

From Ludhiana: Bassi Pathana Town - Fathegar Sagar dt.

7th October

A Community meeting was held in Valmiki Mohalla. It was attended local eminent persons from the community, Mr. Sardar Sukhdev Singh Jamagal- rtrd Additional Judge, Mr. Kaval Jit Singh Mattu, Advocate, Mr. Dholak Ram- and President, Safai karmachari Union, and community leader Mr. Ram ji Lal, Govt Employee. 12 liberated SK women took the responsibility of organising a meeting in the basti with the support of committee people. They invited the community as well as general public to the meeting, where the mission, demands, SKA's back ground were discussed and people's views were taken.

10 CDs on Baba Saheb and his writings were distributed by the judge to all the yatris.

SK women like Krishna Neena, Raja Rani , Sunita, Lasho, Prem actively participated in the meeting and shared with the participants that they are going to receive the rehabilitation support on Monday- 11th Oct. These liberated women also shared with the media that now govt officers are releasing amount s for rehabilitation and this decision came even as they came to know about the Yatra.

SKs freed from Manual Scavenging like Krishna and Prem shared their happiness that they had left the work and were excited that now they are on the threshold of a new life. Now all SKs are liberated...they all agreed to go anywhere to motivate other safai karmacharis into this movement . Youngsters from the community are very happy- they played drums and sang songs of pain and of liberation, and spoke to the media with great courage.

The participants observed 2 minutes silence in condolence of the sad demise of S. R. Sankaran — they observed that 'though he is not there with us, his mission is, he is the "Marga Darshi" (guide) for all SKs across the country .' What a fitting tribute to the chairperson of the SKA, who strived all his life for the welfare of the marginalised and stigmatised!

Mediapersons from PTC news channel, MH1, ANI news channel, Punjab club ,Sathvi news attended the meeting. All the print media also covered the community events and govt's announcement of rehabilitation.

Liberated Safai karmachari women- now in leadership: Yatris Proceeded to Kurali Tehsil, Mohali dt.

Meeting started with Sraddhanjali to Sankaran.

6 liberated and rehabilitated SKs organised a warm welcome for the Yatris. Anita, a liberated woman, presided over the community meeting. It was a big gathering. A portrait of Baba Saheb was garlanded by liberated and rehabilitated SKs and SKA team.

At the meeting, there was a discussion on Manual scavenging prevention Act -1993, Govt policies and rehabilitation provisions.

General Secretary of Safai Mazdoor Cell in the state Mr. Rajpal Bedra attended the meeting and heard all about the issue from different SKA teams from Punjab, Rajasthan, HP, Haryana and liberated women.

He applauded the efforts of the activists for eradication, saying that for the first time in the country, SKs are emerging as one voice against manual scavenging, and that it is wonderful to see the liberation process in many states.

Ms. Tara, a liberated women recounted her struggles for a dignified life, and how she succeeded in getting work in the Municipality. The success stories of Kamlesh, Anita, Asha etc, who are all now working in Municipality were also shared.

Lunch was served with great affection by liberated women and their families and Mohalla Committee.

Chandigarh:

The Yatra reached Chandigarh at 8 PM and welcomed by General Secretary of Dr. Ambedkar Bhavan Committee, prominent Punjab & Haryana High Court Advocate Mr. Anil Lam Dharia, and Vice president Shanti Ram and many other team members. A meeting was held in the conference hall. Baba Saheb's portrait was garlanded and till 10.30 Pm there was an animated discussed mostly on legal provisions, govt's apathy, Supreme Court's case, SKA's counter response and the influence of Parviartan Yatra on various stakeholders. Members of the SKA team from different states also shared their experiences. Saying they are with SKA since 2004, they assured the gathering that they would continue their solidarity to reach the goal.

Accommodation, dinner and next day's breakfast were hosted by Ambedkar Bhavan committee.



Meeting in Chandigarh



Procession in Ambala



Usha Ramanathan garlanding cultural activist