

# 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.

## SHADOWS OF STRUGGLE CHILDREN RISE STRONG ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

Balaknama Reporters- Kajal Anjali Jyoti Damini Kishan

Across the country, the annual examination season has created an atmosphere filled with focus, pressure, and hope in schools. As exams begin, not only do children experience a shift in their daily routines, but parents also carry growing concerns about their performance and future. Outside examination centres, one can easily notice the rush and energy, where children arrive carrying a mix of confidence and nervousness. For many children, this phase is a significant milestone in life, as exam results often play an important role in shaping their future direction. During this period, children's daily lives undergo noticeable changes. Studying late into the night, waking up early for revision, and managing time carefully becomes part of their routine. While this process can feel demanding even under normal circumstances, it becomes far more challenging for street-connected and working children. These children not only focus on their studies but also carry responsibilities related to work and family, which often affects their preparation and



adds additional pressure to their lives. Through this edition of Balaknama, we bring forward the stories of such determined children who, despite facing difficult circumstances, continue to move ahead with courage and commitment. From cities like Noida, Delhi, Lucknow, Gurugram, and Jaipur, these children are proving that with determination, hard work, and the right support, no challenge is too big to overcome. Their journeys reflect strength, resilience, and an unwavering belief in their dreams. This year marks a significant achievement for children associated with Chetna's alternative education centres. For the first time, several children

have appeared for Class 5 and Class 10 board examinations. This milestone is not just an academic success, but a powerful symbol of their growing confidence and their steps towards building an identity and a better future. It reflects a new beginning in their lives, where education is becoming a pathway to change. Balaknama reporter Damini from Jaipur interacted with children to understand their experiences more closely. Sixteen-year-old Golu (name changed), from Jaisinghpura, shared that due to the absence of required documents, he could not get admission in a government school. Despite this setback, he did not give up and continued his

studies through Open Basic Education, eventually passing Class 8. Now, as he appears for board exams, he considers this moment extremely important in his life. He shared that initially he felt nervous and unsure, but now he feels proud and confident that he is moving forward just like other children and taking meaningful steps towards his dreams. Similarly, 12-year-old Jaya (name changed) shared her experience, explaining that earlier she could not give enough time to studies because of work responsibilities. However, after joining the education centre, her interest in learning gradually increased. During exams, she did feel nervous, but by managing her

time properly and focusing on her preparation, she was able to attempt her papers with confidence. Now she believes that her hard work will bring positive results and she is determined to continue her education further. Before the examinations, facilitators from Chetna provided children with special guidance to help them prepare better. They were taught how to fill answer sheets correctly, read questions carefully, manage time effectively, and attempt easier questions first. Along with academic preparation, children were also supported emotionally to stay calm and reduce stress. These efforts have had a visible positive impact on their confidence and approach towards exams. Another important aspect of their preparation has been peer learning. Children often sit together in groups to study, help each other understand difficult topics, and review their answers. With the guidance of teachers, they identify their mistakes and work on improving them. This supportive and collaborative environment not only strengthens their academic skills but also builds teamwork and self-confidence among them.

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## CHILDREN WORKING HARD TO CELEBRATE FESTIVALS

Talkative Reporter Aarav

The lives of street and working children are filled with many challenges. Every day, they struggle to meet their basic needs. Throughout the year, many festivals come when people celebrate with joy, wear new clothes, and spend time with their families. However, for street and working children, celebrating festivals is not so easy. They have to work very hard even to enjoy these occasions. To understand this issue, Balaknama's child reporters visited the Lajpat Nagar market in Delhi. There,

they observed that many children were engaged in different kinds of work. Some were helping carry goods, while others were seen asking people for money. During their visit, the reporters noticed two children, around 11 and 14 years old. When the children saw the reporters approaching, they became frightened and started running away quickly, as if they feared someone might harm or catch them. Later, the child reporters approached them kindly and tried to talk to them. After some time, the children felt comfortable and began to talk. An 11-year-old



boy, Rahul (name changed), shared that he lives in a slum area in Nehru Nagar and comes to Lajpat Nagar market

every day to ask for money. He said he usually arrives at the market around 10 a.m. and stays until about 4 p.m., after which he returns home with whatever money he has collected. Rahul further mentioned that the festival of Shivaratri is approaching and it is celebrated with great enthusiasm in his community. His father works as a daily wage labourer, and his mother stays at home. Due to the family's weak financial condition, it is very difficult to manage household expenses. Rahul explained that during festivals, many children around him wear

new and nice clothes and celebrate happily. However, his father cannot afford to buy new clothes for him. Because of this, Rahul and many children like him come to the Lajpat Nagar market to ask for money, so they can save enough to buy new clothes for Shivaratri. Rahul said, "We also wish to wear good clothes and celebrate Shivaratri like other children." This conversation makes us reflect that while many children celebrate festivals with joy and excitement, there are others who have to struggle even for these small moments of happiness.

# CHILDREN LEARNED INTERNET SAFETY ON SAFER INTERNET DAY



Balaknama Reporter Damini  
Talkative Reporter Rehan

Balaknama reporters visited different communities in Jaipur to understand children's experiences on the occasion of Safer Internet Day. Street and working children shared that they celebrated this day with great enthusiasm and joy. They said that through this program, they learned in detail about the global importance of the internet, its proper use, and ways to stay safe while being

online. The main objective of the program was to make children aware of the safe use of the internet and to provide them with knowledge about protection from cybercrimes, so that they can not only keep themselves safe but also spread awareness among their families and society.

On this occasion, children presented messages about internet safety in unique and creative ways. Some children dressed up as mobile phones, while others represented the internet, WhatsApp,

Instagram, Facebook, gaming apps, the Play Store, and Google on stage. Through plays, quizzes, and engaging games, children explained the advantages and disadvantages of these digital platforms, along with ways to use them safely. During the program, children were also informed in detail about cyberbullying, fake links, online fraud, and the dangers of misuse of the internet. They were guided on why it is important to be cautious while interacting with strangers online. A 13-year-old boy, Rehan (name changed), shared, "Earlier, I used to think the internet was only for playing games, but today I understood that its misuse can cause problems. Now, if a stranger sends me a message or a suspicious link, I will not open it and will definitely inform my family." At the end of the program, children made handprint drawings and took a pledge for internet safety. They promised that they would not spend money on online games, would stay away from inappropriate photos and videos, and would use the internet for positive and educational purposes. They also said that if they come across any kind of cybercrime, they will report it immediately. This initiative not only boosted children's confidence but also inspired them to become alert and responsible citizens in the digital world.



