

# 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.

## INTENSE HEAT WAVES DISTRESSING CHILDREN WITH RISING TEMPERATURES

Reporters: Kajal, Hansraj,  
Raj Kishor, Kishan

The onslaught of intense heat is taking its toll on children, with increasing temperatures causing distress. At present, the entire nation is in the grip of severe heat, as the rising mercury spreads its warmth across every corner. However, amidst these escalating temperatures and heatwaves, what is the condition of children live on streets and engaged in street vending activities? Are they feeling uncomfortable due to the rising temperatures and heat? Are they facing numerous obstacles due to the heat in their daily chores? To address these concerns, reporters of Balaknama conducted visits to various locations to gauge the impact of increasing heat on children. They interacted with these children to understand the challenges they face in their daily lives due to the rising temperatures. One such encounter took place with the residents of Sector 115, Noida, who shared their experiences. "We reside in rented accommodation with our parents in Noida. Our household consists of five members, including two brothers, a sister, and our parents. Our mother engages in domestic work in households and our father works in a

factory. We also attend school and, upon returning, engage in the sale of ice balls in the neighborhood streets from 2 p.m. until 7 p.m. We have been selling ice balls continuously for six months now because it is challenging to manage household expenses with the earnings our parents bring home. Even paying rent becomes quite difficult. Our father earns approximately eight thousand rupees per month, and our mother earns around five thousand rupees per month. However, even with these earnings, it is challenging to sustain our family. Consequently, we have to go out in the heat to sell ice balls on the streets. We have a large cart and a big box in which we store ice. Various colored powders are used to dye the ice, and there is a machine to crush the ice finely. When we leave home, the intense sunlight causes a burning sensation on our bodies, and as a result, our entire body becomes drenched in sweat. Pulling the cart becomes quite difficult, and that's why we go to streets in the village where there is shade. However, it becomes a big problem because when we roam on the streets, the sunlight falls on the ice, causing it to melt rapidly, leading to significant losses. We will endure whatever hardships



come our way because if we avoid the sunlight, neither will the ice balls sell nor will we earn money, making it even more difficult to manage household expenses."

To gain insight into rising temperatures and the heat, reporters met with children from Jaipur, among whom Archana (changed name) disclosed that currently, we reside with our parents in a rented settlement in Jaipur. Our parents work as street sweepers. Presently, we also attend school and are receiving education in the fourth grade. From 6 to 8 in the morning, we accompany our parents to a market, where we sweep outside and inside shops, earning around two hundred rupees from each shop per month. After returning from school, we also have to sweep and clean in the evening.

On days when we don't go to school, we have to do this work for even more time. The current intense heat makes us feel weak while sweeping the streets, and we even feel dizzy sometimes. However, we have to endure and continue this work. Due to our work of sweeping, many people look down on us. Seeing the increasing heat, we bring water bottles from our home, but due to the scorching sun, the water gets finished quickly. When we ask for water from others or shopkeepers, they disdainfully give it and sometimes refuse.

Eight-year-old Rohan (changed name), residing in a settlement in Delhi, mentioned that the increasing heat becomes a curse in our lives every six months, tormenting us repeatedly. Although our settlement is quite large, staying inside after returning from school and the rising heat makes it feel like we are burning. Therefore, we have to go outside, where the temperature rises so rapidly that our bodies feel like they are burning. Consequently, we are unable to bear the temperature of the increasing heat at all."

While conversing with Armaan (changed name) from Gurugram, Armaan disclosed that we are originally from Bihar and currently reside in a rented settlement in

Gurugram with our parents. Our parents go to work, and we stay at home. Currently, everyone is facing issues due to the severe heat. We live in a tin shed settlement, without any fan or cooler. The sun's rays become so intense that we cannot stay inside our hut for even a minute, posing a risk of illness. When people in the settlement can't bear the heat, the only refuge is to seek shade nearby or go to places with trees. When we suffer from the heat, we have a school friend who lives in Gurugram and has all amenities like a cooler, fridge, and fan at home. We go there to protect ourselves from the heat. When we inquired about the increasing heat from children living in Sector 76 of Noida, a 16-year-old girl mentioned that we live in a hut settlement made entirely of tin sheds. After around eight in the morning, the sun's heat starts to rise, and it becomes very difficult to sit inside the hut after nine in the morning. Until we sit under the shade of trees, we don't find peace. Moreover, not only do we endure the heat to some extent, but it has a significant adverse effect on younger children. As a result, children in the settlement are falling ill, suffering from coughs, colds, etc. When we sit under the trees, we feel relieved when the

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## CHILDREN SHOW ENTHUSIASM FOR FIFTH BOARD EXAMINATION

Balaknama Reporter: Kajal, Local Reporter: Rahim

As we know, according to the directives of the Rajasthan Education Department, the fifth board exams began on May 13, 2024. In this context, there was a noticeable excitement and enthusiasm among the fifth-grade students from Lekhasara Basti, though some children also expressed nervousness about the exams.

Balaknama reporter Kajal spoke with the children to understand their feelings. Rahim (name changed) shared that while he was excited to take his first board exam, he was anxious about the logistics. His exam center, Looniyawas School, was about 9 kilometers from his basti, and he worried about reaching the center on time and navigating the new environment.



However, with the support of Chetna organization workers, he arrived on time and performed well in his

exams.

Another student, Neha (name changed), mentioned that she was initially anxious at the thought of board exams. However, once she arrived at the exam center, she felt reassured as the teachers were very helpful, guiding the children on where to sit and how to write their roll numbers on the exam sheets.

Additionally, Damini and Nargis shared that their parents were very happy to see them participating in the board exams. Many parents from other bastis also showed enthusiasm, helping their children prepare and ensuring they reached the exam centers on time. Under the project, all the children had been preparing for the board exams for several days. Around 50 street and working children participated in the board exams with great enthusiasm.

