

MAINSTREAMING CHILDREN'S VOICES IN PRINT MEDIA

PLAN INTERNATIONAL INDIA
New Delhi

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Mainstreaming Children’s Voices in Print Media is an outcome of a pilot project, popularly known as CPS Project, which was implemented from November 2006 till May 2007. This document is a kind of End Report containing the progress, achievements, failures, learning, experiences and impacts. The project was supported by Plan International, and implemented by Grassroots Media Initiative.

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PREFACE ●

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INTRODUCTION ●

Communication in the modern times is the key of all advocacy campaigns and initiatives addressing social change. At the same time the children have immense potential of expressing/ communicating their mind on social issues if given the space to do so. Children are a reflection of present and the image of future of humanity. Over 41% of the country's population are children (persons below 18 years of age), yet their voices remain unheard. Children face multiple forms of exploitation, abuse and suppression that cause violation of their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. Factors that make children vulnerable to exploitation and abuse are multiple and complex. Children while sunken in all adversities or otherwise want to express their feelings, views, opinions, experiences, knowledge, and solutions. As the children are not allowed to speak at home in front of elders, as the children are disallowed to even sit in gram sabha meeting, as the children's views are disregarded in the matters predominantly controlled by elders, the voices of the children are discarded/ disrespected/ excluded or undermined in the mainstream media including newspapers, magazines, TV, radio. If the children are given space, they are being merely used/ exploited by advertising industry — be it television or newspaper. Moreover, the children appearing in advertisements do not represent suffering majority of the poor/ rural children; they rather belong to minority class enjoying wealth.



The children not only speak and express their own issues (exploitation, abuse, exclusion, beating, trafficking, torture, hunger, violation of rights, illiteracy, sexual abuse, neglect, discrimination, poverty, victimization, work load and violence against them), but they also express their understanding/ feelings about the surrounding they live in. They express about poverty in family, worse health situation, loss of livelihood systems, migration and its causes/effects, polluted/ contaminated environment, degradation of forests, conditions of women, status of education in schools, agriculture, governance system, development of villages/ *mohalla*, and so on. They also offer solutions of the problems. But all this remains unheard, un-surfaced, un-incorporated. Children in different corners of India with the support of Plan International/India have been doing various creative activities including writing stories/ news/ features/ songs/ poems/ critics/ comments/ analytical articles along with



sketches and cartoons through which they express their mind. But this does not get adequate space in mainstream media as the media infringes their rights to be published. Resultantly, it backfires the children as their voices are kept out of public domain, which otherwise would have been taken into consideration by society in general and policy makers in particular.

Keeping in view of above, Grassroots Media Initiative (GMI) conceptualised an initiative encompassing on children's participation in mainstreaming their voices into print media through Children Press Service (CPS). Plan International supported the initiative on pilot basis. The project was implemented between November 2006 and May 2007. In this project, the children from 5 provinces of India participated and, after undergoing rigorous capacity building exercises, wrote stories, features and articles that have got space in mainstream newspapers/magazines of Hindi in north and central India. The project comprises three distinct parts: (a) Children Press Service, that collected the written material from writer children, edited it and got the stories etc. placed in mainstream newspapers and magazines; (b) Journalists Alert on Child Issues, that procured the highlights/guidelines on child issues from the children, and based on that various journalists were motivated to write on the highlighted issues; (c) Capacity Building of Child Reporters, that included rigorous training and follow-up of children.



This document contains systematic account of processes went on, the achievements we got, the challenges we faced, changes that have occurred at various levels, learnings generated, and failures we saw, and so on.



OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT ■

- To collect the stories etc. and issue highlights from writer children of different states who are already in network of Plan India directly or indirectly.
- To edit the written material received from children, and to print it (along with soft copy) in the form of Children Press Service Bulletin.
- To distribute the CPS Bulletin (both hard and soft copy) among identified newspapers, magazines, journals and new media forms for placing the children's stories etc. on regular basis; and to give feedback with little remuneration to the children on publication of their stories etc.
- To post electronic and print form of Journalists' Alert to various journalists in network and pursuing them to write on issues highlighted by the children.
- To build the capacities of child reporters through media writing workshops and follow up exercises.

EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT ■

Since the mandate of Grassroots Media Initiative (GMI) is to serve as an effective link and interface between grassroots activists and the mainstream media in India, on executing the Children Press Service the GMI was to put its endeavour in bringing the core issues of children to the fore by placing children's written pieces with experiences and analyses from their perspective in national/ regional print media, in new media forms and in appropriate fora.

The Children Press Service (CPS) was expected to produce the following tangible results:

1. The appearance in newspapers/ magazines of features, stories, comments, critics, etc. written by children would bolster confidence among children for putting fore their voices articulatively. Those who write one story in a month would be boosted to write 2-3 stories in a month. Moreover, remuneration, though pittance, on the published story would charge the child further to create more and more write ups.
2. Through Journalists' Alert and personal persuasion the media writers would have ready reference of what to write on child issues. Such a media lobbying would result into more and more space for child-related problems and issues in the mainstream media across the country.
3. Enrichment of the content especially on and by the children in local newspapers. Feature stories would be used by media, which will serve to broad base their readership patterns. Placement of local content in the publications would be conducive for creating and projecting a positive image of a vibrant masses-to-media linkage.
4. This would bring about a paradigm shift in the way issues and problems confronting the children at large are articulated and communicated using tools of relevant social communications and in the contextual milieu that would give children's issue a firm grounding.

Quantitatively, minimum 20 features/ stories/ articles of children were to be placed in newspapers/ magazines during the period of 4 months. Children Press Service Bulletin containing 8-10 full-sized stories of children and some important news encompassing child issues would be printed and distributed on monthly basis. Similarly, the Journalists' Alert would be composed and posted electronically as well as along with CPS Bulletin every month.



CHILDREN PRESS SERVICE ●

In the project proposal, the Children Press Service (CPS) was proposed as Children Feature Service (CFS). Once the project began, we arrived to a conclusion that CFS should be named as CPS. It has several meaningful arguments. First, the word 'feature' has limited scope, whereas the word 'press' has broad meaning that actually covers lot many things such as news, news stories, features, articles, comments, interviews, etc. It was conceptualized that the children would not only be confined in the future to writing features only; rather they would write other forms of stories for print media or new media. Second, the feature agencies receive scare attention from the newspapers in India. It attributes to many reasons. Therefore, the Children Press Service (CPS) came into being and was launched in December 2006. The publishing has continued till April 2007.

Box.1: CPS Bulletins publication months

CPS Bulletin#1	Year 1, #1	December 2006
CPS Bulletin#2	Year 2, #1	January 2007
CPS Bulletin#3	Year 2, #2	February 2007
CPS Bulletin#4	Year 2, #3	March-April 2007

**The last bulletin was combined for March and April months.*

Following are the details of all the processes and outcomes of CPS Bulletins publishing and mainstreaming of voices of children in print media.

Pooling of Features, Stories Written by Children

When we decided to compose CPS Bulletin#1, we received 2 bunches of stories written by the children of SBMA and GNK in October 2006. These stories were generated out of the Plan's Amazing Kids Project. Out of the 2 bunches we selected some good stories. Each of the stories then was thoroughly studied and the gaps therein were identified and tagged with each story under consideration. By early November 2006 we established contacts with concerned officers at SBMA and GNK to provide the information on finally selected 10 stories so as to fill up the gaps. Both the officers replied on the queries. Meanwhile, Mr. Kannan gave 2 more stories written by the children who participated Geneva Conference. Out of these 2 stories we selected one story. Thus, we finally selected 10 stories for CPS Bulletin #1.

For the CPS Bulletin#2, the children generated features/ stories during the Writing Skills Workshops. At SBMA Gairsain, the workshop took place between 18 and 22 December 2006 at Gairsain. 8 child reporters were grouped into 4 groups who then wrote one feature each. In that way, 4 good features generated. All the 4 features have been executed in CPS Bulletin#2. On the other hand, similar workshop was organized in premises of CASP at Delhi of 16 child reporters on 26-30 December 2006. These children produced about a dozen features. However, only 4 features were executed in this CPS Bulletin #2. Rest of the features were



executed in next Bulletins. Features of CASP children were better. Other 2 stories came from GNK, which were poorly developed. It was also because no writing workshop had taken place by that time. For this Bulletin, 9 stories were selected and were published.

The children generated features/ stories during the Writing Skills Workshops again for the CPS Bulletin#3. At URMUL Lunkaransar, the workshop took place between 15 and 19 January 2007 in which the children both from URMUL-Lunkaransar and URMUL-Bajju participated. Similarly, such a Writing Skills Workshop was organized in GNK-Nautanwa during 21-25 February 2007. Many features and stories stories/features came from the children of good number of stories and features was features/stories were selected for publishing



were generated out of the workshops. Some CASP-Delhi and SBMA-Gairsain. In this way a compiled. Out of the bunch, 10 in this Bulletin.

Pool of stories sent by children was used for generated by the children after undergoing So enough number of stories came from each URMUL-Bikaner and SBMA-Gairsain. Out of for publishing in this Bulletin#4.

the CPS Bulletin#4. These stories were the writing skill workshops and follow ups. of 4 locations: GNK-Nautanwa, CASP-Delhi, the bunch, 11 features/stories were selected



During the collection of written stuff, the Plan partners i.e. SBMA, GNK, URMUL and CASP had been contacted again and again. Some children no doubt remained in hot contact. Children themselves also took lot of interest, as they had to repeatedly ask about their stories they had sent by post. They actually wished to confirm the postal delivery, but also wished to get assurance of its publishing. Often the children were assisted in finalizing the topics of the stories and how to gather the necessary information for composing a story.



Editing of Features, Stories, Articles Written by Children:

Stories submitted by children were edited in a way that ingenuity was maintained. The stories were in same style as the children originally wrote them. Language had not been changed. However, the gaps were filled up and little finishing was also done. During the editing it was also tried that the story should come up as having lucidity, correct facts, no repetition of facts, sequence in presentation, and so on. Most critical was bringing appropriate transitions in the paragraphs of write up.

While working on the editing part of the stories written by the children we experienced the following things:

- When we began the CPS, the stories written by children were poor in synthesis, layout, language, supporting facts, depth of content and tone. The issues raised by the children in the stories had also not been very serious issues of socio-economic and politico-cultural importance. Only few stories were of that standard. Obviously, it was because the children needed intensive inputs for building perspectives and for developing writing skills.

- When GMI provided intensive training on the art of stories writing, having investigative mind, aptitude of serious thinking, research skills and knowledge of different types of stories (e.g. feature, article, news story, news, memoir, interview, etc.), the level of

Box.2a: Some Comments of Child Reporters on CPS

- In a feature written by Mr. Praveen Sharma, “Hame Chaand Chahiye”, the author has highlighted the changing times and ascending demands of children. The greed of new generation is dividing the society into two halves. The day is far when children will start demanding ‘moon’ or ‘stars’... The CPS Bulletin has very well placed the story and presented.