## CHILDREN MOVING TOWARDS GAMBLING AT A YOUNG AGE

Balaknama Reporter Asif

In the slum area of Kama Nehru Camp in Delhi, some children are being drawn towards the harmful habit of gambling. This situation is concerning, as such habits at a young age can negatively impact children's future and education. When Balaknama child reporters visited the area, conversations with local residents revealed that some children in the settlement engage in gambling by placing bets with money. People shared that some children take money from home or use their pocket money to play. Often, children form groups and start gambling during their free time. During a conversation with a Balaknama reporter, a 15-year-old boy, Sunil (name changed), said, "I enjoy playing with money, so I play with my friends." He also mentioned that many times children start playing just for fun, but gradually it

turns into a habit. According to experts, developing a habit of gambling at a young age can be harmful to children's mental and social development. It can distract them from their studies and may lead them into negative peer groups. In some cases, after losing money, children may take wrong steps to get more money. In such situations, it is very important to encourage children to participate in sports, education, and creative activities. When children are engaged in positive activities, they can use their energy in a constructive way. Parents also need to pay close attention to their children's activities and guide them properly so that they can stay away from such harmful habits. It is equally important for society, parents, and concerned authorities to work together to create a safe and positive environment for children, so that their childhood can move in the right direction.

## SHADOWS OF STRUGGLE CHILDREN RISE STRONG ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

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In Gurugram, a survey revealed that 939 children are regularly attending school, out of which 472 have appeared in annual examinations this year. Additionally, one child is preparing for the Class 10 board exam. These numbers clearly indicate that awareness about education is gradually increasing, and more children are becoming part of mainstream education. Over the past few years, a positive shift has been observed in these communities, where more children are attending school regularly and taking their studies seriously. Parents' perspectives are also changing, as they now recognize the importance of education in securing a better future for their children. Despite these positive changes, several challenges still exist. Lack of a quiet study environment, limited resources, absence of proper guidance, and financial pressures continue to affect children's preparation. Many children are required

to work to support their families, making it difficult to balance both education and responsibilities. However, with the support of families, teachers, and organisations like Chetna, children are gradually overcoming these barriers. Teachers guide them academically, organisations provide additional support and encouragement, and families motivate them to keep moving forward. In different areas of Delhi, children shared that their families are now more supportive of their education than before. Parents want their children to move beyond the hardships they themselves have faced in life, and therefore try to support them in every possible way. However, some children also shared that they do not always receive the expected support in schools. During exams, when they struggle to understand certain questions and seek help, they are not always guided properly, which affects their confidence. Despite this, they continue to work hard and stay

committed to their goals. One child expressed a dream of starting his own business after completing education, so that he can provide a better life for his family. 10-year-old Naina (name changed), a Class 5 student living near Shivaji Park in West Delhi, shared that in her community many children still do not attend school. Some are engaged in work, some lack necessary documents, and others are not interested in studies. Naina shared that a few years ago she was not comfortable with the Hindi language, but through consistent effort she has improved significantly. With strong support from her family, she continues to focus on her studies. At the same time, she also helps with household chores such as washing utensils and cooking. She tries to manage her time effectively so that she can balance both responsibilities and studies. She dreams of becoming a doctor, although financial difficulties remain a major challenge in her journey. From Noida Sector

115, 15-year-old Shiv (name changed), a Class 8 student, shared that earlier he was not very serious about studies. However, as he progressed to higher classes, he began to understand the importance of education and now studies regularly. His family supports him, and his sister also helps guide him in his studies. He shared that sometimes exam questions are different from what he has studied, which makes them difficult to understand. Even then, he tries his best to answer them. He also spoke about the support he receives from Chetna, including study materials and guidance. His dream is to achieve success in life and make his parents proud. Similarly, 14-year-old Pooja (name changed), living near Sector 62 in Noida, shared her experience of preparing for Class 6 exams. She lives in a slum with her mother, who is the sole earner of the family. Along with her studies, Pooja also helps her mother with household work and at a small shop. She shared that one of

the biggest challenges during exams is electricity cuts, which disrupt her studies and sometimes force her to stay awake late at night. This increases her mental stress, but she continues to stay committed to her education. She shared that support from Chetna workers helps her prepare better. Her dream is to complete her education and help other children who are unable to study due to difficult circumstances. These experiences from different regions clearly highlight that for street and working children, examinations are not just about scoring marks. They represent courage, determination, and the hope of a better future. Despite limited resources and multiple challenges, these children continue to move forward with strong willpower. Their stories remind us that when children receive the right guidance, support, and opportunities, they can overcome any obstacle and achieve new heights of success.

# STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN APPEARED FOR BOARD EXAMS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Balaknama Reporter Damini  
Talkative Reporter Jaya

This year, street and working children associated with Chetna's alternative education centres created a new milestone by appearing for the Class 5 and Class 10 board examinations for the first time. This is not just an exam, but a significant step forward toward their dreams. In a conversation conducted by Balaknama Reporter Damini, the children's happiness and excitement were clearly visible. Their faces reflected confidence and hope. A 16-year-old boy, Golu (name changed), shared that due to the lack of documents, he could not get admission in a government school. He then completed Class 8 through

Open Basic Education. Golu said, "We feel very happy that we are now appearing for board exams. Initially, we were a little scared because it is our first time, but we are proud that children from our centre have reached this level."

A 12-year-old girl, Jaya (name changed), shared, "Earlier, I was away from studies because I had to go to work. But after joining the centre, I gradually developed an interest in studying. On the day of the board exam, I felt a little nervous, but I managed my time and solved the questions. After finishing the paper, I felt that my hard work had paid off." Before the exams, the team member of Chetna Ngo provided special guidance to the children at the centre. They were taught



how to correctly fill in their roll numbers, how to attempt longer questions first, how to manage time effectively, and how to remain calm during the exam. They were also

given useful tips to reduce stress, which boosted their confidence. The children worked very hard to prepare for the board exams. They used to sit together, solve

question papers, help each other, and review their answers under the guidance of educators. They would then discuss how many questions they got right and where improvements were needed. This collaborative learning environment strengthened their preparation. On the day of the exam, a live broadcast of the children was also conducted, which further boosted their enthusiasm. This initiative helped reduce their fear of board exams and instilled new hope and confidence in them. For these children, the exam is not just a way to score marks, but an opportunity to prove that with the right opportunities and guidance, they too can achieve their dreams and move forward in life.

