

# 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.

## BRINGING RELIEF AMIDST THE HEATWAVE: SUPPORTING THOUSANDS OF STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN

Balaknama Reporters Deepak, Asif, Preeti

During May and June this year, extreme heat conditions affected millions of people across several parts of India. Temperatures crossed 45°C in many states, including Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, while the Meteorological Department continued issuing heatwave warnings. Streets remained deserted during peak afternoon hours, markets slowed down, and people avoided venturing outdoors whenever possible. However, the impact of the rising temperatures was most severe on children living and working on the streets and in underserved communities where access to safe drinking water, shade, and cooling facilities is limited.

For many street-

connected and working children, summer is not merely a season—it is a daily struggle. While most people seek shelter from the scorching sun, many children continue spending their days at traffic signals, markets, railway stations, construction sites, and waste-picking locations. Alongside coping with extreme temperatures, they often contribute to their family's livelihood, leaving them highly vulnerable to dehydration, heat exhaustion, headaches, fever, skin rashes, and other heat-related illnesses.

To respond to this growing crisis, an Emergency Heat Relief Initiative was launched across Jaipur, Gurugram, Delhi, Noida, and Lucknow, reaching more than 2,500 children every day. Through this initiative, children received



access to safe drinking water, buttermilk, glucose biscuits, Glucon-D, bananas, cucumbers, lemon water, and other nutritional support. Awareness sessions were also conducted to educate children and community

members on preventing heat-related illnesses, staying hydrated, and protecting themselves during heatwaves.

**Jaipur: Relief and Learning Amidst Extreme Heat**  
Children living in various

settlements across Jaipur reported that this year's summer was significantly harsher than previous years. Tin-roofed houses became unbearably hot by afternoon, forcing children to spend time outdoors in search of shade.

Through the initiative, nearly 600 children received daily access to safe drinking water, buttermilk, bananas, cucumbers, glucose biscuits, and Glucon-D.

Muskan (13 years, name changed) shared, "Earlier, I used to feel very weak in the afternoons. Sometimes I would get headaches while studying. Now, getting buttermilk and cool water every day makes me feel much better."

Arif (12 years, name changed), who accompanies his father for waste collection, **continue on page. no. 3**

## CHILDREN SPEAK OUT AGAINST INAPPROPRIATE TEACHER BEHAVIOUR, DEMAND JUSTICE

Bureau Report

If trust is lost even in those who are meant to guide and protect children, then whom can children trust? A 15-year-old girl, Nutan (name changed), living in a slum community near Char Murti, Sector-4, Noida, along with several other children, has raised serious concerns regarding the behaviour of a teacher at their government school. According to the children, the teacher's behaviour towards students makes them feel uncomfortable and mentally distressed. They shared that whenever the teacher enters the classroom, his way of looking at and speaking to students feels

inappropriate. The children further alleged that he often uses objectionable language while interacting with them and also beats students with a stick. Some children said that his behaviour makes them feel unsafe inside the school. The school runs classes from Grade 1 to Grade 5 and has 10 female teachers and 3 male teachers. Children shared that the concerned teacher regularly teaches one class, but also takes Grade 5 classes whenever the regular teacher is absent. The children stated that they had already reported the matter to other teachers and the school principal, but their concerns were not taken seriously. The principal reportedly said that she does not believe the



teacher could behave in such a manner. Some children also mentioned that a few female

teachers in the school appear uncomfortable around the concerned teacher and avoid

interacting with him much. Parents of the children have also approached the principal regarding the issue, but no concrete action has been taken so far. The children are demanding a fair and impartial inquiry into the matter and have requested strict action if the allegations are found to be true. The children said that schools should be safe spaces where every child feels secure, respected, and free to learn without fear. This incident raises serious concerns regarding child safety and the conduct of teachers within educational institutions. Ensuring a safe and dignified environment for children is the shared responsibility of both schools and society.

# MAJOR ACCIDENT AVERTED IN CHAKKARPUR SETTLEMENT; CHILD'S HOME SAVED THROUGH TIMELY ACTION

Balaknama Reporter Kajal

A recent incident in a modest settlement in Chakkarpur, Gurugram, left local residents frightened and reminded everyone how a small mistake can turn into a major disaster. Fortunately, due to the alertness and quick action of people nearby, a serious accident was prevented in time. When Balaknama Reporter Kajal visited the settlement, residents informed her about an incident that had almost led to a fire in the house of a child living in the community. Curious to know more, Kajal spoke with children and local residents about what had happened. During the conversation, a young girl named Tina (name changed) came forward and said, "Didi, there really was a fire-like situation here." She explained that the house belonged to a child named Kashi (name changed), who lives there with his family. According to Tina, on the day of the incident, Kashi's

mother had gone to work as usual in the morning. Only the father and children were at home. While the children were getting ready for school, Kashi's father was cooking in the kitchen. He placed lentils on the gas stove to boil and then went to take a bath. In the meantime, the children left for school. After bathing, he quickly ate his meal. Just then, he received a call from his office asking him to reach immediately. In a hurry, he locked the house and left for work, forgetting to switch off the gas stove. After some time, the vessel kept heating continuously, causing smoke to fill the room. Gradually, the situation became dangerous and could have easily turned into a major fire. Had there been any further delay, the entire house might have caught fire.

Reporter Kajal asked how the situation was eventually controlled. Tina shared that at the same time, a young man happened to pass by the area and noticed smoke coming out from inside the house.



Realising that something was wrong, he immediately alerted nearby residents. Together,

they broke the lock of the house and entered inside. As soon as the door was opened,

they found the room filled with smoke while the gas stove was still burning. The young man quickly switched off the gas and managed to control the situation before it became disastrous. In this way, a major accident was narrowly avoided. Had help arrived any later, nearby houses could also have been affected. When Kashi and his family returned home and learned what had happened, they were deeply shocked and frightened. At the same time, they expressed heartfelt gratitude towards the young man who saved their home in time. Kashi said, "If bhaiya had not come on time, our house could have burned down." Following this incident, people in the settlement have become more cautious. Several families said they would now make it a habit to carefully check gas stoves and electrical appliances before leaving their homes. The incident served as an important reminder that even a small moment of carelessness can lead to a major accident.

