

BALAKNAMA

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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.

TRAINING OF CHILD TRAINERS – CHILDREN DISCOVER A NEW PATH TO LEADERSHIP THROUGH A FIVE-DAY RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP

Balaknama Reporter: Preeti, Jahana, Asif, Nitin

Have you ever wondered what the daily life of street-connected and working children looks like, from morning to night? While some children begin their day preparing for school, others start their morning by collecting water, cleaning, helping with household chores, or taking on family responsibilities. Many children face a lack of access to water, sanitation, and other basic facilities. Some are required to take up work responsibilities at a very young age. As a result, finding time for education, play, and rest becomes a challenge. Despite these circumstances, children have dreams of their own. They want to learn, move forward, build their identity, and do something meaningful for other children like themselves. What they need is an opportunity to showcase their talents, express themselves, and take on leadership roles.

With this vision, CHETNA has been working with street-connected and working children to promote their rights, education, protection, and better future

opportunities. As part of this initiative, a five-day residential workshop was organised from 21 to 25 July 2026 at Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Kukas, Rajasthan.

A total of 38 children participated in the workshop from Delhi, Gurugram, and Noida, including 18 boys and 20 girls. Children from the Street to Skills Project in Delhi, Khilti Kaliyaan Project in Gurugram, and Nanhe Parindey Project in Noida participated in the workshop. The workshop was facilitated with the participation of 19 team members, including 4 men and 15 women. Children from different cities and communities lived and learned together for five days. They participated in games, discussions, group activities, creative exercises, and performances while sharing their experiences and talents. In the beginning, some children were hesitant to speak in front of a group. However, through continuous activities and group exercises, their confidence gradually increased, and they began expressing themselves more openly. The workshop had an important objective of preparing children to become Child Trainers. Children were



encouraged to understand that the knowledge and skills they gain can be shared with other children in their communities. They practised explaining ideas in simple language, speaking before groups, asking questions, listening to others, and using activities as a tool for learning. Special emphasis was placed on leadership, confidence, teamwork, responsibility, and communication skills.

Throughout the five days, learning was connected with practical and participatory activities. Games, group discussions, theatre, music, question-and-answer sessions, creative activities, and presentations provided children with opportunities to express themselves. They discussed important issues such as the POCSO Act, child

marriage, and child labour. These topics were explained through simple language and interactive activities so that children could understand them and later share accurate information with other children in their communities.

A special session on child protection and the POCSO Act was conducted during the workshop. The session began with an activity involving red, yellow, and green cards. Children selected cards according to their existing understanding of the topic. This helped the facilitators assess how much the children already knew about child protection and POCSO.

A video based on the story of Riya was then shown. Through the video, children discussed safe and unsafe touch, understanding

personal boundaries, and the importance of speaking to a trusted person when they experience an unsafe situation. After the video, children were encouraged to answer questions and share their views. They were given space to ask questions, think critically, and express themselves without hesitation.

During the session on child marriage, children openly discussed the issue and its consequences. They understood that marriage at an early age can negatively affect a child's education, health, safety, and future. Children also shared situations and experiences they had observed in their surroundings. During the discussion, children were encouraged to understand the importance of informing a trusted adult or accessing appropriate support systems if they become aware of a situation where a child is being forced into marriage at an early age.

Through songs and creative activities, children also conveyed the message that every child should have the opportunity to study, play, learn, and dream about their future.

The discussion on child **continue on page. no. 2**

NEW DOCUMENTS OPEN DOORS TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

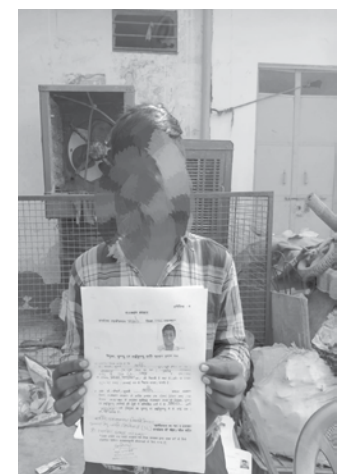
Balaknama Reporter: Deepak Talkative Reporter: Tarun

For many families living in Prem Nagar, an informal settlement in Jaipur, receiving caste certificates has brought new hope for their children's education. For years, the lack of this essential document prevented families from applying for scholarships, submitting required school documents, and accessing various government welfare schemes. Thanks to the

collective efforts of the community and support from the local administration, many families have now obtained their caste certificates. During a visit to Prem Nagar, Balaknama reporters spoke with children and their families about the impact of this development. Fourteen-year-old Varun (name changed) said, "Earlier, our family did not have a caste certificate. The school often asked for it, but we couldn't provide one.

Now that we have received it, applying for scholarships and completing other important school-related formalities will be much easier." Community members shared that they gathered the required documents and approached the Tehsil office, which helped many families complete the process. They explained that the certificates had been delayed for years due to a lack of information and incomplete documentation. Families believe that having

caste certificates will make it easier for children to continue their education by meeting school requirements and applying for scholarships and other government schemes. Those whose certificates are still pending have also started the application process. Residents of Prem Nagar say that timely information and cooperation from the administration have helped resolve a long-standing issue, and they hope that the remaining families will



soon receive their documents so that more children can continue their education and benefit from government welfare schemes.

YOUNG GIRL BALANCES EDUCATION AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak
Talkative Reporter: Kanha

Twelve-year-old Radhika (name changed), who lives in Bagrana settlement in Jaipur, has learned to shoulder family responsibilities from a young age. Alongside her mother, she works from home embellishing sarees with decorative stones while continuing her education with dedication and consistency despite her family's financial hardships. In addition to attending school regularly, she also visits CHETNA's Education Centre every day to continue her studies. During a visit to the settlement, Balaknama reporter Deepak met Radhika helping her mother with the saree work at home. She explained that her father supports the family by driving an e-rickshaw, but because work is not available every day, the family's income is often uncertain. During such times, her mother earns extra income by decorating sarees with stones, and Radhika carefully helps by placing each stone by hand. "I go to school regularly and also attend CHETNA's Education Centre every day. After returning home, I help my mother with



her work. The money we earn helps with our household expenses. Sometimes I even buy my notebooks, school bag, shoes, and other study materials with this income so that I can reduce the financial burden on my family," she said. Despite balancing work and family responsibilities, Radhika has never compromised on her education. She completes her homework every day, prepares for her examinations, and believes that education is essential for her future. When Balaknama reporters asked about her dream, she smiled and said, "I want to

become a teacher when I grow up. I want to teach children who do not have access to education." Residents of Bagrana settlement say that many children continue their education while helping support their families despite financial difficulties. Radhika is one of those children who works hard every day to balance work and studies while building a better future. Her story reflects the determination and resilience of children who refuse to give up on their dreams and continue striving for a brighter future when given the opportunity.