- Mr. Sukhdev Kumar Yadav

Class-IX; Vill. Kolhua Dhala (Uttar Pradesh)

- CPS Bulletin has published story on the environmental disbalance. The deforestation is causing erratic rains and loss of crops. This is adversely affecting all of us. I am happy to see such a story in the Bulletin.

- Mr. Pramod Kumar Gond

Class-IX; Vill. Dhotihwan (Rajasthan)

- The CPS Bulletin has given the stories written by children in such a fashion that the headline is attractive. The stories chosen very well exhibit how should the subject be selected. Bulletin’s stories have demonstrated how to keep the interests of reader alive. How to bring lucidity in writings the Bulletin exposes. Moreover, the features presented give clues how to answer possible questions of the readers. The CPS Bulletin thus has given voice to the children.

- Ms. Zahida Khatoon

Class-VIII; Vill. Argha (Uttar Pradesh)

- After reading the CPS Bulletin, I became more confident. It is easy to understand due to the use of easy words. It is descriptive. I remembered scenes once reading the features. The CPS Bulletin inculcates entertainment, education, social cause, children’s aspirations, and so on. The stories once get published give us immense pleasure, confidence, courage and direction to do something.

- Mr. Sandeep Kumar

Class-VII; Badarpur, Delhi



writing stories improved remarkably. CPS Bulletin#3 and Bulletin#4 contain very good stories from writing and perspective angles.

Box.2b: Some Comments of Child Reporters on CPS

- The arguments are strong in the CPS Bulletin. The headlines of the stories are such that the reader is bound to develop curiosity to thoroughly read. The style and language are simple, effective and interesting. The CPS Bulletin covers the stories that give lesson.

- Mr. Arvind Verma
Class-XI; Sangam Vihar, Delhi
- Had the CPS Bulletin been colored, it would have been appealing. Also the photograph should be there with the story.

- Mr. Chandan Kumar
Class-XI; Sangam Vihar, Delhi
- This Bulletin gives a confidence to us. It is easy to read. It has elaborations. I ever saw the scenes in front of eyes while reading.

- Mr. Ashish Kumar
Class-IX; Badarpur, Delhi
- The design of CPS Bulletin is well thought out. I am extra happy that my story got space in the Bulletins. My story got a voice and platform.

- Ms. Deepa Jhinkwan
Vill. Dhunarghat (Uttarakhand)
- I liked the Bulletin very much. I am too happy seeing my story in it. I got opportunity to read the stories written by children of other states.

- Mr. Deepak Sah
Vill. Shilangi (Uttarakhand)

Printing and Releasing of CPS Bulletins

All the CPS Bulletins had been composed containing 9-11 stories and covering Editorial with 12 pages in total. With a PDF file, 1000 hard copies were printed on offset press. The PDF files have been electronically distributed to over 900 e-mail IDs of national/ international press and journalists. These have also been posted on google group, GRASSROOTS-in-action, that currently has database of over 8000 e-mail IDs. The printed versions of the Bulletins were being posted to various newspapers, magazines, newsletters, NGOs, support agencies and important individual journalists in the country.



List of newspapers and magazines receiving the CPS Bulletins was raised to 800 after GMI began the publication. This list includes mostly the Hindi newspapers and magazines that are of national, regional and local dailies/weeklies/monthlies. About 200 copies of each of the Bulletins were distributed to important NGOs in Delhi and outside.

Box.3a: Some Comments of Media Persons on CPS

- I received the February issue of CPS Bulletin. I felt delighted. I liked the articles like '18 should be a girl, 19 a boy!' and 'I won't go to school'. This attempt should not stop. I am with you step by step. Ms. Prinyanka wrote, "she wants to become a journalist"; I wish to help Prinyanka and other such children. Best wishes.

- Ms. Manimala

Director, Books for Change (Actionaid India), New Delhi

- After encountering the children at CASP, Delhi, I have concluded that the platform being given from this young age to the children will enable them to become responsible citizens and the journalists.

- Mr. Pushendra Pal Singh

Head of Department of Journalism, M. C. National University of Journalism, Bhopal

- To link the children with mainstream media and to enable them to lead in society, the CPS Bulletin is a wonderful platform.

- Mr. Arvind Kumar Singh

Editor, Hari Bhoomi, Delhi

- Children writing on serious issues is as important as it is publishing their output in CPS Bulletin. It is a means of communicating their expressions. We, the media people, are responsible for assisting the voices of children to surface.

- Mr. Palash Surjan

Editor, Dainik Deshbandhu, Bhopal

- Seeing the presentation of facts and selection of topics I am surprised that the children can also write on sensitive issues and, of course, they are equally concerned.

- Mr. Adhir Saxena

News Editor, Central Chronicle, Bhopal

- Following the organization of a workshop in Delhi by GMI/Plan on January 6, 2007 I have written over a dozen stories/news in my newspaper, which is India's biggest paper. I have succeeded in attracting the attention of readers towards the problem of children.

- Mr. Dharmendra Singh Bhadoria

Sr. Sub-Editor, Dainik Amar Ujala, NOIDA

- CPS Bulletin is a successful model of alternative media, which should be replicated.

- Mr. S. P. Singh

Program Officer, Yuva Vani, All India Radio, Bhopal

- Team of CPS and the child reporters are eligible for congratulations.

- Mr. Gulab Chand

Centre Director, All India Radio, Lucknow



The response of various journalists and media organizations has been very encouraging. Some comments are given in Boxes.3a & 3b.

Box.3b: Some Comments of Media Persons on CPS

- I use to publish several stories from CPS Bulletin. Simultaneously, I derive new ideas from these stories. Keep publishing the CPS Bulletin and the Journalist Alert continuously.

- Ms. Savilata Yadav
Reporter, Dainik Hari Bhoomi, Delhi
- I am searching the talents among the children through CPS. I am giving space to the stories written by children.

- Mr. Shiv Prasad Semwal
Editor, Parvat Jan Monthly, Dehradun
- I felt very happy after interacting the children in media workshop at Lucknow on 4th April 2007. These children will give the society a new direction.

- Ms. Tarannum Manjul
Sr. Reporter, Indian Express, Lucknow
- After reading the stories of the children in CPS I was sad why I wasted my boyhood an why I was not so sensitive those days.

- Mr. Shyam Maru
Sub-Editor, Rajasthan Patrika, Bikaner
- In the February issue of CPS, I saw the stories written by Rajasthan children, which were impressive. Keep on sending the Bulletin.

- Mr. Alok Mishra
Sub-Editor, Rajasthan Patrika, Jaipur

Follow Up of Publications for Placing the Children's Features/Stories

After publishing and distribution of CPS Bulletins, the GMI followed up the newspapers and magazines personally. Telephonic persuasion was the principal method. Yet some newspapers were pursued by personal meetings. When Bulletin#1 was released and the follow up of the newspapers was started, majority of newspapers responded passively. It was really frustrating in the beginning. But the GMI team did not give up. The strategy was adopted to catch hold the regional papers first. So several newspapers in Madhya Pradesh were mobilized to publish the children's stories. First of all Dainik Nai Duniya, Nirdaliya, Amrit Kalash and Swadesh executed the stories. Dainik Nai Duniya is oldest and one of the biggest newspaper of Madhya Pradesh. Once it was supposed to be the paper of intellectuals and ideologues. Gradually, other papers started placing the stories. But it was the manifestation of constant and intensive efforts for pursuing the press persons on desks.

Today national newspapers have started publishing the children's stories. The children have been sent the published stories with Rs. 100-150 per story as honorarium. The amount is not big



but enough to encourage the children and to boost up their confidence level. Many stories have been published in more than one newspaper. Moreover, some stories are still being published.

The problem came in collection of the feedbacks of the stories. It happened due to tremendous pressure on existing manpower. The GMI team, constituting only 2 persons meant for CPS publishing and the training of children, somehow managed to collect many of the published stories, yet a number stories could not be procured from newspapers. Actually, the newspapers/magazines do not have developed culture for sending the cutting of story. The newspapers, which the GMI team could track down, were asked to send the published stories. Only few of them sent; rest of the stories GMI arranged to be collected by some

Box.4: Some Observations (Part-I)

- Initially it became difficult to convince mainstream newspapers that the children can write on serious issues. So far it is the trend in mainstream newspapers that children are given a corner in whole newspaper in which small stories of animals cartoons, and songs are written. Children's stuff is considered to be light subject. When CPS was started nobody in newspapers was ready to accept if children could write on serious issues. After tremendous persuasion, several regional newspapers placed the stories of the children.
- When some newspapers readied to entertain the stories/ features written by children, the next question was where to place the story in the newspaper. The stuff written by children was not superior content-wise at par with the stuff written by adults. Neither it was fit for usual children's corners. So the material written by children was somewhere in between. And it was inevitable to happen since the children cannot become perfect writers overnight. But obviously the children broke the prejudice, popular notions of editorial people in press heading to a debate within.
- The issues raised by the children in their writings were vital social issues such as female foeticide, child marriage, child labour, local culture preservation, local self-governance, child education, rural development, gender discrimination, and so on. Yet, here were two general weaknesses in the stories/features/articles of the children: shallow depth in content, and scarcity of well-researched facts. To increase the depth in content, 'perspective building' of child writers/reporters is necessary on each and every issue on which they like to write story. Rigorous research skills need to inculcate abilities of fact finding and analysis.

Box.5: CPS Bulletins publication months

CPS Bulletin#1	Total Stories = 10	Published Stories = 6
CPS Bulletin#2	Total Stories = 9	Published Stories = 9
CPS Bulletin#3	Total Stories = 10	Published Stories = 8
CPS Bulletin#4	Total Stories = 11	Published Stories = 9
Gross	All Stories = 40	All Published Stories = 32

* Story that has been published in more than 1 newspaper is counted as 1.

close contact person. It was next to impossible to physically visit different newspapers for collecting the stories. There are some newspapers in many cities of India that actually published stories of the children, but GMI could not even know if they published any.



The data of published stories of which GMI could gather the feedback is given in Annex.III. Yet a summary of published stories is shown in Box.5.

