



*Anna-daan,*  
Food Charity  
in India

Preaching and Practice

Edited by K.V. Raju and S. Manasi



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# Anna-daan, Food Charity in India

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Eating together unites people and has a significant impact on their physical, social, and emotional development. This book looks at practices and traditions of sharing food prevalent among major religious communities in India, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam.

Food insecurity is one of the major problems every country in the world is facing today because of increasing population, climate change, agrarian distress, wars and conflicts, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Including case studies from across India, this book examines the necessity and effectiveness of food-sharing practices in temples, mosques, and *gurdwaras*, among others. Emphasising the importance of these practices for the social and physical well-being of the most vulnerable sections of society, it showcases how traditional religious practices of food sharing have contributed to tackling hunger, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The volume also offers long-term solutions to address underlying issues which cause hunger and food insecurity.

One of the first to study food sharing and alms-giving practices in India, this book will be an essential read for scholars and researchers of sociology, anthropology, food studies, religion, security studies, political economy, public policy, and South Asian history and culture.

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## Foreword

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Food connects and unites people. It plays a vital role in making a significant impact on the physical, social, and emotional development of people. Thus, eating together is a powerful act. Food is placed as the main and the first in order of need. Besides satisfying hunger, it plays a vital role in determining one's social, economic, and psychological behaviour. At the individual level, absence, non-accessibility, and non-affordability of food directly impact health and nutrition. But at the societal level, food availability changes the food prices, standard of living, nutrition levels, labour productivity, demographic characteristics, and overall economic and social development.

Food security, as defined by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. The *Right to Food* is a human right obtained from the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Several global interventions focus on ensuring a hunger-free society, notably the Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger by 2030. Yet food insecurity is one of the major problems that every country in the world is facing today because of unequal distribution of resources, increasing population and infrastructural bottlenecks, climate change, natural and anthropogenic disasters, ethnic conflicts, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the practical and symbolic importance of food, it is notable that the act of sharing food and its practices are prevalent across major religions – Hinduism and religions of Indian origin Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam. We find food sharing or *anna-daan* traditions practised in massive magnitude across religions and cultures, over the centuries. Such voluntary acts springing from immense devotion, discipline, and community spirit contribute to not only food security and nutrition but also to social solidarity. *Anna-daan* thus functions as social responsibility in aiding the poor and the needy. Even to this day, there are many instances of people giving food to the poor and the underprivileged before consuming it themselves. Religious scholars point to immense literature on the significance of *anna-daan* in the scriptures that highlights its special place in social accountability, morality, and obligation that contributes towards a welfare state.

### **Food sharing – focus of the current study**

The tradition of *anna-daan* is widespread amongst all segments of Indian society and continues to be a significant aspect of people's way of living. On religious or any important occasions, *anna-daan* would be taken up on a large scale. Some Hindus organise a

special meal for the needy, donate to a charitable trust or in memory of the deceased, while Christians have food charity networks, Muslims have a variety of models in food charity, Jains have extensive food charity programmes, Sikhs have established *langars* (community kitchens), and Buddhists have food sharing programmes that have been practised for several centuries.

In brief, *giving* begins at home but extends beyond home. In Indian culture and tradition, both *gurus* and leaders emphasise the need to devote some time to *seva* (service) or to serve humanity in a selfless manner. *Daan* is considered more than just giving; it involves the sharing of resources with others, whether wealth, food, or other things.

*Daan* also includes physical, intellectual, and spiritual service. There are several individuals from varied professions who render such services: doctors render free service, and individuals teach students and raise funds during emergencies like earthquakes, floods, etc. It could be various types of philanthropic acts, like providing shelter homes, planting trees, digging wells, building tanks, and so on. As documented in the book, historically, kings were known for improving such infrastructures by sharing the wealth for the welfare of the people, particularly, the poor, sick, and the needy.

Despite the importance of *anna-daan*, few studies capture the concept and its magnitude theoretically along with evidence of practices in the Indian culture and tradition. This study, therefore, makes an important contribution by presenting the extensive forms and approaches to food sharing and its associated values and belief systems associated with *anna-daan* across Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam.

This study is organised into two parts. Part I presents a structured framework and critical analysis based on literature from religious texts, philosophical texts, *vedas*, *upanishads* for Hinduism; Old and New Testaments of the Bible for Christianity; Quran and *hadees* for Islam. The book has separate chapters across religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam. Authors have extensively referenced the scriptures of respective religions to capture and document how food charity is perceived. They also deal with data and comparative analysis of various case studies, based on types and structures, captured across India in the current context. Part II narrates 78 case studies of these religions across India, captured through a systematic and structured approach. The study engaged more than 60 researchers from various organisations to collect the details from religious pilgrim locations on GIS maps, in spite of constraints posed by the all-pervading COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the last three years, the editors and authors of different chapters have worked to understand the criticality of sharing our food both historically and in the present context. I deeply appreciate the editors' significant and meticulous efforts in presenting this study to a global audience.

Owing to the topic's importance and the keen interest shown by the people of India, the book is being published in English and nine Indian languages (Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu, and Bengali). The study is unique as it explores *food-sharing traditions across time and religious groups, as well as capturing current practices through case studies. Thus, it looks at harnessing tradition to ensure food security and strengthen a framework for the future.*

**Ruth Suseela Meinzen-Dick**

Senior Research Fellow

International Food Policy Research Institute

Washington DC, USA.

November 2021

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## Foreword

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I am happy to know that Chanakya University, Bengaluru has published a book *Annadaan, Food Charity in India: Preaching & Practice* to assess the prevalence of faith-based food sharing practices.

It is said that as you give, so shall you receive. Thus, by donating food to any needy person, it is believed that there will never be a shortage of food in one's life. *Anna-daan* or donating food in India is considered a *mahadaan* because donating food is the greatest *karmic* service. Even those with limited means donate generously as they consider *anna-daan* a sacred duty in service of God and community.

I am confident that this book while providing insight to its readers about the quick adoption of new technologies and management approaches by our religious institutions for the efficient management of their community kitchens and food charity initiatives, also motivate them to contribute generously to the noble cause of *anna-daan*.

My best wishes for the entire endeavour.

**Yogi Adityanath**  
Chief Minister  
Uttar Pradesh, India  
May 13, 2023

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# Acknowledgements

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It is amazing how ideas can take shape. They may lie dormant for months on end and then suddenly spring to life.

Something similar happened in the case of this book.

Though the concept of *anna-daan* and its practice have always fascinated me, any thought of bringing out a scholarly book on it was far, far away from my mind until I met Shri Dattatreya Hosabale, the present General Secretary of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, over dinner at Chauka Bhati, a traditional restaurant, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, in February 2019. We were having a typical dinner conversation until he mentioned the Indian tradition of *anna-daan*, or food sharing, practised in our country for thousands of years.

That touched a chord in me. And in my enthusiasm, I rattled off some key figures on the practice of *anna-daan* based on my study of available literature and my visits to numerous temples to see firsthand the amazing work that was being done to keep the spirit of *anna-daan* alive and thriving. Sensing my interest in the subject, his next question was, “Why don’t you write a book on the topic with some empirical case studies”. It was less a question and more an order! I said I would like to if adequate funding could be assured for the project.

I broached the subject of bringing out a book on *anna-daan* with Dr. S. Manasi, and she readily agreed to come on board.

That’s how it all began.

Yet, this is not a book by K.V. Raju and S. Manasi. Without the support and cooperation of several people, this volume would not have seen the light of day.

At the top of the list is Shri Dattatreya Hosabale, who helped and guided us from day one of the project until its completion. We were fortunate to have had the support and guidance of Shri M.P. Kumar, formerly CEO of Globaledge Software, and now the president of Rashthrothana Parishad, in completing it. We gratefully acknowledge their valuable support.

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Special thanks to all the religious heads of Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries, Jain *derasars*, Sikh *gurdwaras*, Muslim mosques, Christian churches, and all functionaries of the religious trusts for providing us the data, information, insights whenever we needed them for the case studies. But for their support and cooperation, we would not have been able to have such incisive case studies.



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We are highly thankful to Shri Farid Siddiqui, who painstakingly copyedited all the chapters and case studies.

For us, it was a challenge to conduct this study, given the vastness and diversity of its coverage in terms of capturing *anna-daan* across religions and supporting it with case studies. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the pace, as we had to suspend work during lockdowns. However, we pursued it relentlessly, and we are thankful to the whole team for their contributions in various ways to complete the study in time. We place on record our appreciation and gratitude to all for their hard work, diligence, and sincerity in contributing to this study.

To all of them, we remain indebted.

**K.V. Raju**  
**S. Manasi**

Part I

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# History and practices

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# **Anna-daan, food charity**

## **An Overview**

*K. V. Raju and S. Manasi*

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### **1.1 Introduction**

Food is a central element in creating societal bonding and connects people through culture, cuisine, and value systems. It is the experience that relates to food and symbolic meanings, from which there will be associations with eloquent and memorable experiences. At the societal level, food acts symbolically as a forthcoming tradition over which we construct, achieve, and communicate denotation with others. In addition, food is correlated with friendliness, warmth, and expression of camaraderie. Food plays a vital role in the majority of cultures, and understanding culture, practices, customs, and traditions can be revealed through food and the way it is discovered. It is also apparent that sensitivity to food etiquette is vital in developing relationships across cultures.

Besides serving as a basic need and satisfying hunger, food plays an important role in shaping one's social, economic, and psychological behaviour. At a micro-level, lack or poor access to food immediately impacts health and nutrition, while at a macro-level, it affects the pricing, standard of living, nutrition levels, and overall economic and social development. The United Nations Committee on World Food Security has defined food security as a condition where all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. The *right to food* is a human right obtained from the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Initiatives towards controlling and eliminating starvation in society have been notable, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims for Zero Hunger by 2030. Despite various interventions, food insecurity is one of the foremost problems that is faced in every country in the world, as a consequence of population explosion, resource inequality, infrastructural bottlenecks, climate change, conflicts, and recently the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the setting of the real and emblematic significance of food, religion and food are intrinsically connected with an array of practices. Sharing food or *anna-daan* is a central part of all the major religions in the Indian subcontinent – Hinduism, religions of Indian origin – Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam. As a voluntary act, it has deep-rooted belief systems associated with food sharing, besides enormous devoutness, discipline, and societal spirit to continue this meaningful humane act. It has for sure resulted in contributing to food security, nutrition, and social harmony. Thus, *anna-daan* functions as social responsibility in aiding the deprived and the indigent. The tradition of *anna-daan* is widespread among all sections of society and continues to be an essential aspect of people's way of life. Religious scholars point to immense literature on the

importance of *anna-daan* in the scriptures that highlight its uniqueness in achieving social responsibility, ethics, and commitment towards promoting and achieving a welfare state.

*Daan* and *anna-daan* are part and parcel of all religious texts. While *daan* has a larger meaning and is captivated by philosophical connotation, *anna-daan* becomes a part of the larger significance of *daan*. To get a better perspective of the concept of *daan* in the larger context and *anna-daan* in a specific context, one needs to understand the basis of these well-laid-out ethical principles in achieving a larger philosophical sense and meaning extolled in these texts.

