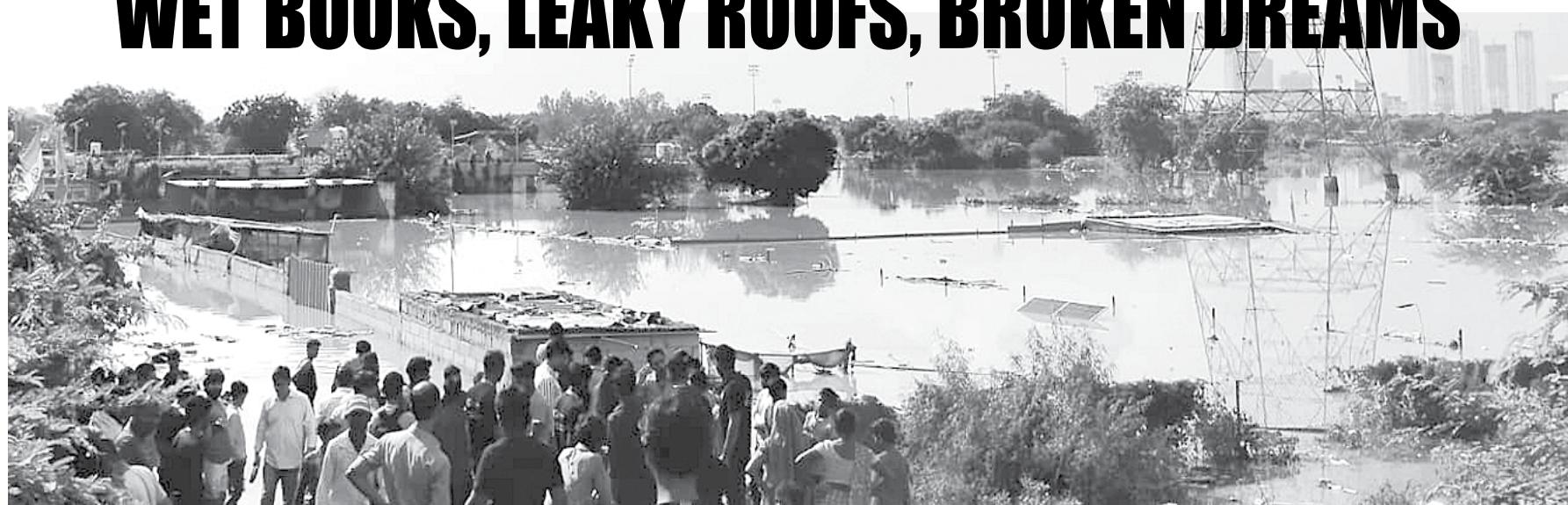


BALAKNAMA

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.

FLOODS RAVAGE STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN: WET BOOKS, LEAKY ROOFS, BROKEN DREAMS



Balaknama Reports : Damini, Kishan and Prince

Currently, heavy rains and floods are wreaking havoc across India. People in several states, including Bihar, Punjab, Delhi, and Noida, are facing severe difficulties due to flooding. Children living on the streets and working children are also confronting these harsh conditions. In this context, reporter from Balaknama visited the slums located along riverbanks where these children reside. Their aim was to understand the problems caused by the rains and floods and to learn how the children are coping with these situations.

Reena (name changed), a 13-year-old living in Sector 62, Noida, shared, "We live

in slums along the roadside. There are around 70 slums in this area. If we rent a room in a village or neighborhood, the rent ranges from ₹3,500 to ₹4,000. In contrast, the rent for a slum shack is only ₹1,000 to ₹1,500. That's why we prefer living in slums, because paying higher rent every month is impossible for us. Many times, when we don't have the money for rent, the landlords use insulting words and harass us in various ways. This is why most people consider living in slums to be a necessity."

Near Sector 14A, Noida, the Yamuna River flows, along whose banks most of the slums are situated. Currently, several homes in this area have been submerged due to flooding. When the

journalists visited, they spoke with local children and parents to gather information. Rahul (name changed), a 13-year-old, explained that there were around 100 slums in this area, which have now been submerged due to the floods. "It has been raining continuously, and news reports also show that many areas are flooded, with more expected. Seeing the strong current of the Yamuna, we feared that flooding might occur. That is why we slowly started moving our belongings, but overnight the water level rose rapidly. Although we managed to take out most of our belongings, water entered the slums, and whatever remained was washed away. Currently, all the slum residents are

surviving along the roadside under small tarpaulins. So far, no government assistance has reached us. A nearby temple has been providing biscuits and snacks when people come for prayers. Many families are using whatever little money they have to order food from hotels."

All the families in this settlement work in scrap collection, but during the floods, all their scrap was washed away. Golu (name changed), a 10-year-old living in Sector 59, described his situation: "The settlement where we live has tall electric poles along its edges. During heavy rains, there is always a fear that the wires might break or the poles might fall. During this rainfall, one pole did fall, and its wires

snapped and scattered on the road. Fortunately, no one was electrocuted at that time, and the slums were not affected by electricity. Later, the electricity department employees were called to repair the pole."

Journalists also visited several slums in West Delhi to assess whether there was any risk of flooding in those areas. Children reported, "The river is several kilometers away from our settlement, so there is no flood-like situation here. However, continuous rains have caused many other problems."

Kavita (name changed), a 16-year-old girl living in the Shivaji Park settlement, explained, "Here, all the

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GIRL REJOINS SCHOOL AND STAYS COMMITTED TO LEARNING

Balaknama Reporter: Damini
Talkative Reporter: Sakshi

In Jaipur's Jaisinghpura Khor community, a 15-year-old girl named Sonakshi (name changed) has now become a Class 9 student in a government school. Her happiness knew no bounds when she got admission. Earlier, an unwanted obstacle stood in her way—her Aadhaar card showed her age higher than her real age,

so last year she could not get admission. A ray of hope appeared when, with the support of Chetna NGO, she got admission in Open Basic Education, passed Class 8 with an "A" grade, and with that marksheet, she was able to get admission in Mahatma Gandhi Government School.