Box.6: Some Observations (Part-II)

- As strategy to begin with, we started to push the regional newspapers to place children's stories. From CPS Bulletin #1, only 4-5 newspapers lifted the stories. This number added to be 6 in case of CPS Bulletin#2. But when CPS Bulletin#3 released it caught attention of 5 more newspapers of which 2 are national newspapers. Amar Ujala and Hari Bhoomi have opened to publish the stories. Naturally, the national newspapers like Sahara Samay are also interested to entertain stories from CPS Bulletin#4 onwards. Popularity of stories written by children through CPS is increasing. There is one critical issue that emerges now. It is that the CPB Bulletin should not pause now, which may otherwise result regress on this front.
- The reaction of the print media is encouraging in the sense that we have got stories published exceeding the target fixed. And the number of newspapers placing children's stories is increasing. Some newspapers are publishing our letter also which we send to thank for their cooperation. There are many newspapers placing our stories in cities/towns which we are not able to track down. In the future we wish to make our interaction with different newspapers/magazines more intensive and live. It involves buying those newspapers/ magazines apart from contacting them on telephones or meeting personally.
- Viraat Vaibhav is published from Delhi that placed stories from Bulletin#3. Feature Sub-Editor, Ms. Anika Arora, repeatedly asks for the next Bulletin. She keeps on taking interests in CPS activities. Published from Haryana, Delhi, Chhattisgarh states, the Hari Bhoomi newspaper responded with extended approach. The newspaper invited the children of CASP Delhi to write comments on the election process of Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The newspaper has published those comments with the photo of children. Deshbandhu (Bhopal) not only published the stories from CPS Bulletin#3 but also gave suggestion of bringing the CPS onto web.
- The responses of participant children are overwhelming. Resident of Diyatara village of Rajasthan, Magga Ram Kumhar called up 15-18 times between January and March 2007. He repeatedly asked for posting the CPS Bulletins regularly. He sometimes asked to talk to his father also. Sanjay Jaiswal and Saurabh Gond call twice a week in order to know the status of their stories. Rajasthan is full of stories related to girl child education, child marriage and purdah. One participant girl, Rukmani Kumari, of media writing skills training at URMUL Lunkaransar not only spelt her sad story of child marriage but also wrote good story on this issue. On the last day of writing skills training at URMUL Lunkaransar the participant children wept with the Editor of CPS. It was height of children's excitement and emotional acceptance of the CPS process. About 2 dozen children from CASP Delhi, URMUL Lunkaransar, GNK Nautanwa frequently call up on telephone asking some guidance, advice and ideas.



English Summaries of CPS Bulletins & Clippings

Full translation of each story of the CPS Bulletin could not become possible due to paucity of manpower. Yet the GMI team wrote English summary of each story of all 4 Bulletins. The scan copies of the stories that got published are pasted in the English summary of Bulletins. These summaries are attached as Annex.II.

अमरउजाला **दिल्ली यूथ** नई दिल्ली, शुक्रवार, 6 अप्रैल, 2007 **॥ 8**

मैं पत्रकार बनना चाहती हूँ।



नई दिल्ली। राजधानी दिल्ली के समीपकली नोएडा में हाल ही में बच्चों के साथ दुष्कृत्य कर उनकी निर्मम हत्या की घटना ने सभी को झकझोक दिया। इस बात से इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता कि इस घटना को उजागर करने में मीडिया ने अपनी अहम भूमिका निभाई। बच्चों के लगातार गायब होने की रिपोर्ट लिखाने के लिए उनके मां-बाप लगातार धाने के चक्कर काटते रहे, लेकिन पुलिस प्रशासन ने कोई सुनवाई नहीं की- जब मीडिया ने इस घटना में रुचि दिखाई तो पुलिस इरफत में आई और गुनाहगारों को गिरफ्तार किया गया।

मीडिया जब गरीबों की आवाज बना तो शासन द्वारा मूलक और तापला बच्चों के अभिभावकों को पांच-पांच लाख रुपये के चेक दिए गए। इस घटना से जुड़े ये अभियुक्तों को सजा भी मिली और बच्चों से संबंधित इस तरह के मामलों को लेकर न सिर्फ उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार बल्कि देश के अन्य राज्यों की सरकारों पर भी दबाव बना। मैं कहने का

पहल

ग्रासरूट मीडिया इनीसिएटिव द्वारा प्रकाशित चिल्ड्रेन प्रेस सर्विस से

मतलब है कि मीडिया द्वारा आज सच्चाई की जो लड़ाई लड़ी जा रही है।

उम्मे देखकर भला किस संवेदनशील व्यक्ति का मन नहीं करेगा कि यह भी पत्रकार बने। और यही मन मेरा भी है। आज मीडिया अपने विभिन्न माध्यमों जैसे टेलीवी चैनल, अखबार, पत्रिकाओं, इंटरनेट तथा रेडियो के जरिये सच्चाई की लड़ाई लड़ रहा है। मैं एक अखबार की पत्रकार बनना चाहती हूँ क्योंकि मुझे लगता है कि अखबार की पहुँच और प्रभाव आज भी ज्यादा से ज्यादा लोगों तक है।

10 भोपाल, 14 फरवरी 2007

मध्य साप्ताहिक

नईदुनिया

जि खेलने का खेल बढ़ाया जा रहा है। बच्चों के खेल के साथ ही इसके अर्थों-बर्तों, नतीजों को लेकर बहस भी शुरू हो गई है। बॉलियो गेम को खेलने वाले बच्चों को इसके नतीजों से बचना है, विशेषज्ञों की राय में ऐसे गेमों के प्रति बच्चों को बचाना चाहिए।

अगर आज बॉलियो गेमों के शौकीन हैं तो कर-रेस में भाग ले सकते हैं। इस रेस में जय का खेलना शुरू हुआ है। बॉलियो गेम को खेलने वाले बच्चों को बचाना है, बालक को बचाने किसी को भी रोकने की जरूरत नहीं है। बालक रेस में बालक पालक के रक्षक से जोते हुए खेल में भाग ले सकते हैं। बालक को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है। बालक को बचाने किसी को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है। बालक को बचाने किसी को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है।

इसके अलावा बालक को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है। बालक को बचाने किसी को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है।

विचार किया है। नकारात्मक को निगम लगाया जा रहा है। बालक को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है। बालक को बचाने किसी को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है।

यह कैसा गेम

बच्चों को इस तरह की गरीबी व पाबंदी बहुत खराब है। पिछले लगभग 6 सालों से बॉलियो गेम खेल रहे 20 बच्चों का कहना है कि बॉलियो गेम में रोजाना खेलना है न कि अस्पष्टता। मार्केट में अनेक से पहले गेम को संसार बनने की प्रक्रिया होती है, इसे अकार पर गेम को रोकना भी नहीं आता है। बालक को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है। बालक को बचाने किसी को बचाने का खेलना शुरू हुआ है।

बच्चों के साथ ही इसके अर्थों-बर्तों, नतीजों को लेकर बहस भी शुरू हो गई है। बॉलियो गेम को खेलने वाले बच्चों को इसके नतीजों से बचना है, विशेषज्ञों की राय में ऐसे गेमों के प्रति बच्चों को बचाना चाहिए।





CAPACITY BUILDING OF CHILDREN ●

The children participating the CPS project needed intensive capacity building on writing skills and perspective building. In the project, it was envisaged that the 'media writing workshops' were to be conducted for the children at SBMA-Gairsain, URMUL-Lunkaransar, CASP-Delhi, GNK-Nautanwa and Seva Mandir-Udaipur. When the execution of writing workshops started, the workshop to be held at Seva Mandir-Udaipur was dropped. Instead, the children of URMUL-Bajju were included in the workshop held at URMUL-Lunkaransar. Moreover, 2 orientations of children for writing of news at PREM in Gajapati and Ganjam districts were added to the list. The GMI delivered these workshops except the 2 orientations, which were conducted by PREM itself by involving an Oriya-speaking resource person. It was done keeping in view the regional language of Oriya in Orissa province.

Brief descriptions of each of the 'media writing workshops' are given as follows.

Box.7: Status of Media Writing Workshops

Writing Workshop at SBMA-Gairsain
Dates: 18-22 December 2006
No. of Participants: 8

Writing Workshop at CASP-Delhi
Dates: 26-30 December 2006
No. of Participants: 16

Writing Workshop at URMUL-Lunkaransar
Dates: 15-19 January 2007
No. of Participants: 20

Writing Workshop at GNK-Nautanwa
Dates: 21-25 February 2007
No. of Participants: 20

Orientation-1 at PREM-Gajapati
Dates: 18-19 May 2007
No. of Participants: 23

Orientation-2 at PREM-Ganjam
Dates: 21-22 May 2007
No. of Participants: 21

Writing Skills Training of Child Reporters at SBMA Gairsain

With the objective of honing the writing skills of child reporters of 'umang' team a workshop was organized, which continued for 5 days in SBMA Campus at Gairsain from 18 to 22 December 2006. The workshop was conducted by 2 resource persons: namely Mr. H. Arjjumend, the Chief Editor of CPS, and Mr. Ashendra Singh, Editor of CPS. In total 8 trainees participated from umang team. The curriculum taught in the training was as under:

- Since the participants had been given training already on how to write NEWS, it was assumed that





they knew writing of news. Just to find out the gaps in the understanding and skills of news writing the participants were given task of writing a piece of news. After they wrote news on rough pages, they wrote the same on chart sheets and mounted on the board.

- Thereafter, they were given theoretical inputs on how to write NEWS. Lead, Body, Tail, Headline, Sub-Headline and Inverted Pyramid concepts were made clear to everyone.
- After analysis of written pieces, the participants were made clear how to remove the mistakes and weaknesses from writings.
- After reading and imbibing news of newspapers, they were asked to write NEWS afresh. Once they finished writing, all the rewritten news were checked thoroughly and the mistakes were marked with red pen. In second time written news pieces, the mistakes reduced but were still quite many in almost all pieces. Later, home task was given of writing the news third time.



- The participants were told about the Headline, Sub-Headline again, as they could not write it properly in their news.
- Theoretical part of 'Feature' was covered in this lecture. What is the feature? Elements of the feature. Types of feature. Language and facts are crux of the feature. Participants asked questions on the features, which were answered by giving examples.
- All 8 participants were grouped into 4 groups. They wrote the features at night.
- Written features were in bad shape when the participants produced it first timely in the morning session. Lot many corrections were made in each of the features all 4 groups wrote.





- Each group tried to learn from the mistakes of other group. This exercise of corrections was intensive and revealing for everyone.
- Later, task of writing the feature at night was given to each of the 4 groups.
- INTERVIEW was also taught. Why to conduct interview? Types of interviews. How to plan interview? Identifying the interviewee. Taking appointment. Drafting questions after reading the subject thoroughly. Reaching the interviewee in time. Asking questions in friendly environment. Listening patiently and taking notes or recording. Eye contact. Command over the interview environment. Ending interview and making personal relation with interviewee. How to write the interview for newspaper or magazine? All such topics were covered.
- Thereafter, the participants in 4 groups were sent to prepare for taking interviews. Before going into field to collect relevant information and read, and prepare questions, they were asked to select their subject and identify the interviewee.
- Participants then went to carry out their respective task. At night they prepared set of questions as per their subject.
- Every group went into the field in Gairsain only and conducted interview of respective interviewee.
- All the groups assembled at SBMA Campus at around 2 pm.
- All 4 groups wrote the interview in the given format: the headline, introduction of the subject followed by name of writers or interviewers, first question they put, response they got, then second question followed by the response, and so forth.
- Once they finished writing, all 4 interviews were checked thoroughly and mistakes were pointed out. By evening the groups also rewritten the interview and submitted.
- In-depth discussions continued on last day on several development subjects/themes e.g. drinking water, irrigation water, globalisation of water, climate change and its impact in





mountains, precariousness of livelihoods of poor in mountains, fragility of mountain ecosystems, deforestation and its impacts, van panchayats, erosion of traditional institutions, land degradation, modern agriculture, organic farming, public health, women's health, malnourished children, female foeticide, dalits suppression, panchayati raj, children participation in local governance, and so on.