In its own ways and forms, *anna-daan* provides food security and ensures nutrition among the indigent in society. It thus functions as social responsibility in aiding the poor and the needy. Probing further, the religious scholars, as mentioned elsewhere in this study, explained that immense significance is attached to *anna-daan* in the religious scriptures holding a special place in social accountability, morality, and obligation to form a welfare state. The practice of *anna-daan* is shared among all sections of society and continues to be an essential aspect of people's way of life. Even today, there are many instances of people giving food to the poor and the underprivileged before consuming it themselves. Besides, *vidya daan* (*free education*) and *anna-daan* are intertwined where we find extensive support provided to pupils. Thus, invigorating impressions of India's present-day with its connections to a distinctive, stable, enriching history will help build its future. The quest to contextualise objectively the impact and the outcome of such valuable and interesting traditions of India made us explore this dimension of *food sharing*.

The beliefs of many religious faiths encourage charitable activity by its members. It is a significant fact that charity has been advocated as a virtue by all religions. Having defined and clarified the concept of *daan* earlier, the study examines the philosophies and doctrines of *daan* in all the major religions of the Indian subcontinent.

## 1.2 *Daan* and *anna-daan* in Indian religious texts

Across religions, *daan* and *anna-daan* carry great significance. A brief overview of the way *daan* and *anna-daan* are perceived will provide insights into the depth and strength of their influence on aiding the continuation of this important tradition to this day. During our exploration, we found that almost all of the religious places serve food at various times. The magnitude is astonishing. In some temples, like Tirupati, food is served to as many as 200,000 devotees on special occasions. Similarly, Sikh *langars* (a communal kitchen where a free meal is served) have a huge number of devotees. The National Geographic channel has made a documentary on India's mega, kitchens which has stunningly captured the nuances of these kitchens in visual form.

### **Hinduism**

The earliest discussion of *daan* is found in the *Rig Veda*. It relates it to *satya* (truth) and in another hymn points to the guilt one feels from not giving to those in need. It uses *da*, the root of the word *daan*, in its hymns to refer to the act of giving to those in distress. Ralph T. H. Griffith, for example, translates Book 10, Hymn 117 of the *Rig Veda*<sup>1</sup> as follows:

*The Gods have not ordained hunger to be our death: even to the well-fed man comes death in varied shapes. The riches of the liberal never waste away, while he who will not give finds none to comfort him.*

*Veda* calls for collecting with a hundred hands and giving away with a thousand hands.

Other than the *Veda*, the significance of *daan* has been emphasised in other Hindu scriptures such as *Bhagavad Gita*, *Upanishad*, *87 Puran*, *Smriti*, as also poetry.

Giving in the Hindu religion can be categorised in three ways: *dakshina*, *bhiksha*, and *daan*. *Dakshina* is repayment to *guru* (teacher), *bhiksha* is alms sought with the purpose of self-effacement or ego-conquering, and *daan* is charity.

*Daan* has been defined in traditional texts as any action of relinquishing the ownership of what one considers or identifies as one's own and investing the same in a recipient without expecting anything in return. While *daan* is typically given to one person or family, Hinduism also discusses charity or giving aimed at public benefit, sometimes called *utsarga*. This aims at larger projects such as building a rest house, school, drinking water or irrigation well, planting trees, and building care facilities, among others. Thus, *daan* is considered the practice of cultivating generosity. It can take the form of giving to an individual in distress or need. It can also take the form of philanthropic public projects that empower and help many.

The *Bhagavad Gita* describes various types of *daan*, highlighting that charity has to be given to worthy persons, and the giver should not expect in return. Other Hindu texts, such as *Vyasa Samhita*, state that reciprocity may be innate in human nature and social functions, but *daan* is a virtue in itself, as doing good lifts the nature of one who gives. The texts do not recommend charity to unworthy recipients or where charity may harm or encourage injury to or by the recipient. *Daan*, thus, is a *dharmic* act and requires an idealistic-normative approach, and has spiritual and philosophical context. The donor's intent and responsibility for diligence about the effect of *daan* on the recipient is considered as important as the *daan* itself.

There are several verses across Hindu scriptures which highlight the importance of *anna-daan*, as well as indicate linkages between the mind, life, and food – defining and emphasising their significance. There is no denying that food is given prime importance and reverence, as it is the provider and sustainer of life. It is described that the giver of food is the giver of life and indeed of everything else. Therefore, one desirous of well-being in this world and beyond should especially endeavour to give food. It is indicated that when food is donated or shared with the weak and emaciated, the person presenting will attain the full benefits of conducting *yagn* (oblation). Besides, *anna-daan* is considered a supreme act, as *Brahma Puran*<sup>2</sup> (83.2) mentioned: there is no better service than providing food in worlds of mortality. In the *Rig Veda*,<sup>3</sup> Sukta 117, *anna-daan* is described as supreme and extols the giver of food (*anna-daan*).

It is a sin and a selfish act if food is not shared with those who need it. *Bhagavad Gita*<sup>4</sup> says that it is a sin to cook and eat for oneself; food must be shared. Food should first be served to guests and then eaten by oneself. A famous Hindu proverb reads: *May the person who donated food remain happy forever*. Since times immemorial, sharing food was a practice in all the temples in various forms and extents, and this tradition is followed to this day with as much devotion.

## **Jainism**

*Daan* is described as a virtue and duty in Jainism. It is considered an act of compassion and must be done with no desire for material gain. Four types of *daan* are discussed in the texts of Jainism: *ahaar-daan* or *anna-daan* (donation of food), *aushadh-daan* (donation of medicine), *gyan-daan* (donation of knowledge), and *abhaya-daan* (giving of

protection or freedom from fear, asylum to someone under threat). *Daan* is one of ten means to gain positive *karma* (*the sum of a person's actions of good and bad deeds*), in the soteriological theories of Jainism. Medieval-era texts of Jainism dedicate a substantial portion of their discussions to the need and virtue of *daan*. *Yashastilaka's* book<sup>5</sup> VIII section 43 is dedicated to the concept of *daan* in Jainism.

*Ahaar-daan* is first and foremost among the *chaturvidha daan* described earlier and performing it is an exemplary act. The Jains believe that liberation of the soul can be attained by offering food to Jain ascetics and needy people. The Jain scriptures repeatedly mention that offering food to hungry ascetics is a noble act on the part of the donor and can shorten his birth cycle. The ascetics are held in so much reverence that if they enter a village or town, they are offered food first. It is only after they have finished eating that the donors can offer food as *prasad* to local devotees. According to Jain philosophy, the tradition of offering food and receiving food is associated with *karma*. It means that every living being will get food based on its *karma*, and those who have good *karma* (including non-human life forms) are entitled to food. The Jain *Agamas*<sup>6</sup> (texts containing the teachings of Mahavir) mention the importance of *ahaar-daan* which was practised and is still in vogue among a large number of Jains. *Anna-daan* initiatives are organised during natural calamities or emergency situations.

Hence, it has been strongly advocated in Jainism that householders should always strive to extend charity to those who need help in accordance with the conditions governing their conduct. It means that the positive aspect has been made an inherent part of the doctrine of *ahimsa* (*non-violence*). Hence, it has been enjoined upon the householders (i) to follow the practice of giving *daan*, i.e., religious gifts or charity; (ii) to organise welfare activities with the help of charities for the benefit of the weaker sections of society, as well as for other living beings like animals, birds, etc.; and (iii) to inculcate the spirit of toleration towards the followers of other faiths or religions.

The Jain religion recognises the fundamental natural phenomenon of interdependence known as *parasparopagraho jivanam* (interdependence). The Jain scriptures have considerably widened the scope and extent of *daan* both for recipients and the contents of *daana*. The *daan*, with reference to its recipients, has also been divided into two classes – *patra-daan* and *karuna-daan*. *Patra-daan* means gifts or offerings made with respect and devotion to worthy recipients and in accordance with prescribed conditions. Such worthy recipients are generally those Jains who have the right beliefs and are continuously engaged in practising vows prescribed for their stage in life. *Karuna-daan* is to protect the life of all living beings or offerings made out of compassion to anyone who deserves it, being hungry, thirsty, diseased, distressed, disabled, helpless, and the like.

*Ahaar-daan* is first and foremost among the *chaturvidha daan*, and sharing it is an exemplary act. Jains believe that liberation of the soul can be attained by offering food to Jain ascetics, *vratikas*, and needy people. The Jain scriptures repeatedly mention that offering food to hungry ascetics is a noble act on the part of the donor and can shorten his birth cycle. The ascetics are held in so much reverence that if they enter a village or town, they are offered food first. It is only after they have finished eating that the donors can offer food as *prasad* to local devotees. The Jain *Agamas*<sup>7</sup> (texts containing the teachings of Mahavir) mention the importance of *ahaar-daan* which was practised and is still being practised by a large number of Jain followers. *Anna-daan* initiatives are organised during natural calamities or emergency situations.

## Buddhism

*Daan* as a formal religious act is directed specifically to a monastic or spiritually developed person. In Buddhist thought, it has the effect of purifying and transforming the mind of the giver.

Generosity developed through giving leads to the experience of material wealth and possibly being reborn in happy states. In the *Pali Canon*, *Dighajanu Sutta*<sup>8</sup> (denoted there by the Pali word *caga*, which can be synonymous with *daan*) is identified as one of the four traits conditioning happiness and wealth in the next life. Conversely, a lack of giving leads to unhappy states and poverty.

*Daan* leads to one of the *paramitas* or “perfections”, the *daan paramita*. This can be characterised by unattached and unconditional generosity, giving and letting go. Buddhists believe that giving without seeking anything in return leads to greater spiritual wealth. Moreover, it reduces the acquisitive impulses that ultimately lead to continued suffering from egotism.

Traditionally, Buddhists have long practised the giving of alms, food, medicines, and clothes to monks and to monasteries in exchange for teachings and merit. This relationship is seen to be a sacred mutual dependence, and merit is shared on both sides for the benefit of all. In addition to giving to the poor, generosity also includes sharing one’s compassion in the loss of a loved one or family member, providing support in times of hardship, or standing by the side of people going through grief or suffering.

*Daan*, or generosity, can be given in both material and non-material forms. Spiritual giving – or the gift of noble teachings, known as *dhamma daan*, is said by the Buddha to surpass all other gifts. This type of generosity includes those who elucidate the Buddha’s teachings – monks who preach sermons or recite from the *Tripitaka*,<sup>9</sup> teachers of meditation – frequently share the truth, thus practising the highest kind of generosity. Those of us who are not qualified to teach the *dhamma* can give the gift of the *dhamma* in other ways. Unqualified persons who encourage others to keep precepts support teachers of meditation. The most common form of giving is in material forms such as food, money, clothes, and medicines. *Daan* as a formal religious act is directed specifically to a monastic or spiritually developed person. In Buddhist thought, it has the effect of purifying and transforming the mind of the giver. Generosity developed through giving leads to the experience of material wealth and possibly being reborn in happy states. With respect to *anna-daan*, the Buddha said *hunger is the worst kind of illness and that if people knew the results of giving, they wouldn’t eat without having shared their meal with others*, emphasising the significance of sharing food.