Sonakshi enthusiastically shared that around 15 children from her settlement, through Chetna's education center, passed Class 3 and

Class 5 exams under Open Basic Education, out of which 3 children got admission in government schools.

Earlier, Sonakshi used to help her family by making "chajlas" (sieves), but now she wears a school uniform, carries books, and walks with friends toward her dreams. She proved by scoring good marks that no child is left behind if given the opportunity.

This story also points to



the thousands of children like Sonakshi who are left out of education due to lack of documents or social

circumstances. With the right support at the right time, every child can return to the mainstream of education.

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SPICE FACTORY IN SHAKURPUR POSES RISKS TO CHILDREN

Bureau Report

In the Shakurpur community of West Delhi, residents are facing serious daily problems due to smoke coming from spice factories. The alleys of this area are always filled with smoke from spices, making life difficult for children, women, and the elderly. Breathing often becomes suffocating, and eyes start burning due to the smoke.

Children of the community, who attend school, have to walk through these smoke-filled streets every day. Many times, the smoke is so strong that it becomes difficult to breathe,

and they are unable to focus on studies or even play.

An 11-year-old girl, Pinki (name changed), living in this community said the smoke from the spice factories is affecting their health and daily lives. She said, "The smoke spreads in such large amounts that we cannot breathe properly, and our eyes begin to burn." Children have to go to and return from school through these smoke-filled lanes, which affects their studies. Some parents of these children themselves work in these factories, so they fear raising their voices. They worry that if they complain, their employment



opportunities might be at risk.

This problem is not limited to children alone. Adults and women also suffer daily while passing through these smoky lanes. Large fans installed in the factories throw the spice smoke outside, polluting the air of the whole neighborhood

and making it difficult to breathe continuously.

Although fewer children in this community go to school, those who do face a lot of trouble while passing through this path. Many times, the smoke gets into the eyes of children and adults,

making it hard to see and breathe.

Residents of the community often wonder why their complaints are not heard and why their rights are not protected. So far, no one has raised this issue with higher officials.

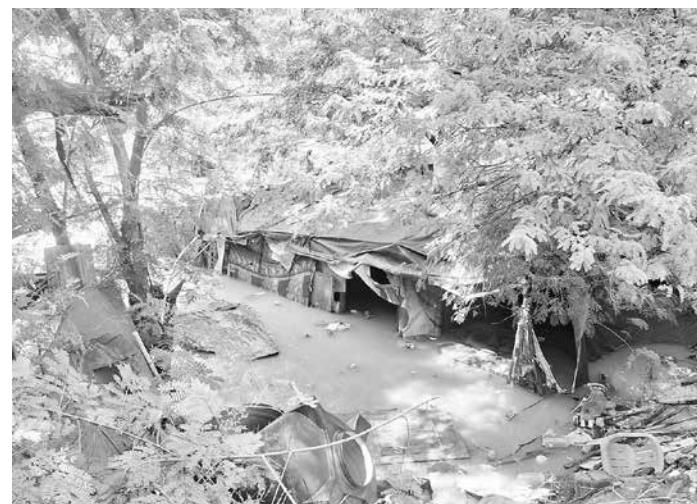
Through this report, Balaknama highlights this serious issue of the Shakurpur community and appeals to the concerned authorities to take note and necessary action so that the daily lives of children, women, and the elderly become easier, their health remains safe, and they can live their lives with dignity and rights.

FLOODS RAVAGE STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN: WET BOOKS, LEAKY ROOFS, BROKEN DREAMS

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small slums are made with tarpaulin. The tarpaulin covers the top and sides but remains open at the bottom to allow airflow. When it rains, water fills inside, and it feels as if we are battling a flood. The homes become completely wet, making it difficult to sit or sleep. Families with charpoys or beds manage to save their belongings and themselves, but those without any are forced to survive on the wet ground. The rain also soaks the stove, so we have to fill our stomachs with snacks like biscuits and salted items. Apart from the mud stove, we have no other alternative. During heavy rains, even the wood gets wet, and it cannot dry until the sun comes out. Only after the wood dries can the stove be rebuilt, fire lit, and food cooked."

Kabil (name changed), a 14-year-old living near Shakurpur, shared, "Everyone is troubled due to the rains. In some areas, flooding has occurred, though not here. But whenever it rains, we face many difficulties. The weather is unpredictable; sometimes clouds cover the sky from morning, and sometimes it suddenly changes in the afternoon. Often, when we go to school, the weather is fine, but it starts raining during the return journey. When it rains heavily, children search for safe places. Sometimes they find one, but often they get wet. Their notebooks, books, school uniforms, and shoes also get wet. At home, they try to dry their notebooks and books. Some books survive, but the ones that get soaked badly tear. Then children repair them with Fevicol and



thread so they last longer. If the uniform gets wet, children often skip school the next day."

A 9-year-old girl living in another West Delhi settlement described, "Our house is built with bricks on all sides and has a cement sheet on top. The narrow lanes near our house have small drains. During rainfall, water accumulates in the lanes, and the drains overflow into our homes. This causes a lot of difficulties, and until the rain stops, it is very hard to remove the water. The water brings dirt, insects, and even glass shards, which can injure hands or body during cleaning. After the rain stops, we remove the water through grates and manually throw out large debris and dirt."

During the ongoing heavy rains in Jaipur, street and working children are facing numerous challenges. When Balknana journalists visited various makeshift settlements and spoke with the children, the children shared that at the onset of rain, they first feel joy. They bathe outside their shacks and play with paper boats. However, along with

this joy, many problems arise.