- Review of all 5 days was done.
- Techniques of writing a story were told in the end, as it needed some theoretical brushing. Types of stories. Styles of stories.
- Closing of the training was done with filling in of Feedback Form.



Writing Skills Training of Child Reporters at CASP

The workshop, held from 26 to 30 December 2006, was conducted by Mr. Ashendra Singh, the Editor of CPS. In total 16 trainees participated from Badarpur and Sangam Vihar areas. The curriculum taught in the training was as under:

- Mr. Hasrat Arjjumend asked the children to write on a piece of paper their expectations from the workshop. It was the exercise actually to understanding the writing, thinking and level of the participants. Pieces written by all the participants were checked and all remarkable points were assembled together. Based on the expectations



reflected by the young participants a calendar of topics was formulated of all 5 days.

- Participants were given tips of what the newspaper is. What is the use of the newspaper? What are different parts of the newspaper? What is master head?
- Participants were told that the first news of the newspaper is known as 'lead story'. They were taught what is the application of 'window' in a newspaper. What is the bottom story on front page called? The meaning of byline, filler, creditline, caption,



etc. words was also told to the participants. For different types of news and material, the pages in a newspaper are well determined, it was explained.

- Then the discussions focused on NEWS writing techniques. Inverted pyramid concept of putting elements of news in sequence of importance. Headline, lead, body, tail and dateline were also told.
- The lectures were followed by the practice of news writing. The participants took home task.
- Lecture: Theoretical part of 'FEATURE' was covered in this lecture. What is the feature? Elements of the feature. Properties of feature. Types of feature. Language and facts are crux of the feature. Participants asked questions on the features, which were answered by giving examples. The participants were told that the feature is that writing art, which contains fact in a style that create interest among readers.
- Curiosity and personal touch are the main characteristics if feature. We need to use ornamental language in the feature.
- Every participant wrote a feature individually as an exercise. All the features were reviewed and the mistakes were discussed. Then the participants wrote the features again.
- Further, with the examples some topics were analysed as to what feature would go in which type of feature.
- Participants were given task to write feedback on what they learnt from lecture on feature.
- Difference between a feature and an article was made clear to the participants. An article is analytical piece in which the author can comment as well as can give his/ her opinions. This is not the case in feature. Feature writer has to entertain the readers with facts and information. Moreover, feature cannot be written on every subject. Language of both also differs.
- Participants were also taught about INTERVIEW. They were told of all techniques and procedures. After conducting an interview one can compile the information and write a feature also.





- Some important things to keep in mind: get appointment, reach in time, prepare questions, read background material of subject of interview. Nothing should be added from author's side.
- Participants were given task of writing comments on CPS Bulletin.
- Features written by participants were corrected and finalized. Some more tips were given to the participants.
- Story writing was covered on last day. Story can be for educating the readers or for entertaining them. Stories could be of 2 types: imaginary stories (e.g. literary stories, stories of fairies, etc.) and real stories (e.g. news stories, success stories, event stories, etc.).
- Closing of the training was done with filling in of Feedback Form.
- Participants were given task of writing features.





Writing Skills Training of Child Reporters at URMUL-Lunkaransar

In URMUL-Lunkaransar and URMUL-Bajju, the child reporters have been active for sometime in several creative activities. With the objective of honing the writing skills of child reporters a workshop was organized, which continued from 13 to 19 January 2007 in URMUL-Lunkaransar Campus at Lunkaransar. The workshop was conducted by Mr. Ashendra Singh, the Editor of CPS. In total 20 trainees participated. Brief description of the proceedings is as under:

- On very first day, 56 children were given an exercise of writing about the problems they see in the immediate society. Most of the children wrote about lack of drinking water, road, school and health facilities and social problems like child marriage. Based on the writing style, facts in it, 18 children were identified out of 56. Among them 7 were girls and 11 boys. Rest of the children selected other forms of media like cartoon, radio for further training.
- All 18 participants of the writing workshop were given an exercise on the 1st day in order to know their expectations from 5-day skill building workshop. In their written pieces the children wished to know how to write news, features, stories, etc. They also exhibited their desires to become journalist, reporter, editor, etc.
- Keeping in view the expectations and desires of participant children, the resource person explained the importance of exchange of information. He told about the various components of newspaper like lead story, second lead story, window, master head, headline, dateline, bottomline, steamer news, etc. He also explained the character of different pages of newspaper. On 1st day itself, the participants were given an exercise of writing news. After collecting the written pieces of news, the subject, headlines, style, etc. were discussed.
- On the 2nd day i.e. on 16th January, the participants were taught the principles of inverted pyramid and the prioritization of putting facts in a news item. On the same day, 2 new girl participants were also included afresh, making total number of participants 20.





- All 20 participants were then taught the principles of feature writing, elements of a feature, types of features, and characteristics of a feature. Procedure of writing a feature was also briefed.
- In the next step the children were divided into peer groups and they exercised writing the features. Each group presented the respective feature written from joint efforts. An analysis was carried out of all features through which the headlines, grammar, language, etc. were checked.
- On 17th January, all 20 participants were given topics to write features individually. There were the discussions done on to choosing the reference material in accordance of the topic. From the rigorous discussions it was revealed that topics of local nature like traditions, problems, culture and common man's life provide opportunities for better feature writings.
- January 18 was the day of field exercise. All participants went out in the field to collect relevant data/information from rural people; and they wrote features accordingly. Thereafter, all presented the written features. During the presentations, the mistakes were identified and rectified. Homework of feature writing was also given to every participant.
- Last day of training was for 'interview'. Why and how to conduct interview. What should be the precautions while taking interview? Writing and presentation techniques of interview were taught to the participants.
- The participants were also told about story writing. Purpose, types, styles, etc. of stories were explained.
- The participants were given information of how to become a journalist/reporter.
- Closing of the training was done with filling in of Feedback Form.





Writing Skills Training of Child Reporters at GNK - Nautanwa

Children in Maharajganj of Uttar Pradesh have formed Babu-Bahini Manch through which they channelise various constructive activities. Selected children representing Babu-Bahini Manch were given training during 21-25 February 2007 at Nautanwa. The workshop was conducted by Mr. Ashendra Singh, the Editor of CPS. In total 20 trainees (15 boys plus 5 girls) participated. The description of the teachings is given below.

- Importance of communication was told to the participants first of all. How wide and big is the scope of the information communication. From the discussion with participants it was revealed that the systematic writing and compilation of the information is essential for any form of mass communication. So the grip on language, understanding of the subject/topic and presentation are necessary.
- Participants then wrote their individual expectations from the workshop.
- News writing techniques were taught along with the practical knowledge of the structure of the newspaper.
- Writing the news requires systematic and lucid presentation of facts, information of events. The writer should not include his/her views in the news. It should be completely based on actual happenings.
- All the participants practiced on writing piece of news. Mistakes were corrected from written pieces of news.
- After refreshing the knowledge on writing the news, the participants were given inputs on how to write feature for a newspaper or magazine. The features and articles published in past issues of Dainik Jagaran and Dainik Hindustan newspapers were analyzed and presented.
- The participants then were taught about the feature writing: elements, types, techniques, etc.
- 11 types of features were thoroughly taught. The participants were divided into peer groups for field visits and group exercises. Topics were distributed to each group.
- The participants were also given exercise of writing comments on the past CPS Bulletins.





- Children went into the villages and collected information for developing features. The children in groups wrote features, which were then corrected by the resource person. During the correction exercise all learnt from each other's mistakes.
- On the last day the participants were taught about the interview techniques. They were told whom to interview and why. Preparations required before interview and getting appointment from the person are pre-requisites. How to conduct interview and how to write it were other topics of discussion.
- Story writing was covered. Types of stories and its writing techniques were also taught.
- Closing of the training was done with filling in of Feedback Form.





Box.8: Some Observations (Part-III)

✧ Capacity building program designed in pilot phase of the project provided inputs on methodological instruments of 'writing skills' in context of press. Following the trainings of the children on 'media writing skills', adequate number of features/stories/articles was written by the children, which were better than the previously written stories. Such trainings and follow-up visits were undertaken at 4 locations: SBMA Gairsain, GNK Maharajganj, CASP Delhi and URMUL Lunkaransar. Children of CASP Delhi wrote fairly good stories. Children have more awareness and interest towards the stories.

✧ A common problem, which we had faced, was that the same children have been given trainings of several media skills together: print, radio, cartoons, video, and photography. It obviously created burden and confusion. Better if it was given general orientation on all media types, and based on one's further interests and inherent potential the children would have been selected for further trainings in one media type. For example, those who were interested and potentialful in writing for print media would have been groomed for it. There was thus no provision in the design to do an orientation first, then to select the able children for intensive media writing skills. In principle, the same Amazing Kids project children were given writing trainings also. For many of the children who got writing skills trainings, the writing of pieces with least errors went tough actually. Moreover, the quality of content remained poor in such situations. However, the children of CASP Delhi produced comparatively good content.

Orientation Programmes for Child Reporters in Ganjam & Gajapati Districts of Orissa

The orientation programmes for the child reporters in Ganjam & Gajapati districts were organized from 18th May 2007 to 22nd May 2007 at two different places. 50 children from various villages in Gajapati district had attended the 2-days orientation programme at Chandragiri of Mohana block in the district on 18th & 19th May 2007. The first day began with their introduction to each other followed by sharing their expectations from the programme.

The 2 resource persons from Koraput, Ch. Santakar and Sarat Pattnaik asked the children to participate in each and every activity so that the process gets evolved out of their thoughts and dreams. The children interacted to understand the reason of observation and expression using the senses effectively. After few hours of interaction the children were seen participating in the observation processes.

The children were exposed to different games and activities followed by presentation sessions to understand the power of collective work, proper observation and expressing using different media effectively. With each session the children developed a belongingness towards their environment which was expected to carry home for developing similar effects with their own village, institutions and people for bringing out the strength and deficiencies in them and act as the change makers for ensuring a proper growth.

The children, with the help of acting, drawing, outdoor activities and games were introduced to the ways to interact people for gathering information with dignity. Children brought out



the problems in their villages and discussed on how to bring solutions collectively. They were exposed to the various institutions available in their own villages for addressing their particular problems and issues.

On the second day the children had been to a nearby village Naringi for talking to people practically. They interacted with the people independently and noted down their strengths and problems. After coming back the children prepared their presentations in groups while others in other groups spotted the missing points. This developed a sense of confidence to do it independently.

The children also had discussed on the process adopted in Koraput district with Mr. Upendra Banka and Mr. Arabinda Banka, the two child reporters from Koraput district. In the process they had learnt the challenges and opportunities in growing with the process for knowing more and more on issues that concern them.