## Sikhism

Sikhism is one of the youngest of the world religions, founded by Guru Nanak in the Punjab region of South Asia in the early 16th century. Guru Nanak had an interesting perspective on charitable giving. Guru Nanak provides Sikhs with a new ethical framework in which people who are fit to work are required to earn a living through honest means while sharing the fruits of their earnings with sections of society that are the most needy. This theology can be summed up in his famous pronouncement that is recorded in the *Guru Granth Sahib*,<sup>10</sup> the Sikh scripture: “Only they are on the True Path who eat what they earn through earnest work and help support the disenfranchised” (page 1245). A Sikh is expected to contribute 10% of his wealth or income to people in need or to a worthy cause.



One of the institutions that evolved out of this ethical framework is the *langar*<sup>11</sup> (or free kitchen). The *Darbar Sahib* – also known as the Golden Temple – in Amritsar, Panjab, serves free food daily to 100,000 people, regardless of their status or religious affiliation. As a consequence, it is said, no one in Amritsar has slept hungry in the last four centuries. In Sikhism, the word *langar* possesses a special feature. Food is imbued with spirituality when eaten with *sangat* (holy congregation). Spiritual food and physical food can be had only by sitting in a *pangat* (row). In addition to the ideals of equality, the tradition of *langar* expresses the ethics of sharing, community, inclusiveness, and oneness of all humankind. This is the uniqueness of *langar* which has given a different look to the Sikh society. The code of conduct regarding the distribution of *langar* is also of special importance.

*Daan*, called *vand chhako*, is considered one of three duties of Sikhs. The duty entails sharing part of one's earnings with others by giving to charity and caring for others. Examples of *daan* in Sikhism include selfless service and *langar*. It means to share what you have and to consume it together as a community, be it wealth, food, or whatever, with a focus on helping the needy. The other two duties of the Sikhs are *naam japo* (recite God's name) and *kirat karo* (live honestly).

### Christianity

For Christians, the role of charity is first built on the injunctions of the Hebrew Bible. But in the *New Testament*, Jesus's parables and actions also speak to the morality of charitable sentiments. The word *charity* comes from the Latin word *caritas*, which means love. The major world religions believe in service to those in need. Also, charities and volunteering are the best examples of *love in action*. Many people believe that they receive a lot by giving. There are several reasons and ways of charity that differ from one religion to another. For instance, Christians often use the term *stewardship* for financial help given to the needy, while Jews use *tzedakah* to refer to acts of charity. A general definition of charity is a voluntary act of giving of money or other help to those in need. It is to be noted that one can do charity in different ways. Many religious groups collect food and clothing to help refugees who have been affected by natural disasters. They also help senior citizens and children. Charitable giving is a centuries-old tradition.

In the book of Luke in the Bible,<sup>12</sup> for example, Christians are urged to share food: He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food let him do likewise. Suppose there are brothers or sisters who need clothes and don't have enough to eat. What good is there in your saying to them, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed", but then do nothing about his physical needs? What good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:14–17).<sup>13</sup> It also emphasises that no worldly return should be expected from giving.

Then Jesus said to his host, "*When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbours – for they will invite you back, and in this way you will be paid for what you did. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind; and you will be blessed, because they are not able to pay you back. God will repay you on the day the good people rise from death*".

Charity, in Christian thought, is the highest form of love, signifying the reciprocal love between God and man that is manifest in the unselfish love of one's fellow men. St. Paul's classical description of charity is found in the *New Testament* (I Cor. 13).<sup>14</sup> In Christian

theology and ethics, charity (a translation of the Greek word *agape*, also meaning love) is most eloquently shown in the life, teachings, and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine summarised much of Christian thought about charity when he wrote, “Charity is a virtue which, when our affections are perfectly ordered, unites us to God, for by it we love him”.<sup>15</sup> Using this definition and others from the Christian tradition, medieval theologians, especially St. Thomas Aquinas, placed charity in the context of the other Christian virtues and specified its role as *the foundation or root* of them all.<sup>16</sup>

Although the controversies of the Reformation dealt more with the definition of faith than with either hope or charity, the Reformers identified the uniqueness of God’s *agape* for man as unmerited love; therefore, they required that charity, as man’s love for man, be based not upon the desirability of its object but upon the transformation of its subject through the power of divine *agape*.

Different theological interpretations have been made by early Christian thinkers to encourage and mandate the affluent members of the Christian community to support the less fortunate ones, including providing food to the poor, which was part and parcel of Christian identity since its inception. The central Christian ritual – namely, the Eucharist – is, in fact, a meal event, and it involves the breaking of the bread and sharing it with one another in memory of Jesus. Such a ritual meal was often accompanied by the *agape* or fellowship meal specially meant to take care of the poorer members of the local Christian community. To this day, it is practised and has motivated Indian Christians’ beliefs, practices, motifs, and varieties as regards *anna-daan* tradition in Indian churches.

## Islam

Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion. Oneness of God (*touheed*), belief in the Prophet (*risalat*), and the Day of Judgement (*aakhirat*) are the three fundamentals of Islam. The Prophet being the principal architect of this society enunciated a wide range of values and personified them in order that his close companions emulated them and became the torchbearers of what the *Quran*<sup>17</sup> laid down and how he (the Prophet) internalised them. Charity is mostly denoted by the word *khair* or welfare in the Arabic text, scriptural or otherwise. It constitutes a basic human value in Islam, and it is desirable for a Muslim to be suffused with it regardless of the context, both in times of war and peace. *Good men*, according to *Quran*, are those who for the love of God, feed the poor, the orphan, and the captive (*Quran*, chapter 76, verse 8).<sup>18</sup> Islam enjoins its followers to part with a portion of their earnings, as well as possessions (which in contemporary terms may be referred to as income and assets) towards the welfare of the poor, the indigent, the orphans, the wayfarers, and generally those in distress. The Urdu term *khairat* (charity in monetary or material form) is a derivative of Arabic *khair* (welfare). It embraces charity in cash and kind; feeding the hungry; providing rest, food, and accommodation to the wayfarers; performing the last rites of the dead; providing succour to uncared-for children, the old, the disabled; rehabilitating the sick, mentally disturbed, or former convicts; and creating facilities for learning for all and sundry. One comes across the concept of giving as a repetitive feature of the guidance by the *Quran*, the principal scripture from which major Islamic tenets, teachings, guidance, and the *shariah*<sup>19</sup> laws are derived.

It is considered a duty of every Muslim to help other human beings as well as he can with the means that he has. But he should not do so expecting a return (*neki kar, daria mein daal*). Charity should be done solely for Allah, and we should expect a reward only from him. One should not even expect a word of thanks from those he helped.

Allah wants every believer to feel the pain of those who do not have enough to eat. To instil empathy, he has made it compulsory for all Muslims to fast the entire month of *Ramzan*.

Feeding the hungry has been described as one of the noblest acts a believer is supposed to do, as well as entice others to do the same. A *hadees* from the Prophet warns the believers against ignoring hunger in the neighbourhood while they spend nights fully satiated.

In Islam, there are two methods of charity: One is called *zakat*, and the other *sadqah*. *Zakat* is one of the five pillars upon which Islam is based and enjoins all Muslims to contribute 2.5% of their saving as *zakat* every Islamic year, provided that the saving is beyond the threshold limit, called *nisab*, defined as the minimum amount of wealth and possessions that a Muslim must own before being obligated to pay *zakat*. In other words, if personal wealth is below *nisab* during one lunar year, no *zakat* is due for that period. *Sadqah* is voluntary charity or contribution. *Sadqah* can be given as money, personal items, time, or other resources.

The *Quran* says that those who feed the needy are described as those who will be among the *companions of the right* and will inherit paradise. The *Quran* discusses charity in many verses, some of which relate to *zakat*. In the *Quranic* view, *zakat* is obligatory. One must give *zakat* for the sake of one's salvation: while those who give *zakat* can expect reward from God in the afterlife, neglecting to give *zakat* can result in damnation. The giving of the *zakat* is considered a means of purifying one's wealth and soul. *Zakat* is part of the covenant between God and a Muslim. *Zakat* has played an important role throughout its history. Thus, reinforcing the traditions of charity, food sharing is practised to this day and in various forms and levels.

### 1.3 Food sharing – the background

Religious traditions rigorously shape an individual's dietary habits and food choices; they drive the followers to skip meals on certain days or months. They regulate the amount in which food is consumed and even the nature of food to be consumed. Thus, the act of eating and conceptions around food is intrinsically linked with religious concerns.

Besides, food connects and unites people and plays a vital role in significantly impacting physical, social, and emotional development. Eating together is a powerful act. Marovelli (2019) highlights that commensalism, the act of eating together, is an essential human ritual whose essence lies beyond the biological need for food. Eating together is one of the most commonly shared practices among human beings, both across space and time. Food sharing has been theorised as an important development in early human evolution (Isaac, 1978). The remains of food around the oldest fireplaces reveal that human beings have been sharing food as far back as about 800,000 years (Walker et al., 2016). Food sharing is depicted in evolutionary anthropology as a fundamental part of human evolution, as a means of reciprocal cooperation, which we share with other primates (Jaeggi and Gurven, 2013). In addition, from a bioarchaeological perspective, sharing food and chipping in collective meals have been analysed as acts that bond human beings as biological organisms who are social persons (Jones, 2007). For instance, Pauline Schmitt Pantel examined various Greek instances of public meals over a period of several centuries (Schmitt Pantel, 1992). Thus, eating together makes up a basic part of our social nature. A wider, simple definition proposes that "commensality is eating with other people" (Sobal and Nelson, 2003). Furthermore, food sharing is another important element and can be seen as a human universal trait that forms the centre of economic and

social life right from hunter-gatherer societies. Besides, human livelihoods require sharing at all life stages to support infancy, childhood, and adolescence and help reduce the risk of daily food shortfalls in adulthood. Attempts to understand the evolved human life history require examining the conditions that led to the evolution of food sharing. Commensality has been and remains an integral part of life, and hints of it can be found in several contexts historically across various events. The role of shared meals as a symbol of trust (or betrayal), social, communion, and reasoned discourse is abundant in philosophical and theological writings and arts.

Commensality forms bonding. Across cultures, it appears that eating the same food is associated with producing the same flesh and blood, thus making commensals more alike and bringing them closer to each other. It is perceived that you are what you eat seems universal and that when absorbing a food, a subject absorbs at the same time salient features of the food (Murcott, 1986; Rozin, 1986; Fischler, 2011). If eating a food makes one become more like that food, then those sharing the same food become more like each other. Given its importance and role, of particular interest for us was sharing food and its prevalent practices across significant religions – Hinduism, religions with origin in the Indian subcontinent *viz.*, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam. Food sharing or *anna-daan* possesses colossal importance in all religions and cultures.