Parinita (name changed), a 12-year-old girl from Angya Bas, explained, "On rainy days, my parents cannot go out for their vending work, making it difficult to manage household expenses and earn money for food." Yug (name changed), a 12-year-old boy, said, "Heavy rains prevent children from going to school and learning centers, which affects our studies. The school is three kilometers away, and the path is damaged and full of potholes. Auto-rickshaws are unavailable, and even if one is found, the fare is too high for us. Sometimes, even the school premises get flooded."

Children also highlighted the dangers posed by electric poles and exposed wires during rains. One child recounted that a few months ago, a four-year-old girl was injured by an electric box. Although she recovered, the fear persists. The risk of electrocution from poles or fires in transformers remains constant. Occasionally, cows die from electric shocks and are left unattended, which worsens the risk of foul odor,

flies, and diseases.

Children shared that during rains, water enters their homes and shacks, roofs leak, and their belongings—books, notebooks, and clothes—get soaked. The risk of serious diseases like malaria, dengue, and chickenpox also increases. Some mischievous children go fishing in dirty drains during rains, which causes cuts and itching on their hands, though they earn some money by selling the fish.

Riyan (name changed), an 11-year-old boy, said that due to the rain, he is sometimes unable to sell toys, and even if he does, sales are poor. The children also shared their small coping strategies: some carry umbrellas, while others cover themselves with plastic sheets. Buckets and pots are placed to collect leaking water from roofs. Mud is packed outside homes and shacks, and tarpaulins are used to prevent water flow.

Palak (name changed), an 11-year-old girl, said, "Water is scarce in our settlement, so people fetch it from far away. To address this, many families place tubs and buckets outside their homes to collect rainwater for later use."

When Balknana reporters visited the Sadar Bazaar community in Lucknow and asked children about the problems they face during the rainy season and its impact on their lives, 12-year-old Anjali (name changed) shared, "Water accumulates in the settlement during rains, and a large nearby drain overflows into the settlement. This dirty, foul-smelling water makes it difficult to breathe. Water fills up to our knees inside homes,

soaking food supplies and important documents."

10-year-old Lata (name changed) added, "Due to waterlogging, we cannot go to school, as the water reaches our waist and soaks our uniforms. The foul, stagnant water also makes us sick. There is no safe pathway; everyone has to walk through the water. Even when complaints are made to the municipal office, no action is taken."

The reporters also visited the Suggamau community, located on a slope along the road. Children explained that rainwater and water flowing from the road accumulate throughout the settlement. The unpaved roads turn muddy, making movement very difficult. 12-year-old Sania (name changed) said, "Every lane gets filled with water, turning the mud into a knee-high mess. If the water remains stagnant for days, the smell intensifies, and mosquito infestations increase, spreading diseases like dengue and malaria. We have approached the local councilor several times, but no action has been taken. Out of necessity, we have to walk through mud and dirty water."

Due to heavy rains, water also leaks into the shacks, soaking ration and clothes. When water enters the shacks, children have to stay awake all night, and many fall ill. The children shared that while rains bring play and fun, they also pose serious challenges to their studies, livelihood, health, and safety. Despite this, they manage the situation through small coping strategies, which has now become a part of their daily routine.



YOUNG HELPERS: CHILDREN ASSIST IN VILLAGE CONSTRUCTION DURING SUMMER

Talkative Reporter: Hema
Reporter: Kishan

From April to June, children had summer vacations due to heat. To understand how they spent their holidays, we spoke with them. Rupa (name changed), a 14-year-old girl from Noida Sector 126, currently studying in Class 8, shared her story. She lives with her parents in a rented house in Noida. She was happy when vacations began and thought she would enjoy them. But her father sent her to their village, where a house was under construction, to help with the work.

She took her school books

with her, but in the village, she spent her entire day helping in the construction—taking care of laborers, bringing water, making tea, fetching items from shops if needed. Dust, cement, and gravel spread everywhere made it even tougher. This work continued for about 25 days.

She said the entire day passed quickly due to work, but she also managed to complete her schoolwork at night. She didn't get time to play, which made her sad, but she was happy that the house construction was completed successfully and that her contribution was valuable to her family.



CHILDREN LABOR THROUGH RAINY STREETS, PULLING HEAVY CARTS

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak
Talkative Reporter: Kalu

In Jaipur's Jamdoli settlement, amidst dark clouds and water-filled lanes, a Balaknama reporter saw a 13-year-old boy and his 9-year-old sister pulling a cart while drenched in the rain. When the reporter spoke to them, it was revealed that their names were Golu and Kuttii (both names changed).

Golu said he lives near Agra Road Pulia on the roadside with his parents and sister. His father drinks alcohol and his mother is ill, so the responsibility of the household has fallen on the children. Both siblings try to run the household by collecting scrap. Their mother gives them the

cart every day and sends them to collect scrap from different places, while she herself stays nearby and does the same. But since she is unwell, she cannot work much.

When the reporter asked about the difficulties of working in the rain, Golu said:

"We face a lot of problems. The cart often gets stuck in water-filled pits, sometimes we fear falling, but what can we do, we have to keep going."

Golu also said they are from another state and come to Jaipur every year for a few months. He has never been to school. Perhaps his path to school is even more difficult than the waterlogged streets he pulls his cart through every day.

DREAMS REALIZED: STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN ENROLL IN SCHOOL

Bureau Report

At the alternative education center in JDA Bapu Basti, Vidyadhar Nagar, Jaipur, five children went to school for the first time. All five children work—some make shoelaces at home, some collect scrap—and none have Aadhaar cards. Due to lack of documents and low academic level, it was not possible for them to sit in school.

Although their documents still could not be made, the school spoke to them, recognized their abilities and leadership qualities, and allowed them to sit in classes and study. This transformation became possible after the children got alternative education and attended life-skills workshops, where they learned about personal hygiene, laws, and child rights.



For the first time, they were able to experience school routine and happiness. They now prepare themselves early in the morning to go to school.

11-year-old Anandi says: "I drop my sister at the Anganwadi, then sit in Class 4 and study. I already knew how to read Hindi, so I got a chance to sit in Class 4."