The children were oriented on the process of news collection, printing, distribution of a news paper and getting feed back from the readers, that a normal news paper undergoes. The details on how they would write reports and how that will be collected by friends from PREM was discussed in detail. Mr. Ashendra Singh from Grassroots Media Initiative, New Delhi also participated in the programme and interacted with the children.

Similar workshop was also conducted on 21st & 22nd June 2007 for the children from Ganjam district at Maniacally, near Berhampur with 50 children coming from various schools. The children had also visited the nearby village Bhabinarayanpur for exposure and practical



interaction. The programme had ended with chalking out an action plan by the friends from PREM that was worked out with the participation of the teachers attending the camp. Everyone, children, teachers and the organizers had the desire to carry out the programme effectively.



Box.9: Feedback of Children on Trainings

☀ I was feeling very good. What I thought, was being fulfilled. What I wanted to learn, I did. I corrected my many mistakes. Whenever I was given homework, I happily did. The resource person gave news to write at home. I wrote the news with vigor because I was first timely writing it myself. The next day when my written piece was checked, the found mistakes made me disappointed. But I was satisfied because after all I came to know my mistakes, and I was committed to eliminate mistakes. I crossed through cumbersome process of writing story, though it was painful sometimes. I was repeatedly asked to write, so I did.....not once, but five times. I did not give up. I was adamant to write even tens of features. So I am confident now after passing through this intensive exercise. I wish to undergo such more exercises.

- Anu Gupta

Class-IX; Sangam Vihar, Delhi

☀ I am delighted and grateful, as I have been given way to fulfil my dream of becoming a reporter.

- Mr. Hari Ram Meghwal

Class-XII; Village Karansar (Rajasthan)

☀ Apart from the skills of writing for print media, we have got inputs on several issues. So he did perspective building also on the issues like the life in desert, Rajasthani films, Rajasthani festivities, dryland agriculture, etc. This is the first time when we have written some creative piece. The resource person gave tremendous knowledge to us.

- Mr. Sunderlal Meghwanshi

Class-VI; Village Girajsar (Rajasthan)

☀ I have written features repeatedly. So I have known how to write it after immense practice. We, the children, write stories and features on the social evils and development problems. Once these stories publish the readers would laugh. If 10 thousand people read newspaper, at least 100 of them will think on this.

- Ms. Pushpa

Class-X; Village Sondhwali (Rajasthan)

☀ I was afraid of writing. Now I see I can do it to any extent. I write without minding the mistakes I do.

- Mr. Ashish Kumar

Class-IX; Sangam Vihar, Delhi

☀ I was not aware of the newspaper at all. I came to know what are different components and parts of a newspaper. How to write a news, feature I knew. I also got knowledge of the pre-requisites of becoming a journalist. Before writing a piece, one has to thoroughly read, prepare, and alike.

- Ms. Hari Bharti

Class-VI; Village Khikhania Patta (Rajasthan)

☀ We learnt too many things altogether. I knew in this workshop what is headline, what is news, how to write news, what is the first news called in a newspaper, what is the caption, what is bylane story, what to do to be a journalist, what to do before presenting in Akashwani (All India Radio), and so on.

- Mr. Ramzan Ali Khan

Class-VIII; Village Kela (Rajasthan)

☀ I have learnt writing a feature. Now I wish to send the written features on various social issues.

- Ms. Rukmani Kumari

Class-XI; Villave 5.5 M (Rajasthan)



☀ The first day we knew the different parts of news and how is it written. We also came to know the terms used for various things in a newspaper. We learnt several things essential for writing anything, like: correction in words, right headline, writing the words straight, no use of English words in between Hindi, and no use of PIN code. We learnt that the feature contains four essential things: artistic writing style, human touch, strong content, and lucidity of language. The characteristics of a good feature are: that creates curiosity, which is true, that attracts the readers, that create trust, that gives entertainment to the reader, and that inculcates facts and information. The essential steps to write a feature were: selection of the topic/subject, collection of raw information, and then writing the actual feature. There are 12 types of feature told by the resource person. Lastly, we were told about the story writing.

- Mr. Suraj

Class-VIII; Sangam Vihar, Delhi

☀ I am thankful to the URMUL, Plan and GMI who gave me the opportunity to participate the training and learn. Otherwise, it is just a dream for girls in Rajasthan.

- Ms. Bijju Kumari

Class-X; Village Sodhwali (Rajasthan)

☀ The resource person did not pressurize or stressed the children, so all learnt in easy-going environment.

- Mr. Avadh Narayan Pathak

Class-XI; Village Kot Kambaria (Rajasthan)

☀ We were not aware of the points put beneath some letters when we write Urdu words. Now we have come to know about this. We may now try to associate with All India Radio and the Journalism. We wish this kind of training should be organized at least twice a year.

- Mr. Jagdish Prasad

Class-VIII; Village Kela (Rajasthan)

Follow up Visits of Experts at CASP-Delhi

Visit-I

A visit of expert was arranged on 7th December 2006 at CASP office in Delhi. Mr. Pushpendra Pal Singh, the Head of Dept. of Journalism of Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism, Bhopal, visited as an expert and interacted with the child reporters for whole the day. In the follow up program, 15 children participated.

After the formal introduction, the participants shared with Mr. P. P. Singh their problems and difficulties in writing features. Mr. Tarun





Kumar of Class VII questioned, "I am doing a research based feature on 'disappearing cinema talkies'. Where should I get the information?" Mr. P P Singh then replied that before writing a feature, one should decide the purpose of feature; then relevant information should be collected. But the facts one is collecting for feature writing should be true and authentic. To write feature on cinema talkies, he advised, one should meet cinema talkies owners, cable operators and the general audience. Simultaneously, one can go to libraries or can browse the internet. He further told that the piece written should be of such that the reader is fully satisfied with every question answered.



Ms. Sunita questioned how could she make the lead of feature interesting. Mr. Singh briefed that the curiosity is the main characteristic of feature. So we should begin the feature in a way that as the reader proceeds he/she should develop more curiosity in the piece. Sunita further elaborated that she was writing feature on "where the stories told by grandparents gone?" How should she begin? Mr. Singh replied that she should first put her own questions in the beginning.

Then she should reply all the questions one by one. Possibly, that would be good beginning of the feature.

Mr. Arvind of Class XI asked how to make the headline of a feature interesting and beautiful. On this Mr. Singh briefed that the headline of the written piece represents the feature/article. It is immaterial whether the story is written in this language or that language. If the headline does not match what is being written inside the body, it can be said that the article/feature is faceless. So one should write the headline carefully. It is also possible that the headline is written after finishing the story.

Ms. Paromita of Class VII asked as to how the errors be minimized in writing. Mr. Singh answered that the writing requires full concentration. If one writes with complete care and concentration, the errors will be less. Togetherwith, if one does grammatical errors or syntax errors, writing after speaking is better way to avoid such mistakes. Relying to a similar question, he said that if one makes a personal thesaurus of wrong and right words is very beneficial.

Another participants, Mr. Chandan, stated that he was writing a feature on animation technology. How could he get information? The expert suggested that one may consult his/her



teacher, can get assistance of a computer specialist, or can web search. Mr. Sandeep Kumar shared that he was writing feature on 'life on footpath in colder nights'. Whom should he interview and what facts should he include in that? Mr. Singh reaffirmed that his subject was related to those unlucky who are bound to live on footpaths in colder nights. He said that he should focus on such people whom he find living on footpaths, which means the poorest of poor. During interview they would share their grief and that will ultimately reach into the readers, which they may also feel.

Mr. Singh told the participants that the article has its own beauty. It invokes us to express facts, arguments. And it pulls us into dialogue. On the other side the feature avails us the information, knowledge and keeps us entertained. Praveen Sharma, Suryakant and Ashish questioned regarding the career in journalism. The expert satisfied all the participants with his valuable inputs. The participants felt fresh look in their writings. They have now generated new set of features/articles.

Visit-II

In continuation of the 1st visit, this 2nd follow up visit of Mr. Arvind Kumar Singh, Senior Editor of Dainik Hari Bhoomi (Delhi edition) was conducted on 22 March 2007. With him his associate Ms. Savilata Yadav, the sub-editor, also interacted the children. In total 15 children participated the interaction.

Children involved in writing of stories for CPS Bulletins participated this 1-day interaction. They questioned the expert and got clarifications. In the beginning Mr. Arvind Kumar narrated that before writing is essential to decide the audience of the written piece. Language is equally important for communication. He illustrated the importance of communication in modern era. He quoted that the information and communication revolution in past 30 years has changed the shape of world that was not changed even in 5000 years. In last 15-20 years the media of communication have changed the face of world considerably.

Answering a question of a participant, Mr Arvind highlighted that data required on child labor for national to district level is available on internet and one can easily search. One participant, Ms. Paronita shared the difficulty in choosing a topic for writing. Mr. Arvind replied that before writing if we question ourselves as to why are we writing, for whom are we writing, and what are we writing. We usually have to make preparation before writing any piece. We may start writing on subjects derived from our surrounding. For example, which is the school in our surround where science laboratory or other facility is absent. We can also see if there is any foreground present in the locality where we live.





Mr. Chandan Kumar asked about the issues of children to write on. Mr. Arvind replied that selection of topics depend on situations too. For instance, at the time municipal elections, the child reporters can talk to contestants taking the matters of school, streetlight, park, etc. After some data collection, the article can be written. Replying to the question of Ms. Priyanka, he said that our writing style should be simple because the newspaper is read by all categories of audience. Every reporter should write keeping in view the situations. They should also properly work on the primary information before writing.

The expert advised that one has to face difficulties if wishes to write seriously. He indicated that the profession of journalism is full of struggles. Ms. Savilata shared the techniques of the reporting in order to gather the information. She told the alternative way of communicating one's problems through letter writing to the editor of newspaper.

The level of questions was quite high. The children had curiosity to clarify their doubts. Some of the children really had focused, clearcut, innovative and journalistic mind in terms of selection of story idea, pursuing that, and how to go about it. The participants were bold, disciplined and hardworking. The daylong interaction clarified many doubts and answered queries. Overall, the interaction was very successful. However, since other sessions on radio was organized side by side, so some children were distracted their attention towards radio.

Follow up Visit of Expert at SBMA-Gairsain

A follow up visit was due in SBMA Gairsain. So it was conducted in February. Mr. Harish Babu, Feature Editor in Dainik Nai Duniya, Bhopal visited Gairsain and had interaction with the child reporters for 2 days during 24-25 February 2007. In the interaction, 8 persons participated.

Mr. Harish Babu in the beginning told that the writing is such a profession in which we need to focus our whole concentration on the issue we are writing on. Unless we have full confidence and grip over the subject/topic we are writing on, we may not write better. It will not be effective, until. He further told that every writing is a different art; it has specific techniques to learn. We may use our skills of writing on the subjects we have in our mind or knowledge.

