



Our Mukthi Bike Challenge (MBC) 2018 was a journey to remember! The group of bikers rode just under 2000 kilometres and were accompanied by a street theatre team that performed in schools, colleges, a hospital and in many public places. There was huge media coverage in both the national and local media, including segments on TV news channels and articles in newspapers which all helped to get the message to a wider audience that we need to keep our children safe from traffickers.

Why Mukthi?



The word Mukthi originates from Sanskrit and it means 'freedom' or 'liberation'.

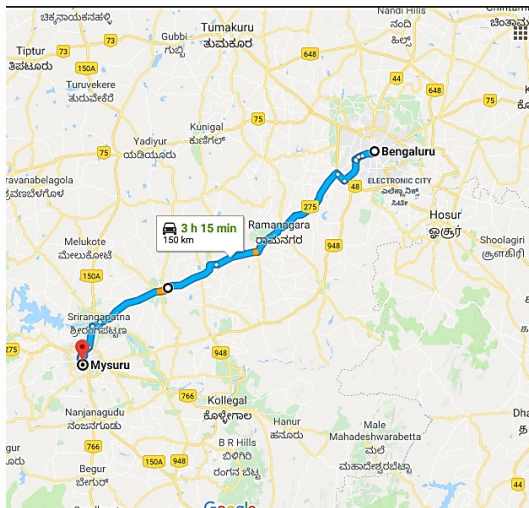
Andy Matheson, Oasis India's Advisor and one of the participants of the Challenge, says, “We chose that name for our bike challenge so that we can signify the need to free those in the trafficking trade.”

According to UN's International Labour Organisation, *the estimated number of people caught in modern day slavery globally is around 40 million, and every year 11 lakh people are added to that number.*

Through the Mukthi Bike Challenge (MBC) we hope to unite as a society to stop innocent victims from vanishing into this horrific world of modern slavery.

The route

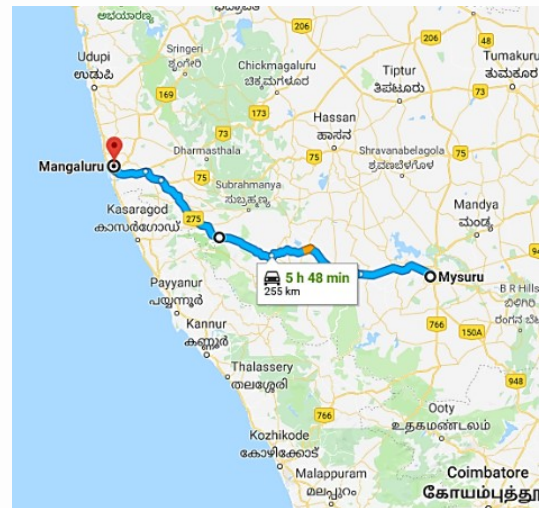
Did you know that our riders rode along key trafficking routes from Bangalore to Mumbai?



Bangalore - Mysore

Karnataka ranks 5th in human trafficking cases in India. Bangalore and Mysore in particular have become havens for flesh peddlers who lure women from across the country into the flesh trade after bringing them to the city offering lucrative jobs.

Fact: The Mysore district police unearthed a child trafficking racket in 2016 involving private maternity homes, and rescued 17

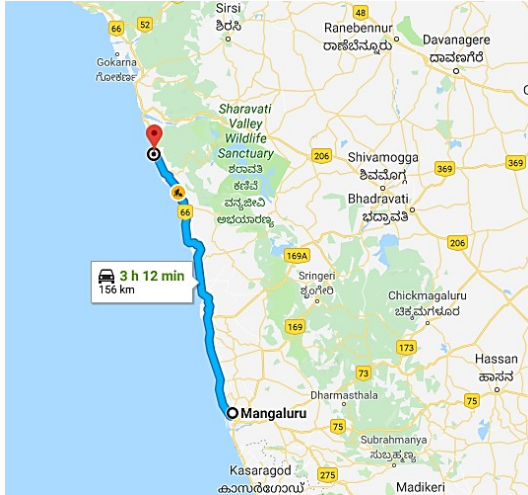


Mysore - Mangalore

Mangalore is an Arabian Sea port and a major commercial center in Karnataka. It is the second major city in the state and is known as the Gateway of Karnataka.

Fact: Hi-tech prostitution rackets have been busted in Mangalore over time with children being brought from Bangladesh illegally and delivered to various lodges

children who had been “sold” to childless couples in different parts of Karnataka and Kerala.

