of Diwali into one overshadowed by sorrow and pain.

## CHILDREN ARE ABDUCTED AND FORCED INTO BEGGING AND CHILD LABOUR IN DELHI BY AN INTERNATIONAL GANG

### Talkative reporter- Adil, Reporter - Hans Kumar

When reporter Hansraj visited the Shakur Basti area in Delhi, he was informed by the local reporter Adil that a fourteen-year-old, named Zafar (name changed), lives there. One day, Zafar and his friends went to the Punjabi Bagh Central Market, where they noticed a child, approximately nine years old, begging and crying. While buying goods, they observed that nobody was giving any alms to the child, who appeared extremely distressed. After a while, the child approached a man and gave him all the money he had. Due to the scarcity of funds, the man became enraged and pushed the child forcefully, causing him to fall in

front of an oncoming vehicle. Due to heavy congestion in the market, the vehicles were moving slowly, and the driver, alert and cautious, applied the brakes just in time, narrowly avoiding hitting the child. Witnessing this scene, Zafar and his companions couldn't stay silent; they went and picked up the child and questioned the man, "Why did you push this child?" The man retorted, "He's my son. What do you mean by interfering when I can hit him, abuse him, or make him beg?" The child immediately responded, "Brother, he's lying. He's not my father. He abducted me to Delhi by enticing me with false promises." One of Zafar's companions got furious and slapped the abductor, leading to a scuffle. Eventually, Zafar

and others joined in, resulting in a commotion that attracted a crowd. When asked about the cause of the brawl, the truth came out. One person from the crowd called the police to report the incident. In a short time, the police arrived and detained the abductor. The child informed the police that the abductor had kidnapped several children like him by offering them money and bringing them to Delhi. The police asked the child about his

home, to which he mentioned being from Haryana but was unaware of the district or village. However, he knew his father's mobile number. The police contacted the father, informing him that his missing child was safe at the Punjab Bagh police station under the Delhi Police's protection and asked him to come and take the child back. Subsequently, the child's father arrived in Delhi and safely took his child with him.

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number

**1098**

Police Helpline Number

**100**

# NOW I WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL

Talkative reporter Maya and Balaknama reporter Kajal

Our small and big dreams hold great importance in our lives because they inspire us and push us towards our goals. But merely dreaming isn't enough; it takes a lot of hard work and relentless effort to make those dreams come true. There are often challenges in turning dreams into reality, ones that we can't solve or even when we try, others take advantage of us illegally. Anjali (changed name), residing in a slum area referred to as Banjara Basti, shared with the talkative reporter Maya that presently, she lives in a hut with

her parents. Her days revolve around domestic chores like cooking, washing dishes, cleaning, and looking after younger siblings. Currently, she doesn't even attend school because she doesn't have the required documents for admission. Once, she and her mother reached a nearby school, but when asked for documents, she didn't have any proof. The teacher said they could admit her if she brought the necessary paperwork. However, when they tried to arrange it, every place they visited demanded such high amounts of money that they couldn't gather. Some asked for 12,000 rupees, some 14,000,



and some even 15,000 rupees, which made them decline instantly. Feeling disheartened, they returned home and continued living their life as it was. But one day, while Anjali was working at home, a representative from an NGO

came. She asked, 'You don't go to school?' Anjali explained the situation, expressing her desire to go to school but lacking the documents. She had tried to get them but couldn't afford the amount asked. The NGO worker explained they work

for children facing obstacles in attending school and help them get admitted. This made Anjali very happy, and she expressed her wish to join. The worker noted down their details, and the process of getting their documents started. However, they weren't asked for the exorbitant amounts they were asked for before. They visited people who helped in making Aadhaar cards by setting up small shops. Initially, they lacked information about where to go to get it done easily, but the NGO worker assisted in getting their Aadhaar card made at a nominal fee. Anjali is now happy that finally, she will be able to attend school.