## CHILDHOOD STRUGGLING WITH INSECURITY AND DEPRIVATION IN ROADSIDE TENTS

Balaknama Reporter Deepak  
Talkative Reporter Dinesh

Balaknama reporter Deepak visited the Jamdoli settlement in Jaipur. During the visit, he interacted with Talkative Reporter Dilip. Dilip shared that on the route he takes daily to go to school, a family has been living in a tent by the roadside for the past several days. The family includes two young children and their parents. To gather more information, the Balaknama reporter spoke with the children. They explained that they do not have a permanent home, which is why they are forced to live in a tent on the roadside. Their parents work as waste pickers and were away at work during that time. Both siblings were alone in the tent when the interaction took place. During the conversation, it became clear that living on the roadside is very challenging for them. A boy, Dinesh (name



changed, around 10 years old), shared that he feels very scared at night because strangers frequently pass by. The constant noise of fast-moving vehicles and the risk of accidents are always present. During the rainy season, water fills their tent, and in winter, they face difficulties due to a lack of warm clothes. The children also shared that they are unable to continue their education regularly, as they often have to accompany their parents to work or take

care of their younger siblings. In addition, the lack of clean drinking water, toilets, and safe spaces to play are major challenges in their daily lives. This situation highlights that children living on the roadside face serious issues related to safety, education, health, and protection. There is a strong need for concerned authorities and society to respond with sensitivity and take necessary steps to improve the lives of such children.

## POOR CONDITION OF TOILETS TROUBLING SLUM RESIDENTS

Talkative Reporter Akash  
Reporter Kishan

When government facilities are not properly maintained, people are forced to face many difficulties. A similar issue was observed in the slum areas near Sector 62, Noida. During a conversation with Balaknama reporters, a 13-year-old boy, Dilip (name changed), shared that there are many huts in the area where he lives. The surroundings are filled with factories, and there is also a paper centre nearby. A short distance from the settlement, there is a government urinal and toilet facility, but its current condition is very worst. Dilip explained that inside the toilet, the handwashing area, taps, and several parts of the urinal are broken. There is also a very strong foul smell coming from the facility, which discourages people from using it. The problem is that when people are unable to use the toilet, many factory workers

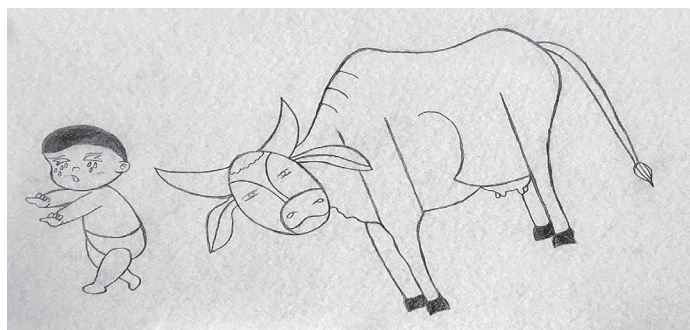


and visitors to the paper centre start urinating in the open around the settlement. They do not consider that women and girls are also present in the area. Such behaviour causes embarrassment and discomfort to children and women living there. Dilip further mentioned that earlier, there used to be a staff member responsible for maintaining and cleaning the toilet. However, for some time now, the staff member has stopped coming. He stated that earlier he used to receive payments on time, but now he is not being paid, which is why he is unable to continue his work. Due to the lack of maintenance, the government toilet is now filled with dirt and is no longer usable. Children living in the settlement have requested that the concerned department should repair the toilet as soon as possible and ensure its regular cleaning, so that people do not face such problems and the surroundings remain safe and dignified.

Balaknama Reporter Farooq

## YOUNG CHILD INJURED IN ATTACK BY STRAY ANIMAL

An incident of a young child getting injured near Sai Mandir in Wazirabad Sector-52, Gurugram, has come to light. The incident is reported to have taken place a few days ago. When Balaknama reporter Farooq visited the area, he learned about the incident. According to local residents, a 6-year-old boy, Ajarul (name changed), was playing near his house when a cow suddenly attacked him from behind. The child was seriously injured in the attack. After the incident, nearby people and family members immediately rushed the child to a nearby



hospital. The doctors provided treatment, and after primary care, the child was discharged in the evening. Following this, the child's parents approached nearby cattle owners to file

a complaint and discuss the matter. However, the cattle owners stated that the cow did not belong to them. The Balaknama reporter also spoke to other local residents about

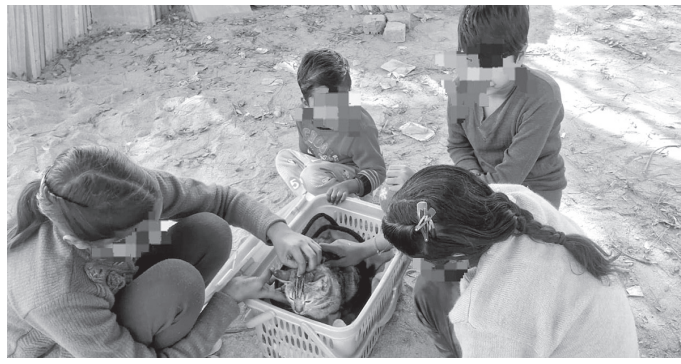
the incident. They shared that the same cow had attacked several people earlier as well. Some residents mentioned that the cow had been injured in its hind leg by dogs some time ago, after which it became aggressive and started attacking passersby. Local residents expressed concern that if such stray and aggressive animals are not addressed, more accidents may occur in the future. They have requested the authorities to take immediate action to resolve the issue so that children and pedestrians in the area can remain safe.

# WHEN A CAT BECAME THE BEST FRIEND

Talkative Reporter Babli  
Reporter Kishan

Most people form friendships with other humans, but street and working children often make friends without any discrimination. For them, friendship simply means companionship and affection, whether it is with a person or an animal. Balaknama child reporters visited a village near Char Murti in Noida. There, they met some children who live with their families in rented houses. When the reporters arrived, they saw a group of children happily playing with a cat.