Similarly, 9-year-old Kartik

(name changed), who collects scrap, says: "Madam makes us recite ABCD there, and we also get food." The children don't know how long they will be allowed to sit in school without names, but they hope their documents will be arranged soon. For now, they are extremely happy and want to take handmade crafts to their Principal as a thank-you gift.

INNOCENT GIRL ENDURES HEAT WHILE SELLING LASSI



Balaknama Reporter: Damini
Talkative Reporter: Sakshi

While passing through Khora settlement of Jaipur, Balaknama reporter Damini saw a 10-year-old girl, Suhani

(name changed), selling lassi with buttermilk and sugar in her tiny hands. Children of her age should be playing or studying, but here she was forced into work. This sight reflects society's neglect of

child rights and administrative indifference. When asked, Suhani said she brings buttermilk and sugar from a shop, prepares lassi, and sells it. She earns ₹60-70 a day by selling each glass for ₹10. When the reporter asked why she doesn't go to school, Suhani replied that she doesn't have an Aadhaar card, and she also takes care of her younger siblings while her parents go to collect scrap. Due to household responsibilities, she neither has time to study nor to play.

Her life has no school bell, no teacher's guidance—an alarming signal that girls are still being deprived of education and safety, and are being pushed into labor.

YOUTH LEADERS OF "BADTE KADAM" CONGRATULATE COUNCILOR AND PROMOTE CLEANLINESS

Reporter: Deepak
Talkative Reporter: Sandeep

Children leaders of Prem Nagar, a slum in Jaipur, set an inspiring example of leadership and active citizenship. On the birthday of their local councilor, Mrs. Vimla Ji, the children placed a handmade garland around her neck, wishing her good health and a long life.

At the same time, they also highlighted a serious issue in their settlement. Due to recent rains, waterlogging had filled the slum's lanes, creating pits and breeding mosquitoes. This increased the risk of diseases like dengue and malaria. Considering this, the children handed a collective letter to



the councilor, demanding mosquito-spraying and pest control in the slum.

Additionally, the children also informed her about the long-standing excavation work on the road leading to the slum, which had been causing accidents.

This initiative shows that

with the right guidance and support, children can not only become aware of their rights but also raise their voices for solving community problems. This step truly reflects their leadership skills and sends a positive message to local authorities that children can be genuine partners in bringing change.

THE HIDDEN DANGER LOOMING OVER SLUM CHILDREN

Talkative Reporter: Bhavna
Reporter: Kishan

Whenever someone wants to do good, they often distribute food or clothes to needy children and the elderly. But sometimes, these distributed things can bring danger instead of help. Something like this happened in our slum too.

We live in a slum in Noida where there are more than a hundred huts. Nearby are large buildings, and some residents are kind-hearted. They often come to the slum with things to give. Children, being small and innocent, don't know right from wrong, so they happily accept whatever is offered.

But two days ago, an incident shook us. A lady from one of the buildings performed some black magic ritual to rid herself of problems, and then sent the ritual's items to our slum through her driver/guard. When the guard uncle arrived, he carried a bag. Seeing it, children thought it contained food. He handed it to an 11-year-old girl. She was delighted. But a man in the slum noticed and opened the bag. Inside, there were five lemons smeared with red color, with needles pierced through them, along with blue rice, lentils, red chilies, and ₹11 cash.

Immediately, he understood it was some occult

ritual. Panic spread. The slum dwellers questioned the guard and even called the lady. But on the phone, she said she didn't have time to talk to "small people" and hung up. Hearing this, people grew angrier and thought of calling the police. Then the guard fell at their feet and begged forgiveness, saying he didn't know what was inside the bag. He said his madam had just told him to deliver it.

People scolded him and then let him go. The 11-year-old girl, however, was very scared later. She said, "If I had taken that bag home and used the lemons or rice, maybe some disaster would have fallen upon my family." Just the thought made her tremble.



Children are innocent; they don't know what's safe or unsafe.

This incident gave us all a big lesson — never to accept anything without checking carefully, no matter how

sweetly it is offered. Truly, as the saying goes: "Those who have no one, have God." Timely, God saved us from this trouble, otherwise who knows what could have happened.

FRIENDSHIP IN ACTION: YOUNG FRIENDS PREVENT CHILD MARRIAGE



Reporter: Nitin

In a society bound by poverty and traditions, when a child raises a voice, it is not only for themselves but becomes hope for the community too. Such is the example of Priya and Shivani (names changed), who study in a learning center run by Chetna organization.

Living in the slums of Kamla Nehru Camp, these two girls came to know that their friend Sangeeta (name changed) was going to be married off at the age of just 13 in her village. They took it seriously and decided to save her. Both girls went to the village with their grandmother, where the marriage was about to take place. There, they spoke to Sangeeta's parents, explained the harms of child marriage, and told them about its legal consequences. Shivani said, "We were very scared, but it was important to save our friend. When we talk about child marriage, people think it is their personal matter. But it is a crime." Priya added, "At

first, villagers didn't listen to us. But when we explained that marrying a girl even a year before the legal age is against the law, some people started to understand. Then the family was convinced, and the marriage was stopped."

Now, Sangeeta is back in school and very happy. During the conversation, Priya and Shivani shared that they had learned about the legalities and harms of child marriage through life skill sessions conducted by Chetna NGO. This knowledge gave them courage, and they were able to save their friend's life.

Both expressed deep gratitude to Chetna, saying that because of the education and awareness provided by the organization, they could prevent an innocent life from being ruined.

WHY DOES FEAR LINGER?

Talkative Reporter: Shivangi
Reporter: Kishan

Fear comes in many forms — sometimes from parents, sometimes from teachers, and sometimes from ghost stories heard here and there. This topic came up when Balaknama reporters were talking with children in a slum.

