

## **Family travels 10km to attend Bharat Yatra in Dhule**

*Over 500 local citizens mobilized to raise their voices for children in Maharashtra*

**Monday, 02 October 2017, Dhule, Maharashtra:** Mr. Gautam Bhagwan Ahire from Fagne village travelled 10 kilometers with his children Sonali and Roshan to participate in Bharat Yatra in Dhule. Dhananjay Tingal, Executive Director, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, warmly welcomed them to raise their voices for Surakshit Bachpan-Surakshit Bharat and gave them a book authored by Shri Kailash Satyarthi.

The [Bharat Yatra](#), launched by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi on 11 September, reached Dhule on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the twenty-second day of the 35-day long march across the country to build unprecedented awareness on combating child sexual abuse and trafficking.

Earlier today, the event was kickstarted by paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri on their 148th and 113th birth anniversaries. Nearly 200 students from Padvi Nutan School and Undergraduate College, Swami Tevram High School and Green Kids Club participated in the event along with NCC Cadets. 11-year-old Janvi and 10-year-old Prithviraj recited a poem titled "I will save the earth". Vashist Samrat, who was rescued in 1998 as a domestic child laborer, now preparing for his IAS exams under Shri Kailash Satyarthi's supervision, recited a poem on his life and that of Gandhi ji. This was followed by a skit performed by students of MSW College Dhule.

Marchers in the Bharat Yatra sang the theme song '[Nikal Pade Hein](#)' to inspire local citizens to take to the streets to demand effective action on violence against children. Students, teachers, government officials and members of the civil society took the pledge to create a Safe Childhood, Safe India.

Other dignitaries present on the occasion included Ms. Ratna Wankhedkar, District Child Protection Officer; Mr. NB Patil Principal and Mr. RP Sonawane, Supervisor, Padvi Nutan School and Undergraduate College.

Addressing the audience, Dhananjay Tingal, Executive Director, Bachpan Bachao Andolan said, "Just like Gandhi ji fought for India's independence in a peaceful way, let us also remember that the one who does not resort to weapons to fight for his cause, is not weak but is actually much stronger. We must raise our voices against injustice and should not give up despite the hardships we will face along the way."

The Bharat Yatra marched on the streets of Dhule and mobilized more than 500 locals to support the cause. The 35-day long Bharat Yatra, which was flagged off on 11 September from Kanyakumari, will now travel from Dhule to Indore.

Earlier last month, Union Home Minister, Shri. Rajanath Singh, gave his assurance on passing the anti-trafficking law, which aligns with one of the key demands of the Yatra.

Ever since its launch, Bharat Yatra has been drawing enormous support from citizens across India, including Amitabh Bachchan who tweeted to his fans to support the Yatra. Earlier, Union Minister for Shipping and Finance Mr Pon Radhakrishnan had flagged off the Yatra from Kanyakumari along with Mr Satyarthi. In Trivandrum, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan assured whole hearted support from his government in eradicating the menace of child sexual abuse and trafficking.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sent a personal letter to Kailash Satyarthi extending his support to the Yatra, which will cover 11000 kilometres across 22 States, including Karnataka. Some of the key cities it covers include Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Guwahati, Bhopal, Jaipur, Srinagar among others.

The Karnataka High court will pay special attention to POCSO cases so the children can get justice.

The Yatra was also supported by Andhra Pradesh and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu walked with the Foundation to promote awareness about the cause. He also announced that the state of Andhra Pradesh would house a global policy institute dedicated to the well-being and security of children across the country.

At Kanniyakumari during the flag off Mr Satyarthi had declared, "I will not rest till children of this country are not safe. I am not going to stop fighting if the raping and abuse do not stop. I cannot sleep in peace until we win our war against rape and abuse. This moral epidemic haunts our nation, and it is time we fight against it, together."

Re-iterating his mission behind launching the Bharat Yatra, he said "Why am I marching? Because my children are being raped. I refuse to accept that eight children go missing and two are raped every hour. Each time if a single child is in danger, India is in danger. Bharat Yatra is to make India safe again for our children." Kailash Satyarthi has been campaigning for the freedom, safety and security for children across the globe for the past 36 years. His Nobel Peace Prize (2014) was for his continuous efforts and struggle for the rights children.

The Yatra is the launch of the three-year campaign against child rape and child sexual abuse which is aimed at increasing awareness and reporting of the cases, strengthening intuitional response including medical health and compensations, ensuring protection for victims and witnesses during trials and increasing convictions of child sexual abuse in a time bound manner.

#### **About Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation**

The Foundation's mission is to create, implement and advocate child-friendly policies that ensure the holistic development and empowerment of children. For achieving these goals, the Foundation encourages government, businesses, civil society as well as children and the youth to participate in strategies and action that will safeguard children from the worst forms of abuse, including lack of education and health. For more information, visit: [www.satyarthi.org.in](http://www.satyarthi.org.in)

Support the Bharat Yatra through - <http://ket.to/bharatyatra>

*For more details on the Yatra, contact:*

**Preeti Rawat**

[Preeti@thegutenberg.com](mailto:Preeti@thegutenberg.com)

**Paroma Bhattacharya**

[paroma@satyarthi.org](mailto:paroma@satyarthi.org)