The reporters spoke with the children to learn more about them. A 14-year-old girl, Ravina (name changed), shared that she lives in a rented house with her parents. Her parents go to work in the morning, while she and her siblings attend school. After returning from school, they spend some time alone at home, as their parents usually come back between 7 and 8 in the evening. Ravina said that there are many girls in the building who are her friends, but she also has a very special friend named Simmi. Although the name sounds like a person's name,



Simmi is actually a small cat. Ravina smiled and explained that in the beginning, the cat used to come into their house every day. It would drink milk and sometimes knock over utensils, which

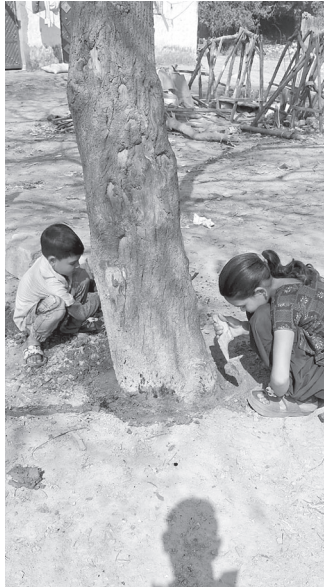
used to trouble them a little. Later, they thought that if they fed the cat with love and care, it might stop being mischievous. So, they started giving it milk and food. Gradually, the cat became

comfortable with them and turned into a good friend. Now, it comes to them every day, plays with them, and no longer causes trouble. The children also take good care of it. Ravina also shared that a few days ago, Simmi injured her leg. The children took her to a nearby government hospital for treatment. Now, Simmi is completely fine and once again plays happily with them. Ravina said that ever since Simmi became their friend, the atmosphere at home has become happier. The children enjoy playing with her, and everyone in the family loves her very much.

## PROTECTING TREES IS PROTECTING OURSELVES

Talkative Reporter Shivam  
Reporter Kishan

In today's time, deforestation is continuously increasing in many places and across different states. A large number of trees are being cut down, which is having a negative impact on the environment. Therefore, it is important for people to plant more trees and take proper care of them so that the environment remains safe and people continue to get clean air. To understand this issue, Balaknama child reporters visited a village near Char Murti in Noida. There, near a rented house, they noticed an interesting scene. An 8-year-old boy, Sonu (name changed), was cleaning the area around the trees near his room. He was digging small pits around the trees and watering them. Seeing this, the reporters spoke to Sonu and



asked why he was doing this. Sonu explained that the winter season is slowly ending and the heat is increasing. From around 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., the effects of the heat can already be felt. He shared that there is a small open

ground near his house where about 14-15 trees are planted. For the past 7-8 days, he has been regularly cleaning around these trees, making pits, and watering them. He believes that if trees are properly cared for, they provide cool air during the summer and help maintain a pleasant environment. Sonu also mentioned that he is currently studying in Class 2. In his school, children are taught about the environment and the importance of trees. Inspired by this, he decided to take care of the trees around him. Sonu added that during the summer, many people from the surrounding area come and sit there to enjoy the cool breeze. Children also play there because the environment remains cooler and more pleasant. This makes him very happy, as his small effort brings comfort to others and helps create a better environment.



## FROM THE STREETS TO SCHOOL: A CHILD WINS A MEDAL IN DRAWING

Balaknama Reporter Anjali

When Balaknama reporter Anjali visited a community in Gurugram, she noticed a child who looked extremely happy. There was a special glow on his face. As soon as the child saw her, he came running with excitement and began sharing his happiness. He told her that his school had recently organized a drawing competition. Many students from his class and other classes participated. He happily shared that he also took part in the competition and secured second place. For this achievement, he was awarded a medal. With great pride and excitement, he showed his medal to the reporter. His happiness was clearly visible, and it made the reporter feel equally delighted. Reporter Anjali shared this news with other children at the centre and explained that this was the same child who earlier used to collect waste, but now regularly attends school and

actively participates in school activities and competitions. This became an inspiring example for other children as well. When Anjali asked him how he learned to draw so well, the child explained that he has loved drawing since childhood. He often spends his free time at home and at the centre making drawings. When his teacher announced the competition, he decided to participate. Initially, he felt hesitant and unsure if he could do it, but he gathered courage and took part. He further shared that when the results were announced and he secured second place, the school head appreciated his efforts and honoured him with a medal. This moment was very special and proud for him. The child also said that when he shared this news with his family, there was a joyful atmosphere at home. His family members were extremely happy and proud, as no one in their family had received such recognition before.

## CHILDHOOD DREAMS LOST TO COMPULSION

Balaknama Reporter - Dharmraj  
Talkative Reporter - Radhika

In a slum area of Gurugram, a young boy has been forced to give up his childhood due to financial hardship and take on work to support his family. At an age when children should be going to school, playing with friends, and focusing on their studies, this child is burdened with responsibilities. When Balaknama reporter Dharmraj visited the area, he saw a boy selling clothes on a roadside cart. While discussing the boy introduced himself as Suman (name changed, 13 years old). He was showing clothes to customers and trying to convince them to

buy. During the interaction, Suman shared that he is not working by choice but out of compulsion. His family's financial condition is very weak. His father has been ill for a long time and is no longer able to work, and the cost of treatment and medicines has made things even more difficult for the family. Suman said that he used to go to school earlier and loved studying. He enjoyed wearing neat clothes, attending classes, and spending time with his friends. However, due to his father's illness and the responsibilities at home, he had to leave his studies midway. Now, he spends his entire day selling clothes to support his family and help

his mother. He expressed that he still wants to return to school, but his current situation does not allow him to do so. Emotionally, Suman said, "I love studying and want to continue my education. But right now, I don't have time. If I don't study, how will I achieve my dreams? Still, I feel it is important to support my parents at this time. If I don't stand by them now, then when will I? I just wish my father recovers soon so that I can go back to school." Suman's situation makes us reflect that even today, many children are living in circumstances where they are forced to give up their education and dreams to take on family responsibilities.