Relevant to discuss here in this context is the Hindu philosophical view wherein sharing is a duty and not a favour because there is abundance. *Anna-daan*, the sharing of food, is a manifestation of the *mahayagn*.<sup>20</sup> It is part of one's religious duty (*dharma*) to offer food to anybody in need of it. Man is expected to partake of food only after it has been reverentially offered to the ancestors, those dependent on him, and those who are more in need of it but cannot earn it themselves *viz.*, the weak, diseased, destitute, and orphaned. Food donation is not limited to feeding a human being; it encompasses all living beings, termed the *Balivaishvadeva yagn*.<sup>21</sup> Thus, every individual in society is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining a hunger-free welfare state both for humans and non-humans, thereby ensuring peace and happiness among the animal kind. Sharing food is not exclusive to Hinduism alone. As discussed earlier, other religions with origin in the Indian subcontinent, such as Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, have placed great emphasis on food sharing.

A review of commensality studies has shown that commensality is one of the most conspicuous manifestations of human sociality and that humans are inclined to eat together, and it is central across age groups, social classes, cultures, societies, and historical time periods. It matters for the well-being of individuals and groups in strengthening social relationships, expressing cultural identity, and involvement in civil communities. However, in a 1992 trend report on the emerging sociology of food, three distinguished scholars in the field (Mennell et al., 1992<sup>22</sup>) remarked in the conclusion of their work that *it is commonplace in discussions of food and society to speak of the social importance of commensality*. However, by and large, in spite of a growing number of interpretations and analyses and some very noteworthy contributions, the theme still needs more exploration and a unifying perspective. Our study is an attempt to bridge this dimension.

### **Recent initiatives for a hunger-free world**

In recent times, we have had several global interventions to focus on ensuring a hunger-free society, the latest being the Sustainable Development Goal 2 – Zero Hunger by 2030. However, achieving the goal seems farfetched given the recent trends and

pandemics that have escalated the situation. The number of people who suffer from hunger as measured by the prevalence of undernourishment showed an increase in 2015, although there was a continuous decline before that. Current estimates indicate that nearly 690 million people or 8.9% of the world population are hungry, i.e., up by 10 million people in one year and by almost 60 million in five years. If the recent trend continues, the number of people affected by hunger will surpass 840 million by 2030.

While the World Food Programme has estimated that there will be 135 million that would suffer from acute hunger mainly due to man-made conflicts, climate change, and economic downturns, and added to that, the COVID-19 pandemic would double that number, adding 130 million to the risk category of suffering acute hunger by the end of 2020. Given the scenario, with a quarter of a billion people possibly on the verge of starvation, there is an urgent call for rapid action to provide food and humanitarian relief to the most at-risk regions. Besides, there is a need for profound change in the global food and agriculture system to nourish more than 690 million people, besides an additional 2 billion who will get added by 2050. Hence, increasing agricultural productivity and sustainable food production are considered vital to alleviate the threats of hunger.

The 2021 Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC 2021) has brought to the fore the notably high severity and number of people in crisis or worse in 55 countries/territories caused due to persistent conflict, pre-existing and COVID-19-related economic shocks, and weather extremes. The 2021 edition shows the hunger crisis's highest existence from among the five years of study reports. The GRFC 2021 aims to identify the prime drivers of acute food insecurity for each country/territory. Again in 2020, conflict/insecurity, weather extremes, economic shocks, and COVID-19-related economic effects were the main drivers for food insecurity. It is also indicated that these drivers are interlinked, mutually reinforcing, and challenging to pinpoint a specific driver causing a food crisis. Over 142 million people in 40 out of the 55 countries/territories included in the GRFC 2021 were forecasted to be in trouble in 2021. Their analysis of the pandemic's economic and food security implications outlines the potential impact of COVID-19 on the world's poorest people. There is a need for measures to ensure that food supply chains are working to mitigate the risk of large jolts that will affect all, particularly the poor. They have also brought out a map indicating the severity of hunger across the countries.

### ***Anna-daan during the pandemic***

Responses to COVID-19 throughout the world have been massive in the context of addressing hunger concerns. At the global level, the World Food Programme's food assistance programme has provided a critical lifeline to 87 million vulnerable people worldwide. The Food and Agriculture Organization has advised the countries to meet the immediate food needs of vulnerable populations, boost social protection programmes, keep global food trade alive and domestic supply chains active, and support small farmers' ability to increase food production. The UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan has laid out steps to fight the virus in the world's poorest countries and address the needs of the most vulnerable people, including those facing food insecurity. In all the countries of the world, there are various forms of initiatives taken up, both macro and micro, to combat hunger and reach out to the poor and the vulnerable. While the government has come up with several programmes, corporates, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), political leaders, and individuals have reached out locally to large sections of the population.

In India, an overwhelming response to the pandemic was to provide food for the needy across the country (Annex 2). Besides government organisations, the labour department, labour commissioner's office, Indian Railways, and Indira Canteen came up with several initiatives and reach to distribute ration kits to the needy. Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Sikh community members, Jain community organisations, Christian organisations, and the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Students' Islamic Organization of India served several lakh people on a continuous basis. Similarly, political parties like the Bhartiya Janata Party were involved in distributing 11 crore meals and other points as well under the feed the needy programme. More than 40 NGOs across the country worked continuously. More than 36 corporates helped in organising food distribution cooked and ration kits across the country. Several of them stepped up by setting up satellite kitchens, hiring more utensils, transportation, and manpower, and worked in collaboration with the government authorities and the police who identified localities where people did not have access to food. Meals distributed by these NGOs ranged from 4 lakh cooked meals to 7 lakh dry ration kits, with some serving as many as 46 lakh meals. Besides, some of them took special care to serve frontline workers like doctors, nurses, and health care workers; sanitation workers; police; workers in the crematorium; and ambulance drivers, while others focused on children in slums, transgender community, construction workers, sex workers, and the less privileged. Besides, some of them focused on infected patients and caretakers. Similarly, there were several trusts which worked relentlessly in distributing food. There were restaurants which had a system in place and were empathetic enough to cater delicious and nutritious food extensively. Besides, there were several social activists and individuals who focused on providing food to the personnel who were serving the patients. Educational institutions also lent their hand in this noble service.

### *Food schemes*

All states have various schemes. If we take the example of Karnataka, a state in India, it had 13.2 million families in the state in 2011. The government of Karnataka has implemented various schemes to eliminate poverty and to make the state a hunger-free state. These schemes focused on children, pregnant women, migrant workers, and below poverty line (BPL) families, and provided cooked and dry rations accordingly. For instance, the *Padithara Khathe* scheme is an ambitious food security scheme of the government of Karnataka launched in 2014 that ensures the delivery of food grains at fair price shops under the Public Distribution System to families living BPL. Under the *Anna Bhagya Scheme*, food grains are provided free of cost to about 20 lakh low-income families. *Antyodaya Anna Yojana* is for the poorest of the poor, supported by the central government. *Dashoha* scheme offers dry rations and cooked food to migrants, old age homes, orphanages, hostels, refugee centres, rehabilitation centres, and others. As of December 2017, some 28,000 mt of rice and 139 mt of wheat were distributed to 28,000 residents of 413 institutions. During the nationwide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the labour department of the Karnataka government took the initiative to distribute food items to the most affected migrant workers in the state. Under the *Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) – Akshara Dasoha Scheme* – wholesome, freshly cooked lunch is served to children in government and government-aided schools in Karnataka. The MDMS aims to avoid classroom hunger, increase school enrolment, increase school attendance, improve

socialisation among castes, address malnutrition, and empower women through employment. India's MDMS is one of the most extensive school lunch programmes globally, benefiting 9.78 crore children in 11.40 lakh schools (2016–17) with the sole objective of increasing school enrolment, improving child health by providing nutritional food, and ensuring social equity. State governments in partnership with NGOs work toward bringing more schools under the ambit of MDMS. For instance, Akshaya Patra, an NGO, is currently operating MDMS in 42 locations in 12 states of India, which is considered to be the world's largest coverage under a mid-day meal programme. In June 2000, the Akshaya Patra Foundation started feeding 1,500 children in five schools in Bengaluru (earlier Bangalore). Currently, the Foundation is feeding more than 1.8 million children every day in 19,039 government schools and government-aided schools. *Ksheera Bhagya Yojana* provides 150 mL of hot milk to 64 lakh children from first to tenth standard in government and aided schools thrice a week, costing the state exchequer Rs. 300 crores annually. *Mathru Poorna Yojana* aims to provide at least one nutritious meal every day to more than eight lakh pregnant women. The meal is designed to meet 40%–45% of the daily calorie, protein, and calcium requirement for pregnant and lactating women. *Indira Canteen's* primary objective is to provide affordable food to the less privileged and the poor. Breakfast is priced at Rs.5 and lunch and dinner at Rs.10. Besides NGOs like Adhaimya Chethana, Youth for Seva is extending the food programmes across the state and reaching out to a large section of society.

Taking the picture as a whole, religious *anna-daan* by shrines meets the needs of a minor fraction of the total population, yet in absolute terms, it may be a huge number. It certainly has not solved the problem of hunger in India since their reach is limited mainly to pilgrims visiting the major shrines. However, the poor in the neighbourhood are beneficiaries. Not all shrines provide meals continuously, but only the major ones which receive donations from pilgrims on a large scale can. Hence, the reach of *anna-daan* by shrines is limited, and there are still a large number of poor, especially children, who are left undernourished or at least malnourished. *Anna-daan* by shrines is no substitute for providing food security by the state however important *anna-daan* is for pilgrims.

#### 1.4 Food sharing – motivation of the current study

As discussed earlier, the tradition of *anna-daan* is extensive among all segments of Indian society and continues to be a part and parcel of people's lives. On several occasions, be it religious or any important occasion, *anna-daan* is practised as a regular tradition. In the Hindu religion, a special meal for the needy, or for the inmates of a charitable trust, or in memory of the deceased is organised often. We observe similar trends across religions; Jains have extensive food charity programmes, while the Sikhs have established *langars* (kitchens), and Buddhists, too, have their food-sharing programmes, for monks. While Christians have food charity networks, Muslims have several models in food sharing that have been in existence for several decades.

In Indian culture and tradition, *gurus* and religious leaders have stressed the need to devote some time to *seva* or selflessly serving humanity. *Daan* is considered more than just giving; it involves sharing resources with others; it could be wealth, food, or other things. *Daan* also includes physical, intellectual, and spiritual service. It has evolved wherein several individuals from varied professions render such services; doctors render free service, individuals teach students and raise funds during emergencies like earthquakes,

floods, etc. It could be various types of philanthropic ways – like providing shelter homes, planting trees, digging wells, building tanks, etc. Historically, kings were known for expending their wealth on building and improving amenities for the welfare of the people, particularly the poor, sick, and needy (Bajaj and Srinivas, 1996).