CHILDREN LEAD AWARENESS RALLY TO RAISE THEIR VOICES AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Balaknama Reporter: Farooq

On the occasion of the World Day Against Child Labour, street-connected and working children organised an awareness rally in Wazirabad, Gurugram, to raise public awareness about the harmful effects of child labour and highlight every child's right to education. The rally saw enthusiastic participation from children, social workers, and members of the local community. Carrying placards and banners, the children raised powerful slogans such as "Stop Child Labour, Ensure the Right to Education," "Childhood is for Learning, Not for Working," and "Every Child Deserves Education and Respect." Through these messages, they appealed to society to ensure that every child enjoys a safe, happy, and dignified childhood. The rally passed through various streets and public places in Wazirabad, where the children interacted with local residents and explained the harmful impact of child labour. They shared that forcing children to work at a young age deprives them of

education, affects their physical and mental development, and puts their future at risk. The children also urged parents and community members not to engage children in labour and to support regular school attendance for every child. As part of the programme, an interactive session on child rights was also organised. Social workers informed the children about their fundamental rights, including the rights to education, healthcare, protection, safety, and a life with dignity. They emphasised that eliminating child labour is a shared responsibility that requires not only government action but also the active participation of every member of society. At the end of the rally, the children pledged to remain vigilant about incidents of child labour in their communities, raise awareness among others, and continue promoting education and child rights. The awareness rally played an important role in spreading a positive message against child labour and encouraging the community to become more sensitive towards protecting children's rights.

TRAINING OF CHILD TRAINERS – CHILDREN DISCOVER A NEW PATH TO LEADERSHIP THROUGH A FIVE-DAY RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP

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labour was closely connected to the children's own lives and communities. Children were asked where they had seen other children working and how work affects their education, play, and everyday lives.

Children shared that financial difficulties and family responsibilities often force children to work at a young age. Through the discussion, they understood the importance of education, safety, play, rest, and opportunities for healthy development. They also learned that they can play an important role in creating awareness among other children in their communities about education and child rights.

The workshop also included practical trainer-training sessions. Children were taught that a good trainer does more than simply provide information. A good trainer listens to others, encourages every member of the group to participate, and explains difficult topics in simple and understandable ways. Children learned how to begin a session, attract the attention of a group, ask appropriate questions, and explain topics through activities. They were then divided into smaller groups

and given the opportunity to become trainers themselves. The children conducted activities for their peers and spoke about different topics. Their peers provided feedback on their presentations. This practical exercise helped reduce hesitation and strengthen their confidence in public speaking. Children began to recognise that they were not only learners but could also become facilitators and educators for others.

Games were used as an important learning tool throughout the workshop. Through group games and activities, children learned to make decisions together, support one another, take responsibility, and move forward as a team. These activities strengthened their sense of teamwork, communication, and leadership.

Music and songs were also used as tools for awareness. Children created songs around issues such as child marriage, child labour, and child protection. They worked together to write lyrics, decide on key messages, and prepare their performances. Through this process, children understood that songs, theatre, poetry, and other creative methods can be powerful ways of spreading awareness about

social issues.

On the fifth day of the workshop, children presented what they had learned during the five days. They enthusiastically participated in group dance, songs, question-and-answer sessions, debates, and other creative performances.

Their presentations reflected growing confidence, teamwork, and understanding of the topics covered during the workshop. In recognition of their efforts and participation, children were awarded certificates, medals, and traditional saafas. One of the key achievements of the workshop was the selection of 15 children as Child Trainers. The group includes 6 boys and 9 girls. These children will now play a role in creating awareness among other children in their respective communities on child rights, child protection, education, and other important issues.

Fourteen-year-old Arif (name changed) shared:

"Earlier, I used to feel hesitant speaking in front of everyone. But when I got the opportunity to conduct activities in small groups and express my views, my confidence increased. Now I feel that I can easily speak in front of others."

Thirteen-year-old Sana

(name changed) said:

"I learned many new things about child protection. During the POCSO and child protection session, I learned about safe and unsafe touch, recognising my personal boundaries, and the importance of speaking to a trusted person when I face a difficult situation."

Fifteen-year-old Rehan (name changed) shared:

"I got an opportunity to think about issues such as child marriage and child labour. I tried to look at the situations around me from a different perspective and understood that early marriage and child labour can affect children's education and childhood."

Twelve-year-old Imran (name changed) said:

"Learning through games and songs was easy and enjoyable. When serious topics were explained through games, songs, and creative activities, they became easier to understand and remember."

Balaknama Reporter Preeti shared that the five-day residential workshop was an important experience in recognising children's capacities and strengthening their voices. Children from different communities came together, learned from one another, and received opportunities to express

themselves.

During the five days, children worked on their hesitation, developed new skills, and began understanding that they can play an important role in supporting other children in their communities. They learned that having knowledge about rights is important, but sharing that knowledge with others is equally important.

They also understood that leadership is not limited to standing on a stage and speaking. Listening to others, taking everyone along, accepting responsibility, and raising one's voice for another child when needed are also important aspects of leadership.

At the end of the workshop, 15 children were prepared to take on the role of Child Trainers. Their learning will not remain limited to the workshop or to themselves. They will carry this knowledge back to their communities and work towards sharing information related to child rights, child protection, and education with other children.

In this way, the learning of five days will continue beyond the workshop—moving with the children into their communities and strengthening children's voices and leadership.

CHILDREN-POLICE INTERACTION BUILDS TRUST AND STRONGER COMMUNITY BONDS



Balaknama Reporter: Anjali

CHETNA organised an interface meeting for street-connected and working children at Badshahpur Police Station to strengthen communication between children and the police, build mutual trust, and raise awareness about children's rights and safety. On arriving at the police station, the children interacted with police officers and staff, introduced themselves, and shared how their lives had changed after joining CHETNA. Priya, a child leader from the education centre, confidently introduced her fellow participants, while Balaknama reporter Anjali

introduced herself and explained the work being carried out by children through Balaknama. Police officers asked the children what they had learned through CHETNA. The children shared that the organisation had helped them access education, understand their rights, and enrol in school. They also explained that they are now more aware of their rights and actively encourage other children to become informed as well. During the meeting, discussions focused on child rights and child protection laws. Police officers asked the children questions about various legal provisions, and the children responded by presenting their knowledge of

the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act through an awareness song, which they proudly shared had also been professionally recorded. Impressed by their performance, the police officers applauded the children and appreciated their confidence and awareness. The officers also informed the children about the Child Helpline 1098, explaining that any child facing violence, abuse, child labour, exploitation, or other forms of distress can seek immediate assistance through the helpline. They assured the children that the police are always committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. The meeting concluded with both the children and the police officers pledging to continue building trust, cooperation, and mutual support. The interface meeting proved to be an important step in fostering a friendly relationship between children and the police while strengthening children's sense of safety, confidence, and awareness of their rights.

