

“KISAN SWARAJ YATRA” - Sabarmati to Rajghat

'Kisan Ki mazbooti mein hi desh ki mazbooti'

'Krishi Bache, Kisan Bache, Desh bache'

An outreach effort across India towards self-reliant, ecological farming and for securing farming communities' rights – October 2nd – December 11th, 2010

Jal, Jangal, Zameen aur BEEJ (Water, Forest, Land & SEED) – the basic common resources that have always belonged to people who acted as the resource-savers and resource-keepers – are in great jeopardy today. These are the basic resources which are pre-requisites for the sustainable livelihoods of millions of Indians. Along with these resources, the very lives of our fellow citizens are perched precariously, mired in unconscionable poverty, hunger, lack of basic rights and any assertive power.

While unsuitable (market-driven, anti-nature, 'treadmill') technologies have degraded and contaminated these resources over the decades, a more basic concern is around the appropriation of these resources by the State and commercial interests, posing a serious question on the fundamental rights for all citizens of India and on the very vision (or lack of it) for Sustainable Development for all. It is no surprise that we are all a witness to thousands of farmers committing suicides, given that key members of our government articulate a vision that would like to see only 15% of Indians in rural areas soon!

It is a matter of shame that in a country where nearly 70% of the population is still connected with farming and food production, rural hunger and starvation is also very high. Worse, the people who are producing food to feed the entire nation are committing suicides in lakhs and are demoralized with their self-respect being eroded constantly, while the industry and sections of the government are gloating about the business opportunities presented by agriculture in India! As we are conversing, the largest displacement ever in our history is happening from agriculture....., with not even basic social security assured for those who are fleeing and are being displaced.

Increasing corporatisation of basic resources, through pro-industry, anti-farmer policies, regulatory frameworks and by conferring legal rights to industry in the form of exclusive rights like IPRs over life forms, the government is violating the *apriori* rights of our farmers over resources like Seed. Further, the willful policies of the government to undervalue the contribution of agriculture and farmers through various mechanisms need to be questioned and addressed squarely.

In this era of neo-colonisation, it is increasingly obvious that the new ways of controlling a whole nation and its sovereignty center around Food & Farming. It is anticipated that one of the main ways that the proverbial last nail would be put in is through the entry of GM seeds.

Bt Brinjal, the first GM food crop sought to be introduced in India has been stopped on its juggernaut towards our dinner plates for now. However, the initial regulatory approval and the opposition to the moratorium decision after February 9th 2010 actually showed the nation and the world how the pro-GM lobby will go to any extent to bypass citizens' democratic voices and ram these unwanted technologies down our throats. There were even official proposals of imprisoning GM critics through a new statutory regime in the form of the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) in addition to wanting to curb the constitutional authority of state governments which are increasingly asserting their right to remain GM-Free, under pressure from people.

On another front, the movement of ecological farming, to reduce the risks of small and marginal farmers of the country, to shift them to greater food security and sovereignty and to make

farming viable for them again, is gaining strength in various states across the country. However, this continues to be an upstream effort given that the 'powers that be' with their neo-liberal mindsets would rather opt for commerce-driven intensive agriculture models even as this contributes to climate change and makes farmers more vulnerable to this phenomenon and even after such intensive models have shown their negative impacts on the social, economic and environmental front in states like Punjab already.

It is in this context that an outreach tour across India called "**Kisan Swaraj Yatra**" is being proposed, to cover at least 20 states of the country. ***The Kisan Swaraj Yatra will be organized by the Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture***, a loose network of all those individuals and organizations that believe that the way forward for Indian agriculture and farmers is that of sustainable agriculture, that will conserve and improve farmers' livelihoods and resources, even as it addresses consumer needs.

This *Swaraj Yatra* seeks to remind all Indians about our hard-won independence and the insidious manner in which neo-colonial powers in the form of big agri-business MNCs, often times hidden behind their Indian *avatars* including public sector institutions and behind huge charitable organisations, are threatening such independence. Hundred years after *Hind Swaraj* where an admirable vision for a *sui generis* kind of development of India was proposed, based on our ethos, resources and conditions and decades after many freedom fighters became martyrs in pursuit of independence from control and subjugation by others, India appears to be truly on its way to neo-colonisation unless this is resisted strongly by all of us.