At that time, 12-year-old Pinky (name changed) shared that she feels very scared in the room where she lives. When asked why, she explained: "We live in a rented house in Noida. My mother works as a cleaner in buildings and my father works as a construction laborer. The house has four rooms but it is poorly built. On top, there are cement sheets, and the bricks have only a thin plaster. Still, we have to pay ₹2,500 per month rent." She further said that earlier, another family



lived in this same room. In that family, there was an old grandmother who was often unwell, and one day, she died in this very room. Pinky said, "Now when we stay here alone, I keep remembering all that, and the fear troubles me. It feels like someone is sitting behind us, wanting to talk. Sometimes things fall down on their own. When the fear gets too much, I immediately leave my work and run to a

friend's room. Sitting there gives me some relief. Until my parents return from work, I don't go back to my room."

Because of this, Pinky finishes household chores quickly in the morning and then spends the whole day outside. The family wants to shift to another house, but rents in the village area are too expensive. So, out of compulsion, they continue living in this same room.

VILLAGE CHILDREN EXPLOITED AS LABORERS BY CONTRACTORS IN DELHI-NOIDA

Talkative Reporter: Ankit
Reporter: Kishan

Whenever you eat snacks at roadside stalls, you often see children working there. But do you know if they are working by choice or brought forcibly?

To understand, reporters spoke to a 15-year-old boy, Sonu (name changed), living in Noida. He said they live in a rented building with 10 rooms and an open ground where carts and vehicles are parked. Some children there are from Bihar and Bengal, brought by contractors. Their ages range from 7 to 17. Children aged 7-13 wash



utensils, serve food, clean, etc. They are given ₹6,000

provide two meals a day. Children aged 15-17 make naan/roti and get ₹20,000 monthly.

Parents only call them to ask for money. Those staying with contractors are given ₹20 daily, which they spend on cigarettes, gutkha, tobacco. Contractors don't stop them; instead, they encourage and even provide money for intoxication.

Sometimes children get so intoxicated they forget food. Parents know, but they don't care because they themselves are addicted. For them, money is more important than their children's well-being.

BOY FALLS INTO WATER TANK IN WAZIRABAD; FRIEND HEROICALLY RESCUES HIM

Balaknama Reporter – Saberul
Talkative Reporter – Jatin

In the narrow lanes of Wazirabad, panic spread when 10-year-old Nitin (name changed) fell into an open water tank while fetching water. Fortunately, his friend was nearby, who immediately showed presence of mind and courage to save his life.

The incident happened in the morning when Nitin

went, as usual, to collect water from the tank for bathing. While filling, his foot slipped, and he fell straight into the tank. The tank was in a dirty and slippery area, surrounded by garbage heaps and sewage water.

His friend, who was passing by, was startled but quickly grabbed a nearby pipe, extended it to Nitin, and asked him to hold it. Nitin showed courage, held the pipe firmly, and his friend

pulled him out safely. After the incident, local residents expressed deep anger. One resident said, "We live in constant fear. This tank has become life-threatening for children. Neither is the street cleaned nor are the drains maintained. Dirt and foul smell spread everywhere."

The sanitation system in the area has completely collapsed. During rains, waterlogging and stench make life unbearable. For



children, passing by open tanks and broken roads is always risky. When Jatin (the rescuer) was asked if he wasn't afraid, he innocently replied, "Of course I'm afraid, but

we have no choice. We fetch water from here every day."

This time, Jatin's life was saved, but if timely action is not taken, the negligence may cost another innocent life.

FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS FORCE STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN INTO LABOR



Balaknama Reporter – Saberul
Talkative Reporter – Azharul

In a deserted ground of Wazirabad, a few trampolines stand under the scorching afternoon sun. While children play on them, a boy stands nearby—not to play, but to watch over them.

When the reporter spoke with the boy, Ali (name changed), about 12 years old, he said, "I like going to school, but home conditions force me to work. My father is ill, and my mother works as a cleaner. The situation at home is such that they cannot manage everything alone. That's why I have to work too." He continued, "I love studying,

I want to become something, but we cannot afford books. I don't like looking after the trampolines, but whatever I earn brings food for the family." This isn't just Ali's story—it reflects the reality of hundreds of children struggling in poverty and harsh circumstances. Poverty is the biggest reason behind child labor. When families

worry about food, education and childhood are left behind.

In many urban areas, especially among migrant families without ration cards or direct access to government schemes, children are forced to work. For them, education, play, and childhood remain just a dream. Ali shared, "When I see my friends wearing uniforms and going to school, I also feel like studying, but what can I do? Children like us lose our childhood to family responsibilities." The laughter of children playing on trampolines and the silent compulsion of a child working nearby is not just a scene—it is a social reality. Even today, society normalizes child labor. But child labor is not normal—it is the killing of childhood. We must understand that every child has the right to go to school, play, dream, and live life fully.

CHILDHOOD AT RISK: INNOCENTS CONFRONTING HAZARDS

Talkative Reporter: Ahsan

Shakur Basti in West Delhi is a large area where people have built their own slums. There are pits everywhere in the area, which fill up with water when it rains. Today, we bring you the story of two friends living here who saved their lives with their presence of mind.



One day, it was raining heavily. After the rain stopped, 12-year-old Jeet (name changed) went out to play. He then saw his friend, 14-year-old Varun (name changed), coming on a bicycle. Varun said he had to go to Srinagar to buy some items. Jeet listened and sat behind him on the bicycle. After riding some distance, Varun stopped and told Jeet that he needed to use the bathroom. He parked the cycle there. Jeet stood nearby waiting.

Where Jeet stood, a blanket was hanging on a wall. The blanket was rotten and wet. Mischiefously, Jeet tried to pull it, but he didn't know that along with the blanket a wire was attached to the wall—and the wire carried electric current. As soon as Jeet pulled, he was badly shocked and started shaking violently. At that moment, Varun returned and saw his friend's condition. Quickly understanding the

situation, he grabbed a dry stick from a nearby house and called for help from others. With the stick and the people's help, they managed to separate the blanket and wire and pulled Jeet to safety.