# GIRL FORCED TO WORK TO SUPPORT DISABLED MOTHER

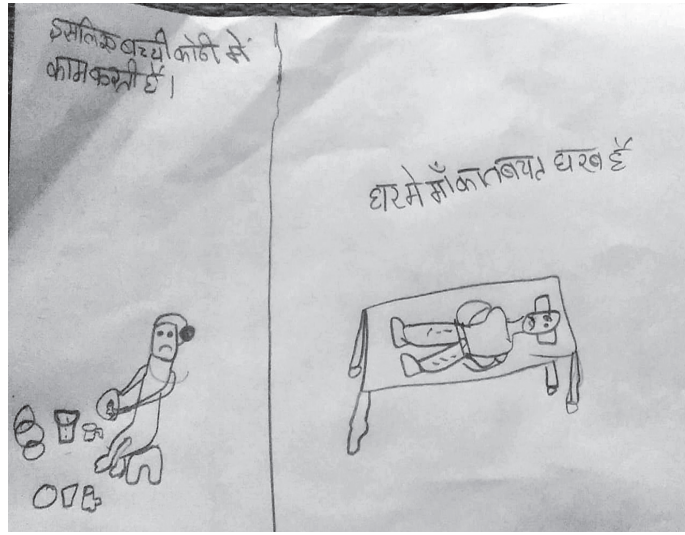
Local Reporter: Jehana  
Balaknama Reporter: Hans  
Kumar

During a visit to Shakur Basti in West Delhi, Balaknama reporter Hans Kumar was informed by local resident and talkative reporter Jehana about a girl living nearby who has sacrificed her educational aspirations to financially support her family. The girl, Anupriya (name changed), comes from an economically distressed background. Her mother is disabled and unable to work, while her father is an alcoholic. Following a severe argument between her parents, her father abandoned the family, leaving Anupriya

to shoulder the responsibility of caring for her mother and herself.

With no other support, Anupriya began working as a domestic help in nearby homes, where she sweeps and mops for long hours in exchange for a meager wage. Despite her tireless efforts, she continues to struggle to make ends meet and support her family. Although she dreams of continuing her education and breaking free from the cycle of poverty, the financial constraints and responsibilities have left her with no choice but to put her ambitions on hold.

The daily struggles and hardships she faces have taken a toll on her mental and physical



well-being, yet she continues to persevere in the face of adversity. Her story is a stark

reminder of the harsh realities faced by many minor children in marginalized communities,

where the burden of familial responsibilities often overshadows personal growth and the pursuit of self-fulfillment.

Anupriya's unwavering determination, despite the challenges, serves as a testament to her courage and strength in adverse circumstances. As she navigates the challenges of her daily life, her story poignantly highlights the urgent need for support and assistance for those who are marginalized in society. It calls for greater awareness and empathy towards individuals like her who are fighting against all odds to create a better future for themselves and their loved ones.

## CHILDREN LEARN IMPORTANT LESSONS DURING REPORTERS' MEETINGS



Local Reporter -Nidhi,  
Balaknama Reporter- Kishan

Balaknama's reporters bring the issues of street and working children to the forefront. Every month, Balaknama reporters, visit different areas and conduct children support group meetings with the children. These meetings are attended by Badhte Kadam Federation members (it is a federation by and for children), Balaknama's contributing reporters, and writing reporters. Let's delve into what topics Balaknama's reporters discuss during these meetings and how the children feel about them.

Many children shared their thoughts during discussions, expressing their joy when Balaknama reporters visit their educational centers. They feel a sense of happiness seeing the reporters and eagerly await their monthly visits. Each month, Balaknama's reporters travel to various locations to conduct Baal Kadam meetings. These meetings, held once a month, serve multiple purposes, such as providing information about Badhte Kadam federation, educating other children about Balaknama, explaining the importance of child helpline numbers, and informing children about their rights. The

primary goal is to understand the challenges children face in their lives through detailed discussions during these meetings. Additionally, the meetings involve various games like Kho-Kho, Musical Chairs, Apple-Orange-Banana, and Fish-Net. During one such meeting, several children expressed how happy they felt when the reporters visited. They eagerly look forward to these monthly interactions, as they provide an opportunity to share their problems, which are then highlighted in Balaknama, and to learn valuable lessons such as the role of journalists, respecting elders, and focusing on education. When the reporters asked the children how they would feel if the meetings didn't happen, the children replied that they would miss them greatly. They enjoy the games played during these meetings more than those at home and appreciate the valuable lessons learned. The children hope that these meetings continue, bringing smiles to their faces.

## CHILDREN LEARNED FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ENCOURAGED TO CREATE PIGGY BANKS

Balaknama Reporter: Kajal  
Local Reporter: Sonia

To simplify and improve the lives of street and working children, monthly life skills workshops are conducted at education centers under Twinkling Stars Project of CHETNA NGO in Jaipur. These workshops aim to empower children with essential skills such as financial literacy, time management, gender equality, awareness of safe and unsafe touch, and understanding good and bad habits.

During a visit to the Jamdoli Kacchi Basti, Balaknama reporter Kajal spoke with the children to learn about their problems and experiences. A girl named Aniya (name changed) shared that during a life skills workshop at the Chetna Center, they were taught about financial literacy, specifically how to save money, use it wisely, and invest it correctly. Aniya learned the importance of saving money and made her own piggy bank from clay, in which she has saved



approximately 150 rupees. Another child, Gaurav (name changed), mentioned that he has saved about 300 rupees in his piggy bank and now wishes to open a bank account. Through this workshop, around 15 children from JDA Bapu Basti created their own piggy banks and started saving money, while many children from Mangyawas Basti have been inspired to open bank accounts.

## ANNUAL EXAMINATION RESULTS BRING SMILES TO STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN'S FACES

From pg. 1

wind blows. However, when the wind stops, we continue to sweat profusely even under the trees. Thus, trees and the breeze are our only solace against the heat. Sonakshi (changed name), residing in Jaipur, mentioned that although we handle household chores at home, the intense heat makes it unbearable to step out. However, sometimes I have to go out in the afternoon to purchase essential items for the house. Just a few days ago, I went to the store in the scorching sun to buy some groceries, but suddenly I felt dizzy due to the heat and fainted. I was also sick at that time, and due to fainting, I collapsed on the road. Some passersby

noticed me, sprinkled water on me, and brought me back to consciousness. It took me quite a few hours to reach home, and I informed my family about fainting due to the heat. Girls living in Delhi also shared significant impacts of the severe heat, affecting children who work on the streets and in households. However, one can't even imagine what those children who work all day in this blazing sun to run their households go through. Chandni (changed name), a girl living in a slum area in Delhi, sells samosas door to door in a basket, braving the scorching sun every day. Some of her sisters also join her in this work, but they sell samosas in different locations. Before the

summer holidays, she used to go to school and was a student of class eighth. Even then, after returning from school, she used to sell samosas. Her mother prepares the samosas, and then she and her sisters take them to sell. These children spend the entire day selling samosas in different slums.

Chandni explained that doing this work exposes them to many difficulties due to the heat. When they walk, the sun beats down on every part of their body, causing sweat to pour down, and they have to wipe it off with either their clothes or a handkerchief. Selling samosas in the slum areas makes their clothes and faces dirty due to dust and dirt, and most people discriminate

against them when they see this. This discrimination hurts them a lot. Additionally, the intense heat affects them physically, and their bodies start to smell due to sweating. Moreover, when they return home in the evening, they often have to bathe with cold water mixed with ice cubes to find relief.

