

In Punjab - Ecstasy in solidarity

Samajik Parivartan Yatra started out from Kashmir valley, proceeded to Jammu, Damtal of Himachal Pradesh and now entered Punjab.

Jalandhar City, 4th October

On 4th October 2010, Samajik Parivartan Yatra bus reached the next destination on Jai him Marg, the city of Jalandhar. The Yatris include safai karmachari activists from Rajasthan, J&K, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. They were given a hearty and ceremonious welcome and garlanded by the following local workers unions who had gathered at the Municipal Corporation in Jalandhar:

- . Nigam Safai Mazdoor Union,
- . Sewer Man, Water supply & Technical Workers union
- . Nagar Nigam Fourth Class Workers Union
- . Northern Railway Mens Unions

Symbolizing the community aspirations, the meeting at the conference hall of the Jal Municipal Corporation was started with garlanding the portrait of Baba Saheb Ambedkar by Safai Karmachari Andolan team members & union leaders. Subhash Desawer (State convener, Punjab) and Sohanlal (State Convener, Rajasthan) spoke about the goal of the Samajik Parivartan Yatra and the significance of the route. For the first time, people in Jalandhar heard about the demands and the holistic rehabilitation package which was read out by the team... They listened in rapt attention to the concept of the nation asking for forgiveness. The people were further inspired by video footage of various activities of the SKA in the country, featuring liberated women safai karmacharis who called upon all community women to stop the work, which was screened at the meeting. It made the community to recollect their experiences and in one voice they all endorsed the goal of the Yatra.

Booklets of 'Action 2010' were distributed among the large number of people present there by the team members of SKA. On this event, a thought provoking skit on manual scavenging was performed by the SKA team.

In Firozpur, 5th October, 2010

From Julundhar, the Samajik Parivartan Yatra proceeded to Firozpur - by then it had already travelled 154 KMs. The bus went to various areas in the town and the SKA Yatra team conducted meetings with the community.

1) Bhilni Dera Aashram

In Bhilni Dera ashram, the Samajik Parivartan Yatris were welcomed by Baba Jasvalji, Mukthyar Ji, Jaswanti Batti and many more of his friends. Our Yatra team shared the vision of the campaign and the task ahead, both immediate and long term. The Valmiki community leaders were very much impressed and declared that they too will join the movement for a manual scavenging free India and actively involve with SKA for Action-2010. They treated the Yatris to a wonderful hot lunch of Aloo mutter, rice, halwa and many rotis and served with invaluable love.

2) In Ferozpur Cantonment

The Yatra bus went through Buchadi khana, Valmiki Mohalla and Bada Valmiki Mander, where the safai karmachari community was waiting in anticipated excitement. The Bharatiya Valmiki Dharm Sansta warmly welcomed the Yatris. The district president of Valmiki Mandal Dharam Samaj Aman Dravid and vice president Rikesh Kumar, President of Dr.Ambedkar Youth Club,

Sushil Ji, Sumol Bhatti, Sant Ram, Javvadi, Dharmendar, Vikram, Rajendar Syal, Satpal and many more community leaders also ecstatically welcomed the Yatris and expressed their solidarity to Samajik Parivartan Yatra, pledging to participate and also identify the persons in Manual Scavenging, if any and not already identified by SKA, and persuade them to join this campaign. They vowed to end Manual Scavenging 'not only in our town, but in the whole of Punjab!'

They also announced that they will join Delhi on 29th, 30th October to raise their voice and to make it heard by the govt for liberation of the country from oppressive and exploitative practices, and for rehabilitation package for liberated Safai Karmecharis.

Many more women of community joined the meeting --- SK expressed their great happiness for the Samajik Parivartan Yatra especially with an aim for liberation. We are all part of this campaign and we are there with all the liberated and still engaged in the meeting.

Declaration to eradicate Manual Scavenging in Punjab within 30 days – By community, Ludhiana

On the 6th of Oct,2010 the Yatra proceeded to Ludhiana. The Sangarsh committee along with a large number of Safai Karmacharis held a warm reception at "Bharat Nagar Chowk". Sanagarsh Committee organized a motor cycle rally across the city and held a meeting at the Municipal office. Memorandums were submitted to the municipal officials and a public meeting was held in front of the Municipal office. The survey data of existing dry latrines and list of safai karmacharis were publicly reads out. Many office bearers of the Trade Union have pledged to eradicate Manual Scavenging in Punjab within 30 days.

Anita, a liberated Safai Karmachari, told about her struggle for liberation and released the demands for the special package in the meeting. She said: "This Yatra is Mine and it also gives courage to many".



Bike Rally in Ludhiana City



Marching from Jalandar to Ludhiana



Anita demanding special package



Burning the Basket