As can be widely seen, the mode of control is now through Seed and other related agricultural technologies, to control our food and farming systems and to profiteer on the ever-expanding huge markets available. In this greedy profiteering, though the "Farmer" is used as an excuse, it is apparent that this is about destruction of farmers and farming as we have always known in India. It is about appropriating people's resources like land and seed.

This control is already being experienced in farmers' rights in statutory frameworks being narrowed down constantly, the de-skilling of their knowledge and the discounting of their contribution, the appropriation of their resources and the impoverishment that they are being subjected to.....

This Yatra sees GM seeds as a danger to be resisted in itself (given its many adverse implications on farmers, consumers and our environment) as well as a symbol of this new colonization, which needs to be resisted. We see this as the "Salt" of our new war of independence, for communities to reclaim their resources, knowledge, livelihoods and lives.

Kisan Swaraj Yatra will focus on telling the truth, based on the philosophy of "Satyameva Jayate". The truth about the macro-agricultural policies, the truth about technologies like GM seeds and the situation in India at present, the truth about MNCs like Monsanto, the truth about the public sector institutions that we are supporting with our tax money, the truth about other unsustainable technologies like synthetic pesticides, the truth about corporate and contract farming and most importantly, the truth about ecological farming as the only way forward. The Yatra will also highlight the fact that in this age of appropriation of people's natural resources for corporate greed, the only way to attain sustainable development for all is to stop such an appropriation.

In addition to farmers who have suffered with GM seeds/pesticides/fertilizers/agro-fuels/appropriation of their land and other resources sharing their stories of woes, the Yatra will have successful and experienced ecological farmers sharing their knowledge and views throughout the yatra, reaching out to fellow farmers and consumers with a message of "Swaraj"

in our food and farming. The Yatra will have citizens asserting their right to informed choices with regard to something as basic as food. This will also have “experts” seeking to demystify the real implications of corporate-science-driven “modern technologies” and would seek to democratize science & technology debates in the country; further, activists and others would analyse the various policies and developments at the macro-level and present various pertinent issues for debate and discussion. This is a platform where all citizens concerned with what is happening to our food and farming will have space to join and take part in asserting their rights. While the Yatra will also create a platform for state governments which want to assert their constitutional authority over agriculture and health as State subjects, it will also attempt to get those governments which are still viewing this issue from a distance to take a firm pro-people stance on the side of sustainable development for all citizens.

The Yatra will commence on 2nd October 2010, on Gandhi Jayanti from Sabarmati in Gujarat and will end on 11 December 2010 in Delhi, after traversing through Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Chattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana.

The Yatra will have exhibitions, seed diversity and organic food festivals, public meetings, rallies, film screenings, cycle yatras, street plays, direct actions, lobbying meetings, press conferences and ‘skillshares’ on its mission of “Swaraj”.

Margadarshak Mandal:

Anupam Mishra (Gandhi Marg), Bhaskar bhai Save (renowned natural farmer), Chennaiah P. (National Agricultural Workers’ Forum), Dayamani Barla (Adivasi Moolvasi Asthitva Raksha Manch), Dr B D Sharma (Bharat Jan Andolan), Dr Banwari Lal Sharma (Azadi Bachao Andolan), Dr Claude Alvares (Organic Farming Association of India), Dr Inderjit Kaur (All India Pingalwara Society), Dr Jagmohan Singh (Association for Democratic Rights), Medha Patkar (National Alliance for People’s Movements), N D Patil (farmers’ leader), Omkar Chand (Servants’ Society of India), Radha behn Bhatt (Gandhi Peace Foundation), Rashida Bee & Champa Devi Shukla (Goldman Prize winners), Shubhmoorty (Bhoodan Samiti), Vijay Pratap (Lokayan)

**“Protect our Rights & Resources,
Say NO to GMOs & Chemical Pesticides,
Bring in Ecological Farming,
Save Farmers”**

Abhi nahin to kabhi nahin...(If not now, never..)

COME, JOIN THE YATRA!

TO FIND OUT MORE ON THE EXACT ROUTE AND EVENTS DURING THE YATRA GO TO THE NEXT FEW PAGES.