## BRINGING RELIEF AMIDST THE HEATWAVE: SUPPORTING THOUSANDS OF STREET-CONNECTED CHILDREN

from page no. 1

said, "After spending hours in the sun, getting cool water and a banana gives me energy again. Earlier, I often felt dizzy, but that happens much less now."

Community members also reported improved attendance at CHETNA's Alternative Education Centres despite the intense heat. Children continued participating actively in learning sessions, group activities, and recreational programs.

### Gurugram: Supporting Children in Informal Settlements

Children living in informal settlements in Gurugram face particularly difficult conditions during summer due to overcrowded housing and tin-roofed structures that become extremely hot.

Approximately 700 children received regular relief support, including cool drinking water, buttermilk, glucose-based drinks, and fruits.

Rani (14 years, name changed) explained, "It becomes impossible to sit inside the house during the afternoon. Even the fan blows hot air. Drinking cool water and buttermilk at the centre gives us relief."

Many children reported

that they had learned the importance of drinking water regularly and recognizing symptoms of dehydration. Parents appreciated the initiative, noting that it provided valuable support during a challenging period when they were away at work for long hours.

### Delhi: Promoting Hydration through the "Water Bell System"

The impact of the heatwave was particularly severe across several areas of Delhi. More than 500 children per day in West, South, and North-West Delhi received support through the initiative.

Children were provided with buttermilk, lemon water, Rooh Afza drinks, Glucon-D, and glucose biscuits. A unique feature of the Delhi intervention was the introduction of the "Water Bell System."

At regular intervals, a bell reminded children to stop their activities and drink water. What initially seemed unusual soon became a popular and effective habit-building exercise.

Zoya (13 years, name changed) said, "Whenever the water bell rang, we all stopped and drank water together. Now I understand how important it is to stay

hydrated in summer."

Community members reported that children began encouraging their siblings and parents to drink water regularly and adopt safe practices during extreme heat.

### Noida: Building Awareness Alongside Relief

Children living in Noida's informal settlements described how difficult it becomes to remain indoors during the day because of poor ventilation and high indoor temperatures.

Relief activities provided children with drinking water, buttermilk, Glucon-D, and nutritious snacks while also educating them about heat safety. Ruhani (15 years, name changed) shared, "Earlier, we simply tolerated the heat. Now we know how to protect ourselves from it."

Many children reported adopting healthier practices such as carrying water, covering their heads while outdoors, and resting in shaded areas when necessary.

### Lucknow: Strengthening Resilience and Awareness

In Lucknow, children reported experiencing fatigue, weakness, and headaches because of prolonged exposure to heat. Through the relief initiative, they

received cool drinking water, buttermilk, and nutritional support.

Sana (13 years, name changed) said, "During summer, I often felt too tired to study. After receiving the relief support, I feel much better."

Irfan (14 years, name changed) added, "We learned how to stay safe during extreme heat and now share this information with our friends and younger siblings."

Children and community members observed positive changes, including increased awareness about hydration and improved health practices.

### Beyond Relief: Building Awareness and Community Action

One of the most significant achievements of the initiative was that children did not merely receive relief materials; they also gained knowledge and practical skills to protect themselves during heatwaves.

Many children learned for the first time about dehydration, heat stroke, and heat-related illnesses. They understood the importance of drinking water frequently, covering their heads while outdoors, seeking shade, and recognizing warning signs of heat stress.

Balaknama reporters observed children taking leadership roles during relief activities—distributing water, assisting younger children, and reminding their peers to stay hydrated. These actions demonstrated that when children are provided with information and opportunities, they can become powerful agents of change within their communities.

Conversations with children, parents, and community members across Jaipur, Gurugram, Delhi, Noida, and Lucknow revealed that extreme heat is becoming one of the most serious challenges affecting vulnerable children. For those without access to permanent housing, safe drinking water, cooling facilities, or adequate shelter, every day of summer can be a struggle.

The Emergency Heat Relief Initiative not only provided immediate support but also equipped children and families with knowledge and skills to better cope with future heatwaves. The experience reinforced the importance of timely interventions that protect children's health, well-being, and dignity during periods of extreme climate stress.

# NANHE PARINDE EDUCATION MOBILE VAN BRINGS HOPE AND LEARNING, PREPARING A YOUNG GIRL FOR SCHOOL

Talkative Reporter Chandni and Balaknama Kishan

A positive change is now visible in the life of 12-year-old Kiran (name changed), who lives in a slum community in Sector 67, Noida. After staying away from education for several years, she has finally received an opportunity to reconnect with learning. This change has brought happiness not only to Kiran but also renewed hope for her parents regarding their daughter's future. Kiran shared that her family consists of only three members — her mother,

father, and herself. The family has been living in the settlement for the past six years. Her parents work as daily wage labourers and also earn a livelihood through waste segregation and scrap collection. They leave for work early in the morning and return late in the evening, due to which many household responsibilities fell on Kiran. Because of domestic responsibilities and financial hardship, she had been unable to attend school for the past four years. Kiran said that whenever she saw other children going to school, she too wished to study, read books, and learn



how to write. However, her family circumstances did not

allow this to happen. Over time, she began to feel that she might never get the chance to study again. Recently, the arrival of the "Nanhe Parinde Van" in the community brought a turning point in her life. Through this initiative, Kiran received an opportunity to begin learning again. She now attends classes regularly and is learning new things every day. Happily, she shared that she is now learning to read Hindi and is also trying to improve her writing skills. Since restarting her education, her confidence has grown significantly. She also shared

that her Aadhaar card has now been made, which she previously did not have. This has made her very happy, as she is now preparing for school admission. She hopes that soon she will be able to attend school like other children and continue her education. Kiran's parents are also extremely happy to see their daughter studying. They said they want her to become educated, independent, and move forward confidently in life. According to them, education is the most important key to securing a better future for children.