Ms. Deepa Jhinkwan asked how to differentiate news, feature and article. He replied that the news is an item that contains information base, whereas the feature contains the information with entertaining and lucid presentations. Different newspapers release features on different subjects. The article inculcates facts and thoughts side by side the information. Analysis and thought-provocation are important contents of the article. Ms. Vandana Siraswal questioned, what should be in the good feature? Mr. Harish Babu highlighted that a good feature is not written on imaginations; but it is written with putting the facts effectively imagination capacity. Truth and lucidity are the principal characteristic of a good feature. Answering to Mr. Deepak Sah, he said that the feature might contain the popular sayings, folklore, etc. connected to local culture. The feature can also contain the quotes, reflections and references from the people. Ms. Laxmi Panwar questioned, whether the feature could be written on true events. He replied that the memoir-based feature could include the



description of true events. Ms. Laxmi Nautiyal asked about the headline of news, feature or article. He responded that the headline should always be short and attractive. The headline and the content of write up must match.

The resource person thus gave answers of many other questions.

Follow up Visit of Editor at GNK-Nautanwa

Visit of expert was arranged on 30-31 March 2007 at GNK Nautanwa. Mr. Ashendra Singh, the Editor of CPS, visited as an expert, and interacted with the child reporters for 2 days. In the follow up program, 20 children participated.

Sushil Kumar of class IX asked: when he writes he is not able ascertain how to give it a headline. Ashendra Singh responded that the headline needs to reflect the contents of the article, feature or story. Moreover, the headline should be half-explaining so as to create curiosity and unrest in the reader/audience. Replying to another similar question he said that the headline should be short.

Answering to question of Narayan Pathak, Mr. Ashendra illustrated that the writing exhibits our language skills, thoughts, opinion, perspective and the social messages in the writings. Sanjay Jaiswal asked whether he can send articles directly to the newspapers. Mr. Ashendra informed that one should correspond first with the Editor of newspaper. Gradually when one starts writing good and confidently, he/she may send write ups to newspapers directly.

Pawan Kumar asked what the introductory feature is. Zahida Khatoon wanted to know whether she could write introductory feature on her village. Mr. Ashendra replied that as the name says the introductory feature explains with interestful words about a place, good or person. If her village has some significant characteristic she may write on her village. Nand Kumar asked how to make good feature. The resource person replied that the understanding and knowledge of the subject/topic should be perfect. Togetherwith, the language should be smooth and lucid. After reading a feature the reader should not have any question unanswered. Many other such questions were asked by the participants.





SENSITIZING THE MEDIA ●

Children are a reflection of present, and are the face of the future. Over 41% of the country's population is children, yet their voices remain unheard. Children face multiple forms of exploitation, abuse and suppression that cause violation of their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. Factors that make children vulnerable to exploitation and abuse are multiple and complex.

Communication in the modern times is the key of all advocacy campaigns and initiatives addressing social change. Mainstream media is the primary forum through which the problems, issues and voices of the children can be meaningfully highlighted in a way that the policy environment of the country changes favourably.

Keeping in view the multiple purposes such as mainstreaming the children's problems, issues and voices in the media, and popularising the CPS apart from strengthening the initiative of Journalists' Alert, the GMI organised several workshops/meets with mainstream media.

Workshop of Youth Journalists and Children Issues in Delhi

1-day workshop was organized in which about 35 persons from press and children-based NGOs participated. The workshop was successfully completed at Rajendra Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi on 6 January 2007.

Issues of child rights need to take remarkable shape in the society, as these are stakeholders of tomorrow; but the child issues receive inadequate attention and space in different forms of media. Highlighting children's issues in media is today's





essential need, as it has direct bearing on the policy environment at local, national, international level. This attempt was to bring closer the child rights activists and media persons of all types.

Keynote address was given by Ms Razia Ismail, noted child rights activist. First of all she gave her brief introduction of herself how she struggled to establish herself in press (she started career from), as everywhere there is competition to be in limelight. Ms. Razia Ismail was very happy on breaking this ice. She gave her concern over human development report on the children especially the children of India. How accountable we Indian are about the rights of the child, how Nithari massacre was permitted in epicenter of politics.



She was very much concerned about the attitude of politicians and official who consider child development a welfare activity, not as an investment. Press as an important partner and pillar of democracy can work as an eye opener. Media should reflect the issues in the human development reporting during the coverage. Commonwealth games are being organized in Delhi but at what cost? Has somebody thought of those who are being displaced? Where are they going? What will happen to their families and children? Whole ASIAD Village was built by homeless builders. Now who knows about them? Journalists should come forward and write on these issues. Today rarely there is any one to write on these child issues except Chetan Chauhan.

Politicians pay no or little attention to children, as they are not voters, while they make a huge volume of population. In 1940, human rights was the theme with child rights as theme of 1950 when the National Policy on Child Rights was promulgated. In this policy, the children were considered as Supreme National Asset. Only in the third five-year plan, the children for the first time were considered important. Government has a mindset that child programme is welfare programme, not an investment. Press can play a vital role to get the government realize this as investment. National Knowledge Commission considers youth as a major resource, not merely a work force.

Mr. Abhijeet from HAQ Centre for the Child Rights in his address told that many efforts for bringing media and NGOs together were not successful due to various reasons. This is good



initiative by GMI. Media people can place him/herself whenever there is any violation of human right. Mr. Abhijeet also told the importance of media and NGO partnership.

When Mr. Abhijeet was speaking to 2-3 youth journalists (namely Mr. Dharmendra Singh from Amar Ujala, Mr. Vishwanath Suman from Amar Ujala, and Mr. Vijay Prabhat from Dainik Jagaran) had resented. Journalists argued that the NGO persons want their own coverage instead of the coverage of the issue.



Mr. Arvind Kumar of Haribhoomi glorified role of media as every body considers media as superman. He expressed the grief of brain drain from print media and said that the electronic media is lost what to show or what not to show. And quality journalists from print are disappearing. He suggested the focus on the rural children as many exclusive stories can be explored like Nithari. He

emphasized the need o politicizing the children issues. He said that young journalists prefer political reporting rather than social. He also emphasized better coordination between media and development sector by orientating the media on social issues, as there are thousands of

bonded labourers in the tobacco industry in Allahabad. But rarely anybody knows. The media people should do investigative journalism. He suggested that some readymade stories should be prepared and sent to papers so that it is easily published. And this type of interactive meeting should be held regularly. The Journalist Alert should also be bilingual. He also suggested that there should be a resource centre created to provide with the background material on story ideas highlighted in Journalist Alert. He lastly emphasized the need of meetings of all bureau chiefs.





Mr. Atharuddin of Janmat TV spoke about the working style of NGOs. He suggested that there should be a transparency and reliability in the sector. He also seconded what Mr. Arving said. Several other journalists especially one senior journalist from Prabhat Khabar reinforced the necessity of creating a constant source of information on children issues that the media persons can access or from where the information flow could be persistent. Moreover, majority of the press persons stressed on constant coordination between media workers and the child activists.

Workshop of Youth Journalists and Child Reporters in Dehradun

This workshop held on 21 January 2007 at Urja Bhawan, Dehradun invited the media persons from Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. The important feature of this workshop was that 4 youth reporters from SBMA-Gairsain addressed the press. Mr. K. Kannan principally facilitated the workshop. Introduction was done by Mr. H. Arjjumend.

Mr. Shiv Prasad, Editor of Parvat Jan magazine started interacting with the youth reporters. Many journalists like Mr. Shashibhushan Bhatt, Editor of Uttarakhand Shakti, Mr. S. Rajen Todaria, Editor of Janpakshcha Aajkal, Mr. Shakt Dhyani of Halant magazine, Mr. Iqbal Vaasu, Editor of Doon Darpan, and other senior reporters questioned the youth reporters about their aspirations, experiences, trainings, difficulties, learnings and further plans. The youth reporters also asked various questions from the journalists. Ms. Aditi Kaur, President of Mountain Children Forum moderated several times the discussions.



Two magazines offered space for Uttarakhand children on a regular basis. 4-5 newspapers published the news of the program the next day.

Workshop of Youth Journalists and Child Reporters in Lucknow

Issues of child rights need to take a remarkable shape in the society, as these are stakeholders of tomorrow; but the child issues receive inadequate attention and space in different forms of media. Highlighting children's issues in media is today's essential need, as it has a direct bearing on the policy environment at local, national, international level. This need further aggravates when the children themselves start writing on the problems they face in their surroundings. How should the media respond to their voices if they speak for themselves?



Mr. Hasrat Arjjumend, Chief Editor of Children Press Service gave welcome note to all participants. He was very affirmative with the encouraging response from the participants. Mr. Arjjumend in brief elaborated the objective of the workshop. He then explained the whereabouts of the CPS project. He described how the GMI is building the capacities of children in 5 states of India and their stories get published in CPS Bulletins before its distribution in 800 Hindi newspapers and magazines. So the CPS is such a platform of the children through which they communicate to large audience via their written pieces. The forum was then open for expression of views, opinions and further discussions.

First of all Mr. Rahul from GNK-Plan came forward to explain the initiative centred on the children. He said that after joining the writing initiative the children have developed their



understanding about the issues. Senior journalist, Mr. Afzal Ahmad Ansari expressed that such efforts of the children not only enhance the capacities and abilities of the children themselves but also increase their sensitivity towards the social problems and issues. Giving the reference of his experiences, he praised the children that if they are exposed to journalistic skills they would become very

sensitive citizens one day. The president of Lucknow Journalists and Writers Foundation, Mr. Izhar Ansari shared the experiences with the children. He said that the technology is increasingly dominating the field of journalist. He advised the child reporters to get acquainted with the latest technologies and the English language.

Week and Times weekly's Editor, Mr. Sanjay Sharma, and TV channel Five Star's reporter Mr. Rahul interacted with the children Mr. Sharma disclosed that we may express the problems and pains of the society in principally two ways: one, we may write analytical article on the events; other, just by publishing the news about the event. Representative of Maya Jagat magazine, Mr. Gaurav Trivedi gave advice to incorporate the local and rural issues into the mainstream media. He interacted the child reporters and shared that there are countless issues in





the village on which one can write immensely. Jansatta's representative Mr. Suresh Verma, Hemant from Punjab Kesri, Raj Kumar from Rashtriya Swaroop, and Imraan from United Bharat spoke the similar things.



Senior journalists Mr. Kaushal Kishor and Mr. Gurudev Sharan asked the preferred subjects of the children for writing. They advised to the children to read more and more on the chosen subjects. Mr. Yogesh Kumar of Swatantra Chetna and Mr. Dheeraj Dhawan of Dainik Hindustan took information from the children about their ideals and expected nation. Mr. Omkar of SVN TV and Ms. Shilpi of Dainik Jagaran asked the children about their interests. The representative of Sahara Samay, Mr. Manoj Sharma

gave information about different mediums of the communication and the competitive trends in it. He further told that the competition for exclusive stories is increasing with more number of newspapers and TV channels entering into the business.