# A CHILDHOOD LEFT ALONE AMID FAMILY CONFLICTS

Balaknama Reporter Farooq  
Talkative Reporter Ajarul

When Balaknama reporters visited the Wazirabad area of Gurugram, they came across the story of a 9-year-old boy, Akash (name changed). After his parents separated, Akash is forced to live with his grandmother. At home, only his grandmother and elder sister stay with him.

Akash shared that when he was younger, his parents used to fight frequently. There were arguments almost every day at home. One day, after

a major conflict, his mother filed a case against his father, which eventually led to their divorce. After the separation, his father wanted to keep him, but his second wife refused. In anger, his father left him with his grandmother and went away. After some time, both his parents remarried and moved on with their lives. Akash's grandmother asked his father to visit him occasionally so that he could stay connected. Following this, his father started visiting him sometimes. However, Akash shared that during

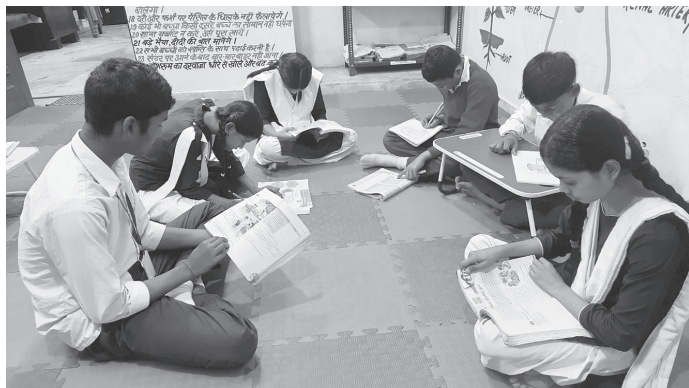


these visits, his father would often beat him. In reality, Akash is often left alone at home when his grandmother

goes to work. Due to loneliness and the negative influence of children around him, he developed habits like using abusive language, speaking rudely, and even engaging in substance use. When his father saw this behaviour during visits, he would get angry and beat him. Akash's elder sister tried to take care of him and help with household work. However, since their grandmother often falls ill, she was also sent to work. At times, when the grandmother scolded the sister, she would, in frustration, scold or even

hit Akash. The constant environment of scolding, conflict, and physical punishment gradually affected Akash's behaviour. He sometimes refuses to do work and speaks rudely even to his grandmother, which leads to further scolding or beating. This situation shows that family conflicts and parental separation deeply affect children. Such children need proper guidance, care, and emotional support so that they can move in the right direction and build a secure future.

## STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN PREPARING FOR EXAMS WITH DETERMINATION



Balaknama Reporter – Kajal

When Balaknama reporter Kajal visited the slum area of Chakkarpur in Gurugram, she observed that children there were working very hard to prepare for their upcoming final examinations. Despite limited resources and challenging circumstances, the children were studying with great enthusiasm and dedication. At the education centre, it was seen that children were attending classes regularly and focusing seriously on their

studies. Many children shared that their homes are small and do not provide a peaceful or suitable environment for studying. Therefore, they come to the education centre every day, where they get a better learning environment along with guidance from teachers. The teachers at the centre mentioned that since the exams are approaching, special classes are being conducted for the children. In these classes, previously taught lessons are being revised, and special attention is given to important questions. Along

with this, children are also encouraged to manage their time effectively and appear for exams with confidence. During conversations with the reporter, children shared that they want to move forward in life through education. Some aspire to become teachers, while others dream of becoming police officers or doctors. They believe that education is the most important path to achieving their dreams. Although these children face many challenges while living in slum areas, their determination remains strong. Despite weak financial conditions, parents are encouraging their children to continue their education. The support from the education centre and teachers is further boosting the children's confidence. Their hard work and dedication, even in difficult situations, clearly show that with the right guidance and opportunities, children can achieve their dreams.



## LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOP IMPROVED CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF CLEANLINESS

Balaknama Reporter Omanas  
Talkative Reporter Adhuri

A positive impact of a life skills workshop organized among children in Ghata village, Gurugram, was clearly visible. When Balaknama child reporter Omanas visited the community, he noticed three to four children cleaning their street. Seeing this, the reporter spoke to them and asked why they were cleaning the area. The children shared that they attend an education centre run by Chetna. Recently, during a life skills workshop held at the centre, they were

taught about pollution and the importance of cleanliness. The facilitator explained that if we do not keep our homes and surroundings clean, it can lead to the spread of various diseases and negatively affect people's health. One of the children, a 12-year-old girl, Shivani (name changed), shared that a few days ago she had been suffering from a severe cold and fever for two to three days. One day, while sitting outside her lane, she noticed garbage and dirt scattered all around. At that moment, she remembered what her teacher had explained at the centre—that unclean surroundings can cause illnesses and harm people's health. After this, Shivani discussed the issue with some of her friends from the centre, and they all decided to clean their street together. The children started cleaning the garbage using brooms and other tools. While they were cleaning, some adults also encouraged them and supported their efforts. Other residents of the area appreciated the children's initiative and praised them. Some people even came forward to help with the cleaning. This small effort by the children spread a positive message throughout the community. After the cleaning, the entire street looked much cleaner and more pleasant than before, and everyone in the area seemed happy with the change. The children said that if everyone takes responsibility for keeping their surroundings clean, the environment can remain healthy and safe for all.

## CHILDHOOD UNDER THE SHADOW OF ABUSE

Talkative Reporter – Sohel Khan  
Balaknama Reporter – Tanmay Singh

During a visit by the Balaknama team to a community in Gurugram, the case of a young girl, Rani (name changed), came to light, who is facing both physical and emotional abuse. Originally from West Bengal, Rani lives with her parents and younger sister. She shared that her mother works as a domestic helper and her father drives an auto, and due to their weak financial condition, there is constant stress at home.

Rani revealed that her mother often forces her to beg at a temple, and if she refuses, she is scolded, beaten, and sometimes even denied food. She is also blamed and punished if she



does not receive items during community distributions. Rani said she frequently faces verbal abuse, which has deeply affected her confidence and emotional

well-being. She wants to study and go to school like other children, but her mother refuses, saying that girls do not need education and will eventually do

household work. Most of the household responsibilities are also placed on Rani, leaving her with no opportunity to study. As a result, her life is becoming limited to domestic work and begging. Recognizing the seriousness of the situation,

Balaknama reporter Tanmay Singh spoke with Rani and explained that such treatment can harm a child's physical and mental health. He also informed her about the free education available at Chetna's education centre and assured her that the team would try to speak with her parents and guide them. The Balaknama team believes that every child has the right to education, dignity, and a safe environment, and that children's rights and emotions must not be ignored so they can achieve their dreams.