Jeet was so terrified that he didn't speak for a while. Later, when he calmed down, he narrated the whole incident. But the story doesn't end here—after this, both friends learned that this wasn't the first time. Four other people had also been shocked here earlier and narrowly escaped. That wire had been lying like that for many days and the blanket remained there too. Despite so many incidents, nobody paid attention.

The very next day, Jeet and Varun returned to the spot and, after speaking to the nearby people, got the wire fixed so that no one else would get electrocuted in the future.

BULLYING FORCES CHILD TO LEAVE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL

Bureau Report

If someone asks you whether you'd like to stay where you don't feel safe, your answer will surely be "No." The same happened with 14-year-old Paresh (name changed), living in a Noida settlement.

He shared his story with his family and made his own decision. Earlier, he was studying in Class 6 at a government school and attended daily. But the environment was so bad

that he had to withdraw his admission. Other children in the school were very naughty and fought over small things. One day, while playing in the ground, an older child pushed and beat him. Paresh and his friend apologized, but the boy remained angry. They reported the incident to their class teacher, saying they even felt scared outside school. The teacher said, "Don't worry, they won't do anything." But after school, when Paresh came out, the same boys



were waiting. Two held his hands while the one who had pushed him earlier beat him and stabbed him on the head with a pen, causing bleeding. He went home crying, and his family immediately took him to a doctor. The next day, he reported everything again to the teacher, but no action was taken.

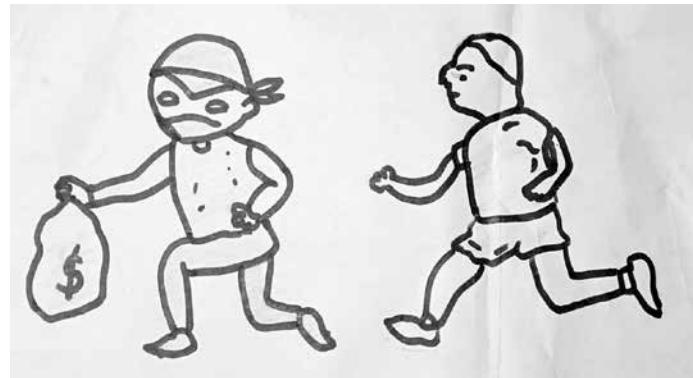
Due to this, his father withdrew him from the government school and got him admitted to a private school.

RISING THEFTS CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR FOR CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporter – Saberul
Talkative Reporter – Sumit

A mobile theft incident in Sector 52, Wazirabad, has created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity in the area, especially among children.

The incident occurred around 10 am on Monday when most people had left for work. A man was resting at home, with the door open as usual. Suddenly, a thief entered and quickly grabbed a mobile phone before fleeing.



The man woke up just in time to see the thief running away with the phone. He shouted and chased after

him but the thief had already escaped. The victim said, "My mobile contained many important details. This incident was very shocking."

At that time, many children were playing outside and saw the thief running. They got frightened. Local parents have since stopped their children from playing outside.

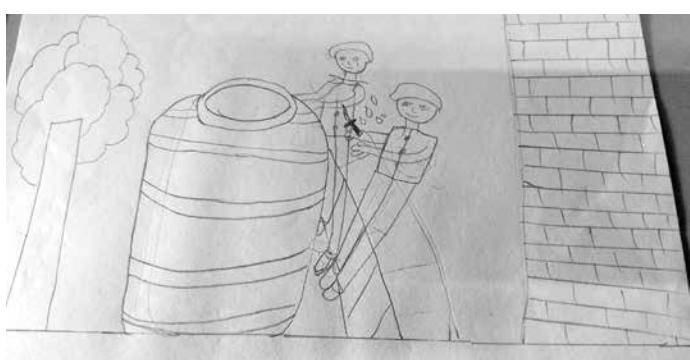
One parent said, "If such incidents happen in broad daylight, imagine what could happen at night. It feels like

we're not safe even in our own homes."

Residents believe the police are not effective. They say the police don't act on time, which emboldens criminals. Notably, this isn't the first theft in Wazirabad. In recent months, several such cases have occurred, but lack of proper action has left people dissatisfied and scared.

The biggest impact has been on children, who are now filled with insecurity.

PROTECTOR IN PERIL: SCHOOL GUARD FAILS TO STAY SAFE



Balaknama Reporter – Ritika
Talkative Reporter – Khushi

This news is from Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Inderlok, West Delhi. Children attending school from the Chetna center shared that even the guard appointed to ensure the safety of students was not safe.

On 1 July 2025, the school guard was murdered. Neighbors and school-going children said that the guard uncle used to watch over our

school and take care of all the rooms and the office. But one night, while on duty with his family, tragedy struck.

The guard's shift was from 4 pm to 10 pm. That evening, he sent his family home, saying, "You go home, I'll just check the water tanks of the school and come."

As he went to check, 2-4 boys jumped the gate and entered the school. Their intention was to steal from the office, but they failed. When the guard tried to stop

them, they attacked him with knives and killed him.

The guard sacrificed his life while protecting the school, ensuring nothing was stolen. When he didn't return home, his son went to the school and witnessed the horrifying sight of his father's murder. He screamed loudly, which gathered the family and neighbors. They immediately informed the police and the school principal.

That night, the police, the guard's family, and the school principal all reached the school. The police filed a case and began the investigation.

After this incident, fear has gripped the hearts of girls coming from Zakhira to attend school. Children are now hesitant to go to school, and parents are scared to send them. The children no longer feel safe.

RISING THEFT IN SETTLEMENTS THREATENS CHILDREN'S SAFETY

Balaknama Reporter – Ritika
Talkative Reporter – Archana

In the Nathupur slum of Gurugram, frequent thefts are now affecting the lives of small children.

When Balaknama reporter Ritika visited the settlement, she spoke with many children living there. One child shared about a recent theft at the home of 9-year-old Rachna (name changed), who studies at Chetna's education center.