Editor of Dainik Quomi Khabrein, Mr. Mohammed Ghufraan Naseem described the changes appearing in the presentation of the news, and said that the value of the news today is not determined by the content of it but by the presentation. Every person presents the news in different way. It applies to writing of news or it's reading in front of TV camera. Reporter of Metro TV, Mr. Pankaj Mishra, and Mr. Naeem of Indian Express commented on the writings of the children in CPS and welcomed the sensitivity of the children. They emphasized that the children would be responsible and sensitive citizens if they were writing from this tender age.

Ms. Tarannum Manjul, senior reporter of Indian Express, talked to the GMI persons and the child reporters extensively. She wrote a very good press note and published in Indian Express. Though the press coverage including on TV was very heavy, but we could not collect that.

There were lot many news on television as well as in newspapers of Lucknow on 5th April. Unfortunately, GMI could not collect the feedback of news except the one given as follows. It appeared in Indian Express, the leading English daily in India.



This is teen reporter, filing on child marriage from Ratanpur

By **Tarannum Manjul**

Lucknow, April 4: Move over 'mainstream media', the child reporters have arrived. To take the plight on nondescript villagers in nondescript villages across the state to the big dailies of Delhi.

From child marriage and female foeticide to health problems faced by brick kiln workers, 40-odd child reporters, barely in their teens, have spread out across the state, thanks to an initiative of the Delhi-based Grassroots Media Institute.

Five of these 40 child reporters from UP were in the state capital to attend a workshop in which they shared their experiences and interacted with other experts in the field.

"I always wanted to voice my concern about problems in my village but could not find the right avenue," Ankita Shukla, a Class VI student from Ratanpur block in Maharajganj district, said. Daughter of a poor farmer, Ankita said she got the opportunity to bring to light these problems by becoming a child reporter.

About her recent article on child marriage, she said: "It is a common practice in my area, and I want everyone to know about this problem that every child has to face (in her area)." She stressed that she would go on writing till someone in the corridors of power takes note of the issue.

Sanjay Kumar Jaiswal, from Ratanpur block in the same district, said many senior journalists in the national capital appreciated his article on environmental threats in his area. "I feel strongly about threats to the environment due to increasing industrialisation," said the Class VIII student of Nautanwa Inter College.

"Then there is the issue of exploitation of labourers in my village — they are never given any health facilities. I want people in power to listen to even the smallest villager in Baldi Dali village."

As part of the initiative, 40 child reporters from Maharajganj district send such reports in Hindi to the office of Grassroots Media Institute every month. The Grassroots team then compiles selected articles in a newsletter of "Children Press Service", which is circulated across the Hindi dailies in Delhi for publication.

Grassroots director Hasrat Arjumend said the project started some four months ago as a pilot experiment in Maharajganj district. "Similar initiative was undertaken in a district each in Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Orissa and Delhi," Arjumend said. "We selected children who are already being initiated by an NGO, called Gram Niyojan Kendra, in Maharajganj."

The children were later trained by the institute's experts to report and edit their stories in Hindi, he said.

Press Meet in Delhi: Children - the leaders of social change

Children are the future of nation. Destiny of nation lies in the children. World over there are worries about the children's future, security, development and safety. Children have themselves also been struggling to save them or build their future. They have formed various platforms to execute their innovative acts. Media and civil society organizations are playing



significant role in aiding the children's fights. Taking this reference a press meet was organized on 8 May 2007 at Rajendra Bhawan today by consortium of Plan International, CASP Delhi and Grassroots Media Initiative. Bal Panchayat, a children's institution, addressed the press meet entitling 'children as change agents'.

Present in number of about 37, the press persons interacted with the children. In next a week, there were lot many news appeared in national media including of English as well as internet. The news appeared in the following platforms.

- Hindustan Times: 16 May 2007
- Deccan Chronicle: 16 May 2007
- The Hindu: 11 May 2007
- The Tribune: 9 May 2007
- Monsters & Critics dot Com: 8 May 2007
- Big News Network dot Com: 11 May 2007
- Hind Today dot Com: 8 May 2007
- India e-News: 8 May 2007
- Nerve News of India: 8 May 2007
- Street Talk: 8 May 2007
- Two Circles dot Net: 8 May 2007
- Web India 123 dot Com: 8 May 2007
- Yahoo India News: 8 May 2007
- Net India 123: 8 May 2007

Journalist Alert

Journalist Alert was conceived an important instrument to sensitise the media on children's issues. The GMI team brought out 2 issues of Alert. 1000 prints of each issue were distributed widely among the press and journalists through post. Moreover, it's the PDF file of the Alerts were e-posted to large number of people.

Journalist Alerts got mixed response of journalists and others. Some journalists in the network attributed their stories to the effect of Journalist Alerts.

Bal Panchayats can go a long way in addressing children's issues

HAVE HELPED CHILDREN

VEEKSHA VAGMITA, Delhi University

BAL PANCHAYATS serve as a platform for children to express their concerns and opinions. They have played a significant role in fighting the evil of child marriage, and thus liberating young children from a lifelong ordeal. The contribution of Bal Panchayats in eliminating gambling amongst children and other addictive habits can hardly be overemphasised. They bring to focus specific problems faced by children and thereby facilitate the required action by the adults.

Child labour acts as an impediment to the growth of children. Bal Panchayats have played a phenomenal role in aiding the not-so-fortunate children in villages who would otherwise have spent their lives toiling as labourers.

Hygiene and health care in children are other important issues that need to be addressed and bal panchayats play an active role in creating awareness about them. They enable children to realise their dreams that have been thwarted by orthodox social values. Helping children complete high school before marriage and encouraging dropouts to rejoin school are some of the issues on their agenda. Bal Panchayats go a long way in fostering personality development and bringing a sense of empowerment in children.

After all, children are a country's greatest assets and such organisations boost their confidence, inspiring them to fight for their rights. Bal Panchayats envisage a society where children have a sense of autonomy in their lives and play a pro-active role in releasing their friends from the tenacious grip of poverty and age old tradition. They inculcate healthy values in them and also take initiative to organise sports programmes. Thus, by providing a forum to children to interact and educate themselves, Bal Panchayats have brought about a positive change and highlighted how children can sometimes be a lot more wise, fair and unbiased as compared to adults.

YOUR VIEW

BAL PANCHAYATS, INARGUABLY, HAVE ALLOWED CHILDREN TO VOICE THEIR CONCERNS, BUT THEIR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON REMOVING ILLITERACY AND POVERTY



It is outstanding initiative. Media is one of the major stakeholders we working with. We would certainly like to contribute to Journalist Alert.

Rakesh Nair

Dy. Executive Secretary, Manav seva Sansthan "SEVA"



Journalists Alert ...1
Child Issues in Focus

key story ideas for media coverage and discourse

Dear Reader,

Issues of child rights have been taking remarkable shape in the society, but receiving inadequate space in different forms of media. Highlighting the children's issues in media is today, is extremely essential because it has direct bearing on the policy environment at international, national, regional and local levels. JOURNALISTS ALERT is an attempt to remind you to pen down on different issues and aspects of the children in our society so that their future can no longer remain bleak, ultimately they are the future citizens of our country and the world. Supported by Plan International, this Alert consists of some positive stories of children-based interventions that actually show way to all of us. Other set of stories drives us towards realizing the gravity of the problem and to act upon the burning issue. Hope you will subscribe some of the story ideas and act appropriately.

Sincerely,

Harriet Arjmand

Child participation should not just be rhetoric but should become a meaningful reality

In the remote area of Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu (India) where the devastating Tsunami of 26 December 2004 played havoc with more than 5,000 lives. A small group of children are using photography as a tool to monitor relief and rehabilitation measures initiated by international development agencies. Equipped with a child friendly eye and simple parameters to assess relief, they have posted their findings including photographs on the website www.pichers.org. There is a lot to learn from these children as the website simply reveals.....

Plan International

Journalist Alert ...1

Only formal schooling can ensure education of children in Orissa

There are more than 40 lakhs of child labour in Orissa out of which around 23 lakhs are girl child labourers. After several schemes are launched to proliferate education for children and bring more children into mainstream education, the situation has not improved. The need for quality education for the children is still a dream. The idea to popularize the non-formal education to bring more children into the mainstream school has also faced with implementation problem. Different schemes like EGS, DREP, SSA, NCP, etc. have failed to provide quality education and all the children must get quality and equitable education through mainstream formal school system. For more information, please contact: Grassroots Media Initiative, New Delhi at gm@grassrootsmedia.org

Government of India not serious for children's future

In 2002, the 65th constitutional amendment included education as a fundamental right by incorporating Article 21(A) of the constitution. It generated some hope that every child in India will have access to education. However, a central act is still awaited to provide free and compulsory education in a proper spirit. 65th amendment should set legal standards, which would pave the way for millions of children to get free, compulsory and quality education. Nevertheless, despite several consultations and meetings the central government could not reach a consensus to enact the Right to Education Bill in the parliament. In 1994, following a judgment by the Supreme Court, the centre asked the states to make education compulsory for children in the age group of 6 to 14 years. The state governments evaded their hands off enacting a bill and did not bear the financial burden. Government of India is deliberately delaying the Bill to pass in parliament in order to escape the responsibilities. The facts need to be investigated and unearthed. For more information, visit: www.childlabour.org or contact: Harriet Arjmand, Campaign Against Child Labour, ShriJangaraj at harriet@childlabour.org / childlabour@childlabour.org

Ever tried to find out children's views on issues affecting their lives?

Probably yes or perhaps no. But children are however, do not bear around the world and are generally concerned on issues of education, health and many other areas affecting their lives. Why not talk to a child the next time you do a story on issues affecting children's lives. Or perhaps carry their story alongside the stories you choose to write. We will only be too glad to help.

For further information, please contact:
HARSHAT ARJMAND, Grassroots Media Initiative, Above Rail Reservation
30 A, Street 17, Zakir Nagar, Opp. New Friends Colony A Block, Connaught Place
New Delhi - 110 022 India. Tel: +91-11-26055172, 9606666666, 9906666666
E-mail: grassrootsmedia@focm.com, gm@grassrootsmedia.org

Journalists Alert ...2
Children Issues in Focus

Dear Reader,

Issues of child rights have been taking remarkable shape in the society, but receiving inadequate space in different forms of media. Highlighting the children's issues in media is today, is extremely essential because it has direct bearing on the policy environment at international, national, regional and local levels. JOURNALISTS ALERT is an attempt to remind you to pen down on different issues and aspects of the children in our society so that their future can no longer remain bleak; ultimately they are the future citizens of our country and the world. Supported by Plan International, this Alert consists of some critical story ideas with a glance. This set of stories drives us towards realizing the gravity of the problem and to act upon the burning issue. Hope you will subscribe some of the story ideas and act appropriately.

We have back up information related to the stories, which we may provide to the interested journalists. We are also open to work in close coordination in order to take on the issues.

Looking forward to hear from your side for the cause of children.