CHILD PROTECTION AND POCSO SESSION EQUIPS CHILDREN WITH ESSENTIAL SAFETY SKILLS

Balaknama Reporter: Preeti

A Child Protection and POCSO Awareness Session was organised in the N-86 community in Delhi through a joint effort by CHETNA and the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU), North-West. The session aimed to educate children about the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, safe and unsafe touch, child protection, and Child Helpline 1098. The session was facilitated by Meenakshi Sharma, Protection Officer from the District Child Protection Unit. The programme began with an introduction session, followed by an open discussion with children about their safety, rights, and everyday experiences. The children were informed that the POCSO Act protects all children below the age of 18 from sexual abuse, harassment, and other sexual offences. They were also explained that the law provides protection to children in case of inappropriate incidents and that legal action can be taken against the person responsible. During the session, children were given detailed information about safe and unsafe touch. They learned that safe touch is one that makes a child feel comfortable and secure, while unsafe touch can make a child feel uncomfortable, frightened, or disturbed. The children were sensitively informed that if anyone tries to touch them inappropriately, shows them inappropriate pictures or videos, or makes them feel unsafe in any way, they should not remain silent. They were introduced to the "No, Go and



Tell" safety rule: clearly say "No", move away from the situation, and immediately tell a trusted adult about what happened. The session also focused on the role of Child Helpline 1098. Children were informed that the free helpline is available 24 hours a day and can be contacted in cases involving violence, abuse, child labour, child marriage, trafficking, or any other difficulty faced by a child. They were also told that their concerns are treated confidentially and that appropriate support is provided according to their needs. Thirteen-year-old Noor (name changed) said, "I did not know much about the POCSO law earlier. Through this session, I learned that I can seek help by calling 1098 if I face any problem. We were also taught about creating a circle of trusted people whom we can approach whenever we need help." Fourteen-year-old Gauri (name changed) said, "I asked the DCPU team about the kinds of cases in which they help children. I learned that children can receive support and protection in cases of child marriage, child labour, violence, and abuse. Now I know much more about my rights." Twelve-

year-old Mishti (name changed) shared, "Today I understood clearly for the first time what safe and unsafe touch means. If anyone ever makes me feel uncomfortable, I will not remain silent and will seek help from my parents, teacher, or 1098." Thirteen-year-old Arbaaz (name changed) said, "Today's session helped me understand that protecting myself is also important. If something like this happens to one of my friends, I will encourage them to seek help from a trusted adult and call 1098." Fourteen-year-old Preeti (name changed) shared, "I knew very little about 1098 earlier. Now I know that it is a 24-hour service available to help children. I will also share this information with my friends and family." Throughout the session, children actively asked questions and clarified their doubts. Through discussions, examples, and activities, they learned about personal safety, their rights, and the different ways to seek help when needed. The children said that they now feel more aware and confident about speaking up and seeking help from trusted people instead of remaining silent when they encounter an unsafe situation.

CHILDREN TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT 24TH BADHTE KADAM FOUNDATION DAY

**Balaknama Reporter: Damini
Talkative Reporter: Rehana**



The 24th Badhte Kadam Foundation Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at various CHETNA Ngo Alternative Education Centres under the Chamakte Sitare project in Jaipur. On the occasion, children showcased their talents and leadership skills through songs, skits, creative activities, and other performances. Balaknama reporter Damini visited several CHETNA Alternative Education Centres across Jaipur and spoke with children about their experiences. The children shared that being associated with Badhte Kadam has increased their confidence. They said they are now more aware of their rights and feel more comfortable expressing their opinions. During the celebration, children participated in colourful costumes and shared their thoughts on children's rights, equality, identity, and leadership. Through a play on child rights, they spread messages about children's rights to education, protection, participation, and identity. One of the highlights of the programme was the "Champion Tree (Sankalp Tree)" activity, through which children decided what kind of child champions they wanted to become in their communities. Some pledged to become Education Champions, while others expressed their

desire to work for cleanliness, the environment, health, sports, equality, and child rights. The children placed their individual commitment leaves on the Champion Tree and pledged to work towards fulfilling them. Twelve-year-old Heena (name changed) said, "The Champion Tree activity gave me an opportunity to think about my future. I want to become an Education Champion and encourage other children to continue their studies." Thirteen-year-old Kishan (name changed) shared, "My confidence has increased after joining Badhte Kadam. Now I can express my views openly, and I also attend school regularly." The programme concluded with the children coming together to perform the inspirational "Badhte Kadam" song. The children pledged to share information about their rights with other children and work towards bringing positive changes in their communities. They said that being part of Badhte Kadam has given them opportunities to showcase their talents, gain new experiences, and take on leadership responsibilities.

RAINWATER FLOODS SETTLEMENT HOMES, DEEPENING CHILDREN'S HARDSHIPS

Balaknama Reporter: Asif



Continuous rainfall has increased the difficulties faced by children and families living in Kamla Nehru Camp in Delhi. Rainwater has entered several homes, disrupting daily life and damaging household belongings. Many families have had to deal with wet furniture and other essential items, while children are often forced to remain indoors for long periods. Balaknama reporter Asif visited the settlement and spoke with local residents about the situation. Residents explained that waterlogging in the lanes during heavy rain makes it extremely difficult to move around. In some places, the water rises so much that the roads become almost inaccessible. Children face difficulties travelling to and from school, and because the roads become slippery, families are often afraid to allow younger children to go outside alone. Fourteen-year-old Anjali (name changed) said, "Whenever there is heavy rain, water enters our home. The first thing we have to do is remove the water before we can do anything else. Many times our books, notebooks, and other belongings also get wet." Thirteen-year-old Sameer

(name changed) shared, "After it rains, there is so much water in the lane that going to school becomes difficult. Sometimes when the usual route is blocked, we have to take another way, which takes much longer to reach school." Residents said that the same situation occurs almost every rainy season because of inadequate drainage. Water from the drains often overflows into the lanes and reaches nearby homes, creating difficulties particularly for children, elderly residents, and people travelling to work. Local residents believe that regular cleaning of drains and a better water drainage system could provide significant relief from the problem. Families in the settlement hope that the concerned authorities will take action so that children and families can remain safe during the rainy season and avoid these daily difficulties.