There are limited studies that capture the concept and magnitude of *anna-daan*, which is seemingly instilled in Indian culture and tradition. Our aim is to fill this gap. Across all religions, extensive forms of and approaches to food charity and associated value and belief systems are being captured. We have restricted our study of food charity to traditional practices of large-scale feeding of food, excluding all the other forms of charity. The book brings out in detail the importance given to food charity in India by all religions prevailing in India. Besides, the shrines have provided the pilgrims with a basic need and have thereby supported religious tourism, also facilitating the intermingling of people from far-flung lands speaking different languages and with different cultural backgrounds. Religious shrines constitute a major part of the social and cultural capital of India and have promoted inter-regional understanding and national consciousness. The book draws extensively from scriptures to explain how *anna-daan* is important in the practice of religion and documents several case studies. Against this backdrop, this book intends to focus on the following objectives.

### 1.5 Objectives of the study

- To explore how *anna-daan* is conceptualised over time across religions and associated cultural practices
- To elicit spirit/reasons for continuing *anna-daan* over time
- To understand and document various initiatives, types, and models of *anna-daan* across religions in India
- To understand emerging issues and suggest policies in the *right-to-food* context and options for sustainable programmes that ensure food security

### 1.6 Methodology

There are two parts. Part I includes chapters in which scriptures and other religious texts of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam have been extensively examined to capture and document the spirit, traditions, and practices of *anna-daan* in these religions.

Part II has 78 case studies documenting through a structured format the actual implementation of *anna-daan* in these religions. While in the Hinduism case studies, temples and other religious places practising *anna-daan* located in several states have been covered, the case studies of other religions focus on the five most popular pilgrim locations practising *anna-daan*. The model of practising *anna-daan* in Buddhism is different, so there are no case studies documented. However, *anna-daan* traditions in Buddhist scriptures and practices in monasteries have been discussed in Part I.

We engaged several researchers and organisations to collect details from across these sacred pilgrim locations. It was a Herculean task involving more than 60 investigators who, in the midst of the pandemic, collected, collated, and analysed the data for the case studies. Data were collected through visits to pilgrim centres and telephonic discussions with the concerned persons at these locations.



Part I of the book has eight chapters.

The first chapter on overview sets the context for taking up the study and discusses the spirit and significance of food charity traditions and their contribution to ensuring food security. Against this backdrop, the chapter discusses food charity systems extensively practised in all the major religions in the country. The methodology and the case studies provide an overview and highlight the magnitude of the food charity systems.

The chapter on **Hinduism** focuses on *daan* (giving) as being an important part of one's *dharm* (religious duty). Each person has a *dharm* towards family, society, the world, and all living things. *Dharm* needs to be seen within the framework of the traditional extended Hindu family, which plays the role of a welfare state. The wealth a person acquires is not for himself or herself but for the welfare of the extended family and others. One has a responsibility towards those members of one's family who cannot maintain themselves. In some circumstances, an individual may have no option but to give up or compromise his/her personal goals for the sake of the family. In short, *giving* begins at home but extends beyond home.

Any giving that is motivated by selfish considerations loses its value from the spiritual point of view.

The chapter on Hinduism is followed by chapters on Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, and Islam.

The chapter on **Jainism** focuses on explaining the fundamental philosophy of *daan* and then defines *anna-daan* specifically. The main goal of human life is to liberate the soul from *karmic* bondage and the miserable life cycle of birth and death. In Jain philosophy, the doctrine of *karm* occupies a significant place, linked with a universal chain of cause and effect. The main pillars of Jain ethics are *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *aparigraha* (non-possession or need-based possession). The central focus of *ahimsa* is *parasparopagraho jivanam* (help other living beings to live) advocating the equality of the souls of all living beings. *Aparigraha* encourages its adherents to do *chaturvidha daan* (four types of giving) comprising *ahaar-daan* (gift of food), *aushadh-daan* (gift of medicines), *abhay daan* (gift of shelter for protection), and *shaastra daan* (gift of books to impart knowledge). Among all these *daans*, *ahaar-daan* is foremost.

**Buddhism** is often associated with meditation, pacifism, and Zen quotes. But one aspect of Buddhism that is often overlooked is the concept of generosity. In fact, despite the popular stereotypes of Buddhism being all about peace and mindfulness, generosity is a very crucial part of Buddhism. The Buddha describes giving something as like throwing it away, even if valuable, as fruitless, while throwing away something as worthless as leftover food with the benevolent thought of feeding small insects and animals as still beneficial.

In Buddhism, practising generosity is believed to train the mind in a way conducive to attaining enlightenment. Giving serves as a way to eliminate one's greed and ill will. By giving away what is valuable, you reduce attachment by letting them go. By using your possessions or time to benefit another, you develop altruism towards others. Giving helps to rid your mind of defilements by conditioning the mind to let go of attachments and extinguish ill will.

The chapter on **Sikhism** focuses on *anna-daan*, which is defined as a way of cultivating generosity. It is a form of giving to an individual who is in distress or need. Of the three pillars on which Sikhism is based – namely, *naam japo* (chant God's name), *kirat karo* (live honestly), and *vand chhako* (share with others), it is the third pillar which

emphasises the spirit of giving and sharing. *Langars* are kitchens attached to *gurdwaras*. The *langar* reflects the aspect of charity in three ways. First, it welcomes the hungry. Second, it functions as a symbol for charity, which has a link to the two words often mentioned in early Sikh documents: *deg* (large cooking pot, a symbol of sharing and charity) and *teg* (sword, a symbol of standing up for truth and justice). Third, before completing their duties, volunteers collect uneaten food and distribute it among the poor and the indigent in the neighbourhood.

The sixth chapter on food charity in **Christianity** focuses on almsgiving, which comes close to the Hindu idea of *daan* and has a long legacy in Judeo-Christian tradition. Tracing its origin to such a legacy, the essay dwells upon different theological interpretations evolved by early Christian thinkers to encourage and mandate the affluent members of the Christian community to support the less fortunate ones by providing them food, which was part and parcel of Christian identity since its inception. The central Christian ritual – namely, the Eucharist – constitutes breaking the bread and sharing it in memory of Jesus (Montoya, 2009). Such a ritual meal was often accompanied by the *agape* meal or fellowship meal specially meant to take care of the poor members of the local Christian community. Just as the Christian mandate to feed the hungry goes back to Jesus himself, who identified himself with the hungry, the chapter based on case studies in India focuses on how this has motivated Indian Christians' beliefs, practices, motifs, and varieties as regards *anna-daan* tradition in Indian churches.

The seventh chapter focuses on food charity as practised in **Islam** and exemplifies that ensuring the well-being of fellow human beings is one of the fundamental objectives of Islam. It urges the believers to set apart a portion of their income and possessions for the welfare of society as annual *zakat* (compulsory disbursement among the needy) and *sadqa* (voluntary offering, whose amount is at the will of the benefactor). Among the five essential duties of a Muslim, giving and sharing of one's resources in varied forms is emphasised in the *Quran* and *Hadees* (Prophet's sayings). While on one hand, *ush'r* (tithe), *fitra*, *valima*, *aqeeqa*, and *qurbani* came to be occasions for food distribution among the hungry, *waqfs*, orphanages, and *langars* institutionalised regular feeding of the indigent and the needy along with the provision of shelter, education, and healthcare. Thus, broader dimensions of feeding as a charity and a source of earning God's blessings in Islam are explored in the chapter.

The concluding chapter brings out some of the most valuable traditions and systems across religions. Besides, it also highlights the way forward in further strengthening the practices of charity as ordained in various religions and observed by their adherents. While the systems are good, ways to make them great in terms of exhibiting the traditions and further strengthening them are essential.

Our initial discussions with various specialists/experts/practitioners/followers, besides our own experience, indicated that *anna-daan* or food sharing/giving across religions varied in scale, types, and periods, besides the nature, quality, varieties, and types of food served and so on. Further exploration helped us get a fair idea about the governance, institutional arrangements formal and informal ways that were in place that contributed to the sustainability of the tradition. It is a religious obligation for some, whereas others perceive it as a primary tenet of humanity. Consequently, the practice and philosophical perceptions of *anna-daan* are fluid and constantly emerging and reconfiguring themselves. The study thus expounds on the various textual contents and practices in multiple sacred locations to decipher the religious perception of *anna-daan*.

## 1.7 The way forward

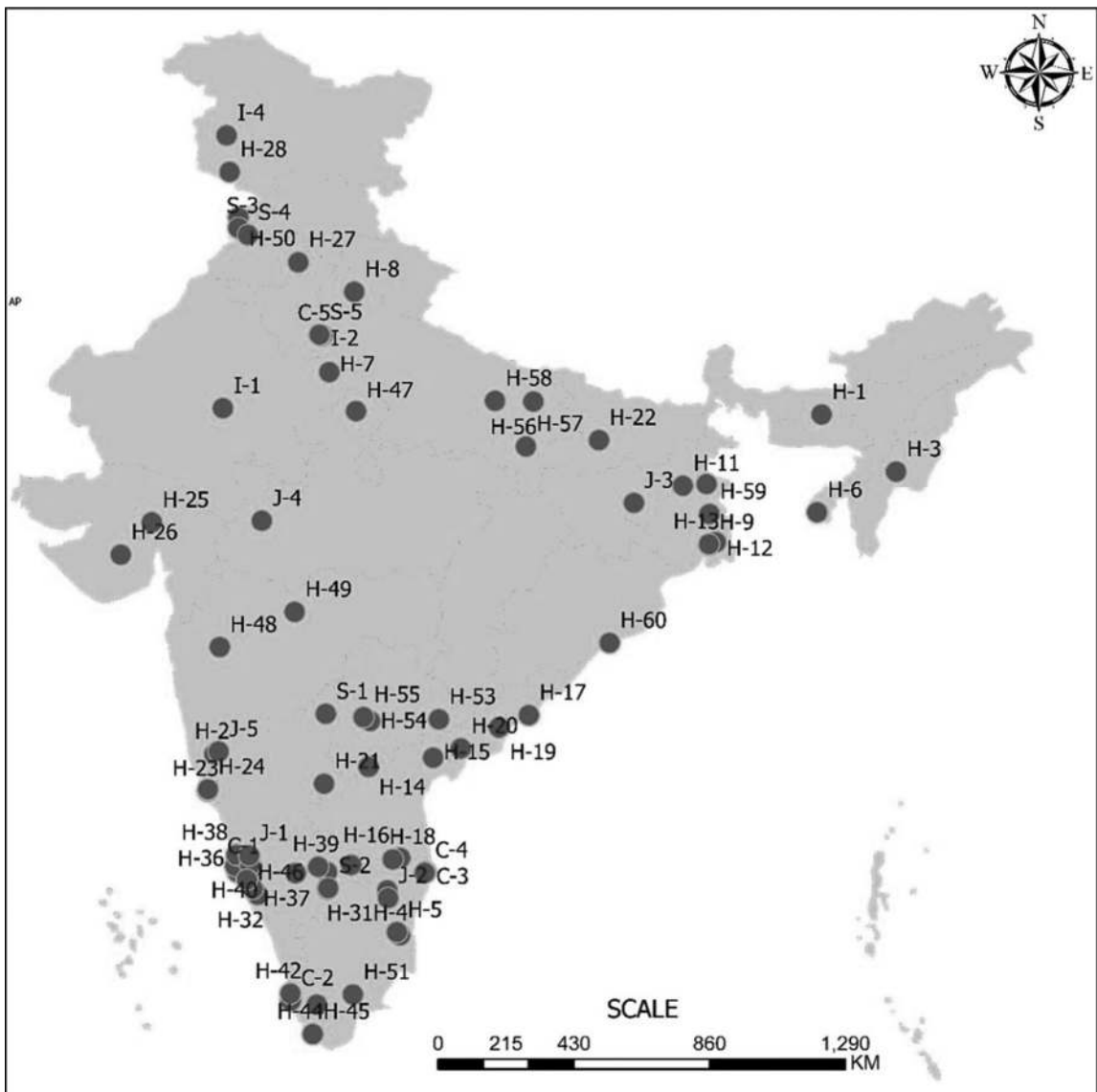
The critical analysis presented in this book provides insight into the theoretical and functional constructs of the tradition of *anna-daan* in various religions in India. We may infer that the tradition is constantly changing and negotiating with the shifting contextual realities; thus, a longitudinal study would ensure a perpetual advancement on the subject.