Sincerely,

Harriet Arjmand

Plan International

key story ideas for media coverage and discourse

Find your mail interesting. I would like to know about the Chetna study on platform kids in Delhi. The kind of odd jobs they do. I think the report hasn't been published.

Pragya Kaushika, Times of India

This is commendable initiative. We extremely interested to learn about the outcome of Journalists Alert. We will be happy to share with you some of the work we have done related to children and media.

Kavita Ratna
Director-Communications, CWC

Box.10: Some Observations (Part-IV)

☞ The response of media was extremely nice. Particularly when an interaction with press was done in Lucknow (UP) and Delhi. Some journalists/ reporters interviewed the GNK and CASP children for long. After Lucknow program, the coverage was such that the famous star Ms. Subhsini Ali (who saw it in Kanpur on TV) contacted us back and requested the written pieces of the children. Indian Express gave exclusive coverage to CPS and the children of GNK. A popular magazine of development issues, Civil Society, has recently done a commentary story on CPS project, which is about to publish shortly.

☞ The CPS project has become brandised in several states like UP, Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra.



CAPTURING SOME IMPACTS ●

CPS project has brought about remarkable impacts in a short span of time. There are many secondary impacts that have yet to appear. Moreover, there was no mechanism proposed in the design of the project that would have monitored or systematically documented the impacts of interventions. However, the GMI team has observed certain impacts of the CPS project on child reporters, on parents and society, on media persons and the participation of children in processes.

Impacts on Child Reporters

Following the publishing of the stories of child reporters they have developed immense confidence and courage. As they underwent the trainings and guidance time to time, they could develop perspective of various critical issues. These child reporters have improved their writings considerably. Mr. Hariram Meghwal, Mr. Magga Ran and Mr. Bhanwar Lal of Rajasthan started sending the written stories directly to CPS/GMI for publication. Similarly, the child reporters of Uttarakhand have been sending stories by e-mail.

Associated with GNK-Nautanwa, Mr. Hirman Yadav accepted that the writing workshops have changed his writing style and art, which benefited him in regular school examination too. Children participating in CPS project have started looking at the things very critically, especially the system of governance and the institutions in villages. Many features appeared in CPS Bulletins exhibit such comparative analysis done by the children.

Mr. Bhanwar Lal of Rajasthan has continuously phoned to CPS office and ever demanded the CPS Bulletin to be sent to him. He was interested to improve his writing skills through the platform. The children associated with CASP-Delhi monitored the municipal elections in



Box.11: Reflection of Sanjay Jaiswal (UP)

I have written several stories/ features in CPS Bulletin. When my story “Catastrophe awaited” got published in CPS Bulletin#2 and then in newspaper, I was extremely happy. After this I was excited to write a number of stories on the problems I see surrounding me. After getting training on media writing skills I have become confident to take interviews of officers from whom I was otherwise afraid of. The biggest change I saw in myself was the craze of becoming a journalist to serve my country and my land. Today, I have decided to write more and more stories. I discussed this achievement with my fellow children in Babu-Bahini Manch, who supported me writing on rural problems. They also pronounced to make the villagers aware through writings. I showed the published story to many fellow villagers who were just shocked see it. My parents now are more positive towards me and try to comply with my requirements. I am very happy.



Badarpur and Sangam Vihar areas and wrote their observations. National daily, the Hari Bhoomi (Delhi edition), published the observations of the children with their own photographs.

A large number of children have seen the changes in themselves. Due to scarcity of time, the GMI team could only gather the reflections of several children only. These reflections are given in Boxes.

Box.12: Some Observations (Part-V)

We have published 4 CPS Bulletins containing the stories/ features/ articles written by children in Hindi. These are in Feature Agency style. The features/stories/articles being published in CPS Bulletins have been republished (placed) by various newspapers. Yet there are few limitations of hard copies of CPS Bulletin. These are:

- a) If a child reporter/writer has a photograph related to the story, it is difficult to supply photo to the newspapers. The newspaper usually skips contacting back for the photo. Those newspapers who are placing the stories of children already have suggested to put the relevant photographs on web and mention the link of photo right in the hard copy of CPS Bulletin below the concerned story.
- b) The reach of CPS Bulletin is confined to about 800 newspapers/magazines only to which it is posted every month. The stories, which are placed in the newspapers further, reach large number of audience. It has been suggested by different journalists that the stuff in CPS Bulletin can reach double-triple number of audience if put on web. For some print newspaper/magazine it will be easy to copy the text of stories and place in respective newspapers/magazines. Yet another set of web-based news/magazines would have privilege to lift the stories directly from the web-version of CPS Bulletin.
- c) Those who don't read/understand Hindi, including some of the Plan people, suggested to transcribe/summarize the CPS stories into English. So far we have produced summary of stories in English for reporting purpose. But the CPS Bulletin may be fully transcribed in English and should then be placed on web version of CPS.
- d) Presently, the CPS Bulletin covers only the articles/stories/features written relatively mature/competent children. And the number of these participating children is limited. There is large number of young children who cannot write fullscale stories but small pieces (e.g. news, observations, notes) of text. If we convert the small pieces written by young children into news and publish in hard copy of CPS Bulletin, it is not fruitful. The news actually should be current; while CPS Bulletin's frequency is monthly (sometimes delays). To include voices of more and more children through news/ observations/ notes/ photos/ illustrations (e.g. cartoons) the CPS has to be on web-based so that weekly news bulletins may be e-published and e-circulated.

From above 4 limitations of hard copy of CPS Bulletin, it never means that the present hard copy of CPS Bulletin should be dropped. It must continue. Out of 800 newspapers/magazines, to whom the hard copy is presently posted, hardly 10% are convenient with web. Just downloading a photo from web version is another matter. So they prefer print version of CPS Bulletin.



Box.13: Reflection of Saurabh Gond (UP)

I have written many stories and articles. My story on child marriages was published in CPS Bulletin#1. CPS has provided us a platform to write and communicate the problems and issues of our villages. It is catching attention of external world. I was initially afraid of whether my story would be entertained by CPS or not. But when it was published in newspaper too I was really very happy and confident from inside. Now I am writing continuously so that I can also become a journalist to serve the humanity. Trainings given to our Babu-Bahini Manch fuelled energy among us to act upon rural problems through writings. When the villagers came to know that children of Babu-Bahini Manch are writing in magazines and newspapers they were very happy and proud. When I told to my parents and bother-sisters about my story writing, they did not believe and just laughed. I was disgruntled. But when I showed them the published story that I wrote their eyes widened. I am today highly motivated to write the stories and supply to CPS.

Box.14: Reflection of Magga Ram (Rajasthan)

One day the postman came to my village and called me and handed over an envelope. I was thrilled. But when I opened it, there was copy of CPS Bulletin inside. I was out of control in happiness. Whole village came to know that the chhotu (small child) has received the letter from Delhi. I am active member of Bal Panchayat. I never took training of writing skills. Once there was a training of writing skills in Lunkaransar where I was taking other training on radio. In the evening when I talked to fellow children, they told me about writing skills. I started taking interest in it. When I returned home, I wrote something and posted to CPS. My story did not publish but I received the other issues of CPS Bulletin. Then I became confident that my story would surely publish one day. I wrote more and more. Suddenly, story of village fellow Ms. Mangiram Khudia got published in CPS Bulletin. We took it to village meeting and read all stories of Bulletin for others. I am hopeful that I will be a writer after some training.

Changes in Behaviour of Families and Society

After the children associated with CPS project, the parents and rest of the members of society have changes their perception towards these children. This change is seen at two levels: once the children started writing on society's serious issues the guardians gave various facts and information about the topic the children selected. Second, the people have started discussing openly on the issues in front of children. Mr. Rahul Tomar of Delhi says, "when I told my parents and others at home, they supported me and helped in collecting facts and information". Ms. Pushpa of Uttar Pradesh says that when she accessed the doctor of primary health centre to get some information, the lady doctor entertained happily and cooperated in providing information she wanted.

During orientation of child reporters in Orissa, the children when reached Naringi village, the men were in their fields. The women in the beginning did not talk well with the children, but after sometime the women gave sufficient information about the problems in the village.



Young children have been gradually building rapport in the rural society. The children have developed their writing skills to a considerable level. The village society and families have supported the children in the endeavour. Nothing was possible without cooperation of parents and the society. The participation of girls in the writing trainings held in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh particularly is strange, as no parent allows their daughters go out of village. This is nothing but manifestation of the society's mobilization and acceptance.

Impact of Journalist Alert

The Journalist Alert was printed in English along with the CPS Bulletins. Through this Alert, various journalists and media workers were given clues and story ideas on the issues of children. The effect of its publication was observed in a number of cases. Many mainstream journalists worked on the children's issues following the Alert. A reporter of TV channel, Sahara Samay, Mr. Vijay Nandan Yadav gave extended coverage to the children related issues on TV screen by including in the package 9 exclusive stories.

Such a positive effect was also observed in print media. Mr. Kumar Brijendra of Navbharat published 4 stories on the children issues after he received the Alert and got mobilized. Senior Sub-Editor of national daily Amar Ujala, NOIDA, Mr. Dharmendra Bhadoria, published a dozen of stories on child rights and protection issues. Delhi's daily Virat Vaibhav's Ms. Anika Arora published several features on children.

Several English newspapers also showed response. Reporters associated with Times of India, Civil Society and The Tribune gave encouraging response on Journalist Alert.

Effect on Participation of Children

The children have always registered adequate participation in the activities of CPS project. The children have written stories after carefully selecting the topics and issues. Issues ranged from child marriage, child labour, female foeticide, etc. to technology, environment, culture, etc. The children participating in CPS project are mostly studying in schools. They are also associated with children institutions crafted at village level. In all 5 provinces, the children have taken immense interests in the activities of CPS project including the capacity building exercises. Overall, the level of motivation of the children has increased with the extended participation in CPS project. The children are actually seeing their future in reporting the local problems and issues. This participation is positively affecting the action the children groups take at local level for social reform, rural development or correcting the governance. Participation of girls is really commendable. It is becoming possible as a result of parents' and society's changes in thoughts.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT PHASE ●

- To increase the depth in content, 'perspective building' of child writers/reporters is necessary on each and every issue on which they like to write story. Rigorous research skills need to inculcate abilities of fact finding and analysis.
- A general orientation on all media types should be given first to the children, followed by further trainings on 'writing skills for print media' based on one's interests and inherent potential. This way, those who are interested and potentialful in print media would be groomed further.
- The web version of CPS is essential along with the print version. The web version will contain monthly issues of CPS containing features/stories/articles written by children both in Hindi and English, plus weekly section of news written by children.
- The CPS Bulletin should not pause, as it has created adequate rapport in the newspapers and magazines.
- To increase the placement of children's stories in newspapers, that too more in national newspapers, the CPS project requires separate person who could exclusively do this task with the collection of feedback of printed stories. Similarly, a personnel is also needed who can exclusively conduct capacity building of the children. Since the web version requires more and more time commitment, so the editorial team (consisting of Hindi and English editors) should also be exclusively meant for editing and stories collection tasks.