DESPITE FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, SANA CONTINUES HER JOURNEY TOWARDS EDUCATION

Balaknama Reporter: Anushki
Talkative Reporter: Anshu

During a community visit, Balaknama reporter Anushki met 12-year-old Sana (name changed), who was busy cooking on a stove under the scorching sun. During their conversation, Anushki learned that Sana had not been able to attend school or join an education centre because of her responsibilities at home. Sana has three younger siblings, while her parents leave home every morning for daily-wage work and return late in the evening. In their absence, Sana is responsible for taking care of her younger siblings, preparing their meals, and managing other household chores. She said, "If I don't cook, my younger brothers and sisters may have to remain hungry throughout the day." During the conversation, reporter Anushki told Sana about CHETNA's Education Centre, where many children like her regularly come to study. She explained that the centre provides children with opportunities to learn not only academics but also life skills and participate in creative activities. After hearing about the centre, Sana expressed her desire to study and said that she would like to attend. When Sana visited the Education Centre for the first time, she saw

children like herself studying, playing, and participating in different activities. While speaking with other girls, she learned that some of them also manage responsibilities at home while regularly attending the centre. This encouraged Sana and helped her believe that she too could continue her education while managing her responsibilities. Following this, CHETNA's team members met with Sana's parents and explained the importance of education and the activities offered at the Education Centre. After the discussion, her parents agreed to support her and allow her to attend the centre regularly. Today, Sana attends the Education Centre regularly, where she is learning letter recognition, reading and writing, basic mathematics, life skills, and various creative activities. Her interest in learning has grown, and she now participates enthusiastically in the centre's activities. Sana's story shows that many children remain disconnected from education because of responsibilities at home. With timely information, family support, and access to learning opportunities, the doors of education can also open for such children, giving them a chance to begin their educational journey anew.

GARBAGE BAGS ON SHOULDERS AT SCHOOL AGE

Balkanama Reporter: Deepak

During a visit to Jaipur's Lakhesara slum, Balkanama reporter Deepak overheard an incident that made him reflect on the fact that not all children have the same childhood. While some children rush to class upon hearing the school bell, others head to the garbage dumps as soon as morning arrives. Salman (name changed), a 13-year-old resident of the slum, shared the story of two children, Mohit and Jeetu. Salman explained that the two children come to the slum daily to pick garbage. They carry a large sack in which they collect plastic, paper, and other waste. Salman explained that one day he spoke to the children. He asked, "Why do you work so hard every day?" The children explained that their family's financial situation is very poor. Their mother works as a laborer, but that doesn't cover the family's needs. Therefore, the two brothers help their family by picking garbage. The

children also revealed that their father, due to his drug addiction, shirks family responsibilities. The mother and children struggle to make ends meet. The money earned from selling garbage is sometimes used to buy groceries and sometimes to meet other household needs. Salman said, "When I heard them, I felt very sad. They are children like us. They too must have dreams, but circumstances forced them to work." This incident raises an important question for society. Why are some children burdened with responsibilities instead of enjoying their childhood? Why are some children deprived of their right to education and play? Every child has the right to go to school, live in a safe environment, and have the opportunity to fulfill their dreams. It's essential to identify such children and connect them with education, protection, and government programs, so that they have books in their hands, not garbage bags, and a bright future.

COMMUNITY MEETING BRINGS PARENTS TOGETHER TO DISCUSS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND RIGHTS

Balaknama Reporter: Jeet

CHETNA organised a parent meeting at the ERC Chakkarpur Centre in Gurugram to discuss children's education, safety, rights, and overall development. A large number of parents participated in the meeting and shared their views on various issues affecting their children. The meeting began with a discussion on the importance of education, followed by a review of each child's progress card. Parents were updated on their children's regular attendance, academic progress, and learning levels. They were also encouraged to set aside time for their children's studies at home and support them in attending school regularly. The meeting also focused on the school enrolment of children who had not yet been admitted. The CHETNA team explained the admission process, required documents, and relevant government schemes to the parents. They also assured families that necessary support would be provided if they faced any difficulties



during the admission process. The importance of Aadhaar cards was also discussed in detail. Parents were informed that Aadhaar and other essential documents are often required for school admission, scholarships, and accessing various government schemes, and that these documents should be obtained or updated on time. Parents whose children did not yet have Aadhaar cards or whose details needed correction were provided with information and guidance on the process. During the meeting, parents shared their experiences and concerns related to their children's education, documentation, and other challenges. The CHETNA

team listened to their concerns and answered their questions. Parents were also encouraged to prioritise their children's education, safety, and rights and to create a positive and supportive environment for children at home and within the community. At the end of the meeting, several parents shared that such meetings help them understand their children's education, essential documentation, and available government schemes. They felt that regular discussions between families and the organisation help create better coordination and support children in continuing their education and moving towards a brighter future.

CHILDREN BRING "BADHTE KADAM-YE HAIN BACHCHON KA SANGH" TO LIFE IN THE RECORDING STUDIO

Balaknama Reporter: Jeet

For six children associated with CHETNA, recording the inspirational song "Badhte Kadam, Ye Hain Bachchon Ka Sangh" at a professional recording studio in Delhi became a memorable and empowering experience. It was not just an opportunity to record a song, but also a chance for the children to showcase their talent on a new platform and build confidence in themselves. Three girls and three boys participated in the recording, using their voices to express children's dreams, confidence, struggles, and determination to move forward. As soon as the children entered the studio, their excitement and curiosity were clearly visible. The modern recording equipment, microphones, and headphones were completely new to them. Although some of the children were initially a little nervous, their confidence soon became evident in their voices once the recording began. The children had been practising regularly for several months as part of CHETNA's music training programme, working hard to understand the rhythm, melody, and emotions of the song. Their consistent practice prepared them for the opportunity to showcase their talent in



a professional recording environment. During the recording, some portions had to be recorded several times, but the children remained patient and enthusiastic and tried to improve with every take. The people present at the studio appreciated the children's hard work, dedication, and confidence. Thirteen-year-old Aarav (name changed) happily shared, "Singing in a studio was a completely new experience for me. I was a little nervous at first, but after completing the recording, I felt really happy. Now I feel that working hard can create opportunities like this." Twelve-year-old Siya (name changed) said, "I never imagined that I would get an opportunity

to sing in a recording studio. This experience has increased my confidence, and now I feel even more motivated to learn and improve my singing." CHETNA regularly organises music, dance, writing, and other creative activities to encourage children to explore and develop their interests and talents. The recording gave these children a new experience and an opportunity to believe in their own abilities. After the recording was completed, the children's faces reflected happiness, satisfaction, and confidence. For them, the experience will remain a special memory that encouraged them to believe in themselves and take another step towards their dreams.