In another part of Delhi, Kartik (changed name) from the Shakur Basti area, works as a waiter in a canteen with his friends every morning. They load goods onto a cart and travel to places like Gurugram and Noida. There, Kartik unloads the cart and starts working as a waiter, serving water and cold drinks to people. In return, people give them

tips of around 50-60 rupees, and they earn about 200-300 rupees per day. Kartik has been doing this work for many years. However, when the school was open, he used to go out with his friends around eight at night and return around two or three in the morning, then wake up and go to school.

The reason behind Kartik doing this work is the poor financial condition of his family. When they unload goods from the cart, the heat makes it unbearable to work, and they feel tired. However, they have to do this work to run their households. In this way, many working children from various places have shared the problems caused by the summer heat.

# NEWBORN'S BODY FOUND FLOATING IN DRAIN, ALARMING THE COMMUNITY

Talkative Reporter: Ravi

During a visit to slums in West Delhi, Balaknama reporter Hans Kumar was informed by local resident and talkative reporter Ravi about a tragic and shocking incident that recently occurred in their area. A few days prior, the dead body of a newborn baby was discovered floating in the water near the drain. This news has left the local residents, especially the children, stunned and terrified, now living in fear and uncertainty. The infant, believed to be only a few hours old, was found by a group of children playing near the drain. One of the children noticed the

baby's foot protruding from a black plastic bag floating in the water, and immediately alerted their parents. The parents then notified the authorities, who arrived at the scene and retrieved the body. Preliminary investigations suggest that the baby was abandoned and left to die in the drain shortly after birth. The exact cause of death is yet to be determined, but it is evident that this was a heinous and inhumane act.

This incident has left the residents of slum in a state of shock and disbelief. Many are now living in fear,



concerned for their children's safety and the future of their community. Some parents have started keeping their children indoors, fearing what

might happen next. Local authorities have launched an investigation, but no suspects have been identified so far. They are urging anyone

with information about the incident to come forward and assist with the investigation. As the community grapples with this tragic event, feelings of grief and anger are rising among the residents. Many are demanding justice for the innocent baby who lost their life in such a cruel and heartless manner. The discovery of the newborn in the drain highlights the desperate and severe conditions faced by many in the slum areas. It underscores the urgent need to support vulnerable and marginalized communities and take serious measures to prevent such tragic events from happening again.

## EDUCATION BOOSTS SELF-CONFIDENCE IN STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN



Balaknama reporter- Hans Kumar

Ruptured cylinder sparks devastating fire, leaving children terrified and many homeless.

During a visit to the Shakur Basti area in West Delhi, our reporter Hans Kumar discovered that a few days earlier, a fierce fire had engulfed several shanties, reducing five huts to ashes. The fire occurred when a woman lit a gas stove for cooking, and the leaked gas cylinder exploded, igniting a massive blaze. The densely populated area led the fire to spread rapidly among

the adjacent shanties. The fire brigade was immediately called to the scene, and firefighters worked diligently to extinguish the flames and prevent further spread.

Unfortunately, by the time the fire was brought under control, five huts were destroyed, rendering many families homeless. Several people were injured in the fire and were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment. Among the injured were children and elderly individuals who either suffered burns or lost consciousness due to smoke inhalation.

Residents of the shanties were left with nothing but

the clothes on their backs, as their homes and belongings were reduced to ashes. The fire had a profound impact on the children, depriving them of basic necessities such as food, water, and shelter.

According to eyewitnesses, children are forced to sleep on the streets due to the loss of their homes and belongings. The fire also destroyed their school uniforms, books, and other essential items, hindering their ability to attend school and adversely affecting their education.

The scorching summer heat, coupled with power cuts due to electricity shortages, has exacerbated the children's distress, making it difficult for them to sleep at night.

Efforts are underway to provide shelter and assistance to those affected by the fire. Authorities are investigating the causes of the fire and urging residents to exercise caution when using gas cylinders for cooking. This incident underscores the need for appropriate safety measures in densely populated slum areas to prevent such tragedies in the future.

## DWELLINGS OF THE POOR REDUCED TO ASHES

Balaknama Reporter Kishor

In Sector 54 of Gurugram, an atmosphere of chaos prevails after a fire engulfed the dwellings of the impoverished. Some families had arrived here recently, while others had been residing for years. They had toiled for years to build their shanties, investing all their savings to establish a household. However, within a few hours, the possessions of thousands of households turned to ashes. In the aftermath of the incident, children and adults wander hungry and thirsty, with no food left in their homes. Every family is engulfed in worry, pondering how to care for their children under such dire circumstances. For these individuals, living a life of hunger and thirst has become an inevitable reality. The three-hour blaze has inflicted a lifetime of pain upon these individuals. Only the clothes they were wearing remain on the bodies of children and adults. The tragedy was so horrifying that



recovery seems like a distant prospect for these people. Residents of this settlement lament that neither do they possess any insurance, nor do they receive any training for fire prevention, leading to significant losses.

In this disaster, essential documents such as ration cards and Aadhar cards have turned to ashes, as they lack fireproof boxes to safeguard even the most basic documents. Their plastic utensils have melted away, and this calamitous event has robbed us of everything. Although some people in the vicinity extend minimal help, sustaining life with utensils, clothes, and ration seems nearly impossible. Children feel hunger pangs quickly, and surviving with a single pair of clothes poses a challenge. Numerous questions arise in our minds, and we are perplexed about whom to seek help from as homeless individuals.

## FATHER'S ADDICTION LEAVES TWO CHILDREN IN DISTRESS

Local Reporter: Saniya

In roadside slum of Delhi once happy family of four – parents and their two children – lived together. After moving from their village, the father initially earned well, supporting the family comfortably. However, over time, he succumbed to the grip of addiction, abandoning his responsibilities and falling into substance abuse. This led to severe hardships for the family, including a lack of food and the inability to meet even the children's basic needs. The mother, in a desperate attempt to manage the situation, sent her 7-year-old daughter to her

maternal grandmother's home while keeping her 4-year-old son with her. Recently, in the early hours of the morning, around 4 AM, there was a knock on the door. The family found the father lying in a near-dead state on the railway tracks. The sight caused the mother to faint. Though the family members managed to pull him off the tracks and rushed him to the hospital, he had already succumbed to his injuries by the time they arrived. An investigation revealed that due to a personal feud, he had been brutally beaten in the area and then dumped near their home.



The children, too young to comprehend the tragedy, were left in shock. The 7-year-old daughter, who saw her father's body over a video call, was devastated and inconsolable, unable to see her father one last time in person. Meanwhile, the

4-year-old son remained under the illusion that his father had gone for a walk on the tracks and would return soon. Thus, the father's addiction and ensuing enmity led to the disintegration of a family, leaving two innocent children in a state of profound loss and confusion.