Further, India is home to countless unorganised religious practices that primarily lie understudied and undocumented. A similar study on food charity in unorganised religions may be commissioned to document the patterns of *anna-daan* in those religions.

This book is being translated into several regional languages of India to enhance its reach.

The study is supported by the Mythic Society, Bengaluru, and coordinated by the Centre for Education and Social Sciences, Bengaluru. Its panel of specialists has reviewed the work and suggested refinements to improve the focus and the overall quality of the manuscript.

All the case studies presented in Part II are shown in the GIS map (see Map 1.1).



Map 1.1 Case studies across religions in India.

Source: Compiled by authors.

Code	Temple Names	Code	Temple Names	Code	Temple Names	Code	Temple Names
H-1	Kamrup Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati, Assam	H-21	Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt, Mantralaya, AP	H-41	Chottanikkara Temple, Kochi, Kerala	I-1	Ajmer Dargah, Rajasthan
H-2	Shree Mahalaxmi Mandir, Kollhapur, MH	H-22	Mahavir Mandir, Patna, Bihar	H-42	Guruvayur temple, Kerala	I-2	Nizamuddin Dargah, Delhi
H-3	ISKCON Temple, Imphal, Manipur	H-23	Shree Rammath Mandir, Goa	H-43	Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa Temple, Kerala	I-3	Chintamani Dargah, Karnataka
H-4	Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, TN	H-24	Sri Vijaya Durga Temple, Goa	H-44	Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Kerala	I-4	Athrout, Srinagar
H-5	Satya Ganana Sabha (The Vallalar Temple), TN	H-25	Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Gujarat	H-45	Thiruvambadi Sri Krishna Temple, Kerala	J-1	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
H-6	Tripura Sundari Temple, Tripura	H-26	Shree Kastabandan Hanumanaji Temple, Gujarat	H-46	Nityananda Ashrama, Kerala	J-2	Shree Kshetra Arihantagiri, TN
H-7	Karshini Ashram Raman Reti Mahaban, Mathura, UP	H-27	Maata Mansa Devi Temple, Haryana	H-47	Sri Balaji Mandir, Gwalior, MP	J-3	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand
H-8	Shanathi Kunj, Haridwar	H-28	Sri Mata Vaishnodevi Temple, Jammu	H-48	Sri Sai Baba Temple, Shirdi, MH	J-4	Mahavir Tapobhumi, MP
H-9	Belur Math, West Bengal	H-29	Sri Nimishamba Temple, Bengaluru	H-49	Sri Shegaon Gajanan Maharaj Temple, MH	J-5	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, MH
H-10	Dahapara Dham Temple, West Bengal	H-30	Sri Kalika Durga Parmeshwari Temple, Bengaluru	H-50	Sri Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple, Punjab	S-1	Gurudwara Nanak Jhira Sarowar, Bidar, Karnataka
H-11	Tarapith Temple, West Bengal	H-31	ISKCON, Bengaluru	H-51	Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, TN	S-2	Gurdwara Sahib Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bengaluru, Karnataka
H-12	Lokenath Babar Mandir, West Bengal	H-32	Kukke Sri Subramanya Temple, Karnataka	H-52	Sri Lakshmi Narayani Golden Temple, TN	S-3	Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab
H-13	Adyapith Temple, West Bengal	H-33	Sri Adichunchugiri Mahasamsthana Math, Karnataka	H-53	Sri Sita Ramachandraswamy Temple, Telangana	S-4	Goindwal (Baoli) Sahib Gurdwara, Punjab
H-14	Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Temple, AP	H-34	Sri Annapoomeshwari Temple, Karnataka	H-54	Yadagirigutta Temple, Telangana	S-5	Gurudwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi
H-15	Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy varla Devasthanam, AP	H-35	Sri Durgaparameshwari temple, Koteel, Karnataka	H-55	Sri Vidya Saraswathi Shanceeshwara Temple, Telangana	C-1	St Lawrence Minor Basilica, Udupi, Karnataka
H-16	Sri Kalahasthiswara Temple, AP	H-36	Sri Krishna Mutt, Udupi, Karnataka	H-56	Sri Gorakhnath Temple, UP	C-2	Navajeevan Trust, Kerala
H-17	Sri Varahalakshmi Narasimha Swamy Vari Devasthanam, AP	H-37	Sri Manjunatha Swamy Temple, Dharmasthala, Karnataka	H-57	Kasi Annapurna Annakshetra, UP	C-3	The Salvation Army Programme, Chennai, TN
H-18	Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaari Temple, Tirupati, AP	H-38	Sri Mookambika Temple, Kollur, Karnataka	H-58	Sri Janaki Mahal Trust, Ayodhya, UP	C-4	CSI Victory Cross Church, Chennai, TN
H-19	Sri VeeraVenkata Sathyanarayana Swamy Temple, AP	H-39	Sri Siddaganga Math, Tumukuru, Karnataka	H-59	ISKCON Mayapur, West Bengal	C-5	Mary's Meals Bread, Noida
H-20	Sri Venkateswara Swami Vari Devasthanam, Dwaraka Tirumala, AP	H-40	Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri, Karnataka	H-60	Jagantha Temple Puri Odisha	I-1	Ajmer Dargah, Rajasthan

Map 1.1 (Continued)

## Notes

- 1 Ralph Thomas Hotchkin Griffith, *The Rig Veda*, 1, published by E. J. Lazarus & Co, 1896.
- 2 S. N. Khandelwal, *Brahma Purana*, Chaukhambha Publishers, 2016.
- 3 Wendy Doniger, *The Rig Veda*, Publishers – Penguin Classics, 2015.
- 4 Shrimad Bhagavad Gita: Karma Yogam: Chapter 3: (Part-1) Karma Yogah: Yoga of Action. Verse 26 available at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/chapter/3/verse/19>
- 5 Yashastilaka: *Aspects of Jainism Indian Thought and Culture* by Krishna Kant Handiqui, published by D.K. Print World Ltd, 28 September 2011, ISBN-10 8124606005.
- 6 K. L. Chanchreek, Mahesh K. Jain, *Jain Agamas: An Introduction to Canonical Literature*, Shree Publishers & Distributors, 2004.
- 7 K. L. Chanchreek, Mahesh K. Jain, *Jain Agamas: An Introduction to Canonical Literature*, Shree Publishers & Distributors, 2004.
- 8 Rune E. A. Johansson, *Pali Buddhist Texts: An Introductory Reader and Grammar*, Routledge, 1981
- 9 Ancient collections of Buddhist sacred scriptures.
- 10 Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. 1983 (Reprint). 1430 p. Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar.
- 11 With respect to food sharing, *langar* is the term used in the Sikh religion for common kitchen/canteen where food is served in a *gurdwara* to all the visitors (without distinction of background) for free was started by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh *guru*. It was designed to uphold the principle of equality among all people regardless of their religion, caste, colour, creed, age, gender or social status.
- 12 Interlinear Hebrew Greek English Bible, Four Volumes, Authors for Christ, Inc. publishers, Revised, Multilingual.
- 13 [https://web.mit.edu/jywang/www/cef/Bible/NIV/NIV\\_Bible/JAS+2.html](https://web.mit.edu/jywang/www/cef/Bible/NIV/NIV_Bible/JAS+2.html)
- 14 Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.
- 15 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/charity-Christian-concept>
- 16 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/charity-Christian-concept>
- 17 Holy book of Islam.
- 18 <https://quranicquotes.com/2014/07/22/51-quran-surah-al-insan-8/>
- 19 Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the *Quran* and the traditions of the Prophet, prescribing both religious and secular duties and sometimes retributive penalties for lawbreaking.
- 20 *Mahayagn*=*Maha+yagn*, i.e., *maha* meaning greatest and *yagn* a ritual done in front of a sacred fire.
- 21 The donation of food is not limited to feeding a human being; it encompasses all living beings.
- 22 S. Mennel, A. Murcott, and A. Van Otterloo, *The sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture*, Sage, 1992.

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# **Anna-daan, food charity in Hinduism**

## An exploration

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*Food dear to those in the mode of goodness (satvik) increases the duration of life, purifies one's existence and gives strength, health, happiness and satisfaction.*<sup>1,2</sup>

(Krishna to Arjun; *Bhagavad Gita* 17.8)

### **1.0 Anna-daan in India – a historical and functional perspective**

*Anna-daan* is a virtuous act, and its practice among religious faiths carries enormous veneration. In Hinduism, *anna-daan* is considered one of the most superior of *daans* or giving. There are several manifestations of this noble act, defined and explained across the Hindu scriptures, and perhaps it is one of the acts that have helped imbibe the performance of *anna-daan*, a practice that is prevalent to this day. There are deep-rooted belief systems, emotions, and perceptions that have sustained this tradition through the centuries. In the Hindu scriptures, it is ascertained that *anna-daan* is a duty and must be performed by all, thus, contributing to the significance placed to ensure a welfare state and support the needy and the underprivileged. In brief, *dharma* or duty includes personal, cultural, and social aspects of human life in Hinduism. *Daan* has been classified by scriptures in several overlapping ways, depending on one's perspective. More than 130 specific forms have been enumerated – in all probability; there are other forms as well. *Daan* is very commonly identified with food (*anna-daan*), knowledge (*vidyaa-daan*), land (*bhoo-daan*), cattle (*go-daan*). However, the principle of 'giving' overarches it all as explained in the *shloka* अन्नदया देयम् | अश्रद्धया देयम् | श्रिया देयम् | ह्रिया देयम् | भिया देयम् | संविदा देयम् |

*Give with commitment. Do not give without commitment. Give generously. Give with humility. Give with respect. Give with understanding* (Nadkarni, 2014). In short, the Hindu scriptures place food in high reverence and equate it with the divine, thus signifying the importance bestowed on food.