HEAVY RAINS FLOOD SLUM COMMUNITIES, LEAVING CHILDREN TO COPE WITH THE CRISIS

Balaknama Reporter: Anjali

After heavy and continuous rainfall, Balaknama reporter Anjali visited the community and found that rainwater had entered several homes due to severe waterlogging. Many young children were seen using buckets, containers, and household utensils to remove water from their homes. Most of them were also trying to move household belongings to safer places to prevent them from getting damaged by the water. The reporter observed that the lack of a proper drainage system in the community causes rainwater to flow directly into the slum homes. At the time of the incident, most parents were away at work, leaving the children to take responsibility for removing the water and protecting household belongings. Thirteen-year-old Ronny (name changed) said, "Whenever it rains, water enters our home. We use buckets and



containers to take the water out. Many times, our belongings also get soaked. At night, there is hardly any space left to sleep, and even cooking becomes difficult." During the visit, the reporter also observed water accumulated at several points along the lanes and pathways. The children explained that because there is no proper drainage route, they have to walk through the stagnant water to reach school, markets, and other places. The wet and

slippery paths sometimes cause children to fall, increasing the risk of injuries. Local residents said that waterlogging affects not only children but the entire community. Parents also face difficulties travelling to and from work, while stagnant dirty water for long periods can lead to an increase in mosquitoes and raise the risk of illnesses such as dengue and malaria. The children shared, "We have told the landlord about this problem several times. The area is cleaned for some time, but the same situation returns whenever it rains. We face this problem every year." The situation highlights how the lack of proper drainage affects the daily lives of children living in the settlement. Community members believe that improving drainage, ensuring regular cleaning, and providing basic infrastructure could significantly reduce the difficulties faced by children and families during the rainy season.



CHILDREN PERFORM OUTSIDE TEMPLE TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES

Balaknama Reporter: Deepak

Balaknama reporter Deepak was visiting different settlements in Jaipur when he came across two children performing street tricks by the roadside. After speaking with them, several details about their lives and struggles came to light. The childhood of a brother and sister living in the Sindhi Camp area of Jaipur is being shaped by financial hardship. Due to their family's difficult economic situation, the two children travel by metro every Tuesday and Saturday to the area near Kale Hanuman Ji Temple at Chandi Ki Taksal. There, they perform small tricks and street acts and depend on the money given by passers-by to help support their family. Thirteen-year-old Rohit (name changed) said, "We come here every Tuesday and Saturday. The money people give us helps meet our household expenses." The

children shared that their father is a person with a disability and their mother has been unwell for a long time. As the family has no regular source of income, the children have had to take on responsibilities at a young age. Whatever money they receive after performing is used to help meet the family's everyday needs. The children also said that they want to study, but continuing their education regularly is difficult because of their family's circumstances. To meet household needs, they sometimes have to come to the streets and perform. Local residents believe that children like them need timely access to education, healthcare, social security, and government welfare schemes. They feel that with regular support and access to essential services, these children could have the opportunity to focus on their education and childhood instead of having to work on the streets.

STREET-CONNECTED AND WORKING CHILDREN MARK 24TH BADHTE KADAM FOUNDATION DAY WITH ENTHUSIASM



Balaknama Reporter: Farooq

Street-connected and working children in the Wazirabad area of Gurugram enthusiastically celebrated the 24th Badhte Kadam Foundation Day. Children, community members, and the CHETNA team came together to participate in a range of cultural and creative activities. The programme provided children with an opportunity to showcase their talents, learn from one another, and celebrate together. The event began with a welcome song, followed by performances of songs, dances, poems, skits, and

art activities. All the children participated enthusiastically and encouraged one another throughout the programme. During the event, discussions were also held with children on education, child rights, equal opportunities, and self-confidence. The children shared their thoughts and spoke about the importance of education for their future. Several children also shared their experiences and said that participating in such programmes gives them an opportunity to learn new things and express themselves confidently. The CHETNA team introduced the children to the journey and objectives of

the Badhte Kadam Foundation. They explained that the organisation has been working for many years to support the education, health, safety, and overall development of street-connected and working children, while continuously working to connect children with education and raise awareness about their rights. At the end of the programme, the children cut a cake to celebrate Foundation Day. They also pledged to continue their studies regularly, remain aware of their rights, and encourage other children in their communities to pursue education. The enthusiasm, participation, and confidence shown by the children throughout the programme were truly inspiring. The celebration became a memorable opportunity for the children to showcase their talents, gain new experiences, and share happiness with one another.

WATERLOGGING DISRUPTS EDUCATION, KEEPING CHILDREN AWAY FROM SCHOOL

Balaknama Reporter: Preeti

Continuous rainfall has caused severe waterlogging in the N-86 community in Delhi, with children's education being one of the most affected areas. Water has accumulated in the lanes and pathways, making it difficult and unsafe for many children to reach school. Balaknama reporter Preeti visited the community and spoke with children about the situation. Ten-year-old Aarav (name changed), 12-year-old Simran (name changed), and 11-year-old Rohit (name changed) shared that continuous rainfall over the past few days has caused water to collect in the community's lanes and pathways. Several areas have become slippery, making travelling to and from school risky. Ten-year-old Aarav said, "I used to go to school every day, but now I am unable to go because there is water on the way. Sometimes I am afraid that I might slip and fall." Twelve-year-old Simran shared, "Water also leaks into our house when it rains. Many times my uniform and books get wet. In such a situation, going to school becomes very



difficult." Eleven-year-old Rohit said, "Missing school regularly is affecting my studies. I miss my teachers and friends too. I try to study at home, but it is not the same as learning in school." The children said they are trying to read their books and complete their homework at home, but staying away from regular classes makes it difficult for them to understand their lessons. They explained that during the rainy season, waterlogging is not just a problem of commuting but also directly affects their education. Community members said that the lanes and pathways become waterlogged every time it rains, causing difficulties for children, elderly residents, and people travelling to work. The children hope that the accumulated water will be cleared soon so that they can safely return to school and continue their education regularly.

CHILD INJURED IN FALL NEAR COMMUNITY WATER TANK

Balaknama Reporter: Divyanshi

Balaknama reporter Divyanshi visited the contact point area of the Emaar Tower community, where she learned that 10-year-old Shiva (name changed) had been injured after slipping near a community water tank. Residents said that Shiva had gone to the water tank to bathe. A large amount of mud and stagnant water had accumulated around the tank because many community members use the area for bathing. Due to the lack of proper drainage, the area often remains wet and slippery. While bathing, Shiva



slipped in the mud and his face hit the edge of the water tank. He suffered a deep injury to his chin, which began to bleed. People nearby immediately came to his assistance, helped him move to a safe place, and took him to a nearby doctor for treatment. The doctor provided first aid, cleaned the wound, applied medication, and bandaged the

injury. Community members said that the lack of regular cleaning and proper drainage around the water tank often results in muddy and slippery conditions. They believe that timely cleaning and an adequate drainage system could help prevent such accidents. The incident has once again raised concerns about children's safety in the community. Local residents urged the concerned authorities to focus on cleanliness, drainage, and safe access around the water tank so that similar accidents involving children can be prevented in the future.