TO FIND OUT VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN JOIN AND SUPPORT THIS, READ THE ATTACHED APPEAL.....

JAI KISAN!

**“KISAN SWARAJ YATRA”
YATRA’S ROUTE ACROSS INDIA**

(Please note that the places indicated here are the main locations on the route – events could be in and around this location)

Date	Event at:	Night Stay at
GUJARAT: CONTACT KAPIL SHAH: 094-270-54132 or jatantrust@gmail.com		
October 2, Sat	Sabarmati, Ahmedabad	Villages in Sabarkantha & Saurashtra (2 teams)
October 3, Sun	Saurashtra/Sabarkantha	Saurashtra/Sabarkantha
October 4, Mon	Bharuch	Bharuch
October 5, Tue	Dahod	Raipuria (In Jhabua)
October 6, Wed	(Banswara in Rajasthan – field visit to farmers)	Raipuria in Jhabua
MADHYA PRADESH: CONTACT NILESH DESAI: 094-253-29222 or ndesai52@gmail.com; JAYANT VERMA: 094-251-51871 or vermaj51@gmail.com		
October 7, Thu	Petlawad	Raipuria
October 8, Fri	Badnagar	Raipuria
October 9, Sat	Indore	Bhopal
October 10, Sun	Bhopal	Jabalpur
October 11, Mon	Jabalpur	Jabalpur
October 12, Tue	Seoni	Nagpur
MAHARASHTRA: CONTACT AARTI PANKHARAJ: 094-224-60587 or aarti_pan23ngp@yahoo.co.in		
October 13, Wed	Nagpur and Sewagram	Sewagram
October 14, Thu	Akola	Jalna
October 15, Fri	Jalna	Ralegaon Siddhi
October 16, Sat	Ralegaon Siddhi	Mumbai
October 17, Sun	Mumbai	Mumbai
October 18, Mon	TRAVEL TO GOA	Goa
GOA: CONTACT MIGUEL BRAGANZA: +91-832-2255913 or myofai@gmail.com		
October 19, Tue	Goa	Goa
October 20, Wed	Goa	Dharwad
KARNATAKA: CONTACT KRISHNA PRASAD: 098-808-62058 or sahajasamrudha@gmail.com and KODIHALLI CHANDRASEKHAR: 098-442-93908 or kodihallikrrs@gmail.com		
October 21, Thu	Dharwad	Haveri
October 22, Fri	Haveri, Ranebennur and Davanagere	Davanagere
October 23, Sat	Chitradurga, Shira, Tumkur	Shira
October 24, Sun	Bangalore	Ramnagara
October 25, Mon	Mysore and HD Kote	HD Kote
KERALA: CONTACT SRIDHAR: 099-953-58205 or mail.thanal@gmail.com		
October 26, Tue	Mananthavadi	Mananthavadi
October 27, Wed	Kozhikode	Calicut
October 28, Thu	Malappuram	Palghat
October 29, Fri	Palghat and Coimbatore	Coimbatore
TAMIL NADU: CONTACT SELVAM RAMASWAMY: 094-436-63562 or organicerode@gmail.com and KANNAIYAN: 094-449-89543 or sukannaiyan69@gmail.com and VICTOR: 094-860-86938		
October 30, Sat	Erode/Trichy	Erode