## WHEN PARENTS LEAD CHILDREN TOWARDS HARMFUL HABITS, WHAT CHOICES DO CHILDREN HAVE?



Talkative Reporter Sunny and Balaknama Reporter Kishan

A deeply concerning situation related to children has emerged from a settlement near the Char Murti area in Noida. During a conversation with journalists associated with the child rights platform Balaknama, 14-year-old Neha (name changed), a resident of the community, shared her concerns about the environment in the settlement. According to Neha, the atmosphere in the community is not safe or healthy for children. She said that not only adults, but even young children are

increasingly getting involved in substance use at an early age. She mentioned that there is a family in the settlement where the parents themselves consume intoxicating substances and do not stop their children from doing the same. Instead, they reportedly encourage children to consume products such as gutka, bidis, and alcohol. Children in the community shared that many of those falling into addiction are between 12 and 15 years old. When some children tried to raise their concerns and complained to elders, their voices were not taken seriously. They were often dismissed with

statements like, "These things do not cause addiction." The children also said that several young boys and girls use the money they earn from waste picking and scrap collection to buy such substances. Since many parents themselves struggle with addiction, they are unable to pay proper attention to their children. As a result, children's education is also being affected. Many children are gradually moving away from school and spending most of their day wandering around aimlessly. Other children in the settlement expressed sadness and concern after witnessing their friends getting trapped in such habits. They said it hurts them to see children of their own age moving towards a harmful path. This situation raises an important question — how long will children's futures continue to fall into darkness in such environments? Children need safe surroundings, positive guidance, and healthy company to grow and thrive. Parents, society, and community members must come together to take responsibility and ensure that children stay away from addiction and harmful influences so they can move towards a brighter future.

## OPEN DRAINS POSE SERIOUS HEALTH RISKS TO CHILDREN IN THE SETTLEMENT



Balaknama Reporter — Omansh and Talkative Reporter — Riya

A serious sanitation problem has emerged in the settlement of Ghata Village, Gurugram, where open sewers and unhygienic conditions are affecting the daily lives of residents. The issue came to light during a visit by Balaknama Reporter Omansh. During the visit, it was observed that the main pathway of the settlement had an open sewer with dirty water flowing across the road, spreading filth and creating a strong foul smell throughout the area. This road is the main route used by local residents

and school-going children. Children shared that they have to face the dirty surroundings and unbearable smell every day while going to and returning from school. Many children said they cover their mouths with their hands or cloth while crossing the area to avoid the stench. According to residents, the situation becomes even worse during the rainy season when dirty water spreads across the entire pathway. Continuous exposure to filth and open sewage has increased the risk of diseases among children and local people. Children reported that many residents have started suffering from itching, allergies, and skin-related problems. Due to stagnant dirty water and open drains, the number of flies and mosquitoes has also increased, raising fears of diseases such as dengue and malaria. Local residents said that the environment has become so unhygienic that it is difficult to live there comfortably. They also shared that visitors are often shocked after seeing the condition of the settlement and wonder how people are surviving in such surroundings. Residents believe that immediate attention should be given to this issue so that children and families can live in a clean and safe environment. They feel that proper sanitation and sewer management would improve children's health and provide relief from the daily hardships caused by the unhygienic conditions.

## "PAPA, PLEASE STOP DRINKING... I WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL"

Talkative Reporter Naina and Balaknama Reporter Kishan

During a recent visit by journalists to the slum settlements near the Char Murti area of Noida, a heartbreaking incident came to light that left everyone deeply concerned. While interacting with children in the community, a minor girl shared the struggles her family faces every day. Muskan (name changed) said that her family consists of her parents, herself, and her younger brother, who is around five years old. Her parents work as daily wage labourers, and the entire family lives in a rented slum dwelling. She shared that she accompanies her



parents to work every day and spends most of her time taking care of her younger brother at the worksite. Because of these responsibilities, her education has completely stopped. During the conversation, Muskan further revealed that her father

is addicted to alcohol. He often returns home intoxicated and creates conflicts within the family. According to her, her mother repeatedly requests her father to enrol Muskan in school, but the matter is always ignored. This issue frequently leads to arguments at home, and at times the fights become so intense that neighbours gather around to watch. Later, people often make fun of the family, which deeply hurts the young girl. Becoming emotional, Muskan said, "I do not like the fights at home at all. I want my father to stop drinking and get me admitted to school." "This incident does not only reflect the hardship of one family, but also highlights how poverty,

addiction, and lack of education continue to affect the future of children living in vulnerable communities. When children who should be in classrooms are instead spending their days at labour sites, it becomes a serious concern for society. The situation also raises an important question — when the very person responsible for the family's well-being becomes the reason behind conflict and disruption in a child's education, where can such families seek support? There is an urgent need for society and the administration to work together to provide guidance, counselling, and support to such families so that children's childhoods and futures can be protected.

## CHILDREN FROM THE SETTLEMENT SHINE AT SPORTS COMPETITION, WIN MULTIPLE MEDALS



Balaknama Reporter Dharamraj

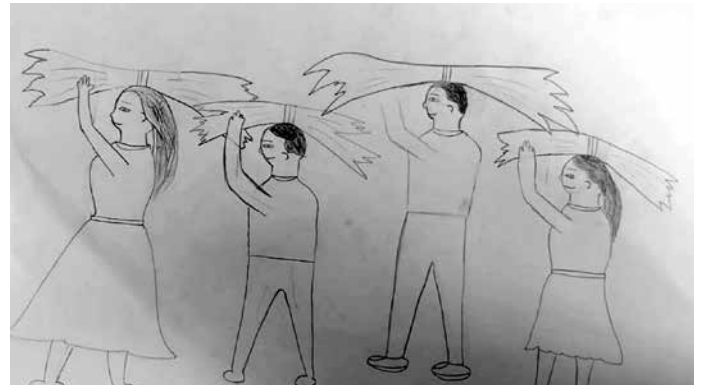
Children from the Ghasola settlement, including street-connected and working children, delivered an impressive performance at a recent sports competition organised at Government Model Sanskriti Primary School, Rosewood City, Sector 49, Gurugram. By participating enthusiastically in different games and races, the children won several medals and made everyone proud through their hard work and talent. The achievement was also highlighted by Balaknama Reporter Dharamraj. During conversations with the participants, the children expressed great happiness, confidence, and excitement about their success. They shared that participating in sports made them feel motivated and encouraged them to work even harder in the future. Thirteen-