ART AND CRAFT ACTIVITIES GIVE WINGS TO CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY



Balaknama Reporter: Anushki
Talkative Reporter: Manju

Children enthusiastically participated in an art and craft activity organised at the CHETNA Education Centre in Khota Colony, Gurugram. The activity introduced them to new artistic techniques and gave them an opportunity to express their imagination through colours and paper. It became an enjoyable learning experience for the children. During the activity, the children used the dot painting technique for the first time to create pictures of houses,

flowers, and other attractive designs. They shared that they usually made drawings using traditional methods, but learning the new dot painting technique was a different and exciting experience. The children appeared enthusiastic while creating their artwork, and each one tried to make their picture as beautiful as possible. Along with dot painting, they also used colourful paper to make bouquets, roses, and other decorative items. All the children put great effort into creating their artwork. While making paper roses, they helped one another and continued

learning new techniques from their teacher. Eleven-year-old Ashwini (name changed) said, "This was my first time doing dot painting. I really enjoyed it. Now I will make similar drawings at home too." Ten-year-old Rehan (name changed) shared, "I liked making flowers from paper the most. I didn't know how to make them before, but today I learned a new way." At the end of the activity, the children proudly showed their artwork to their classmates and teachers. They looked happy and excited about what they had created. The teachers appreciated their efforts and encouraged them to participate in more creative activities. Such activities give children opportunities to learn new skills, develop patience, and express their imagination creatively. The children said they would like to participate in more such activities and learn new forms of art in the future.

CHILD ESCAPES SERIOUS INJURY AFTER FALLING DOWN STAIRS WHILE HOME ALONE

Balaknama Reporter: Karan
Kumar

During a visit to the Nathupur community in Gurugram, Balaknama reporter Karan Kumar learned that a young child had been injured after falling down a staircase. To understand what had happened, he visited the child's home and spoke with the family and nearby residents. Om Prakash, a resident of the community, explained that the child's parents leave for work every morning and return late in the evening. During this time, the child stays at home with his siblings. On the day of the incident, his sister was busy with household chores while the child was playing on his own. While playing, he suddenly



slipped on the stairs and fell down. He suffered an injury to his head, which began to bleed. People nearby immediately rushed to help, picked him up, and took him to a nearby doctor. He received first aid and had his head bandaged. Because he received timely treatment, his condition soon became stable and he did not suffer

any serious complications. As soon as they learned about the incident, the child's parents returned home from work. The child's mother explained that the family's financial situation requires both parents to go to work every day. It is not always possible for them to take their young child along, so he often stays at home with his siblings. Local residents said that caring for young children is a major challenge for families in such circumstances. When parents are away at work, children may remain at home for long periods, increasing the risk of accidents. They believe that during such times, families and community members should work together and pay special attention to children's safety to help prevent similar incidents.

CHILDREN PLAYING AMONG OPEN DRAINS FACE SERIOUS SAFETY RISKS

Reporter: Amrit
Talkative Reporter: Payal

When Balaknama reporter Amrit visited a settlement in Delhi, he found several open drains in the surrounding area. During the visit, many children were seen playing near these open drains in the evening. Since the drains do not have covers, there is growing concern about the safety of the children. Reporter Amrit spoke to a local boy and asked how long the drains had been open and whether they had ever been covered. The boy said that the drains had been left open for a long time and that children have to be careful while playing around them. The reporter further asked whether the children feel afraid when



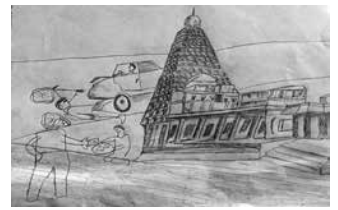
they play there in the evening, as there is a possibility that someone could fall into a drain. The boy said that they do feel scared because children often get very close to the drains while playing, and if a child is not careful, there is a risk of falling in. Reporter Amrit also spoke to 13-year-old Radhika (name changed), who said that during the rainy season, the drains fill with water and the

open sections become difficult to see. She said that covering the drains would make the area much safer for children and would allow them to play without fear. Local residents said that the open drains are a problem not only for children but also for elderly people and pedestrians. They said that as it gets dark in the evening, walking near the open drains becomes even more difficult and dangerous. Residents have requested the concerned department to cover the drains as soon as possible and ensure their regular cleaning. They said that, keeping children's safety in mind, the authorities should not wait for an accident to happen but should take the necessary steps in time.

CHILD BEGGING ON ROAD SERIOUSLY INJURED IN ACCIDENT

Balaknama Reporter: Tanmay
Singh

While on his way to buy books near Tulip Chowk in Gurugram, Balaknama reporter Tanmay Singh noticed several children begging outside a temple and a mall. During this time, a child who was crossing the road was hit by a speeding vehicle and seriously injured. The accident was so severe that the child's cries immediately drew the attention of people nearby, who rushed to the spot. After the incident, Balaknama reporter spoke with local residents and witnesses. They said that several children can be seen begging along the roadside in the area every day. Because there is heavy movement of people around the temple and mall, some passers-by give the children food, drinks, or money. During the incident, a speeding vehicle struck the child as he was crossing the road, leaving him seriously injured. Witnesses said that people nearby immediately took the injured child to a nearby



hospital and later informed his parents about the accident. Local residents also advised the family to file a police complaint, but the parents declined. The child's parents said, "We are very poor. We came here from another state and work as daily-wage labourers to support our family. We do not want to get involved in any dispute or legal proceedings. We cannot afford it either. We will somehow manage to get our child treated." Local residents said that many children are seen begging around Tulip Chowk every day, and because the area has heavy traffic, they remain at constant risk of accidents. They believe that timely and effective steps are needed to ensure the safety, education, and rehabilitation of such children so that they are not forced to beg on the streets.

A BIG RELIEF FOR CHILDREN AND LOCAL RESIDENTS AFTER GARBAGE DUMP WAS CLEARED



Balaknama Reporter: Amrit
Talkative Reporter: Kishor

Ten-year-old Kishor (name changed), who lives in a settlement in Delhi, shared that until some time ago, a huge pile of garbage used to accumulate near their settlement. Residents would throw household waste, leftover food and dirty water at the same spot, while some vehicles from other areas would also dump garbage there. Gradually, the place turned into a large garbage dump, causing many problems for local residents. The garbage created a foul smell throughout the area, and the number of mosquitoes and flies also increased significantly. Children often played around the area, putting them at risk of fever, cough and other illnesses. Local residents said that the garbage was affecting the surrounding environment and making it difficult for people to breathe clean air, causing daily discomfort because of the dirt and bad smell. Kishor said that the area is now being

cleaned regularly. A Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) garbage collection vehicle now visits the settlement every day and collects waste from households. As a result, the huge pile of garbage that used to accumulate there is no longer seen. The area, which was once surrounded by garbage and dirt, now looks much cleaner. Regular cleaning has reduced the foul smell, and there has also been a decrease in mosquitoes, bringing great relief to children and local residents. Residents said that regular garbage collection and cleaning have improved the environment and created a safer and healthier space for children. The children believe that if the garbage collection vehicle continues to come every day and everyone puts their waste in it, the settlement can remain clean and hygienic. This will help prevent another large garbage dump from forming and protect children and local residents from the problems caused by unhygienic surroundings.