## CHILDREN AID FAMILIES BY DYEING SLIPPERS



Talkative reporter- Sameer, Reporter- Kishan

Balaknama reporters have drawn attention to children living in slums and on the streets. Mostly in the slums, children bring or receive items from the factory and then engage in various activities. Journalists visited a settlement where they noticed several people engaged in the same work, including some children. Sitting with these children, journalists learned about their work. A 12-year-old girl named Savita (changed name) explained in detail, 'We

have been living in Delhi's slum for about five years. There are eight members in our family, four sisters, two brothers, and parents. My father and brother ride rickshaws, while my mother and I work on dyeing flip-flops. I currently attend sixth grade, and my siblings also go to school every day. My mother stays at home and works on dyeing flip-flops. We leave for school at 8:00 in the morning and return by 2:00 in the afternoon. After coming back from school, having lunch, and taking a little rest, we work on dyeing flip-flops. Just as we wear various types of flip-flops,

we have to do various tasks on those flip-flops like dyeing, breaking, attaching the sole, etc. The work comes from the factory. The workers bring flip-flops from the factory to the slum area, where people have to perform various tasks. Some have to dye the flip-flops, and some have to gather in a bag, putting 12, 12, 24, 24 pairs in it. When the flip-flops come from the factory in the bag, they emit a strong odour as they are made of very dirty plastic. Some flip-flops need to be dyed in colours like black, white, etc. The colours are provided by the factory itself, but when we dye the flip-flops, they emit a strong odour. Most people cannot bear it, and as a result, many children and adults fall ill with various problems such as difficulty breathing, chest pain, cough, etc. When the flip-flops come from the factory, they have to be completed according to the time assigned, only then the full payment is received. If delayed, some money is deducted. After dyeing 24 flip-flops, we get ₹2 and manage expenses up to ₹120 a day for the household.'



## CHILDREN RALLIED TO PREVENT POLLUTION, ADVOCATING MASK USE

Reporter: Sarita

The street and working children conducted a rally against pollution, advocating for the use of masks. Collaborating from all centres, the children organized a grand rally to raise awareness against pollution. Holding posters with slogans in their hands, they collectively chanted, "To drive away pollution, wearing a mask is a must," enlightening everyone around their centres. The children emphasized the importance of masks and how they protect them from pollution and ensure their safety. Subsequently, they moved from their alleys to other lanes, continuing their chant

and advising everyone to wear masks. Some children even engaged with shopkeepers, advising them that wearing masks inside their shops could protect them from pollution-related illnesses. The shopkeepers appreciated this advice, acknowledging the children's intelligence and understanding. The children thoroughly enjoyed the event, feeling content about educating adults regarding the necessity of wearing masks and emphasizing their importance whenever they step out. They unitedly advocated for driving away pollution, washing hands before meals, and maintaining cleanliness in both eating and drinking, aiming to ward off illnesses.

## WATER CRISIS CAUSES KIDS' SCHOOL COMMUTE DELAYS

Talkative reporter: Reshma and Balaknama reporter Hans Kumar

When Child Reporter Hans Kumar visited Delhi's Amar Park area, he discovered that due to the water crisis, children often get delayed in reaching school every day. Talking to the local reporter Reshma, it was revealed that Amar Park faces significant

water scarcity. People struggle to find drinking water, often having to fetch it from distant places. Eleven-year-old Seema (changed name) shared that her parents leave for work in the morning and return home late, making it her responsibility to fetch water from a distance daily. If she gets delayed in fetching water, it leads



to a significant crowd and causes inconvenience. This results in delays in reaching school or even missing it entirely. Seema's story from Amar Park in West Delhi sheds light on the growing water crisis in Delhi's slum areas. While Seema attends sixth grade, her struggles revolve more around fetching water than studying. Similarly, other

children in the area also face difficulties in reaching school on time as their first responsibility in the morning is to fetch water. Unfortunately, when they arrive late, the school's security personnel often deny them entry, impacting their education negatively, and leading to academic setbacks.

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

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

Balaknama 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.