*Anna-daan* over the years has evolved into various forms and expanded in its reach and extent. Before discussing *anna-daan* and its meanings in the scriptures, this article first discusses the significance placed on *daan* in the larger context followed by an in-depth analysis of *anna-daan* as a concept and practice. Against this backdrop, the article captures the philosophical moorings, preachings across the scriptures, and practices of *anna-daan* in Hinduism across the country.

## 1.1 Daan in Hinduism

*Dharma* is a word often used synonymously with religion by Sanskrit laureates of foreign origin, but *dharma* is the word frequently used in the Indian vernaculars as a synonym for duty, a duty that is dictated by the Almighty and that which is inculcated socially. Etymologically, the word *dharma* originates from the root verb *dudhay*, which means *that* which nurtures when embraced.<sup>3</sup> Precisely, *dharma* encompasses personal, cultural, and social aspects of human life. Hence, every human being has a *dharma* towards family, society, all living beings around, and ultimately the whole universe. Besides, the common understanding is that the word *dharma* is derived from the root *dhri*, which means to hold or support. There is a famous verse in *Mahabharat*, Karna Parva (Chapter 69, verse 58),<sup>4</sup> which says,

*Dharanaat dharma ityaahurdharmo dhaarayate prajaah/  
Yat syaat dhaarana samyuktam sa dharma iti nischayah//*

As it holds/supports, it is called as *dharm*. People are supported by *dharma*. Whatever upholds or supports, can be called *dharm*. It means that without *dharma* or ethics, there can be no society, economy, or polity. *Daan* is *dharm* because the act of giving supports. Thus, India's heritage prescribes *daana* (giving) or charity as an important form of one's *dharm*.

ऋतं तपः सत्यं तपः श्रुतं तपः शान्तं तपो दमस्तपो शमस्तपो दानं तपो यज्ञं तपो भूर्भुवस्सुवैर्ब्रह्मै तदुपास्यै तत्तपः

The Vedic verse heralds *daan* (giving) as a *tapas* (penance) or a must in a person's life.

### Spirit behind giving or daan

*Daan* is based on the principle that one can be happy only if every other being in the society is happy. The *Rigved* has the earliest discussion of *daan*. It points to the guilt one feels from not giving to those in need.

In verse 5.2.3 of *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*,<sup>5</sup> three characteristics of a good person are self-restraint (*damah*), compassion or love for all sentient life (*daya*), and charity (*daan*). *Chandogya Upanishad*,<sup>6</sup> similarly, states that a virtuous life requires *tapas* (asceticism), *daan* (charity), *arjava* (straight forwardness), *ahimsa* (non-injury to all sentient beings), and *satyavachan* (truthfulness).

Hence, *daan* is indeed considered more than just giving; it is giving away unconditionally without expecting anything in return. It could be giving either to an individual in distress or need, or philanthropic public projects that empower and help many.<sup>7</sup>

### Types of daan and its principles

*Daan* has been classified by scriptures in several overlapping ways, depending on one's perspective. More than 130 specific forms have been enumerated, and in all probability, there are other forms as well. *Daan* is very commonly identified with food (*anna-daan*), knowledge (*vidyaa-daan*), land (*bhoo-daan*), cattle (*go-daan*).



*Bhagavad Gita*,<sup>8</sup> a sacred Hindu text, mentions three types of *daan*.

- *Satvika daan*: one given without any expectation of appreciation or reward. It is beneficial to both the giver and the recipient and is the most recommended form of *daan*.
- *Rajasika daan*: one which is given reluctantly with the expectation of some advantage; it is harmful to both the giver and the recipient.
- *Thamasika daan*: one which is given without any regard for the feelings of the recipient and at the wrong time, thereby causing embarrassment to the recipient. It is harmful to both the giver and the recipient.

*Daan*, particularly *satvik*, directly helps in the distribution of wealth in society from the individual level through the principle of sharing. Thereby giving rise to a welfare society of peace and harmony. Besides performing *daan*, emphasis is also laid on minimalism. Although material prosperity is valued, the accumulation of wealth for personal greed was viewed as going against the principle of *dharma*. *Bhagavad Gita* urges that people should act selflessly for the welfare of others and eventually for the welfare of the world. By devoting oneself to selfless work, one attains the supreme goal in life. “Do your work with the welfare of others in mind” (3.19–26).<sup>9</sup>

It also rules whatever is given to us by nature and god if consumed by ourselves without sharing with others is as good as thieving (*Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 3, Verse 12).<sup>10</sup>

The *Mahabharat*, India’s traditional historic epic, recommends that one-third of one’s wealth is to be used for philanthropic purposes. *The Bhagavad Puran*<sup>11,12</sup> dictates that one is not supposed to claim more than what is needed for living. The *Ishavasyopanishath*<sup>13,14</sup> points out that true enjoyment and peace lie in detachment from wealth. It is to be noted that it is not the renouncement of wealth but rather the sense of possession that matters. It is not wealth that brings happiness and peace but our attitude towards possessions. *Daan* the trusteeship concept was highly placed through the passing of the ownership of the assets to the next generation with high respect attributed to family life. Thus, *daana* and *dharma* were a way of life in the traditional extended Hindu family, which also played the role of a welfare state. In brief, *giving* begins at home but extends beyond home.

अन्नदानं महादानम्

A very popular proverb used in Indian vernaculars reveals that *anna-daan* (donating or giving of food) is the most superior of *dans*; it is *mahadan*. There is no better *puja* (worship) and ritual in the Hindu religion than feeding a hungry living being. It is foremost among the duties to offer food to anybody whether human or animal. *Anna-daan*, hence, happens to be the most popular and common form of *daan*.

Hinduism places such great emphasis on the role of food that it has been called the kitchen religion. No religious activity, personal or public, is complete without the distribution of food, especially *prasad* (food offered to God). Food plays an important role in worship, and the food offered (*prasad*) to the deities is thought to bestow considerable religious merit, purifying body, mind, and spirit. Cooks are required to follow strict standards of personal cleanliness. There is a widespread belief that the consciousness of the cook enters the food and influences the mind of the eater. Taking *prasad* that has been cooked

and offered with devotion inclines the mind towards spirituality. आहारशुद्धीसतवशुद्धिःसत्त्वशुद्धीध्रुवा स्मृतिः purity of food leads to purity of internal organs. From purification of internal organs comes unfailing memory (*Chandogya Upanishad*, 7.26.2).<sup>15,16</sup>

## 2.0 Anna-daan – concept and perspectives in Hinduism

### Definition of anna-daan

The word *anna-daan* is a combination of the words *anna* and *daan*. *Anna* is derived from the root verb *ann pranane* and *daan* from *dudaay*<sup>17</sup>*daan* – to give that which nourishes life. *Anna-daanam* is thus known as *mahadaanam* – a great *daanam* or a great service to the society and is an essential part of *Sanatan Dharma*, eternal way of life or Hindu tradition.

### Concept of anna-daan

Hindu scriptures define *anna-daan* in varied ways and describe the benefits associated with *anna-daan*, as well as the consequences of not sharing food with a needy and hungry person. Given the fact that religion is an important part of the human race, belief systems play an important role in inculcating some value systems in society. Scriptures have tried to influence some views to promote these thoughts to achieve the common good that is food security in this context. *Annam parabrahma swaroopam* meaning food is a form of God. The scriptures basically refer to food as being equivalent to God, indicating the respect and importance accorded to food.

Anna is Brahma, the lord (the life giver) (*Taitta.Aranyaka*, 9.2).<sup>18</sup>

Food is spelt as god. Every life in the world is implanted in food (*Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad*, 5.12.1)<sup>19,20</sup>

*Those who worshipfully venerate anna as Brahman, indeed attain all anna... food is virtuous (Aitareya, 1.2.3).*<sup>21,22</sup> Since, upon food rests life, food is a manifestation of god himself.

Every life is derived from food and will thrive on it. Hence, with all efforts provide food (*Raa Purana*, 99.61).<sup>23</sup>

Be a patron of food (*Mahabharat, Anushasana Parva*, 63.51).<sup>24</sup>

*Anna (food) is said to be both prana and apana, the two forms of the breath of life that permeate the body.*<sup>25</sup> *Anna is the giver of life, and the extinguisher of it, progenitor of all progeny and comprehended as the almighty himself. It is through food that every life takes shape and so will perpetuate and will finally accomplish and unite with the food.*<sup>26,27</sup>

(*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3.2.1)

*All that is born is born of anna indeed. Whatever exists on earth is born of anna(food), lives on anna, and in the end merges into anna. Anna indeed is the first born amongst all beings; that is why anna is called sarvausadha, the medicine that relieves the bodily discomforts of all.*<sup>28</sup>

(*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.1)

*Food is that elixir which procreates the progeny.*<sup>29</sup>

(*Ashvamedhikaa Parva*, 8.2)

*Food is the preserver of life and food is the source of procreation. When there is no food, the five elements constituting the body cease to be.*

(*Mahabharat*, 14.108.38)

### **Benefits of doing *anna-daan***

The giver of food is the giver of life, and indeed of everything else. Therefore, one who is desirous of well-being in this world and beyond should especially endeavour to give food. It is indicated that when food is donated or shared with the weak and emaciated, the person donating will attain the complete benefits of conducting *yagn*.

Besides, when a person shares food, he will benefit from being a friend of everyone and enemies may also befriend him. It washes away all the sins (*Agni Purana*, 175.16).<sup>30</sup>

*Anna-daan* is a supreme act as mentioned in *Brahma Purana* (83.2)<sup>31</sup>; *there is no better service than providing food in worlds of mortality.*

In the *Rig Veda*, *Sukta 117, Mandala 10*,<sup>32</sup> *Anna-daan* is described as supreme and extols the giver of food (*anna daan*).

*There is no and will be no patronage equivalent to sharing of food in the past and in the future.*<sup>33</sup>

(*Mahabarata, Anushasana Parva* 63.6)

*Donating 1000 elephants and horses, donating 10 million cows, donating any number of vessels of silver and gold, donating the entire land till sea, offering the entire services of the clan, helping in the marriage of 10 million women, all this is never ever equal to *anna-daan*, the feeding of hungry and needy*<sup>34</sup> A popular *subhashita* or an adage.

### **Not sharing food is a sin**

If food is not shared, it is considered a sin and a heinous act. Several quotes regarding this are referred to in the scriptures. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that it is a sin to cook and eat for oneself; food must be shared. Food should first be served to guests and then eaten by oneself.