Rachna, originally from Bihar, currently lives with her family in the Nathupur slum. With the child's help, the reporter reached her home and spoke with her.

Rachna said, "This happened on the night of July 1. While we were sleeping, someone broke into our house and stole money and important belongings. In the morning, when my mother woke up, she found the cupboard open and



everything scattered. The money was gone. Since that day, everyone at home is very worried. My mother was crying, because due to the theft, we couldn't even buy vegetables." This incident has filled children like Rachna with a sense of insecurity. While they are trying to move forward towards education, such events are obstructing their mental and emotional development.



RAINWATER EXPOSURE MAKING STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN SICK

Balaknama Reporter – Ritika
Talkative Reporter – Durgesh

During her visit to the Chakkarpur slum in Gurugram, Balaknama reporter Ritika met a large number of children. During

conversations, 10-year-old Dharmesh (name changed) said, "Rainy season becomes playtime for us, but it also harms us." He added that as soon as it rains, children begin playing and bathing in

cont. on pg. 7

PARENTS UNLOCK EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN THROUGH LEGAL AWARENESS AND DETERMINATION

Balaknama Reporter – Damini
Talkative Reporter – Sakshi

In the Jai Singhpura Khor slum of Jaipur, parents set an inspiring example by ensuring school admissions for their children under the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

A 14-year-old boy, Anil (name changed), shared that the school teachers had refused admission due to the children being "overage." But his mother, Anita (name changed), did not give up. She herself went to the Government Senior Secondary School, Naurkha, and firmly told the teachers: "You must admit my children. Education is everyone's right."

When the teachers argued that the children were too old, Anita replied: "If I wanted to study, you could teach me too. What fault is it of my children? You have admitted other children from the settlement,



then why not mine?"

She went further and demanded that the teachers give her a written explanation for denying admission. When they accused her of being sent by a lady from Chetna organization, Anita strongly responded: "That madam is not the mother of my children. I am. I have brought them myself. If you refuse admission, I will call the media."

Her initiative proved that

when parents are aware of their rights, they can change their children's future. This incident not only highlights the importance of the Right to Education Act but also shows how courage and correct information can challenge the system. Finally, the teachers admitted the boy into Class 6, and his two younger brothers and one younger sister also got admission according to their ages.

CHILD EXPRESSED JOY AFTER ATTENDING TUITION

Talkative Reporter – Ravi
Reporter – Kishan

Education is very important in life—whether through school or tuition from people around us. Many children, for various reasons, cannot attend school but continue learning through tuition.

When reporters visited some settlements in Noida, they met children playing there. During conversations, 12-year-old Lekhu (name changed) was asked why he didn't go to school.

He said they are from Bihar and had moved to Noida only two months ago. Earlier, he stayed in the village while his parents worked here. But because the environment in the village was not good, his father brought him here.

Currently, he is not enrolled in school as they don't yet have information about nearby schools. Instead, his father enrolled him in a local tuition class. He attends from 8–10 am in the morning and 6–8 pm in the evening. Lekhu happily said he was

glad he didn't have to sit idle after coming from the village and got the chance to study through tuition. He said his tuition teacher (whom he calls Bhaiya) is very good and understanding. Bhaiya is physically disabled, so he cannot do other work, but he teaches children in the area.

Lekhu added that Bhaiya doesn't trouble them much about fees. Normally, they pay ₹200 a month, but if his father doesn't have money, Bhaiya kindly agrees and says, "Pay whenever you can, but focus



on your studies."

Apart from studies, Bhaiya also teaches them many important things about the outside world, which are very useful for life. Lekhu's father

says, "Studying at tuition for a few months will help him focus on studies instead of roaming around aimlessly. Later, we'll get him enrolled in a school."

HANGING ELECTRIC CABLES IN JAIPUR SLUMS PUT CHILDREN'S LIVES AT RISK



Balaknama Reporter – Deepak
Talkative Reporter – Gautam

While visiting the Mansarovar slum in Jaipur, Balaknama Reporter Deepak discovered unsafe electricity arrangements that had already caused a serious accident.

Naveen (name changed), a 10-year-old boy living with his parents and younger brother, suffered an electric shock. As there is no government electricity facility, residents pay nearby house owners to take illegal connections.

One day, after a water

tanker came, dampness and filth caused faults in the wires. Some children mistook a faulty cable for scrap and tried to collect it to sell. Naveen was among them. The moment he touched the cable, electricity surged through his body, and he fell unconscious.

Residents quickly used wooden sticks to separate him from the cable and rushed him to the hospital. Timely treatment saved his life, but his hands were badly burnt, and he is still under medication.

This incident has left the entire settlement in fear. Talkative Reporter Gautam said: "This slum has no electricity, water, or toilets. Adults go to work, leaving children alone all day. This accident opened people's eyes, but the danger remains."

The situation urgently demands government attention to prevent such tragedies in the future.



CHILDREN NEGLECTING PARENTAL GUIDANCE AND ENGAGING IN RISKY ACTIVITIES

Bureau Report

In some Noida slums, children are so troubled that they naively engage in harmful activities.

A 15-year-old girl, Mohini (name changed), told reporters with a heavy voice: "In our slum, drug peddling happens. Outsiders live near the slum for months and years doing this work. They bribe the police monthly, so no one stops them. Residents can't say anything either. The real problem is they involve children."

Children, aged 5–17, are used to sell drugs or do chores like cleaning and fetching items. Some are even made to consume drugs. Many parents are unaware because they return home

late from work, and by then the children are back.

Some parents do know and scold or beat their children, but the children don't listen. Parents, feeling helpless, say: "If our children don't listen to us, they won't listen to anyone. Let them do what they want." Thus, exploiters take advantage and force children into drug selling and consumption. Reporters explained to children that this work is very wrong and must never be done. Children replied: "We are smart. Our parents advise us, but we don't do such things."

Reporters also informed them about Child Helpline 1098, urging them to call if anyone tries to exploit them or other children.