# CHILDREN STOPPING SCHOOL DUE TO FEAR OF RUMOUR

Balaknama Reporter – Anjali

In several slum communities of Gurugram, rumour about child kidnapping have been spreading rapidly, causing many children to stop going to school despite their annual exams approaching.

When Balaknama reporter Anjali visited the community, she found children playing in the lanes, watching television, using mobile phones, and even engaging in waste-picking instead of attending school.

On speaking with them, the children shared that their parents had stopped them from going out due to fear created by this rumour. Although the children themselves felt scared, they expressed a strong desire to continue their studies and attend school, especially with exams nearing.

Anjali informed them about safety measures, including the Child Helpline number 1098 and Police Helpline number 112, and advised them to



avoid strangers, not go out alone, and always move in

groups. She also spoke with parents and clarified that

no confirmed incidents of child kidnapping had been reported in the area and that most information was based on rumour. She urged parents not to believe unverified news and to prioritize their children's education by sending them to school regularly. She suggested that children should go to and return from school in groups for safety. By the end, the children decided to attend school together in groups so that they could stay safe while continuing their education.

## WORKING TODAY DREAMING OF A BETTER TOMORROW

Balaknama Reporter Anushki  
Talkative Reporter Ansh

During a visit to Khota Colony, Balaknama reporter Anushki met a young girl whose life reflects both struggle and strong dreams for the future. While walking through the community, Anushki noticed a small girl sweeping and mopping the stairs of a house. When asked about her name and work, the girl shared that her name is Priya and she works in the house, earning 2000 rupees a month.

On asking whether she goes to school, Priya said that she attends classes at a Chetna NGO learning centre. She explained that she finishes some work before going to the centre and then continues her studies there.

Priya shared that her father is physically disabled and unable to earn much, which is why she works to support her family. She also expressed a simple wish that when she sees other girls wearing nice clothes, she too wants to wear good clothes someday. Speaking about something close to her heart, Priya said that next month is her younger brother's birthday, and she wants to celebrate it with a cake and balloons. She shared that her own birthday has never been celebrated, but she wants to make her brother feel special, which is why she is saving money from her work. Balaknama reporter Anushki encouraged Priya not to let work interrupt her education and to continue attending the centre regularly. Priya

confidently shared that she goes to the centre regularly, her name is enrolled there, and her learning file has also been created. She proudly said that she has learned basic Hindi letters, the English alphabet, and counting, and is now slowly learning to read Hindi. She has also gained awareness about children's rights and important helpline numbers like 1098 and 112. Priya further shared that she does not yet have an Aadhaar card, which is why she has not been able to enroll in school. However, she has spoken to her father about it, and they are planning to get it made soon so she can join school and continue her education. Priya says she loves studying and dreams of building a better future for herself through education.



## ADOLESCENT GIRL MOVES TOWARDS EDUCATION AFTER COUNSELLING

Balaknama Report – Shrashtika

A 9-year-old girl, Kishori (name changed), living in the JMD community of Gurugram, was earlier surrounded by very difficult circumstances. Originally from Bihar, she lives with her parents, two sisters, and a brother. Due to the family's weak financial condition and limited income of her father, the responsibility of running the household also fell on her mother and children. Because of this, Kishori was forced at a very young age to work as a waste picker, spending her entire day in this work. The physical exhaustion and constant struggle made her withdrawn; she spoke very little to others, showed no interest in studies, and did not attend the education centre. Her childhood was passing in hardship instead of learning and play, and this began to affect her physical and mental well-being, making her often tired and unhappy. Seeing her

condition, the Chetna Ngo intervened and conducted a counselling session with her, where she was gently made to understand the harmful effects of such work on her health, along with the importance of education, cleanliness, and well-being. She was also assured that she was not alone and would be supported if she wished to study. After the counselling, a positive change was observed in her behaviour. Her mother shared that earlier Kishori would not listen to anyone and remained quiet most of the time, but now she has become happier, communicates more, and regularly attends the centre for her studies. Most importantly, she has completely stopped waste picking. Today, Kishori is showing interest in learning and actively participates with other children at the centre, giving hope that with the right guidance and support, children's futures can truly be transformed.

## KARAN WINS FIRST PRIZE IN DRAWING COMPETITION THROUGH HARD WORK AND GUIDANCE

Talkative Reporter – Ajarul  
Balaknama Reporter – Farooq

Karan (name changed), a 13-year-old boy living in Wazirabad Sector-52, Gurugram, secured first place and won a medal in a drawing competition organized at his school, marking a proud achievement driven by his hard work, dedication, and proper guidance. During a community visit by the Balaknama team, it was revealed that Karan earlier did not attend school and spent most of his time at home, sometimes even working as a waste picker due to his family's weak financial condition. His

family includes his parents, two sisters, and a brother, and education was not given much priority earlier. One day, team member from Chetna Ngo visited the community and interacted with children, where they met Karan and encouraged him to join their education centre, explaining that it provides learning along with sports activities and meals. Initially, Karan refused, saying he worked with his father at a shop and did not have time, but after continuous efforts and counselling with his parents, they agreed, and Karan started attending the centre. Gradually, he learned to read and write and also developed

skills in drawing, playing carrom, and participating in other activities. After about three months, he was enrolled in a nearby school, where he began showing interest in studies and received positive feedback from teachers. Later, when a drawing competition was held at school, Karan initially felt nervous but decided to apply what he had learned at the centre and created his drawing with full dedication. His work was appreciated by teachers and classmates, and when the results were announced, he secured first place and was honoured with a medal, making it a special and proud moment for him.