year-old Shivam achieved remarkable success by winning three medals in the competition. He secured first position in both the Frog Race and the One Leg Race, while also winning third position in the running race. Dharamraj himself won first position in the Sack Race and secured third position in the running competition. Twelve-year-old Muskan showcased her talent by winning first position in the Lemon Race, while 11-year-old Taniya secured second position in the One Leg Race. The success of these children has brought immense happiness to their families and inspired many other children in the settlement to attend school, participate in sports, and stay connected with education. Their achievement clearly shows that when children receive the right opportunities, encouragement, and guidance, they can excel in every field and move confidently towards fulfilling their dreams.

## LACK OF COOKING GAS FORCES CHILDREN TO LEAVE THEIR STUDIES AND COLLECT FIREWOOD

Balaknama Reporter Farooq

The shortage of gas cylinders in the Wazirabad area has become a major problem for local families, with children's education being affected the most. During a visit by Balaknama Reporter Farooq, residents shared that gas cylinders are not being supplied on time, forcing many poor families to depend on firewood for cooking. As a result, children are often sent to nearby forests and open areas to collect wood instead of attending school. Many children said they want to study and go to school regularly, but due to household needs they are compelled to help their families. Suresh (name changed) shared, "When there



is no gas at home, we have to collect firewood. Sometimes because of this we are unable to attend school." Local residents believe that if gas cylinders are supplied regularly, children would not have to face such difficulties and could focus on their education instead of household responsibilities.

They also said that this issue is not only about the shortage of gas cylinders, but also about the future and education of children. People have urged the concerned authorities to address the problem quickly so that families can get relief and children's studies are not affected.

## GROWING UP IN THE SHADOW OF HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

Balaknama Reporter – Nandini

During a support group meeting organised in the settlement near the Jalvayu Tower Contact Point in Gurugram, a concerning reality about children's lives came to light. During a visit by Balaknama Reporter Nandini, several young children were seen engaged in work instead of enjoying their childhood. Some were helping carry goods, while others were busy with household chores, reflecting how economic and social hardships are slowly taking away children's right to education and a safe childhood. While cities continue to grow with tall buildings, modern roads, and advanced facilities, many children are still deprived of books, schools, and opportunities. At an age when children should be



studying and playing, they are burdened with responsibilities that affect both their present and future. Experts believe that child labour is not caused

only by poverty, but also by lack of awareness and the failure of welfare schemes to reach those in need. Families struggling with difficult circumstances often involve children in work, even though children need education, safety, and guidance the most. This situation raises an important question — should development only mean bigger buildings and modern infrastructure, or should it also ensure a better and secure future for children? There is an urgent need for society, local authorities, and organisations to work together to identify such children and connect them with education, support, and protection, because true development can only be achieved when every child gets the opportunity to study, play, and live a safe and dignified childhood.

## GROWING UP IN THE MIDST OF FAMILY CONFLICT

Balaknama Reporter – Tanmay Singh

Rising family disputes within communities are severely affecting children's lives and their future. During a visit by Balaknama Reporter Tanmay Singh, a case came to light where constant conflict between parents was negatively impacting both the childhood and education of their children. A boy shared the story of his friend, whose family originally belongs to West Bengal. According to him, the child's parents fight almost every day due to financial hardship and lack of stable work. The mother struggled to find permanent



employment and eventually started sweeping at a temple,

where she earned around ₹1500 per month. At times,

she also sought help from people outside the temple to support her children. Meanwhile, the father wanted her to earn more money, which led to frequent arguments that gradually turned violent. The situation worsened to the point where the father forced the mother to leave the house. Since then, the mother has been living separately while the children stay with their father, who now takes them along for rag-picking work. As a result, the children are unable to attend school regularly and are drifting away from education. They have also become separated from their mother, which is deeply

affecting their emotional and mental well-being. The mother says she wants to provide a better future for her children, but poverty and difficult circumstances remain major challenges. This situation highlights how parental conflicts have the greatest impact on children, forcing them to grow up in an environment of stress, fear, and insecurity, which can harm both their confidence and future. It also emphasizes the urgent need for families and society to understand that children require a safe, peaceful, and supportive home environment to grow, learn, and build a better future.

## BURDENED BY RESPONSIBILITIES, CHILDREN DRIFT AWAY FROM SCHOOL

Balaknama Reporter – Dharmaraj

A heartbreaking picture of child labour and economic hardship has emerged from the Ghasola community in Gurugram. During a visit by Balaknama Reporter Dharmaraj, the case of a teenage boy forced to shoulder family responsibilities at a very young age came to light. During the visit,

Dharmaraj saw a child selling fruits and vegetables on a cart. In conversation,

the boy introduced himself as Rehman (name changed), a 14-year-old resident of Fazilpur. Rehman works alongside his uncle, travelling through nearby villages with a street cart to earn money and support his family. He shared that his father has passed away, and his mother struggles to run the household through daily wage labour while caring for four children.

However, her earnings are not enough to cover food, rent, and other basic



expenses, and at times the family does not even get enough to eat. Because of these difficult circumstances, Rehman started working with his uncle to help support the family and ensure that his younger siblings do not go hungry. When asked about his education, Rehman said that he used to attend school but had to discontinue his studies. "If I go to school, I won't be able to earn money, and then my family will struggle for food. I cannot see my family hungry,"

he said. His words clearly reflected the harsh realities many children face, where the burden of survival forces them away from classrooms and childhood. This situation highlights how poverty and financial difficulties continue to push many children into labour at an early age. It also underlines the urgent need for financial support, free education, and family assistance programs to help such children reconnect with education and secure a safer and brighter future.

