

Need to reform education policy to prevent crimes against children; Bhuwan Ribhu

Medical fraternity in Nashik joins MLA, Mayor and youth to take pledge for Safe childhood-safe India

Nashik, 1st October 2017, Sunday: The [Bharat Yatra](#), launched by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi on 11 September, reached Nashik on 1st October, the twenty-first day of the 35-day long march across the country to build unprecedented awareness on combating child sexual abuse and trafficking.

The Kailash Satyarthi Children's foundation and the Bharat Yatra marchers were welcomed by Mayor Ranjana Bhanasi, Member of Legislative Assembly-Devyani Farande, NMC Standing Committee Chairman Shivaji Gangurde, NMC Corporator Hemlata Patil and NMC's Leader of the House Dinkar Patil, who also took the pledge to create a safe childhood.

Said noted child rights activist, lawyer and national secretary, 'Bachpan Bachao Aandolan', Shri. Bhuwan Ribhu, "We have covered about 7000 km in the Bharat Yatra already and are hoping to cover about 15000km by the time we reach Rashtrapati Bhavan on 16 October. We are aiming to influence all sections of the society on the issue of creating a safe childhood. There is a need for reforms in the education policy which should sensitise the youth on this issue in a way that crimes against children do not take place. The child who is abused should not be victimized but the onus should be put on the offender. Budgetary allocation should be increased. Enforcement agencies should be held accountable in case they do not act on a complaint of violence against children. Exclusive, time-bound courts should be set up to dispose of high pendency of POCSO cases. Creating a safe childhood is the collective responsibility of the media, teachers, business houses and different strata of the society and not just the government."

The march from Golf Club Maidan saw the participation of nearly 1000 youth, and working professionals take to the streets and demand necessary rights for the youngest citizens of our country. Slogans of 'stop child abuse' and 'down with sexual assault' resonated across Nashik. Representatives of sports, medical and women organizations, government institutions, schools, children and elected representatives participated in the Bharat Yatra, with more than 4000 people being sensitized during the march.

The Yatra marchers called upon the citizens of the country to step up and fight for children across India. They urged people of Nashik to strive towards building a safe childhood and a safe India.

"Girls are being trafficked out of India and pushed into prostitution. There is a need to create awareness in smaller towns and villages. Gullible children are being misguided in the name of good jobs but pushed into other trades. While there are robust laws, the issue will not be solved unless there is mass awareness. I welcome Sh. Kailash Satyarthi's Bharat Yatra, which is helping mobilize the people at the grassroots," added Devyani Farande.

The public event was organised by NGO Forum Nashik that represented 55 NGOs across Nashik and was supported by Child Line 1098. Some of the participating organizations included Pune Vidyarthi Grah, Navjeevan Day School, Navjeevan world peace and research foundation, Training College of Nursing and Maharashtra Gazetted Medical Officers Association, Nashik.

Earlier last month, Union Home Minister, Shri. Rajnath Singh, gave his assurance on passing the anti-trafficking law, which aligns with one of the key demands of the Bharat 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 Kanyakumari 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 institutional 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
Support the Bharat Yatra through - <http://ket.to/bharatyatra>

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