CARTOON NARRATOR:

'It's like a nightmare that never ends. We are trapped in this cycle of poverty and oppression. Every day, we risk our lives to provide for our families. But the government doesn't care. They don't see us as human beings, but as mere tools to do their dirty work.

We demand respect and dignity. We demand justice. We demand the government to accept responsibility for the violations of our dignity. We demand the demolition of all dry latrines in the country. We demand the punishment of those who violate the 1993 Act that outlawed manual scavenging. We demand punishment for those who force manual scavengers to do manual scavenging. We demand Rs 5 lakh per manual scavenger for rehabilitation, excluding Rs 10,000 as immediate relief; 5 acres of land; Antyodaya cards and houses. We also demand special pension for women manual scavengers who are either single, widowed or aged.

If the government does not accept our demands within 60 days, we will all come to Delhi and stay put here until our demands are met.'
as though we were dogs,” she said, “We could get water only from the river.” Saroj from Ambala in Haryana recalled how she fell from a ladder when and the collected excreta fell over her. The house owners refused to help her get up, only pushing her with a stick, due to untouchability. Each speaker demanded an apology from the government.

Supporting their demands were Harsh Mander and Aruna Roy, members of the National Advisory Council, the Communist Party of India’s D Raja, former secretary to the government of India PS Krishnan and Planning Commission member Bhalchandra Mungekar, amongst others.

The event was a culmination of a month-long bus yatra from five different places in the country. They came from Srinagar in Kashmir (Jai Bheem Marg), Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu (Periyar Marg), Dibrugarh in Assam (Birsa Munda Marg), Khurda in Orissa (Jhalkari Bai Marg) and Dehradun in Uttaranchal (Savitri Bai Marg). Along the way, the bus went to Dalit bastis in 172 districts in 20 states to persuade those still engaged in the practice of manual scavenging to quit.

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