October 31, Sun	Kumbakonam	Pondicherry
Nov. 1, Mon	Pondicherry	Chennai
Nov. 2, Tue	Tiruvannamalai/Chennai	Chennai
Nov. 3, 4, 5 (Wed, Thu, Fri)	DIWALI BREAK	In Chennai or Chittoor
ANDHRA PRADESH: CONTACT RAMOO: 090-006-99702 or ramoo@csa-india.org and KIRAN VISSA: 097-017-05743 or kiranvissa@gmail.com		
Nov. 6, Sat	Chittoor	Chittoor
Nov. 7, Sun	Anantapur	Hyderabad
Nov. 8, Mon	Hyderabad	Vijayawada (night driving)
Nov. 9, Tue	Vijayawada/Hanuman Junction	Visakhapatnam (night driving)
Nov. 10, Wed	Srikakulam	Koraput
ORISSA: CONTACT DEBJEET SARANGI: 099-385-82616 OR livingfarms@gmail.com and SAROJ MOHANTY: 097-771-54149 and S CHANDRASEKHAR: 09437973831 schandrashekar@siddharthvillage.org or BINAYAK SWAIN: 098-611-12338 or batnet97@hotmail.com		
Nov. 11, Thu	Koraput	Koraput
CHATTISGARH: CONTACT JACOB NELLITHANAM: 094-255-60950 OR farmersrights@gmail.com		
Nov. 12, Fri	Jagdalpur	Raipur
Nov. 13, Sat	Raipur	Bilaspur
Nov. 14, Sun	Bilaspur	Sambalpur
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Nov. 15, Mon	Sambalpur	Bhubaneswar
Nov. 16, Tue	Bhubaneswar	Baripada
Nov. 17, Wed	Baripada	Kaanthi (Medinipur, WB)
WEST BENGAL: CONTACT ANSHUMAN DAS: 094-330-79847 or dasanshuman@yahoo.com and DEBAL DEB: 094-326-74377 debaldeb01@yahoo.com		
Nov. 18, Thu	Kaanthi, East Medinipur	Kolkata
Nov. 19, Fri	Kolkatta	"Basudha" farm, Bankura dist.
Nov. 20, Sat	Bishnupur	"Basudha" farm, Bankura dist.
JHARKHAND: CONTACT PANKAJ BHUSHAN: 094-729-99999 or mail.tarafoundation@gmail.com		
Nov. 21, Sun	Dhanbad	Patna
BIHAR: CONTACT PANKAJ BHUSHAN: 094-729-99999 or mail.tarafoundation@gmail.com		
Nov. 22, Mon	Patna	Muzaffarpur
Nov. 23, Tue	Muzaffarpur & Samastipur	Champaran
Nov. 24, Wed	Champaran	Gorakhpur
UTTAR PRADESH: CONTACT DHARMENDAR MALIK: 092-196-91168 or bku.tikait@gmail.com and UTKARSH SINHA: 099-357-36877 OR utkarshks@gmail.com		
Nov. 25, Thu	Gorakhpur/Basti	Varanasi
Nov. 26, Fri	Varanasi/Sultanpur	Lucknow
Nov. 27, Sat	Lucknow	Lucknow
Nov. 28, Sun	Bareilly/Moradabad	Moradabad

UTTARAKHAND: CONTACT BIJU NEGI: 097-604-21947 or negi.biju@gmail.com		
Nov. 29, Mon	Haridwar	Haridwar
Nov. 30, Tue	Roorkee/Saharanpur	Saharanpur
HARYANA: CONTACT UMENDRA DUTT & GURNAM SINGH OF BKU		
Dec. 1, Wed	Kurukshetra/Ambala	Nahan
HIMACHAL PRADESH: CONTACT KULBHUSHAN UPMANYU: 09418412853 or kbupmanyu@gmail.com		
Dec. 2, Thu	Nahan/Solan	Chandigarh
PUNJAB: CONTACT UMENDRA DUTT: 098-726-82161 or umendradutt@gmail.com		
Dec. 3, Fri	Chandigarh/Ludhiana	Ludhiana
Dec. 4, Sat	Patiala/Sangrur	Bathinda
RAJASTHAN: CONTACT RANA: 094-141-33141 OR mlpctrust@gmail.com		
Dec. 5, Sun	Bathinda & Hanumangarh	Bikaner
Dec. 6, Mon	Bikaner	Bikaner
Dec. 7, Tue	Jodhpur (by afternoon)	Jodhpur
Dec. 8, Wed	Beawar/Ajmer	Jaipur
Dec. 9, Thu	Jaipur	Jaipur
HARYANA: CONTACT SUNDERLAL: 099-960-22534 or scriakhori@yahoo.co.in		
Dec. 10, Fri	Rewari	Rewari
DELHI: CONTACT NAYANI: 099-997-78674 OR nasa.nayani@gmail.com or Gautam at: g_agarwala1@yahoo.com or YUDHVIR SINGH: 098-994-35968		
Dec. 11, Sat	Delhi	Delhi