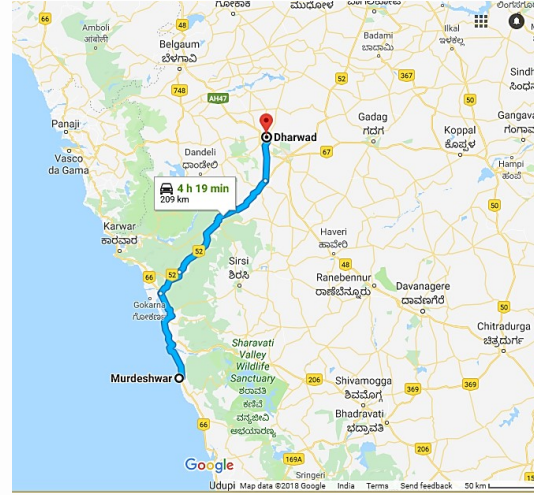


Mangalore - Murudeshwar

Murudeshwar is a small coastal town bound by the Arabian Sea and the hills of the Western Ghats.

Fact: Murudeshwar also caters significantly to illegal activities, including human trafficking. With the rise in tourism, trafficking opportunities have also increased. Cattle trafficking is common in Bhatkal district which has led to communal clashes.

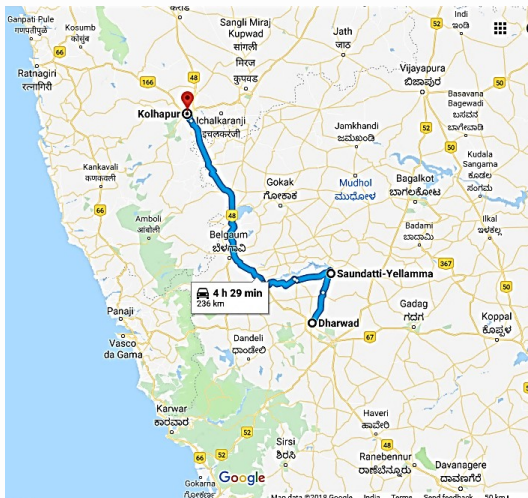
that were restructured to facilitate prostitution.



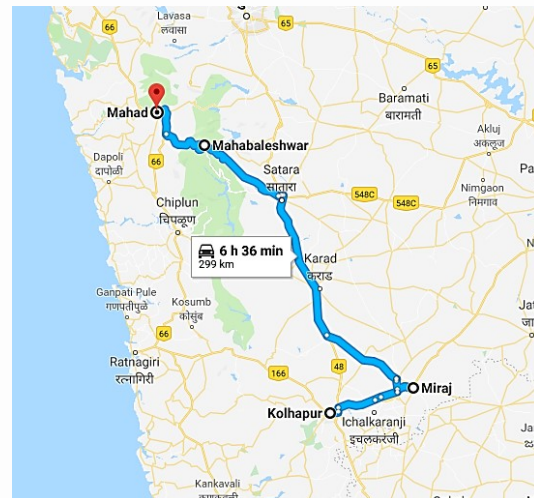
Murudeshwar - Dharwad

Dharwad is an administrative district and the cultural headquarters of North Karnataka.

Fact: In the recent news it has come to light that girls were sold for high prices in the area. In response, the government has started anti-human trafficking cells and appointed nodal officers in Hubballi-Dharwad.



Dharwad - Kolhapur via Saundatti



Kolhapur - Mahad via Miraj/Sangli/Mahabaleshwar

Saundatti is one of the oldest towns in Karnataka. It is 38 km from Dharwad.

Fact: A huge number of girls who become Devadasis are dedicated to goddess Yellamma in the Yellamma Temple in Saundatti. They are forced into becoming Devadasis by their own parents, because these girls are their only source of income in most cases. Once the girl attains puberty, her parents inform the community, which in turn helps them find a landlord or someone wealthy to “take” the girl.

Kolhapur is a historic city in Maharashtra and is known for its temples, like the ancient Mahalakshmi Temple, a Hindu pilgrimage site.

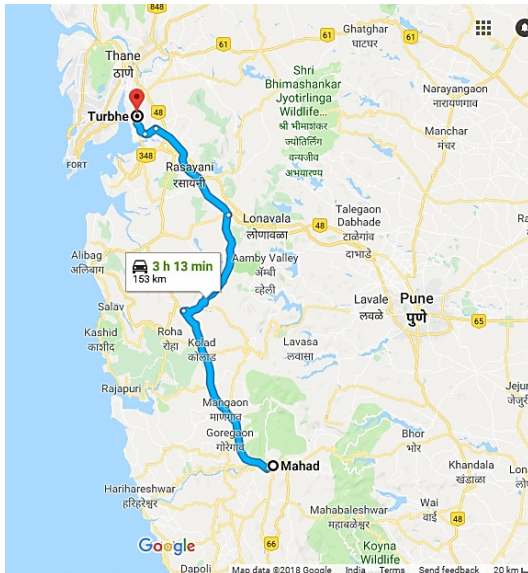
Fact: Kolhapur has one of the highest rates of trafficking. Early this year, a homoeopathic doctor was arrested for trafficking babies, case that is suspected to be part of a much bigger racket. Police have also rescued girls from hotels and continue routine patrolling in the city to nab culprits.