HEAVY RAINS IN JAIPUR CAUSE HARDSHIPS FOR STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN



Balaknama Reporter – Deepak
Talkative Reporter – Naman

Balaknama reporters visited several Jaipur slums and asked children about their struggles during heavy rains.

An 11-year-old boy, Aman (name changed), said: "This time, continuous rain flooded our huts. Children and families suffered a lot. Household items were ruined, dirt spread

everywhere, and many children developed boils on their hands and feet, which kept them from going to school."

A 10-year-old girl, Alia (name changed), added: "Rain is necessary, but because of it we can't even sleep outside, and at night electricity goes away too. Our parents cannot go to work, which creates financial problems. In the mornings, when it rains, children miss school, and interest in education is decreasing."

A 12-year-old boy, Aryaman (name changed), shared: "Since there are no toilets in the settlement, during rains we cannot go outside. None of the houses here are permanent; everyone lives in huts. We face such problems every day."

RAINWATER EXPOSURE MAKING STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN SICK

from page no. 6

the rain. Sometimes, school gets canceled due to rain, and children miss classes, resulting in cough, fever, and cold. He also shared that some children get so drenched they even lie in dirty rainwater. Many sewer lids remain open, spilling dirty water, but children still play in it. Dharmesh

said that sometimes at night when it rains, children rush outside to bathe, worsening their health. Parents try to stop them, but children don't listen and continue getting drenched. Many times, school uniforms, clothes, and shoes get wet, preventing children from attending school. Teachers scold them for missing classes.

GARBAGE OVERSHADOWS CHILDREN'S SMILES AND STEALS THEIR CHILDHOOD



Talkative Reporter – Saleem
Reporter – Kishan

On the streets, many children can be seen carrying sacks of scrap on their backs or pulling carts. Some collect scrap in markets and neighborhoods. But does this work even sustain their families?

Reporters visited slums in Noida, where most children collect and sort scrap. A 13-year-old boy, John (name changed), said:

"These days, scrap is very hard to find. Many of us only collect in our settlement, but we also go to markets and neighbourhoods. Because scrap is less now, it is difficult to run the household. That's why children are finding a new way."

He explained: "Around Noida, there are big buildings. People there throw out household garbage, and we collect it. But before entering, we must pay the building

supervisor—about ₹5,000 or more. Whoever pays more gets to collect from more towers. Usually, children aged 15–17 go for this work. We younger ones don't, because we are small in age and height. So we stay home and help sort the scraps our older brothers or fathers bring back."

He added, "The benefit of collecting from companies and buildings is that we get more scrap, and it helps us run our home."

HEAVY RAINS IN GURUGRAM DISRUPT DAILY LIFE, CHILDREN WORST AFFECTED



Reporter: Rajkishor
Talkative reporter: Rattika

Continuous heavy rainfall in Gurugram has worsened the problems of people living in slum areas. Reporters Rajkishor and Rattika from the Balaknama team visited several settlements in the city, where the situation looked very bad. Due to the heavy rain, water has entered

many homes. Some houses have leaking roofs, which has caused clothes, bedding, children's notebooks, books, and shoes to get wet. As a result, children's education has been disrupted. Food stock in many houses has spoiled, creating problems for families in getting food and water. Daily wage laborers have also lost work opportunities due to the rains,

worsening their condition. The situation is particularly difficult for children—both those who go to school and those who work. They are suffering from the humidity and heat. Power cuts during the rainy days make things worse, and the water-logged streets pose constant risks of accidents. Many children are unable to attend school, as their parents ask them to help manage the household. The children said they haven't been able to play outside for many days because water and mud are everywhere. In some areas, even sewage water has overflowed. The children expressed their concern, saying, "How do we deal with this problem? We haven't been able to play for several days. Everywhere there is water and mud. Now we will have to see when this rain finally gives us relief."

LIVING EACH DAY IN THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS



Talkative Reporter – Rohini
Reporter – Kishan

In a Noida village, reporters met 15-year-old Hina (name changed). She said: "Right now we live in a rented room

here. Our family has four members—mother, father, one brother, and one sister. Our parents live in the village and do farming. Since no one else can look after the fields, they must stay there."

She continued: "My elder brother and I live in Noida and work as cleaners in tall buildings. Together, we earn about ₹10,000 a month, which we send home for expenses. While working, I don't feel too sad, but at night when I sit alone, I miss my parents and start crying. It's been over a year since I saw them. When I miss them too much, I video call them."

"We cannot go to the village often because work doesn't allow many days off. If we leave, we lose the job. Sometimes, when someone visits from the village, we call our parents here. Seeing their faces after months gives us immense happiness."

Finally, she said: "I wonder how I will live when my parents are gone. I love them deeply."

UNSAFE OPEN PITS ENDANGER CHILDREN AND DISRUPT ADULT LIFE

Reporter: Rattika
Talkative reporter: Ankush

In Gurugram's Chakkarpur community, open pits during the rainy season have caused a great increase in difficulties for the residents. When Balaknama reporter Rattika visited the area, she spoke to children and families. During this, a 12-year-old boy named Ankush said, "During the rainy season, pits get filled with water. Because of the water, the pits are not visible, and people accidentally fall into them." Ankush further shared that on the evening of August



4, around 7:30 pm, during heavy rain, many people fell into such water-filled pits. He added, "My mother also fell

into a pit that day. It was very difficult to get her out, and now she has fallen ill. For the past two to three days, she has

not even been able to go to work." Ankush also shared that not only his mother, but 3–4 children also fell into pits and became sick afterwards. When children were asked why these pits exist, they said sewage water frequently overflows here. Road construction is ongoing, but the continued rain has worsened the situation even more. Open pits during the rainy season have become a serious safety risk for both children and adults. The local people said that if these pits are not filled soon and the roads repaired, the number of accidents may increase further.

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

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

Balaknama thanks HCL Foundation and Azim Premji Foundation 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.