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

CONTACT THESE TOLL FREE  
NUMBERS IF YOU FACE ANY  
PROBLEM.

Child line Number

**1098**

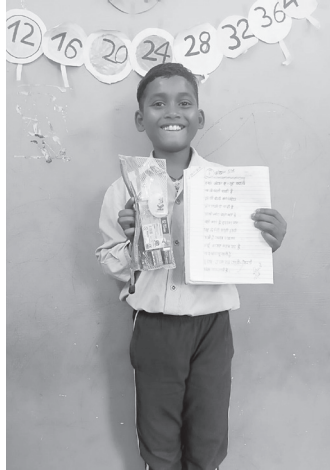
Police Helpline Number

**100**

## STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN ARE OFFERED EDUCATION THROUGH HARD WORK

Balaknama Reporter- Sarita  
Local Reporter- Ajay

Every child in society possesses some hidden talent, including street and working children who are often rich in skills. Today, we introduce Ajay (name changed), a 10-year-old boy from Bengal currently living with his parents and three siblings in Ghasola Village, Gurugram. During a visit to the Ghasola village in Gurugram, our reporter Sarita spoke with Ajay. He shared that he had been unable to enrol in school for a long time. However, workers from the Chetna organization took him to the school. The teachers there told us to bring our parents before we could be admitted. Since our parents couldn't get leave from work, they couldn't accompany us to school. However, when the organization's workers met with the school principal and discussed the admission, the principal initially said they would test the child first. During the test, Ajay answered all the questions correctly, impressing the principal who admitted him to the school immediately and awarded him a prize. Ajay's hard work

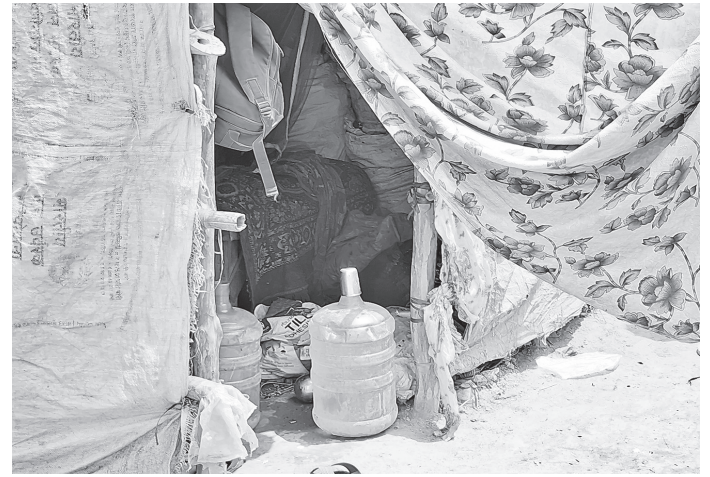


paid off as he is very diligent and smart in his studies. His parents were overjoyed with his admission. Ajay's mother works as a housemaid, and his father is a labourer, so they do not earn much. As a result, Ajay has to carefully consider every expense related to his studies and faces many challenges because his parents cannot fulfil all his wishes. Ajay is active and intelligent in every aspect. He is a leader at Chetna's alternative education center. When our reporter asked Ajay about his aspirations, given his academic talents, he said, "I want to become a police officer and protect my country."

## CHILDREN FORCED TO DRINK HOT WATER DUE TO RISING TEMPERATURES

Local Reporters: Rakhi and  
Balaknama Reporter: Kishan

The impact of environmental changes is felt more acutely each year. Currently, the heatwave is intensifying day by day. Reporters from Balaknama spoke to street children about how they are coping with the increasing heat. The children reported that their lives have become extremely difficult due to rising temperatures. When reporters visited the slums near Sector 101 in Noida, an 11-year-old girl shared her experience. She said, "We live in rented slum housing with our parents, who work as scrap collectors. Our slum is made of tin, and the rising heat is causing numerous problems. By noon, the sun is so intense that it becomes unbearable to stay inside the slum, forcing us to seek refuge under nearby trees." The girl highlighted a major issue: the water becomes too hot to drink due to the sun's heat. Although they can buy earthen pots to keep the water cool, these pots break frequently. Each pot costs between ₹150 and ₹200, which they cannot afford to replace repeatedly. Consequently, most people in the slum store water in 20-liter plastic bottles, which also heat up in the sun. The girl explained, "Our parents leave for work early in the morning



and sometimes don't leave any money at home. Those in the slum who have a refrigerator or earthen pots can drink cool water, but we are forced to drink

hot water because we don't have enough money. In the evening, my father buys ice from nearby, which provides some relief with cold water."

## PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CHILD SUBSTANCE ABUSE



Balaknama Reporters: Kajal and  
Local Reporter: Sandeep

As we all know and have often heard, curbing substance abuse is crucial for preserving our culture. Such statements sound commendable, but the reality is quite different. In a recent report, Sandeep, a local reporter from the slums of Jaipur, revealed a disturbing trend. He reported that around four to five parents in the slum are habitual drinkers, consuming alcohol daily, both in the morning and evening. Shockingly, these parents send their children to buy alcohol from liquor stores. Sandeep shared the story of

his friend Prakash (name changed), whose father is also a heavy drinker. One day, when Prakash's father asked him to fetch alcohol from the store, Prakash refused, explaining to his father that substance abuse is harmful and deteriorates the body. In response, Prakash's father beat him severely. Despite the beating, Prakash eventually had to bring the alcohol. This scenario is common in the slum, where several parents send their children to buy alcohol. These children, when asked, silently comply. Occasionally, parents entice their children to fetch alcohol by offering them one or two rupees as a reward.

## CHILD'S EDUCATION DEPRIVED DUE TO SIBLING CARE BURDEN



Kajal: Balaknama Reporters and  
Local Reporter: Rohan

During a visit to the slums on the other side of Mangyawas slum in Jaipur, Balaknama reporter Kajal encountered children who shared their struggles. One such child, Rohan (name changed), about 7 years old, spoke about his predicament. Rohan takes care of his two younger brothers and a sister, all three years younger than him, throughout the day. Rohan explained that his family consists of six members, and his father alone cannot bear all the expenses. Therefore,

his mother accompanies his father to help collect scrap, allowing them to earn a bit more money. Both parents leave early in the morning to gather scrap, using a small trolley to collect items throughout the day. They return home in the evening to sort the scrap into plastic and metal, which they sell to buy daily necessities like flour and vegetables. This is only possible because Rohan takes care of his younger siblings at home. Unfortunately, Rohan's responsibility prevents him from attending school. He shared his sadness, saying that if he goes to school,

his siblings cannot manage without him. Despite being young, the weight of his responsibility is heavy. His daily routine involves feeding his siblings, buying things from the nearby shop, playing with them, and wandering around. He wistfully expressed his desire to attend school, lamenting that the burden of caring for his siblings keeps him from getting an education.