N-86 SETTLEMENT'S PUBLIC TOILET IN POOR CONDITION, BROKEN GATE AND FAULTY TAPS CAUSING PROBLEMS

Reporter: Amrit

When Balaknama reporter Amrit visited the N-86 settlement in Delhi, he found the condition of the public toilet to be quite poor. The toilet gate was broken, and several taps inside were also not working. Due to the damaged condition of various parts of the toilet, local residents are facing difficulties while using it. Residents said that these problems have existed for a long time and that the toilet has still not been repaired. When 14-year-old Ram (name changed) was asked about the

issue, he said that the problem had been continuing for many days. Ram explained that the toilet gate and several taps were broken, causing considerable inconvenience to people. According to him, despite the poor condition of the toilet for a long time, no repairs have been carried out so far. A 13-year-old girl, Kajal (name changed), who lives in the settlement, also said that children face difficulties because of the poor condition of the public toilet. She said that, along with the broken gate and taps, other facilities in the toilet are also not functioning properly.



Kajal believes that the toilet facilities should be repaired soon so that children and other residents do not have to face these problems. Many families living in the settlement depend on this public toilet, making

the damaged gate, faulty taps and other essential facilities a serious concern for them. According to local residents, the poor condition of the toilet is affecting people who use it every day and causing them

several difficulties. Residents said that regular cleaning and maintenance of the toilet, along with timely repairs of damaged facilities, are necessary. They believe that repairing the facilities and ensuring regular maintenance would provide significant relief to the community. Local residents have requested the concerned department to inspect the public toilet in the N-86 settlement at the earliest and repair the broken gate, faulty taps and other problems so that children and residents can access better, safer and more functional sanitation facilities.

DREAMS AND FUTURES OF CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE DISCUSSED AT SWAPNA SAMMELAN 2026



Reporter: Amrit

On 21 August 2026, Swapna Sammelan 2026 was organised at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University in Delhi to discuss children's dreams, rights and opportunities for a better future. The programme focused on various issues concerning children, particularly the lives and futures of children who do not have their parents with them. When the venue was visited, a large number of people were present in the auditorium. The stage was decorated with flowers and plants, while a large screen displayed information about the conference. Seating arrangements were also made on the stage for the guests. During

the programme, speakers shared their views on the education, safety, care and future of children without parental care. The discussion highlighted that such children should not be treated as different from other children but should be given equal opportunities to learn, grow and move forward in life. The speakers also discussed children's dreams and aspirations. A child may dream of becoming a doctor, teacher, artist or pursuing a career in another field, but without family support, many children face difficulties in planning and building their future. Such children need proper guidance, encouragement and support. The programme also focused on children's rights and dignity. Speakers said that

providing children only with food and a place to live is not enough; they also need quality education, healthcare, a safe environment and opportunities to develop their talents. Cultural performances by children were also presented during the event, with children showcasing their artistic abilities and talents on stage. Their performances showed that children have no shortage of talent or confidence; what they need is the right platform and opportunities to move forward. The conference aimed to send the message that the dreams of children without parental care deserve the same importance as the dreams of every other child. Society, organisations that provide care and support to children, and the government need to work together to build a better future for them. The programme highlighted that every child's dream matters. Whether a child is living with their parents or receiving support from an institution, every child deserves the right and opportunity to study, grow and fulfil their dreams.

CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT HEALTH AND DISCIPLINE THROUGH FUN ACTIVITIES



Balaknama Reporter: Jeet
Talkative Reporter: Deepanshu

At the education centre in the Chakkarpur community of Gurugram, physical activities are being made an important part of children's learning along with their studies. As part of this effort, children enthusiastically participated in various physical activities and learned the importance of health, discipline, concentration and teamwork through play. During the activity, children practised different hand and leg exercises and stretching. They listened carefully to the

instructions and tried to follow them while performing the exercises. The activity also encouraged children to learn from one another and complete the activities together as a team. Through these physical activities, children were encouraged to understand that staying healthy is not only about eating nutritious food but also about keeping the body active every day. Regular games and exercise help children stay fit and active while also improving their confidence and concentration. The children also practised discipline during the activity by following instructions, waiting for their turn and working together as a group, all of which are important life skills. When these lessons are taught through games, children can understand them more easily and the learning experience becomes enjoyable. At the Chakkarpur education centre, such activities are being used to convey the message that education is not limited to books and classrooms. A healthy body, positive thinking, discipline and a spirit of cooperation are also important for the overall development of children. The active participation of the children showed that when learning is combined with play and fun, children become more enthusiastic about learning and are encouraged to try new things. The children said that such activities give them an opportunity to learn new things along with their studies and also spend enjoyable time with their friends.

RIISING MOSQUITO MENACE INCREASES THE RISK OF ILLNESS AMONG CHILDREN

Reporter: Amrit

With the arrival of the rainy season, the mosquito problem has also become worse, with children being among those most affected. The increase in mosquitoes has raised the risk of diseases such as dengue, malaria and chikungunya, and several children are falling ill. Fifteen-year-old Rishi (name changed), who lives in the Lawrence Road settlement, said that recent rainfall has led to a large amount of water collecting in the lane outside his house. When the reporter asked why the water was not being cleared, Rishi said that water frequently accumulates there and is not cleaned or removed. The stagnant water has led to an increase in mosquitoes, raising the risk of diseases such as dengue and



malaria. Seven-year-old Sonu (name changed), who also lives in the settlement, has developed a high fever and cough. Because of his illness, he is unable to play properly or go outside and has become very weak. According to his family, the child's studies and daily activities are also being affected because of his continued fever. Local residents said that whenever it rains, large amounts of water collect in the area. When the reporter asked why no one complains to the

authorities about getting the water cleared, residents said that no complaints are made to any department regarding the cleaning. As a result, stagnant water remains in the area for a long time, creating conditions that can contribute to the spread of diseases such as dengue and malaria and putting children at risk of becoming seriously ill. In addition, several drains in the area are open, creating a risk of children falling into them or getting trapped in nearby pits.

When the reporter asked why these drains are not cleaned or covered, local residents said that there is no proper arrangement to cover them. Women in the area said that young children often play near the open drains and pits, which not only exposes them to the risk of illness but also increases the possibility of a serious accident. Parents said that children are falling ill repeatedly, medical expenses have increased, and their education is also being affected. Children and local residents are demanding that the Water Department and other concerned authorities remove the stagnant water as soon as possible and clean and safely cover the open drains so that the spread of diseases can be prevented and children can remain safe.

NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL VISIT INSPIRES CHILDREN WITH STORIES OF COURAGE AND SACRIFICE

Balaknama Reporter: Asif

Under the Street to Skill Project, CHETNA organised an educational visit to the National Police Memorial and Museum in Delhi for 49 children—22 boys and 27 girls—from Kamla Nehru Camp and Zakhira communities in West Delhi. The purpose of the visit was to familiarise children with the role and responsibilities of the police, their courage, and the sacrifices made by police personnel in service of the country. At the beginning of the visit, S. P. Mukherjee introduced the children to the National Police Memorial and explained that it was built in memory of police personnel who lost their lives while protecting the country. The children then visited the Wall of Valour and the Amar Jyoti. They learned that the memorial is based on

the concept of the five elements of nature—earth, water, fire, air, and sky—and that the Amar Jyoti symbolises the courage and sacrifice of police personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty. The children also saw the names of around 35,000 police personnel engraved on the memorial. Reading these names helped them understand the contribution and sacrifices of police personnel in protecting the country. Several children said that it was their first opportunity to learn about how police officers work to protect citizens without worrying about their own safety. The children then visited the National Police Museum, where they learned about different ranks, from Head Constable to Director General of Police (DGP), and their respective responsibilities. The museum's exhibits, including police uniforms from



different states, old and modern communication equipment, historical documents, gallantry medals, photographs related to police work, weapons, and other equipment, attracted the children's attention. During the visit, the children also watched a seven-minute film highlighting the courage and sacrifice of police personnel.

Through digital screens, they learned about the stories of bravery and contributions of police personnel from different states. At the end of the visit, a post-assessment was conducted to understand what the children had learned. The children were then provided with meals and safely escorted back to their communities. Speaking to the

Balaknama reporter, 15-year-old Adil (name changed) said, "I liked the memorial based on the five elements the most, especially the inverted rifle and cap placed in front of it. After visiting the memorial, I learned how police personnel who sacrificed their lives are honoured." Fourteen-year-old Annu (name changed) shared, "I really enjoyed seeing the police uniforms, real equipment, and other exhibits in the museum. This visit helped me learn many new things about the work and responsibilities of the police." The educational visit gave children an opportunity to learn about the history, functioning, and responsibilities of the police department. The children said that after the visit, they developed an even greater sense of respect for the police personnel who serve and protect the country.

THE JOURNEY OF EDUCATION CONTINUED DESPITE THE CHALLENGE OF EXAMINATIONS

Balaknama Reporter: Jahan

Fourteen-year-old Nazia (name changed), who lives in Shakur Basti, West Delhi, used to attend school regularly and was determined to continue her education. Managing her studies alongside her family's financial difficulties and household responsibilities was not always easy. Despite these challenges, she remained committed to attending school



and completing her education. During her studies, Mathematics became a difficult subject for her. In the annual examination, she had to appear for a supplementary examination in Mathematics. The result was disappointing for her. Despite her efforts, she felt that she was still unable to understand the subject properly. This affected her confidence, but instead of giving up on her studies, she decided to prepare again. Nazia began focusing more on the areas of Mathematics where she faced difficulties. She started practising regularly and sought help from her teachers whenever she did not understand a question. Gradually, she became more comfortable with solving problems. While preparing for the supplementary examination, she focused not only on practising questions but also on understanding and correcting her mistakes. Rather than allowing her previous result to discourage her, she used it as an opportunity to identify the areas where she needed to improve. After appearing for

the examination again, Nazia successfully passed and secured admission to Class 9. For her, this was not simply an opportunity to move to the next class; it was also a journey of overcoming the disappointment she had experienced after her first examination. Her success has strengthened her confidence in continuing her education. She now wants to pursue her studies and create better opportunities for herself in the future. Nazia's story shows that one difficulty during a child's educational journey does not determine their overall potential. Timely support, guidance, and an opportunity to try again can make an important difference. When she faced difficulties in Mathematics, she chose not to give up. Instead, she worked on her preparation, learned from her mistakes, and ultimately succeeded in reaching Class 9.

Balaknama Reporter: Damini
Talkative Reporter: Anita

Balaknama Reporter Damini visited several informal settlements in Jaipur. During her visit, she noticed a few children carrying bricks at a construction site near a settlement on Agra Road. During a conversation with the children, it came to light that they were not working for wages. Instead, they were carrying bricks at the construction site for 2–3 hours every day in exchange for an opportunity to bathe using the water stored in a tank at the site. Every day, four to five children

ONE CHILD, ONE PLANT: CHILDREN TURN SCHOOLS INTO GREEN SPACES THROUGH THE 'HARIYALO RAJASTHAN' CAMPAIGN

Balaknama Reporter: Damini
Talkative Reporter: Palak

During the pleasant monsoon season, government schools across Rajasthan organised plantation drives under the 'Hariyalo Rajasthan' campaign, spreading the message of greenery and environmental protection. As directed by the Education Department, children were encouraged not only to plant saplings but also to understand the importance of trees and their responsibility towards caring for them. As part of the campaign, children at Government Primary School, Khar Ki Dhani, Jaipur, enthusiastically participated in a plantation drive. Under the guidance of their teacher, Nirmala, the children planted different varieties of saplings, including neem, peepal, and karanj. After planting the saplings, the children took a pledge to water them regularly, protect them, and care for them until they grow into



healthy trees. The children were taught that trees and plants are essential for our lives. They provide clean air and shade, create a healthier environment, and play an important role in maintaining the balance of nature. The children also learned that planting a sapling is only the beginning—the real responsibility lies in caring for it regularly. Giving the message of "One Child, One Plant," the children also encouraged their families and neighbours to plant trees around their homes and communities and take responsibility for their care. Eleven-year-old Palak (name changed) shared, "Seeing the plantation drive at

school inspired me. I planted a sapling in front of my home in the settlement. I will water it regularly and take care of it." Palak's initiative shows how engaging children in environmental protection can inspire positive changes not only in schools but also within their families and communities. The plantation drive strengthened children's sense of responsibility towards nature and encouraged them to become young ambassadors of environmental protection. What began as a school activity became a message that children could carry home—one child, one plant, and one step towards a greener future.

CHILDREN CARRYING BRICKS FOR WATER

between the ages of 9 and 13 were seen carrying bricks barefoot, with cloth wrapped around their heads. They carried the bricks from one place to another at the construction site. Twelve-year-old Anita (name changed) said, "There is no water at home. It is very hot, so we come here and work. Later, we bathe using the water from the tank. We do not get any money; we only get water." The children shared that they come to the construction site together every day and sometimes treat the work like a game. For

them, carrying bricks has become a way to meet their basic need for water. Some parents are also not fully aware that their children are going to the construction site in this manner. The settlement has been facing a water shortage for a long time. Irregular government water supply makes it difficult for families to arrange enough water for their daily needs. Purchasing water from private tankers is also expensive for most families. As a result, the children's need for water to bathe is taking them to the construction site. Carrying

bricks barefoot and spending several hours at a construction site can expose children to physical injuries and other safety risks. The fact that children are carrying out such work simply to access water highlights the seriousness of the water crisis in the settlement. There is an urgent need to ensure regular and safe water supply in the settlement so that children do not have to face situations where they work at construction sites in exchange for water. Children should be able to spend their time studying, playing, and enjoying a safe childhood.

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