Miraj is a city in southern Maharashtra that was founded in the early 10th century.

Fact: From getting killed as a foetus to landing in red-light areas, married to a goddess or trafficked to serve foreign nationals, a grim fate awaits girls here. The Sangli district, parts of which have reeled under drought for many years, have helped flourish the devadasi tradition where girls from poverty-stricken families are married off to goddess Yellamma. Miraj and Sangli have one of the largest red-light areas where poor girls from Maharashtra and bordering Karnataka continue to pour in.

Mahabaleshwar is a hill station in India's forested Western Ghats range, south of Mumbai. Mahad is a big town in Raigad district situated in the North Konkan region of Maharashtra.

Fact: Mahad is famous for a small lake where local Dalit (untouchable) villagers were barred from drinking its water by people of high caste. In 1927, Dr. Ambedkar led a revolt which was later seen as the Dalits' 'Declaration of Independence'. Human trafficking is still prevalent in a large scale in India partly because of the caste system, where people who come from some sections of the community are still considered to be disposable.

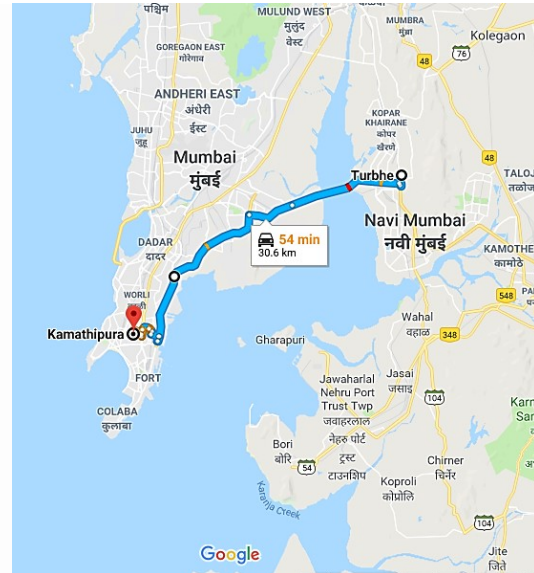


Mahad - Turbhe, New Mumbai

Turbhe is a suburb in Navi Mumbai. Close to Turbhe is Panvel, a node of Navi Mumbai.

Fact: Panvel has the highest number of minors who are sex workers. Data collectors have also observed that a large percentage of minors are seen in hotspots like pick up joints.*

*Source: Maharashtra State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights and International Justice Mission. (2016). Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Mumbai.



Turbhe - Kamathipura, Mumbai

Mumbai has emerged as a major destination for global sex trafficking with girls from within and distant countries being trafficked to the city.

Fact: There are more than 100,000 female commercial sex workers in Mumbai. Kamathipura is divided into 14 lanes roughly and is estimated that over 20,000 people are kept under sexual slavery in Kamathipura alone. Most female sex workers are not there by choice but are victims of human trafficking.

The backbone of MBC

“Plans are nothing. Planning is everything.” – Albert Einstein

Our organising team planned their hearts out and here's a glimpse at their experience.



A man approached me in Kolhapur and said that a person offered jobs for his young daughters in Mumbai. He was glad that he attended the awareness session, now he knows the dangers that could await his daughters. He thanked us for sharing this information. That incident helped me see why we do what we do – to make aware and to stop trafficking from happening hence forth. Awareness is the key. The entire experience was quite overwhelming at times but my inspiration was Ian lees, one of our oldest riders. He's 77 years old, yet he rode nonstop and never complained once. I learnt about determination, courage and passion from him. I told myself that if he can, then I can too. For the next year, I hope we could reach a larger audience with innovative ways in which we can engage them to become more aware about human trafficking and its prevalence.

Vishwas Udgirkar
Fundraising and Communication
Coordinator - Mumbai

Mukthi Bike Challenge truly was challenging and an inspiring experience. I have been a part of this event for the past two years and I was happy to see our initiatives breaking new ground this year. NGOs and other organisations took the initiative and brought influential people who can be a part of effecting change at the policy level. The rides were mentally and also physically taxing, as we drove up rocky mountains, flood-affected roads and sometimes even in pitch darkness, but the key motivation for all of us was to help give a voice to trafficked women and children. Sometimes things did not go as planned, as two of our riders fell sick, but we learnt to help each other and make it to the end. Eventually when we saw the awareness reaching the public, it brought a sense of satisfaction and vigour to do more. I am greatly looking forward to next year!