## YOUNG BOY SUPPORTS FAMILY BY PLAYING THE DHOLAK

Local Reporter: Vivaan  
Balaknama Reporter: Kajal

As we know, playing the dholak can bring joy and foster creativity. In line with this, a story emerged about a young boy, Vivaan (name changed), who helps support his family financially by playing the dholak. To gather more information, Balaknama reporter Kajal visited Mangyawas Basti and spoke with Vivaan. Vivaan shared that his mother plays the dholak during festivals and collects money by

performing in households. His father, however, spends whatever he earns on alcohol, making it extremely difficult to manage household expenses.

Vivaan explained that due to the financial strain and household needs, he gradually learned to play the dholak. He began accompanying his mother, and now, in addition to festivals, he also plays at Mata Rani's jagrans and weddings. He earns a decent amount, making around 300 to 500 rupees per event, and during the wedding season,

he can earn between 2000 to 3000 rupees a month. Vivaan gives this money to his mother to help cover household expenses, ensuring the family can get by. Vivaan joyfully mentioned that he loves studying as well. Therefore, he usually plays at events held at night and attends classes at the Chetna NGO's alternative education center in the mornings. He also expressed his desire to see his younger brother receive a good education, which is why he takes him to the education center.

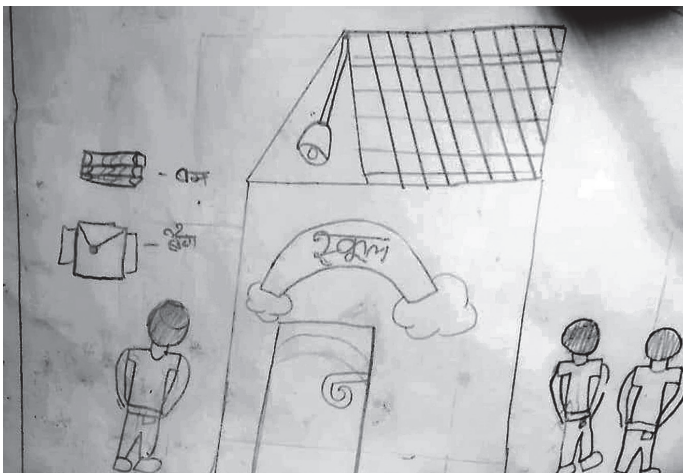
# PANIC AMONG STUDENTS AND PARENTS DUE TO BOMB HOAX

Local Reporter Sagir and Hans Kumar

Recently, a false rumor caused panic among students and parents in schools across Delhi and its surrounding areas, instilling fear and terror in the community. The chaos erupted after news of a bomb placed in a school spread through TV and social media, leading to anxious reactions from parents. Concerned about the threat of explosives in schools, parents rushed to pick up their children, resulting in confusion and disorder in various schools.

Many children felt scared and anxious about attending school, with some opting to stay home for several days, significantly impacting school attendance.

During a visit to Keshavpuram in West Delhi, Balaknama reporter Hans Kumar spoke with local reporter Sagir, who described the chaotic scene at his school. Parents suddenly gathered in large numbers to collect their children, creating an atmosphere of panic and fear among the students. One child, Imtiaz (name changed), recounted that his father,



who works as a laborer in a factory, became worried for

his safety after seeing the news and immediately took leave

from work to fetch him from school. Similarly, another child, Junaid (name changed), shared that his mother was afraid to send him to school, questioning the point of sending him if he wasn't safe there. Many children were crying, and some were in shock due to the incident. However, a subsequent police investigation confirmed that the rumors were baseless and that all schools and children were safe. Ultimately, once parents were reassured of their children's safety, they allowed them to return to school.

## KARISHMA'S EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY FACILITATED BY TEACHERS' SUPPORT

Balaknama Reporters: Akash and Local Reporter: Karishma

As we all know, parents and teachers play a crucial role in shaping children's lives. While parents provide upbringing and nurture, teachers foster intellectual, spiritual, and moral development. This was evident in the story of 11-year-old Karishma (name changed) from Ganeshpuri slum in Jaipur. Karishma shared her experience, explaining that her mother is disabled, and her father was unemployed, which forced the family to leave the slum and return to their village. Around 10 months ago, she had been admitted to a school, but due to family issues, she had to drop out and move with her family. Her continuous absence from school led her class teacher to call and inquire about her



situation. When her mother explained everything, the teacher reassured them that Karishma's name would not be removed from the school rolls. The teacher emphasized that Karishma should come back for exams whenever they called. After some time, her father decided to move back to

Jaipur, which made Karishma very happy as she could return to school. However, this time they lived in Transport Nagar, about 2 kilometers away from the school. It was impossible for her to travel alone from such a distance, so her mother, despite her disability, showed great determination by accompanying her to and from school every day. While Karishma attended classes, her mother spent the entire time in a nearby garden, waiting until school ended to take her back home. Karishma acknowledged that if her class teacher had removed her from the school register and not understood their difficulties, she might not have been able to advance to the next grade. The support and empathy from her teachers were crucial in ensuring her continued education.



## HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION OF STREET CHILDREN PAID OFF

Balaknama Reporters: Sarita and Local Reporter: Kajal and Jyoti

Hard work and determination can make any child successful. Street and working children, who have the ability to turn every difficult situation into an opportunity, are very talented. During a visit to the slums of Chakkarpur village in Gurugram (Haryana), Balaknama reporter Sarita spoke with two girls, Kajal (name changed) and Jyoti (name changed). Kajal shared her story, saying, "I live here with my parents and two siblings. We are originally from Uttar Pradesh and moved here in search of better employment opportunities. We have been living in Gurugram for three years now. Our economic situation in the village was poor, which is why we relocated here. My mother works as a house cleaner, and my father is a painter."

Kajal continued, "When we first moved here, my parents wanted to enroll us in school, but we faced difficulties in getting admitted. One day, we learned about the Chetna organization. We spoke with a social worker from their alternative education center, and they helped us get enrolled in school. I was admitted to the fourth grade, and my sister to the second grade. Thanks to Chetna, I am now in the fifth grade, and my sister is in the third grade." The girls attended school regularly and also participated in the education center's programs. Their hard work and dedication paid off, as Kajal secured the third position in her class and Jyoti achieved the first position. Kajal added, "The school principal honored us with awards. My parents are very proud of us. My dream is to become a teacher and fulfill my parents' dreams."