## OVERCOMING ILLNESS AND HARDSHIPS, GIRLS RETURN TO SCHOOL

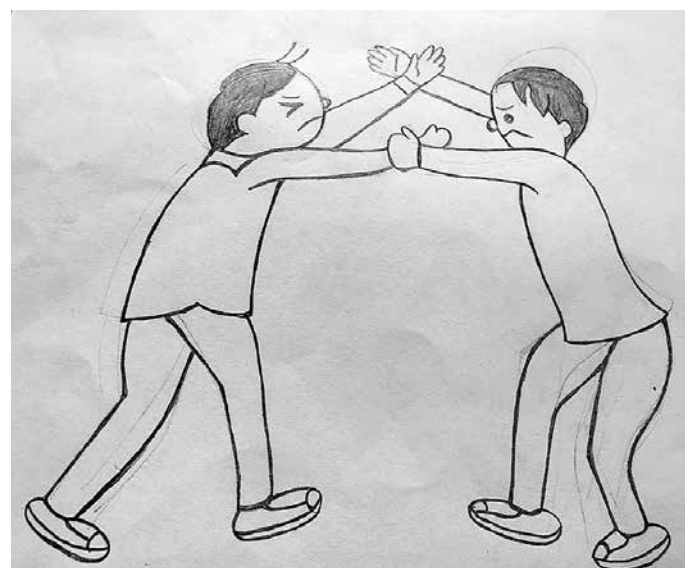
Balaknama Reporter – Preeti

During a visit by a Balaknama reporter to the N-86 community in West Delhi, nine-year-old Sneha (name changed) shared her inspiring journey of overcoming illness and continuing her education. Sneha said that she earlier lived in Bihar and regularly attended school like other children. However, her life changed when she suddenly fell seriously ill. She suffered from severe chest pain and often vomited blood, and her condition gradually worsened. Due to the lack of proper medical facilities in her village, her family moved to Delhi for treatment. During this difficult period, her studies completely stopped, and she began feeling lonely and sad at home, missing her school and friends. Later, Sneha met a social worker from Chetna Institution, who introduced her to the education center where many children came to study. Inspired by this environment, Sneha



regained interest in learning. Seeing her enthusiasm, the organization connected her with the education center, where she slowly began attending regularly, learning Hindi, and understanding her rights. The organization also helped prepare her documents and ensured her re-admission into school so that her education would not stop again. Today, Sneha is happily attending school once more, and her parents are delighted to see their daughter smiling and studying again after struggling with illness and sadness. Similarly,

12-year-old Ayesha (name changed) shared that she earlier lived in Haryana and studied in a private school. However, after her father lost his job, the family faced severe financial difficulties, making it impossible to pay her school fees. She also faced scolding from teachers because her family did not have a bank account linked to the school process. Hurt and discouraged by these problems, Ayesha decided to stop going to school. Later, her family moved to Delhi in search of work, where her father started selling vegetables, which slightly improved their financial condition. After coming to Delhi, Ayesha became connected with Chetna Institution, and with the organization's support, she was re-enrolled in school. Now she has started attending classes again and feels extremely happy to continue her education. Her family also hopes that she will move forward in life and fulfill her dreams.



## CHILDREN BECOME VICTIMS OF ADULTS' CONFLICT

Balaknama Reporter – Farooq

A recent violent incident in the Wazirabad area has raised serious concerns about children's safety within the community. The matter came to light during a visit by Balaknama Reporter Farooq, while Talkative Reporter Ajarul shared details of the incident involving a 15-year-old boy, Vikas (name changed), who

had recently arrived from Bihar. According to reports, Vikas was eating golgappas at a shop when a group of people from Bengal allegedly began abusing him without reason. Vikas responded to them, which soon escalated into an argument, and some individuals reportedly assaulted him. When he returned home injured, his family learned about the incident, and the information gradually spread among his friends. In anger, some of his friends later went to confront the group carrying sticks and wooden rods, leading to a violent clash in which several people were injured. The conflict continued the next day, and this time several children also became involved, resulting in injuries to some of them. The involvement of children in such violent disputes has deeply worried local residents. Since the incident, the area has been filled with fear and tension. Parents believe that such conflicts negatively affect children's education, mental well-being, and behaviour. Local people say that maintaining peace and encouraging dialogue within the community is essential to prevent such incidents in the future, while parents must also ensure that children are kept away from violence and disputes among adults.

## TOO YOUNG FOR SUCH RESPONSIBILITIES

Balaknama Reporter – Shirishtika

During a visit near GMD Tower in Gurugram, Balaknama Reporter Shirishtika tried to understand the challenges faced by children in the community. During the visit, she met 8-year-old Shifa (name changed), whose responsibilities are far greater than her age. In conversation, Shifa shared that she loves studying and dreams of going to school like other children, learning new things, and studying with friends. However, due to difficult family circumstances, her dream remains unfulfilled. She explained that her mother asks her to stay at home and take care of her younger siblings throughout the day. Along with caring for them, feeding them, and looking after



them, she is also responsible for several household chores such as sweeping, cleaning utensils, and maintaining the house. Because of these responsibilities, Shifa hardly

gets any time to study and is unable to attend the education centre in the GMD Tower community regularly. As a result, her education is gradually being affected, and

she is falling behind other children. While speaking with Shirishtika, Shifa's strong desire to study was clearly visible. She said that if given a chance, she would love to continue her education and fulfil her dreams. Her story reflects the reality faced by many children who are forced away from education due to household responsibilities and financial hardships. Often, children at a very young age are burdened with work that takes away both their childhood and learning opportunities. This situation highlights the urgent need for awareness, support, and collective efforts from families, communities, and social organisations to ensure that every child receives education, safety, and the chance to enjoy a proper childhood according to their age.

