

Jai Bhim Marg

HARYANA Ambala, 10 October

The Samajik Parivartan Yatra reached Ambala, Haryana, on 10th October at 3 pm. Women in Ambala, who have been liberated from the profession, some 300 of them, welcomed the yatra to their city. Their children sang songs to welcome the yatri. A community meeting was held in Majri, a Valmiki basti in Ambala where everyone was informed about the purpose of the yatra.

7 women attending the meeting were still in the profession of lifting night soil (Manual Scavenging). Motivated after hearing the stories of women who have left the profession, these seven also stood up and said that hereafter they would prefer to die hungry than pursue this humiliating profession. Thereafter, Rajkumar Bohat, Haryana convenor of the Safai Karamchari Andolan, declared Haryana a manual scavenging-free state.

Gopal Menon's documentary film on manual scavenging was screened at the meeting and then there was a "nukkad natak" (street theatre) performance.



Ambala and Yamunanagar, 11 October

200 women went to the district collector's office and submitted a memorandum demanding rehabilitation package for 190 women who have left the profession. The bus yatra then reached Dosabaka tehsil of Ambala where followers of the Adi Dharm welcomed it. They welcomed the 70 yatri with garlands. The meeting discussed various issues of the Valmiki samaj and the Adi Dharmis were informed about the purpose and progress of the yatra.

Then the bus reached Sadhora tehsil of Yamunanagar at 6 pm. The yatri were welcomed with the garlands and dhol beats. In the galis (streets) of the Valmiki basti a flag march was carried out. A community meeting began with songs and cultural programmes, and the screening of Gopal Menon's documentary film. The liberated mahila (women) of the basti (community) spoke at length, announcing their unconditional support for the Safai Karamchari Andolan. Next morning the bus reached Yamunanagar city where 40 women and 30 men were waiting to welcome it. They were from different organisations including the Valmiki Mahasabha and the Ambedkar Vichar Manch. They were informed about the yatra and discussions were held.

Kurukshetra, 12 October

The next stop was in Ladwa tehsil in Kurukshetra. As there had been a death in the basti, the programme was made low-key. There were no slogans and songs, just a discussion among liberated women. By night the bus reached Shahabad tehsil by night, where the Valmiki basti was a large one, with 500 homes. A flag march was carried out, accompanied with slogans such as "Awaz do! Hum ek hain!" ('Lend your voice to say we're one') and "Maila pratha band karo! Sab ko punarwas do!" ('End manual scavenging and rehabilitate all'.)

A meeting was held at the Rishi Valmiki temple, where songs were sung, a documentary film screened and nukkad natak performed.

Panipat, 13 October

On 13th morning, the bus set out from Shahabad to Panipat, where in Titana village the yatri were welcomed even by upper caste residents of the village. All communities of the village supported the movement against manual scavenging and praised the efforts of the Safai Karamchari Andolan. The sapers welcomed the yatra with their beers.

Then the bus went to Garhi Chhaju village in Panipat where all Dalit castes welcomed it. Most of those welcoming the yatra were village youth. They were told about the

purpose of the yatra, nukkad natak was performed, songs sung, documentary screened and a press meet held.

Hisar, 15 October

Next day the bus went to Kaimari village in Hisar where the Valmiki Mandir Sabha welcome it. They pledged their support for the SKA movement against manual scavenging and donated Rs. 1,100.

On the same day the bus reached Fatehbad district where various organisations including Valmiki Mahasabha, Adi Dharm Samaj and the Haryana Karamchari Sangh, Haryana Nagar Palika Sangh, Kisan Sabha, Ambedkar Education and Art Society welcomed it. Everyone present agreed the profession needed to be uprooted and eradicated and that they were willing to help in doing so. Many said they would join the yatra in Chandigarh and Delhi. In the evening, a press meet was held, documentary film screened, nukkad natak performed and songs sung.

Sirsa, 16 October

Next morning the Samajik Parivartan Yatra reached Sirsa where a meeting was held in a Valmiki basti at 11 am. Thereafter the bus left for Ganganagar, Rajasthan.



Protest March in Haryana



Yatris in Kurukshetra



Women taking part in a meeting in Ambala



Protest March in Kurukshetra