## CHILDREN COMPELLED TO SELL TOYS RATHER THAN PLAY WITH THEM

Balaknama Reporters: Akash, Local Reporter: Rajat

In many slums of Jaipur, numerous families still struggle with providing education to their children. These children, who should be in school and playing, are instead helping their families secure daily meals. Such is the case with Rajat and Anil (names changed), two young boys from the slums of Jaysinghpura Khor in Jaipur who are forced to sell toys instead of playing with them. Rajat shared his story, explaining that their father buys cheap plastic toys from Delhi and sells them on a cart, moving from street to street. Rajat and his brother sell these toys at fairs, often sitting by the roadside or outside temples



in the scorching heat, hoping that someone will buy the toys for their children. This way, they can earn money to support their family. The boys expressed their sadness, saying that the joy they get from selling toys is different

from playing with them because selling toys provides them with food, money, and clothing. Additionally, during festivals, these children also sell rangoli decorations, festive items, and plastic flower bouquets.

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number

**1098**

Police Helpline Number

**100**

# RESOURCEFUL CHILDREN AVERT CASUALTIES IN FIRE TRIGGERED BY NARCOTICS

Local Reporter: Akash

As harmful as substance abuse is for individuals, its repercussions extend to those around as well. Recently, during a visit to vulnerable slums of Delhi by local reporter, it was observed that a woman in the community was busy and distressed while organizing her household items. Upon closer inspection, the reporter was astonished to see a fire spreading rapidly on the dry grass in the nearby field. Acting swiftly, Akash, along with his two friends and other community members, attempted to control the fire using whatever water was available and moved flammable items away from the area. Upon



speaking to the locals, Akash learned that the primary cause of the fire was the presence of narcotic activities in the bushes. Many youngsters in the area use substances like

matchsticks for intoxication, causing concern among the women in the community to use that route. The recklessness of these troublemakers led to the fire igniting in the grass, which ultimately took on a fierce form. Fortunately, due to timely efforts to extinguish the fire, it was prevented from spreading further, averting potential damage. However, several small plants and dried trees were destroyed in the fire. The field near the community was the only playground for the children, where they used to play in the evenings. With Delhi already reeling under severe heat, the loss of vegetation due to the fire will further exacerbate the plight of the common people.

# CHILDHOOD LOST TO WORK AT A PANI PURI STALL

Balakanama Reporters: Akash,  
Local Reporter: Sohel

Child labor deprives children of their right to education, trapping them in a cycle of poverty for generations. Child labor is a significant barrier to education. This issue is highlighted in the story of Balveer (name changed), an 11-year-old boy from Jaysinghpura slum in Jaipur. Balveer shared his experiences and problems with local reporter Sohel. Balveer recounted, "About a year ago, my father passed away from tuberculosis. During his illness, my mother borrowed a lot of money from people, leading to a significant debt. After my father's death, my mother started begging, but even that could not provide enough for our family of four. Additionally, we have many household expenses, and it is essential



to save money for the future weddings of my two sisters." Due to these pressing needs, Balveer started working. He works from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM at a hotel, peeling potatoes, washing dishes, and occasionally serving pani puri. In return for his labor, he earns 100 rupees a day. These earnings are used to repay the money his mother borrowed, slowly reducing their debt.

# INNOCENT CHILDHOOD SACRIFICED AT CHICKEN SHOP FOR FAMILY FINANCIAL SUPPORT



Local Reporters: Monu,  
Balakanama Reporter: Raj  
Kishore

Today, we want to share the story of an 11-year-old boy who works at a chicken shop. He lives in the slums behind Jalwayu tower in Gurugram. During a visit to the slums, our Balakanama reporter, Raj Kishore, met a boy named Monu (name changed), who revealed that a local child

works at a nearby chicken shop. When asked about his tasks, Monu explained that the child is responsible for packing the chicken. Our reporter went to the slum to meet this boy and asked why he was working instead of studying. The boy explained that he works to meet his needs. When asked about his needs, he replied that although education is important, so is supporting his family. The

money he earns is given to his father, and any leftover funds are used for his personal expenses. The reporter informed the boy about the Chetna organization, which operates in the Jalwayu slums to provide education and recreational activities for children. The organization offers free notebooks, pencils, erasers, and other supplies, and arranges trips to places like Rajasthan. They also conduct regular medical checkups and facilitate interactions with the police so children can voice their concerns. The reporter encouraged the boy to attend the Chetna centre, assuring him that no fees are involved. The boy agreed to consider attending the centre for his education.

# OPEN DRAIN POSES DANGER TO CHILDREN, LEADING TO ACCIDENTS

Local Reporters: Om Prakash,  
Balakanama Reporter: Raj  
Kishore

Today, we bring you a concerning incident from the slums of Nathupur area in Gurugram. For the past few days, a drain excavation has been underway in this area, causing significant problems for the local children. The children living near the excavation site used to play there in the evenings, but now they are afraid to do so due to the ongoing construction. This open drain has become a danger zone, restricting their playtime and posing a severe risk to their safety.



The excavation site is the only passageway for the residents, and they have no alternative route to use. One evening, a child's foot slipped, causing him to fall into the deep drain. The child sustained multiple injuries and was quickly rescued by nearby residents who rushed him to the hospital. It was later revealed that the child suffered injuries to his hand and face, requiring stitches. When our Balakanama reporters visited the injured child, they learned that he used to play at the excavation site daily. On the day of the accident, he was playing and walking on a cement pipe above the drain when his foot slipped, causing him to fall and get injured. The child expressed his fear and said the pipes are very slippery, making it dangerous to walk on them. However, he and other children have no choice but to navigate this risky path as their homes are located right behind the pipes, making accidents a constant threat.

# THE DIRTY DRAIN IN THE SLUM BECOMES A DANGER TO CHILDREN'S LIVES

Local Reporter: Akash

Today, we bring you the story of children who face daily threats to their lives. This report focuses on the street and working children in Shaheed Camp, Delhi. These children already lead a life full of struggles, yet they bravely confront the difficulties that come their way. Shaheed Camp spans approximately one and a half kilometers and has a large, filthy drain filled with dirty water. The area is littered with garbage piles, and many residents throw their household waste near the drain, creating a foul smell. Most children in this area play near the drain, exposing them



to the constant risk of illness due to the filth and stench. Today, we discuss a 9-year-old boy named Sandesh (name changed) who was playing with his friends. During their play, they ventured close to the drain, where garbage piles

were scattered. While playing, Sandesh fell to the ground, soiling his clothes. He decided to clean himself by entering the drain, unaware of the slippery and muddy conditions. As he tried to clean his clothes and limbs, Sandesh slipped

and fell into the deep, dirty water. His friends immediately raised an alarm, attracting the attention of some older boys who came to their rescue and pulled Sandesh out of the water. This incident left all the children present in a state of shock and fear. Sandesh was taken home, and after some time and effort to revive him, he regained consciousness and described what had happened. Our talkative reporter Akash investigated the situation further and found out from the children that such incidents have occurred multiple times before. It remains uncertain how long the children will have to continue facing such dangers.