## HOMELESSNESS AFTER DEMOLITION TAKES A TOLL ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION



**Balaknama Reporter – Farooq**

A distressing incident recently came to light in the Wazirabad Sector 52 area, where the demolition of slums left several families homeless. The situation was observed during a visit by Balaknama Reporter Farooq, and children have been among the worst affected by the incident. According to local residents, the administrative

action took place suddenly, leaving families with little time to gather their belongings. Many people lost clothes, important documents, utensils, and children's books under the debris. Some families said that their children's school materials were also damaged, directly affecting their education. After the demolition, many families have been forced to live under the open sky without proper

shelter. Children are struggling to access basic necessities such as food, clean drinking water, and safe living spaces. The intense heat and unsafe conditions have further increased difficulties for young children and elderly people. During the visit, several children appeared upset and worried. Some shared that they are no longer able to attend school regularly because they no longer have books, uniforms, or a proper place to study. Constant displacement and uncertainty may also have a serious impact on children's mental well-being. Local residents and social workers have urged the authorities to immediately provide safe shelter for the affected families and ensure access to essential services such as education, food, water, and healthcare so that the future of these children is not further affected.



## DIRTY WATER AND POOR SANITATION LEAD TO RISING SKIN PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN

**Balaknama Reporter – Divyanshi**

People in the community are facing serious difficulties due to the lack of clean water and the unhygienic conditions surrounding them. The issue came to light during a visit by Balaknama Reporter Divyanshi, who observed that the dirty water stored in the community water tank had become a major concern for local residents. During conversations with community members, it was revealed that the tank had not been cleaned for a long time. Residents said that because the contractor has failed to ensure regular cleaning, garbage, dirt, and algae have accumulated in the water. Despite the poor condition, families are still forced to use the same water for bathing, washing clothes, cleaning, and sometimes even for drinking. As a result, cases of itching and skin-related problems are increasing among both children and adults.

Children shared that they often experience severe itching after using the water. The ongoing problem is affecting people's daily lives and creating an unhealthy living environment. The area around the water tank is also filled with dirt and waste, while residents are forced to wash utensils nearby amid foul smells and unhygienic conditions. Many people said that if the issue is not resolved soon, they may have to consider leaving the area and moving elsewhere. Local residents have reportedly complained to the contractor several times and demanded proper cleaning of the water tank, but no action has been taken so far. Community members believe that the concerned authorities and contractor must immediately ensure the cleaning of the tank and provide access to safe and clean water, along with regular sanitation measures, so that people can live in a healthier and safer environment.

## ZOO VISIT BRINGS JOY AND NEW EXPERIENCES TO CHILDREN FROM CHAKKARPUR



**Balaknama Reporter – Kajal Talkative Reporter – Deepanshu**

A special and memorable day was organised for children living in the Chakkarpur area of Gurugram when the Chetna team took them on an educational and recreational visit to the zoo. The trip was not just an outing for the children but also a new and exciting experience in their lives. During

the visit, Balaknama Reporter Kajal interacted with the children, whose faces reflected happiness and excitement. Many of them were visiting a zoo for the very first time. One child, Deepak (name changed), shared his joy and said, "Didi, the Chetna team took us to the zoo, and I really enjoyed it there." He explained that it was the first time he had seen so many animals from such

close distance. The children saw different kinds of deer, lions, white tigers, cheetahs, elephants, and monkeys. They were also fascinated by colourful birds such as parrots, macaws, pigeons, jungle fowls, owls, hawks, eagles, pheasants, and ostriches. In addition, they observed crocodiles, fish, swans, and ducks. For the children, the entire experience was both new and educational. Deepak shared that earlier he had only heard stories about zoos and never imagined he would get a chance to visit one himself, but this trip helped fulfil his dream. The visit proved to be highly inspiring for the children as it not only brought them happiness but also gave them an opportunity to learn more about nature and wildlife. Most importantly, it strengthened their belief that their dreams, too, can become reality.

## OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT: STUDENT SECURES SECOND POSITION

**Balaknama Reporter – Anjali**

Balaknama Reporter Anjali visited the Badshahpur community in Gurugram and interacted with school-going children regarding their annual examination results. During the conversation, 8-year-old Nisha (name changed) appeared very happy and excited. Nisha shared that she is associated with Chetna and studies in Class 2 at a government school in Badshahpur. She happily informed that in the examination results declared on 1st April, she secured second position in her class. For this achievement, her school teacher also honored



her with a prize. Nisha said that when she returned home with the award, she first showed it to her mother, who felt extremely proud and happy. Her mother encouraged her to continue studying with the same dedication and hard

work in the future. Nisha also shared her success with the social worker from Chetna, who praised her in front of other children, which further boosted her confidence and motivation. During the interaction, Nisha expressed that she wants to study even harder in the next class and aims to secure the first position. She also mentioned that she enjoys participating in art and craft activities and has received appreciation several times for her good performance in these activities. At the end, Balaknama Reporter Anjali encouraged all children to take inspiration from Nisha and continue their studies with dedication and determination.

## CHILDREN'S EDUCATION INTERRUPTED AS FAMILIES RETURN HOME FOR ELECTIONS



**Balaknama Reporter – Farooq**

During a visit to the Wazirabad area, Balaknama reporter Farooq found that many migrant families living in Gurugram are returning to their home state of West Bengal due to the upcoming elections. This situation is directly affecting the education of children. Many parents working in Gurugram travel back to their villages and towns to cast their votes during elections. Since it is not safe or possible to leave children alone, they take them along. As a result, children's studies get interrupted. Many children remain away from school for several days or even weeks, causing them to miss homework and break the continuity of their learning. In some cases, their exam

preparation is also affected. Staying away from school for long periods gradually reduces children's interest in studies as well. Parents shared that voting is both their right and responsibility, so they cannot ignore the elections. At the same time, they feel it is necessary to take their children with them for safety reasons. To reduce the impact of such situations, schools can arrange special classes so that children can complete their missed studies after returning. Online learning support and extra help from teachers can also benefit children. The government and schools should work together to ensure that children's education continues smoothly and is affected as little as possible during election periods.