**CHILDREN'S HELP  
LINE NUMBERS**

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

Child line Number

**1098**

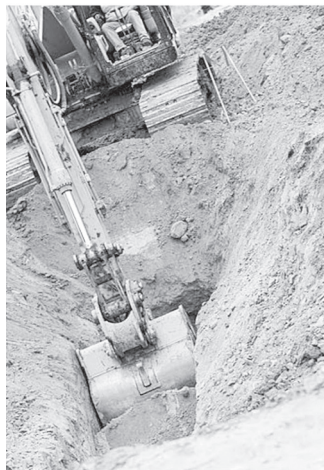
Police Helpline Number

**100**

## DEEP ROAD EXCAVATION BECOMING A DANGER FOR CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporter – Kajal

Deep excavation on roads in the Chakkarpur area of Gurugram has become a serious safety hazard for local residents, especially children. Large pits have been left open at several places without proper barricading or warning signs, causing daily difficulties for people using the road. When Balaknama reporter Kajal visited the site, she observed that school-going children were crossing the road with fear, as some pits were so deep that there was a constant risk of falling. The situation becomes even more dangerous in the evening when poor visibility makes the pits hard to notice. According to local residents, even a JCB machine had once gotten stuck in one of the pits, yet no proper safety



measures were put in place. Many motorcyclists have already fallen into these pits, and street vendors have suffered losses as their goods fell and got damaged. Recently, a woman with her young child also fell into one of the pits, resulting in a serious injury to the child's

hand. Children expressed their concerns, saying they feel scared while going to school as the pits appear suddenly, and it becomes difficult to walk safely. Others mentioned that during the evening, the pits are almost invisible, increasing the risk of accidents. A local woman shared that her child was injured and warned that a more serious accident could occur if immediate action is not taken. Residents have urged the authorities to install warning signs, ensure proper barricading, and fill the pits as soon as possible to make the road safe. Balaknama reporter Kajal has also demanded prompt action from the concerned department to prevent any major accident and ensure the safety of children and the public.

## FROM SCRAP TO SCHOOL: BOOKS NOW BRING JOY

Balaknama Reporter – Jyoti Kumari  
Talkative Reporter – Lakshmi

The lives of children living in the Saraswati Vihar area of Gurugram are not easy. Many children here are forced to work at an age when they should be playing and going to school. Some of them spend their days picking waste from garbage dumps, which affects their health, hygiene, and education. When Balaknama reporter Jyoti Kumari visited the area, she met a 9-year-old girl, Rashmi (name changed), whose story reflects the struggles faced by many children. Originally from Bihar, Rashmi lives with her parents and elder



sister. Due to the family's poor financial condition, she had to start waste picking at a very young age, collecting plastic and other scrap daily. This left her clothes dirty and also affected her health. During a conversation with Talkative Reporter Lakshmi, Rashmi shared, "Earlier, I used to go for waste picking every day. I did not like staying clean or studying. In class, I would make noise and not listen to anyone." It was later found that Rashmi attended a counselling session in Gurugram, where the counsellor spoke to her with care, understood her challenges, and explained the importance of cleanliness, health, good behaviour, and education. Gradually, a positive change was seen in her. Now, she takes care of her hygiene, keeps herself clean, and tries to stay away from dirt. Smiling, she said, "Now I like studying. I am learning to recognize letters and try to learn something new every day." Today, Rashmi is connected to education, and with the support of her family, she is moving forward with hope and confidence. Her eyes now reflect not fear, but a new sense of aspiration—to learn, grow, and build a better future

## COLOURS OF JOY AND LEARNING, A HOLI CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER

Balaknama Reporter Kajal

On the auspicious occasion of Holi, children at the Chetna learning centre in Chakkarpur, Gurugram celebrated the festival with great enthusiasm and excitement. The day was not just about playing with colours but also about understanding the meaning and importance of the festival. The session began with Balaknama reporter Kajal asking the children what they would be celebrating at the centre. Responding with excitement, 11-year-old Riya (name changed) said that they would be celebrating Holi, which brought cheers and



applause from all the children. Kajal then encouraged the children to share what they knew about Holi. Many children said that it is a festival when people wear new clothes, play with colours, and enjoy delicious food at home. They

also mentioned that gujiya is a special sweet prepared during this time. However, some children were not fully aware of the deeper meaning of the festival. Taking this opportunity, Kajal explained in a simple and engaging way that Holi is a festival of colours symbolising love, unity, and happiness. She shared that it also represents the victory of good over evil, highlighted through the tradition of

Holika Dahan celebrated a day before Holi. She further explained that the festival marks the arrival of spring and encourages harmony and togetherness among people. The children listened with interest, clapped with joy, and shared their thoughts. The celebration then continued with music, dance, and playing with colours, creating a lively and joyful atmosphere. At the end, the children came together to enjoy gujiya and wished each other a happy Holi. The celebration at the Chetna centre became a memorable experience filled with happiness, learning, and a strong sense of togetherness.

## DEMOLITION OF SLUMS LEAVES FAMILIES HOMELESS, CHILDREN FACE GROWING HARDSHIPS

Talkative Reporter – Meena  
Balaknama Reporter – Anushki

In Khota Colony, Gurugram, recent demolition of slum settlements has created a serious housing crisis for many families, leaving children and their families forced to spend cold nights under the open sky. People whose homes were destroyed are now struggling to save their belongings and find a new place to live. When Balaknama reporter Anushki visited the area, she saw broken huts, scattered debris, and families hurriedly trying

to gather whatever they could from the rubble. During her visit, she met an 11-year-old girl, Diksha (name changed), who was anxiously pulling out her belongings from her demolished shelter. She shared that bulldozers had arrived suddenly, and since many family members were away at work, a lot of their belongings got buried under the debris. Her own parents were also at work, leaving her alone to manage the situation. Frightened, Diksha said, "I am scared that the bulldozer might come again and bury all our things, so I am



trying to take everything out quickly." She also mentioned that many families and

children are now sleeping outside in the cold, covering themselves with blankets

near their belongings, as they have no safe place to stay. The reporter comforted Diksha and assured her that her parents would soon return and find an alternative place to live. When asked about her education, Diksha shared that she regularly attends the education centre for her studies. The reporter encouraged her to continue her education and return to the centre once her family settles nearby again. Diksha expressed hope that her parents would soon find a new place, and she would be able to resume her studies.