Daniel Jabaraj
Project Coordinator – AHT
Bangalore



An exhilarating experience



Julian, one of the riders from the UK, known for his quirky sense of humor, wrote a reflection about his experience in the Mukthi Bike Challenge. He is the CFO of

Mental Health First Aid England and loves exploring biking opportunities around the world.

Our trip started back in the UK several months ago, when 4 friends from Tonbridge (Tom, Iain, Julian and Andy S) heard about the ride across India to raise awareness about human trafficking alongside Oasis India. We all signed up and started preparing for the trip but unfortunately, one of our team members was advised not to travel by his doctor. Our four became three.

As the day drew closer, we successfully reached our fundraising objectives and soon left for India! After we arrived at Bangalore, Andy Matheson gave us an introduction to 'riding in India' which was both humorous and on reflection, pretty accurate. Our goal was to basically go with the flow and not to collide with any animals.

As we headed across town on our cool bullets, it quickly became apparent that Andy's riding tips needed to be practised. So I adapted to the art of not giving way, not stopping at junctions, familiarising myself with the horn and using every piece of space available. We finally fit our Mukthi Bike Challenge flags and stickers in our bikes and were ready to start the awareness raising.

Every day was something new! Some of my favourite moments were on day 2 when we got a chance to enjoy some great riding on the way to Mangalore. The roads and scenery got better with every mile. Soon we were going through valleys, twisty roads and eventually arrived at a waterfall for refreshments and a photo opportunity. At Kodagu the roads became difficult following the recent landslides and here we got our first roadside experience of chai and chat. This was biking heaven as we took an uphill rutted climb using our well-honed overtaking techniques and advanced handling skills. We were all in good spirits as we bonded over the past few days. On the 5th day we enjoyed a morning rally with a local school and rode through the town to meet with a school parade. On the 7th day we arrived at a hotel in Navi Mumbai, receiving a warm welcome from the national press and media interest on the final day of the Challenge. There is no doubt that this awareness has been raised as a result of the ride and we are a step closer to making trafficking history.

On the final day we had three new riders from Pune who were very inspiring. They rode since 4 a.m. to be a part of the final leg and it was nice to share our experiences with them. We rode to Kamathipura and witnessed the work of Oasis at the day care center and some of the local brothels which hosts over thousands of sex workers, many of whom have been trafficked into the city. It was difficult for me to understand how this trade continues in our developing world. The hardest part of this trip was seeing children of the sex workers and imagining that one day they may end up in the same work with little choices. I personally found happiness in knowing that my contribution would make a small but effective change in eradicating human trafficking.

This trip has been inspiring and challenging. All of us took care of each other, encouraged and enjoyed spending time together for 8 days. We had learnt so much about riding safely and the Indian culture but most importantly, we raised funds for the trafficked and our lives have been changed as a result of this trip. It has truly been an amazing and a life changing experience. We look forward to building the ride for 2019 and raising further awareness through Oasis. I will never forget this.

Stirring hearts and minds





Centre for Social Action is an independent student volunteer organisation from Christ University, Bangalore. Their street play team accompanied the bikers for the first three days and left an unchangeable impact in the hearts of those that witnessed their story.





Some of the Oasis staff from Mumbai used their expertise to prepare a powerful play which they performed in all the programmes from Dharward to Mumbai. Sneha Zachariah, our Relationship Officer from Mumbai, who was also part of the street play team said, "I loved participating with other organisations and collaborating with them for different programmes. I have learnt that not many people are aware of what human trafficking is and i'm glad that I was part of educating a few."





Our very own change agents from Hallegudadhahalli, Bangalore, led a rally of over 600 students in Mysore and even performed a street play on human trafficking. This is the vision of Oasis India coming true.

In the news

Mukthi Bike Challenge received an outpouring support from the press.

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Mukthi Bike Challenge launched by Gandasi Sadanan, National President of Drivers' Union in Bangalore



The bikers spent time with some eager and enthusiastic children in the RC home at Puttur





Students from 3 schools along with the team participated in a rally against human trafficking in Mysore



Capturing memories





After an awareness programme at Santhome School in Sangli, Preeti, the wife of one of our riders shared some insight with the students on preventing child abuse



Tom Hedger, one of the bikers from the UK addressed students at Don Bosco





The Oasis street play team in collaboration with Childline staff performed at Kolhapur



Colours of Mukthi





The team conducted an awareness session at Sevasadan Life Line Superspeciality Hospital at Miraj where the Maharashtra Police also shared their knowledge on human trafficking



Julian and Tom leading the team to perform at Saanidhya School for the differently-abled in Mangalore





The bikers spent some quality time together at the suspension bridge in Mangalore

Want to be a part of the challenge next year?



You could register NOW to be a part of Mukthi Bike Challenge 2019.

Come help #MakeTraffickingHistory.