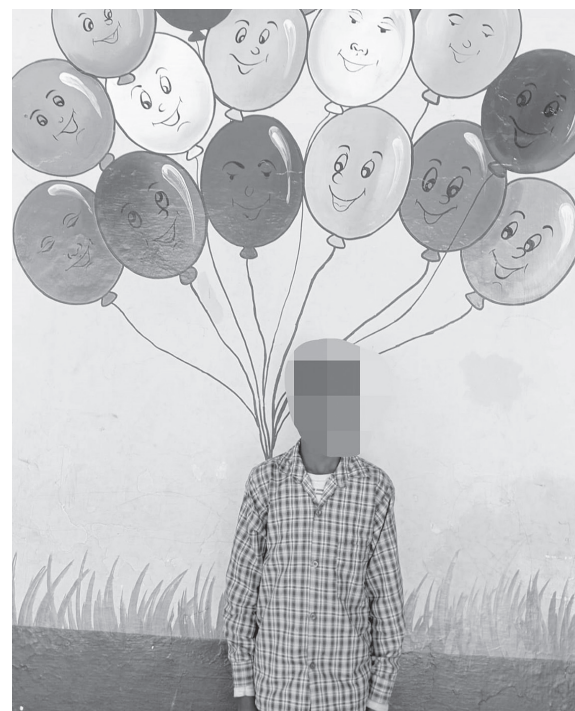
## OVERCOMING SUBSTANCE ABUSE: A CHILD'S PATH TO EDUCATION

Balaknama Reporter: Sarita,  
Local Reporter: Tanmoy Singh

During a visit to a community in Palra Dhani, Gurugram, reporter Sarita encountered a poignant tale. Afzal's (name changed) mother shared her distressing account, revealing how her son was once a wayward youth, indulging in petty crimes and substance abuse. Despite her efforts, Afzal resisted guidance, associating himself with nefarious elements, consuming alcohol and tobacco, and engaging in disrespectful behavior. He even resorted to stealing money from home to fuel his addiction. Left with no support from her estranged husband, Afzal's mother took it upon herself to provide for him, despite facing numerous challenges. When representatives from the Chetna organization attempted to enroll Afzal in their

educational programs, he initially rebuffed their efforts, questioning the importance of education in his life. However, with persistent intervention, Afzal eventually agreed to attend the foundation's learning center. Through counseling and mentorship, he began to comprehend the value of education and the opportunities it could offer him. Gradually, Afzal acquired literacy skills, adopted a cleaner lifestyle, distanced himself from negative influences, and ultimately enrolled in a formal school.

Today, Afzal diligently attends school, distancing himself from the grip of addiction. Recognizing his transformation, the Chetna Foundation assisted him in opening a bank account, symbolizing his newfound hope and stability. Afzal's mother expressed her gratitude, acknowledging the pivotal role played by education and the foundation in redirecting her son's life towards a brighter future.



## TRAIN BECOMES CAUSE OF FEAR, SHANTIES TREMBLE, CHILDREN SHIVER



Balaknama Local Reporter:  
Shahzad

Generally, the sight of a train evokes joy in everyone, and train journeys are cherished experiences. Children, especially, become excited upon seeing a train. Observing the picturesque natural scenery while on a moving train is a delight for all. However, trains have now become a source of fear rather than joy for children. For them, it's become more like a nightmare than a pleasure. Indeed, a recent report by the local reporter of Balaknama from West Delhi revealed a concerning situation. In the locality of Lawrence

Road, which is known for its proximity to railway tracks and high incidence of accidents involving children, the situation has become increasingly worrisome. Houses of these children are situated right next to the railway tracks where several trains pass by daily. Crossing the tracks to fetch anything has become a necessity for them. However, this fear has heightened significantly since the introduction of the Vande Bharat Express train service on the tracks of Lawrence Road. The Vande Bharat Express runs on these tracks two to three times a day. Its speed is so high that dust flies

around, and it startles people nearby. Children are terrified by the noise of the train. The nearby shanties tremble, disrupting the children's sleep, causing them to miss school. One incident narrated by a Balaknama reporter involved a four-year-old girl who was crossing the tracks with her brother when the Vande Bharat Express suddenly appeared. The train was so fast that she was petrified and froze on the spot. Her brother had to pull her away from the tracks just in time, saving her life. This incident highlights the grave danger posed by the high-speed Vande Bharat Express. Due to the rapid speed of the Vande Bharat Express, children in the community are now living in fear. They no longer feel safe by themselves. Balaknama reporter advised children to be cautious and emphasized the importance of safety. They instructed children to pay close attention while crossing the railway tracks, to move away from the tracks when they hear the train approaching, and to ensure special care for younger children.

## CHAOS IN SLUMS DUE TO THEFT AND FIRE, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DISTRESSED



Balaknama Reporter:Kajal,  
Talkative Reporter:Kanha

Balaknama reporter Kajal visited the Bagran slum in Jaipur and spoke to the children there. Local reporter Kanha shared that around 50 percent of the residents in Bagran slum have been allocated houses in JDA (Jaipur Development Authority) flats about six months ago. However, the remaining 50 percent still live in the slum huts. Recently, there have been continuous thefts in these empty houses, with items being stolen. In addition, thieves broke into the homes of two or three families who were away attending a wedding in the city and stole

their belongings. Moreover, some huts were set on fire during the night, causing panic among the residents. The children were so terrified that they had to run with their families in the middle of the night. Some of these families have nowhere else to go but to stay in the slum, yet the ongoing incidents have instilled a deep fear in both the children and the adults. As a result, they are now looking for rental houses elsewhere. Despite these challenges, the community showed resilience by filing reports with the police. They have requested that the police arrange for night patrols to catch the thieves and prevent further disturbances.