## IN SEARCH OF FUEL, MOTHERS LEAVE YOUNG CHILDREN BEHIND

Balaknama Reporter – Anushka

A recent incident in Khota Colony, Gurugram, has raised serious concerns regarding children's safety. During a community visit, Balaknama Reporter Anushka heard children crying from inside a locked hut. No adult was present nearby, and the hut was locked from the outside, making the situation appear very serious. Reporter Anushka immediately sought help from people around her. With the assistance of a utensil seller passing by, the lock of

the hut was opened. Inside, they found an 8-year-old child sleeping while his 3-year-old younger brother was crying loudly. The two children had been left locked alone inside the hut for a long time. The reporter and the local man gave water to the children and tried to calm them down. Later, after speaking with nearby residents, it was discovered that the children's mother had gone to the forest to collect firewood. In the area, facilities such as cooking gas are not easily available, and the cost of firewood in



the market has also increased. Due to these hardships, many women are forced to collect wood from nearby forests so they can cook food for their families. As a result, small children are often left alone at home, putting them at serious risk. Staying alone inside locked huts can expose children to dangers such as electric shocks, fire accidents, or other emergencies, which could lead to severe incidents if timely help is not available. Understanding the seriousness of the situation, Reporter Anushka safely took

the children to their nearby relatives so they could be cared for until their mother returned. She also appealed to community members not to leave children alone at home. Following the incident, local residents expressed that they would be more careful in the future and pay greater attention to children's safety. The incident also highlights the urgent need for basic facilities such as cooking gas and other essential services in such communities so that families do not have to face such difficult situations.

## SMILES ALL AROUND AS STREET AND WORKING CHILDREN BEGIN THEIR SCHOOL JOURNEY

Balaknama Reporter – Anjali

Balaknama reporter Anjali interacted with children in the Goga Colony community of Gurugram to understand whether any children had recently been admitted to school and what challenges they were facing in the admission process. During the interaction, Arjun (name changed), a child associated with Chetna's education center in the community, happily shared that after facing many difficulties, he had finally secured admission to school. Arjun explained that during the admission process, his mother and a social worker from Chetna stayed at the school from morning onwards. Several important documents were required for admission, and some of them were not available with the family. The social worker played a significant role in helping them arrange the necessary documents. He shared that they had to make repeated visits to the CSC center and the school. Sometimes the



school would say the admission would happen, while at other times the process was delayed. The school asked for important documents such as a birth certificate and income certificate, which were not easy for the family to obtain. After many struggles and continuous efforts, his admission was finally completed. Arjun expressed great happiness and excitement about attending school regularly. He also shared that his mother had bought him a school uniform, which made him even more excited. Seeing other children around him going to school

inspired him to study as well. He has now become friends with children who are already attending school. Arjun further shared that his class teacher showed him his classroom, and he would soon begin attending school regularly. He also said that he would encourage other children in his community to take admission in school. In the end, reporter Anjali said that this was a very happy and inspiring moment and expressed hope that every child would be connected to their right to education and get the opportunity to fulfill their dreams.

## FATHER'S ALCOHOL ADDICTION DISRUPTS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Balaknama Reporter – Divyanshi

The growing problem of alcohol addiction in the community is now affecting children's education and future. During a field visit by Balaknama Reporter Divyanshi, it was observed that substance abuse has become one of the major reasons behind frequent family conflicts, and children are the ones suffering the most from these situations. Residents shared that some people in the community consume alcohol daily and often return home intoxicated, leading to arguments and domestic violence. Such an unhealthy environment creates fear and stress for children, making it difficult for them to focus on studies or continue attending school regularly. During the visit, the story of 13-year-old Richa (name changed) came to light. One night, her father returned home



drunk and took away money that had been kept aside for household expenses. This led to a serious fight between her parents. The situation became so tense that Richa's mother took her along to the house where she worked and later moved to her maternal home. The family conflict directly affected Richa's education. Although she had recently been enrolled in school, she was unable to attend classes for two to three days because of the ongoing problems at home. Richa loves studying and enjoys going to school, but her family circumstances are becoming a barrier to her education. Similar stories exist across the community, where many children are unable to attend school regularly because of constant conflicts caused by addiction at home. Living in an atmosphere of fear and stress gradually affects children's interest in studies, their mental well-being, and their overall development. Community members believe that awareness about de-addiction and family counselling is urgently needed so that children can grow up in a safer and more supportive environment.

## FINANCIAL STRUGGLES FORCE CHILDREN AWAY FROM EDUCATION

Balaknama Reporter – Jyoti

The education of many children living in Saraswati Vihar, Gurugram, is being seriously affected due to financial difficulties. While children in other parts of the city are moving ahead toward fulfilling their dreams through quality education, many children in this community are still deprived of schooling. Most families living in Saraswati Vihar are economically weak and survive through waste picking, daily wage labour, and domestic cleaning work. Due to poor financial conditions, children are often forced to support their families from a young age. As a result, many children are unable to attend school, while others are forced to



discontinue their studies midway. Several children in the community do not even have basic educational materials such as books, notebooks, and school uniforms. Some children also lack important documents like Aadhaar cards, making school admission difficult. Because of these challenges, many children are gradually

being pushed away from mainstream education. A 12-year-old girl, Jyoti (name changed), shared that she wanted to continue her studies, but family responsibilities forced her to start working. She now accompanies her mother to clean houses. Jyoti said, "I really loved studying, but now I do not get time for it. If

I get a chance, I would like to go back to school." Similarly, many young children spend their days collecting waste or accompanying their parents to work. The hands that should hold books and pencils are instead seen carrying sacks and brooms. At an age meant for learning and play, these children are burdened with responsibilities, affecting both their childhood and future. Community members believe that if children receive proper guidance, free education, and necessary facilities, they too can progress in life. They emphasized that schools, social organizations, and the government need to work together to ensure that every child gets access to education and the opportunity to fulfill their dreams.