## HIDDEN DANGERS IN DIRTY WATERS, A GROWING HEALTH RISK FOR CHILDREN



Balaknama Reporter – Tanmay

In the Palda Dhani community of Gurugram, a worrying practice has come to light where fish growing in dirty and contaminated water are being caught, sold, and consumed, posing serious health risks to children and local residents. During a community visit, Balaknama reporter Tanmay Singh observed that wastewater flowing out from nearby settlements had collected in one place, creating a stagnant pool. People had introduced fish seeds into this polluted

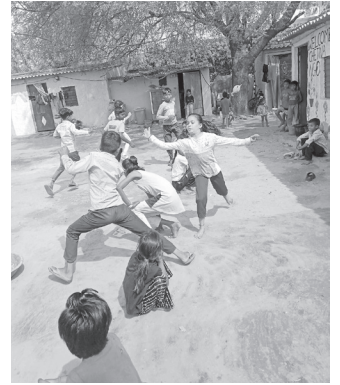
water, leading to a large number of fish growing there. It all began when a child first noticed these fish and tried to catch them. Soon, more children joined in, and gradually many started catching fish from the same polluted water. The children began selling these fish within the community, earning small amounts of money in the process. When the reporter spoke to them, they shared that selling fish had become a way for them to make some income. Further conversations with buyers revealed that some people were purchasing

these fish at low prices and reselling them. Tanmay Singh explained to both children and community members that fish raised in contaminated water can be extremely harmful to health. Consuming such fish can lead to illnesses like typhoid and diarrhea, and may also cause harmful substances to accumulate in the body, leading to serious long-term health problems. Children also shared that entering the dirty water had already started affecting them, causing skin issues such as itching and rashes on their hands and feet. The reporter urged the children to stay away from such polluted water and to stop catching or selling these fish. He also highlighted that such activities not only endanger their own health but also put the entire community at risk. After understanding the risks, the children assured that they would no longer go near the contaminated water or engage in catching and selling fish, choosing instead to prioritize their health and safety.

## WHY PLAY MATTERS MORE THAN EVER FOR CHILDREN'S GROWTH

Balaknama Reporter Nandini

During a community visit in Gurugram, Balaknama reporter Nandini observed that many children today are so occupied with studies and household responsibilities that they are gradually drifting away from sports and play. This shift is beginning to show clear effects on both their physical and mental well-being. She highlights that it is essential for children to engage in at least 30 minutes of physical activity or play every day to stay healthy and active, helping them avoid various illnesses. Nandini explains that sports and play are not just recreational activities but an important part of a child's overall development. Through play, children learn to understand their emotions, develop self-discipline, and express themselves more confidently in front of others. It also helps them build problem-solving skills and the ability to think independently. Regular play offers several physical benefits as well. It strengthens bones,



muscles, and joints, improves body balance, and boosts immunity. At the same time, it keeps children energetic and supports their mental well-being. Nandini also points out that playing helps reduce stress and anxiety, encourages positive thinking, and builds self-confidence among children. She emphasizes that sports are essential for the holistic development of every child. Therefore, parents and communities should actively encourage children to play regularly so they can grow into healthy, confident individuals and move forward in life with strength and positivity.

## A YOUNG STEP TOWARDS RESPONSIBILITY AND LEARNING



Balaknama Reporter: Damini  
Talkative Reporter: Rehan

A positive story has emerged from Chetna Basti in Khor, Jaipur, where a child's determination, self-respect, and commitment to education stand out. During a community visit, Balaknama reporter Damini learned about 11-year-old Rehan (name changed), who had been absent from the learning centre and school for a few days, despite being a regular student earlier. On inquiring further, it was found that he had been working at wedding catering events. When Damini spoke with Rehan and his family, the situation became clear. His parents shared that he was working only for a short time to earn money to buy school uniforms for himself and his younger sister. Despite

limited financial resources, the family continues to prioritise education. With a smile, Rehan said, "I wanted to buy school uniforms for myself and my sister. Now I will get them and go for my exams. I want to study and move forward in life." Rehan's initiative reflects his sense of responsibility, self-respect, and dedication towards education. Although he had stepped away from studies for a brief period, he has now refocused and resumed his learning with renewed commitment. He studies regularly and also encourages his younger siblings to do the same. His parents are happy to see this positive change and believe that he now understands the importance of education and is moving in the right direction.

## CHILDHOOD AT RISK DUE TO MOBILE GAMING ADDICTION



Balaknama Reporter Deepak  
Talkative Reporter Irfan

During a visit to Bagra Basti, Balaknama reporter Deepak noticed a young boy deeply engaged in a mobile game while sitting by the roadside. Wanting to understand the situation better, he started a conversation with the child. The boy, aged around 10 (name changed to Irfan), shared that

he was not just playing regular games but games that involve real money. He revealed that he had already spent nearly 2,000 to 2,500 rupees on these games. When asked where the money came from, the child explained that he does not receive extra money but saves small amounts given for food and daily needs, which he then spends on gaming. He also admitted that he plays these games secretly

without his parents' knowledge. Talking about his family, he said that both his parents work as daily wage labourers and are often out in search of work, leaving little time to supervise him. This situation highlights a growing concern where children, at a very young age, are getting drawn into money-based mobile games. Such habits not only lead to financial loss but also negatively affect their education and overall development. Gradually, children begin to lose interest in studies and spend more time on mobile screens. During the interaction, the reporter explained the harmful effects of online gaming to the child and encouraged him to stay away from such activities. He also guided him to use his time wisely by focusing on studies and engaging in positive activities, so that he can build a better future.

## SLUM CHILDREN SHINE IN HINDI HANDWRITING COMPETITION

Balaknama Reporter Kajal

Children from a settlement in Chakkarpur, Gurugram have made their families, teachers, and community proud by performing exceptionally well in a Hindi handwriting competition. Balaknama reporter Kajal spoke with the children to learn more about their achievement. During

the conversation, the children introduced themselves as Shikha, 12 years old (name changed), and Deep Kumar, 11 years old (name changed). When asked about the competition, they shared that they had participated through their school. Shikha happily shared that she secured first position and received three books, a pencil box, and a pen

box as prizes. Deep Kumar proudly mentioned that he secured third position and was awarded two books and a pencil box. The children said that participating in the competition was a great experience and they felt proud of their success. They also shared that regular practice and guidance from their teachers played an important

role in their achievement. Their success has brought joy to their parents and teachers at the centre, who appreciated and encouraged them. The children also expressed that more opportunities like this should be given to others, so that every child can showcase their talent, move forward, and make their families and teachers proud.

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