## CHILDREN SUCCUMBING TO GAMBLING DUE TO NEGATIVE PEER INFLUENCE

Local reporter-Bisvajeet  
Balaknama reporter- Sarita

During a visit to the slums of Chakkarpur village in Gurugram, Haryana, Balaknama reporter Sarita encountered a child named Vidhyut (name changed) who hails from Bengal and resides in the slums with his family. Vidhyut's parents migrated to Gurugram from Bengal in search of work, with his mother working as a domestic help and his father as a laborer. Unfortunately, Vidhyut's father's alcohol addiction has led to frequent



fights and sometimes even violence at home, deeply affecting Vidhyut's mental well-being and academic focus. Seeking solace, he began associating with older

children in the neighborhood who introduced him to gambling. Gradually, he became addicted to gambling, neglecting his studies and spending his days playing

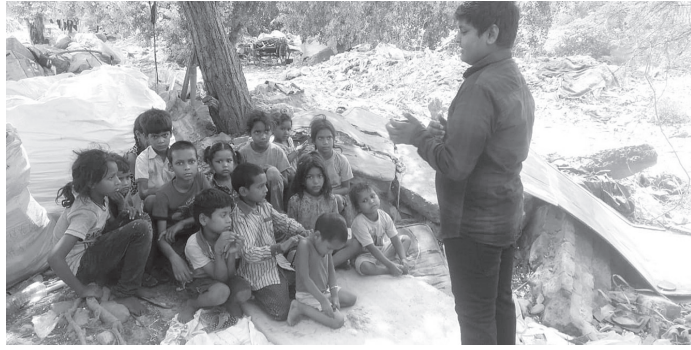
cards with older kids. His behavior changed drastically; he started lying, borrowing money from friends and family, and occasionally resorting to theft to fund his gambling and smoking habits. Despite attempts by outreach workers from Chetna organization to enroll him in their education center, he attended only for a few days before dropping out. Now, he roams the streets aimlessly, disregarding his parents' advice. Frustrated with his behavior, Vidhyut's mother sent him back to their village, but he returned to Gurugram

after a few months, as he faced similar social issues there. During a conversation with Balaknama reporter Sarita, he expressed his disinterest in education, blaming the constant conflicts at home for his detachment from studies. He confessed to being ensnared in the vicious cycle of gambling, influenced by his peers who engage in similar activities. Vidhyut's story highlights the urgent need for intervention and support to rescue vulnerable children like him from the clutches of addiction and steer them towards a brighter future."

# SWELTERING HEAT AND INTENSE SUNLIGHT TAKE A TOLL ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Balaknama Reporter-Hans Kumar

During a visit to the Shivaji Park and Keshavpuram areas in Delhi, our reporter Hans Kumar observed that many children were suffering from dehydration and weakness due to the extreme heat. Particularly in areas like Shivaji Park, where children reside in shanties, they are facing even more difficulties. The tin and tarpaulin shanties become excessively hot, making it unbearable for those inside, especially the children. To escape the intense heat, people are forced to seek shelter under trees, but even then, children are experiencing skin infections due to the hot



air. Large-scale deforestation in surrounding areas has made the situation even more alarming. The cutting down of trees has led to the loss of natural shade and cooling, making the heat even more unbearable. Trees are crucial for absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen, but

their depletion has contributed to the increase in global warming. A similar situation exists in Keshavpuram, where children often faint due to the scorching heat when returning from school. Many children have become weak, and some are experiencing nosebleeds. Cases of heatstroke, diarrhea,

and other heat-related illnesses among children have also increased. When the journalist spoke to some children to understand their experiences, eight-year-old Rohan (name changed) from Shivaji Park said, "I feel like I'm burning from within, and I can't even play outside with my friends anymore." Ten-year-old Ayesha (name changed), who goes to school near Keshavpuram, said, "I always have a headache, and I feel dizzy." "I wish it would rain already." Seven-year-old Vijay (name changed) said, "I miss going to school," as his school had closed due to the worsening heat. However, in response to the extreme heat, the Delhi government has decided to give a 50-day

holiday, resulting in the closure of all government schools. The government, local authorities, and community leaders should come together to find solutions to mitigate the impact of heat on children. This may include providing access to clean drinking water, establishing temporary cooling centers, and launching awareness campaigns to educate parents and children about the risks of heat-related illnesses and preventive measures. It is essential to work together to find solutions to this serious issue, such as launching extensive awareness campaigns to plant more trees and implementing strict measures to prevent deforestation.

## CHILDREN FACE ADMISSION ISSUES DUE TO INCORRECT PARENTAL NAMES ON AADHAAR CARDS

Local Reporter Sania and Naseer

As you all are aware, the Aadhaar card (issued by the Government of India as a unique identification document for Indian citizens) is a fundamental form of identification. Unfortunately, even this document is not readily available to children from marginalized backgrounds, and for those who do possess Aadhaar cards, discrepancies in parental names have become a hindrance to their school admissions. This issue came to light when a child in Delhi solely because the father's name on the child's



Aadhaar card differed from that on the mother's Aadhaar card, or rather, the spelling was different in English. Consequently, the child's

admission was rejected due to the discrepancies in the names across all three Aadhaar cards. Often, there are discrepancies in the

spelling of the mother's name or the child's name between their birth certificates and Aadhaar cards. Due to the parents' lack of literacy, they overlook these details, causing the children to be denied admission to school even after multiple attempts. Consequently, these children also face difficulties in opening bank accounts and accessing government services. Even those children who have been admitted previously receive warnings that their names will be struck off from the school records if their documents are not corrected. Thus, children from marginalized backgrounds become victims of punishment without any

fault of their own. They are constantly shuttling between Aadhaar centers, banks, post offices, and the Municipal Corporation office. Parents are also unaware of this issue and are constantly troubled to correct the Aadhaar cards because they lack any supporting documents and do not have enough money to carry out this task, as it often requires a considerable amount. Therefore, most children are grappling with such problems that need to be addressed by the government in order to find a solution to their plight. Therefore, we urge the government to pay attention to this issue affecting children.

## EMPOWERING STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN THROUGH EDUCATION

Local Reporter-Tanu

Every city possesses its own distinctiveness, known for various reasons. Similarly, Delhi is renowned for its diverse offerings, ranging from numerous amenities to grappling with various issues. While some areas thrive with development, others remain deprived, lacking even basic infrastructure. Amidst this spectrum lies the settlement of Lawrence Road, Keshav Puram, characterized by its lack of essential facilities

such as water, electricity, proper housing, and sanitation. However, the most pressing issue in this community is the lack of access to education. Despite the children's eagerness to learn and progress academically, they often face rejection and discrimination from schools. Denied admission either due to bureaucratic hurdles or other reasons, they find themselves trapped in a cycle of educational deprivation.



One such affected individual

is twelve-year-old Tanu (name changed), who aspires to receive an education but has been unable to do so due to lack of information and systemic barriers. Despite her efforts to enroll in schools, she has faced rejection on multiple occasions, being told that only planned admissions are accepted. Whether due to paperwork complications or arbitrary decisions,

Tanu's dreams have been repeatedly shattered. However, with the discovery of non-planned admissions, many children like Tanu have found a ray of hope. This alternative avenue has opened doors for them to access education and pursue their aspirations. The revelation of this option has provided a lifeline for children who were previously excluded from the educational system, offering them a chance to transform their lives and realize their dreams.

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.

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