## CHILDREN FACE HEALTH RISKS AMID WATER SHORTAGE IN THE SETTLEMENT

Talkative Reporter – Rahul and Balaknama Reporter – Kishan

People living in the slum settlements around Sector 67, Noida, are still deprived of many basic facilities despite being surrounded by developed parts of the city. One of the biggest problems in the area is the shortage of water, which is severely affecting children's hygiene and health. During a visit by Balaknama reporters, many small children were seen living in unhygienic conditions. Several children were wearing dirty clothes, while some appeared unclean because they had not bathed for many days. During the interaction, 13-year-old Rahul (changed name) shared that there is a severe water shortage in the settlement, making it difficult for families to maintain cleanliness even if they want to. According



to local residents, more than 500 slum huts are located in the area, where people live in small groups. Each group has a separate contractor, but there is no government water facility available anywhere in the settlement. People are dependent on nearby villages for water and many families spend around ₹500 every month to collect water through private motors. Residents also explained that whenever electricity cuts occur, the motors stop working for several days, making the water crisis even worse. In such situations, families are forced to fetch water from factories or other nearby places. Many women

and children carry water from long distances using carts or containers on their heads, which causes great hardship. People in the community said that they can keep their children clean only when water is available, but most of the time the shortage leads to unhygienic surroundings and increases the risk of diseases. This situation highlights that despite urban development; some settlements are still deprived of essential facilities. Local residents have appealed to the concerned authorities to ensure proper arrangements for water, electricity, and sanitation so that children's health and future can remain safe.

## STREET PLAY TURNS INTO AN ACCIDENT FOR A YOUNG CHILD

Balaknama Reporter – Preeti

During a visit by a Balaknama reporter to the N-86 community in West Delhi, seven-year-old Vivaan (name changed) was found recovering from a painful accident that recently took place while he was playing in the street. Vivaan and local residents shared that, like every day, he was playing catch with his friends in the neighborhood lane. The street was filled with laughter and excitement as the children enjoyed their game. Suddenly, while running fast during the game, Vivaan lost his balance and fell to the ground. As he fell, his head hit the ground directly, causing an injury and heavy bleeding from his head. Seeing this, the other children became frightened. Some children immediately rushed to help him, while others called nearby adults for assistance. As soon as Vivaan's mother learned about the incident, she quickly reached



the spot and took him to a nearby hospital without delay. Doctors provided immediate first aid and, after examination, informed the family that the injury was not very serious but that Vivaan would need proper rest for a few days. The doctors also advised the family to regularly care for the wound and ensure that he remains careful for some time so he can recover completely. After this incident, both the family and local residents have become more alert regarding children's safety while playing in the streets.

## CHILD INJURED AS STRAY DOG THREAT GROWS IN THE COMMUNITY

Balaknama Reporter – Karan

The problem of stray dogs is continuously increasing in Nathupur settlement, raising serious concerns about the safety of children, especially young ones. During a visit by Balaknama reporter Karan Kumar, an incident came to light that created fear and anxiety among the residents of the community. During



the visit, Karan noticed a 12-year-old boy, Shubhkant (name changed), crying. When he spoke to him, the child explained that he was returning home when suddenly a stray dog came from behind and bit him on the leg. The dog bite caused a deep wound, and his leg started bleeding badly. As soon as Karan learned about the incident, he immediately called the child's mother and informed her about what had happened. Seeing her son's condition, the mother became extremely worried. Karan tried to calm her down and advised her to take the child to a doctor immediately. Shubhkant's mother quickly took him for medical treatment. After examination, the doctor said that the dog bite was deep and that timely injections were very important. The doctor

provided first aid and advised that the child should receive four anti-rabies injections. The doctor also warned that negligence in treatment could lead to serious illness. After this incident, an atmosphere of fear has spread across the settlement. Many parents are now afraid to send their children outside alone. Residents say that the number of stray dogs in the area is increasing rapidly, but no concrete steps have yet been taken to address the problem. People in the community believe that immediate action is necessary to ensure children's safety so they can play and go to school without fear.

## PARENT MEETINGS FOSTER SAFER CHILDHOODS THROUGH POSITIVE CHANGE

Balaknama Reporter – Amrit

Parent meetings organized in Valmiki Camp, West Delhi, are now showing a positive impact on children and their families. Through these meetings, parents were informed about children's education, safety, and rights. Many parents have now started listening to and understanding their children more carefully than before. Twelve-year-old Riya (name changed), who studies at the center, shared, "My mother learned many things from these meetings. She now knows about the POCSO Act. She explains to us which touch is safe and which is unsafe. She also spreads awareness about this among other women." During the meetings, the POCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual



Offences Act) was explained in simple language. Parents were informed that the law is meant to protect children from inappropriate touching, abuse, and any form of exploitation. They were also advised that if a child feels scared, uncomfortable, or disturbed by any touch, the matter should be taken seriously and immediate attention should be given. Fourteen-year-old Neeru (name changed) also

shared her experience, saying, "Now my mother listens to us carefully. Earlier, when we said something, she did not pay much attention, but now she tries to understand us." The experiences shared by the children clearly show that parent meetings are increasing awareness among families, and parents are becoming more sensitive towards their children's safety, emotions, and concerns.

## HEALTH CAMP RAISES AWARENESS AND SUPPORTS CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Balaknama Reporter Farooq

A health camp organized in Wazirabad, Sector 52, Gurugram, witnessed enthusiastic participation from children who came forward to undergo health check-ups and learn about hygiene, nutrition, and healthy living. The primary objective of the camp was to assess children's health conditions and raise awareness about



cleanliness and proper dietary habits. During the camp, doctors conducted health examinations and provided valuable advice to children

and their families. The children actively participated and showed keen interest in understanding their health needs. A serious concern also came to light during the event when it was discovered that a child who had been bitten by a dog had not yet received a rabies vaccination. Upon learning this, the organizers immediately called the child's mother and explained the urgent need

for timely rabies treatment to prevent serious health complications. Organizers emphasized that such health camps play an important role in promoting children's well-being by providing access to health information and early medical intervention. Parents appreciated the initiative and expressed the need for more such programs in the future to ensure the health and safety of children in their communities.

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

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

Balaknama thanks HCL Foundation, Azim Premji Foundation and Mcarbon Tech Innovation Pvt. Ltd. for helping us in publishing our newsletter. You can also help us with publishing. Balaknama is written originally in Hindi by children reporters. This is translated version of Hindi and translation assistance is taken from adults ensuring the original feel intact.