

## Savitri Bai Marg



The Samajik Parivartan Yatra's Savitri Bai Marg was flagged off from Dehradun on 22 October and will reach Delhi on 30 October through Uttar Pradesh. Savitribai Phule (1831-1897) was the first female teacher of the first women's school in India and also considered as the pioneer of modern Marathi poetry. In 1852 she opened a school for Untouchable girls.

In Dehradun, around 50 people collected for the yatra at 11:30 am on 22nd October. They held a meeting in which they were told about the purpose of the 9 days long yatra, the districts it would go to, the purpose of the yatra and the four other routes. The bus was green flagged by Chaman Lal Valmiki, state minister in the Uttarakhand government. The bus went to a Valmiki basti in Dehradun where people were informed about the purpose of the yatra. The procession went to the Clock Tower where it garlanded a statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar. The procession then went to the district magistrate's office where it submitted a memorandum mentioning specifically the case of one woman who was pursuing manual scavenging in Dehradun, despite the profession having been outlawed in 1993. The memorandum also contained the rehabilitation-related demands of the former manual scavengers. The bus then went to Indresh Nagar where a programme was organized by Subhash Valmiki, member of the Safai Karamchari Aayog. The yatra then proceeded to Haridwar, where it reached at 6 pm. In Haridwar, Mahant Mandas welcomed the yatra at the Valmiki Ashram, Kankhal, and the yatri halted there at night. The next day, there was a meeting and interactions with the Valmiki community in Kankhal. At Jawala thereafter, there was a meeting in which people were informed about the purpose of the yatra, and the demands before the government. In this meeting there were people who hadn't yet left the profession for want of alternative work, and some also said they were under pressure from dry latrine owners to not leave the profession.

The members of the Yatra, led by Uttarakhand convenor Ravita and co-convenor Amar Singh, reached the DM's office at 1 pm where the sub-divisional magistrate received our memorandum. The bus then reached Roorkee at 3 pm where officials of Sulabh Shauchalaya welcomed us at the bus stand. A meeting was held at the Valmiki temple of the cantonment area. Women still in the profession were persuaded to leave it.

The yatra then went to Roorkee's Landhora town. A number of women joined the yatra there, and the meeting there resulted in 8 women agreeing to leave the profession. The next stop, Saharanpur, was reached at 9:30 pm where Bezwada Wilson, national convenor of the Safai Karamchari ANdolan, addressed the gathering.



Minister flagging off the Yatra



Yatris marching in the SK community in Deharadun



Procession in Haridwar



Yatris with SK community in Roorkee