*Also, those who partake of the left-overs of *yagn* — those who eat after having offered proper shares to all others and all of nature – are the virtuous. They are cleansed of all sins. Those who cook for themselves alone are the sinners: in eating alone they partake of only sin.*

*The gods have not ordained those human die of hunger; even to the well-fed man death comes in many forms. The wealth of the generous man never wastes away, but the miser has none to console him. He who, possessed of food, hardens his heart against the weak man, hungry and suffering, who comes to him for help, though of old he helped him – surely he finds none to console him. In vain does the mean man*

*acquire food; it is – I speak the truth – verily his death; he who does not cherish a comrade or a friend, who eats all alone, is all sin (Rig Veda, 10.117.1–2,6).*<sup>35,36</sup>

*Eating for himself alone, he becomes the partaker of sin alone (Rik Samhita, 10.117).*<sup>37,38</sup>

*I, the anna devata, am the first progenitor of yagn: the first yagn was born of me. It is I who, at the earliest times, become the nucleus of amrita for the devas. The one who gives me is in fact the one who obtains me. On the other hand, the one who does not give is consumed by me. I am the anna devata, I eat the one who does not give anna (Taittiriya Brahmana, 2.8.8).*<sup>39,40</sup>

In essence, all these verses indicate that sharing food is important and that a person should eat only after sharing with those who are in need. Only then will the food eaten be ingested to become *self*. Thus, it emphasises that health is the most important part of human beings who form a healthy society. Hence, providing food security is the responsibility of every individual human being, community, and state.

Besides, in Hindu cultural heritage, selling food is banned. Culturally, it was always observed that food, medicine, and education should never be commodities for sale. It is further elaborated that if these are sold in a society, the downfall of *dharm* begins, as only the rich will be able to afford them, causing frustration and unrest among the underprivileged leading to chaos and disharmony in the society. Hence, the concept of *anna-daan*, i.e., giving or sharing food without expectation of a return came into existence.

## 2.1 Rationale behind anna-daan

शरीर माध्यायं खलु धर्म साधनम्, it is by putting the physical body through the rigours of *dharm* that it is possible to attain spirituality. “That which gives life is *anna*”; it is not only physical in essence but spiritual or non-physical as well. At the physical level, *anna* is essential for the body to remain healthy and strong; at the spiritual level, a healthy body makes room for the soul to get purer. Justice cannot be done by addressing *anna* only at the physical level. Thus, *anna* should be extended to *gyana daan* also.

This takes us to the spiritual aspect of *anna* from the physical aspect. *Anna* is given for the sustenance of the physical body, which supports the advancement of the soul because the physical body does not have an independent existence. The physical body is a tool in the hands of the soul. *Shareer* (the physical body), *Indriya* (the sense organs), and *Manas* (the mind) are tools under the control of the soul. When these three (*Shareera*, *Indriya*, and *Manas*) get old or dysfunctional, the soul discards the physical body and the body dies. Maintaining these tools by feeding them with *anna* is important. Food is meant for fuelling the physical body; this being one part, it should also lead towards inquiry into the purpose behind feeding the body and the purpose behind the existence of this body. At this stage, *anna* is not just physical, but it is something that supports the soul which needs a physical body to function. Hence, both the physical body and the spiritual soul should be fed. The physical body is subordinate to the spiritual soul. Just as a vehicle is driven by a driver, the soul drives the body. Hence, this machine or the tool or the vehicle must be maintained well and used well for the sake of the soul. For this *anna* is to be fed to the physical body so that it sustains for a longer time. Thus, it emphasises several quotes in the scriptures that indicate linkages between the mind, life, and

food defining and emphasising their significance. There is no denial that food is given prime importance and reverence, as it is the provider and sustainer of life force.

If the soul fails to make use of the physical body, the purpose becomes futile. Hence, the soul is at the centre. This is called *aadhyaatm*. Nurturing the physical aspect of the body is important, as it is a means to attain the higher goal of life. The purpose of nurturing the body is to lead one to move towards the goal.

If the body is not fed with the right ingredients, it collapses before time. Then the soul will be at a loss as the tool which could have been used for its enhancement is rendered useless. The soul can advance only as much as the body remains healthy. Hence, the body must be maintained well, and through this physical body, the knowledge that is taken is the food for the soul. So, a mere fulfilment of the needs of the physical body would be meaningless.

*Taittiriya Upanishad*<sup>41</sup> specifies five components (*koshas*) in *anna* – namely, (1) *annaay*, (2) *pranamay*, (3) *manomay*, (4) *vigyanamay*, and (5) *aanandamay*.

From *anna*, one goes to *pran*, the life, to *manas*, which is mind, from this mind to *vigyan*, the special knowledge, and from that special knowledge to *aanand*, the bliss.

For the seer of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, *anna* and manifestations of *anna* form the entrance to the edifice of *brahmavidya*; and what is enshrined at the centre of that edifice is also *anna*. It is indeed of great significance that *anna* should occupy such a primary place in a venerated text of *brahmavidya*, a text whose concern is *moksh* (salvation). There could have been no higher measure of the importance that Indian civilisation places on *anna* and on the discipline of obtaining it in plenty and sharing it in plenty (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3.10).<sup>42</sup>

Linkages of mind, life, speech, and food are defined in the *Chandogya Upanishad* (6.5.4):<sup>43</sup> *Mind is essentially formed of food, the prana or life is essentially formed of water and speech is essentially formed of fire.*

*Aditya* (sun), *through its rays, draws out the vital essences, and vayu* (wind) *gathers these and places them in the clouds. The vital essences thus collected in the clouds are showered back on the earth by Indra. Suffused with the showers, the Bhudevi* (earth), *O Bharata! Is verily in contentment. Out of the contented earth grows the food-crops, which sustain all life, flesh, fat, bone, and marrow is formed of these alone* (Mahabharat).

#### Evolution of five elements, humans and food

It is believed that the evolution of the five elements, humans and food is intertwined as described next:

*From that Brahman, who is also this atma, the individual self of the seeker, was born akas, the elementary space. From akas was born vayu, the elementary wind. From vayu was born agni, the elementary fire. From agni was born apah, the elementary waters. From apah were born osadhis, the elementary vegetation. From osadhi was born anna, the elementary food. And from anna was born purusa, the man.*<sup>44</sup>

(*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.1)

Thus, a lot of emphasis was laid on the interconnectedness and holistic aspects of the natural elements, food, and the existence of human beings.

### *Respecting food brings out the glory of life and the soul*

It is mandated not to look down upon *anna*, the food. That is the inviolable discipline for the one who knows. *Pran* (the winds of life) is indeed *anna* (food), and *shareer* (the body), is the partaker of *anna*. *Shareer is secured in prana, and prana is enshrined in shareer. Being dependent on each other, the two are anna for each other, and thus it is indeed anna itself that is secured and enshrined in anna.* The one who knows this, that it is *anna* which is enshrined in *anna*, is securely established in his repute. *Such a one becomes annavan, and annada is blessed with anna and the opportunity and capacity to partake of anna. He attains greatness, greatness that arises from cattle, children, and grandchildren, and from nearness to brahman, and he becomes great in his glory.*

Thus, *anna* and *anna-daan* ultimately help in the upgrading of the soul – that is, to become more efficient, pure, and strong. The soul should get stronger to get out of the cycle of birth and death, described as *moksh*, a state of complete bliss for a long time. Every being is searching for this bliss in one way or another.

### *Anna-daan is a manifestation of Mahayana*

*Anna-daan*, the sharing of food is a manifestation of the *Mahayagn*.<sup>45</sup> It is part of one's duty to offer food to anybody in need of it. One is expected to partake of food only after it has been reverentially offered to the ancestors, those dependent on him, and those who are in need of it but are unable to earn it themselves – namely, the weak, diseased, destitute, and orphaned. The donation of food is not limited to feeding a human being; it encompasses all living beings, this is known as *Balivaishvadeva yagn*. Thus, every individual in society is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining a hunger-free welfare state both for humans and animals, thereby ensuring peace and happiness also among the animal kind.

*O the truth loving couple, you two are very close to each other and you two are to be the manifestations of wealth for each other. Hence you must be a reliable body or the protectors of the diseased, the mentally insolvent, the blind, weak. You are described as their caretakers.*<sup>46,47</sup>

(*Rig Veda*, 10.39.3)

It is very important that food that is used for *daan* is procured with the right means. Only then will there be true transformation, justice, and welfare in society.

### *Prayers and thanksgiving*

Every Hindu ritual or more precisely every day for a Hindu starts with a prayer to the Almighty, thus it is pertinent for the production, processing, cooking, and consumption of food also.

It is apparent that prayers are offered to God at every meal for facilitating life on *bhoomi*, the earth with all nutritious and healthy food for holistic sustenance. Prayers offered are not just thanksgiving to god but also induce respect for food and gratitude for the producer of food, the farmer, because without him there cannot be life too. Also, prayers are a reminder for the consumer to not waste food and look at it with respect and

consume it in the right manner, to share it with every other human being and animal so that the food gets assimilated in him perfectly.

Prayers are offered to thank God for providing food to us and all the living beings on Earth, thus, it was very holistic and all-encompassing.

*O Lord Provider of food grains, and all edibles... Thanks for giving us food today. May this food be disease-free and nourishing, and be it good for my body, mind and soul, I pray! O Benefactor of the donors and providers of food, may all living the two legged and the four legged receive their sustenance every day! Peace be on all, everywhere, all times!*

(Yajur Veda, 11.83)

## 2.2 Practice of *anna-daan*

The practice of *anna-daan* is common among all sections of society and continues to be an important aspect of life. The tradition has been institutionalised through temples and monasteries (known also as *dharmachatras* and attached to temples) where food is served to pilgrims and the underprivileged in the vicinity. This tradition is also alive at the family level; food is given to those in need and *atithis* (guests), the unexpected guests, every day. On religious or other important occasions, *anna-daan* would be taken up on a large scale both by common citizens and temples or similar institutions. Some organise a special meal for the needy or donate it to a charitable trust in memory of the deceased. Besides, *vidya daana*, imparting education, and *anna-daan* are intertwined. In monasteries, students are fed every day. Though *anna-daan* is not addressed to poverty alleviation directly, the activity probably ensures there is no hunger in the neighbourhood of major shrines. It has also provided employment to a large number of poor people.

*Atithi yagna*, treating the unexpected guest

*Atithi devo bhava*, Find the god in *atithi*, the guest.

*Atithi is a knower of Veda, so, do not partake food before feeding such an atithi* (Atharva Veda, 9.6.37).<sup>48,49</sup>

There are several principles to be followed in feeding an *atithi*. For instance, the Atharva Veda mentions: *A gruhastha is supposed to partake food only after the atithi has had it so that the yagn the gruhastha performs shall be imbibed completely without any fractures. This should be followed always* (Atharva Veda, 9.6.35).<sup>50</sup>

*Offering reverential hospitality to a guest brings the host wealth, honour, long-life and an abode in the heavens* (Manusmriti, 3.106).<sup>51</sup>

*Atithi also had a special role in society. He was well versed in the Vedas. The one whose strength is Veda and the dharm, it shows, the one who does only the truthful and the rightful tasks, the one who emits the bliss of the Bhagavan, the lord; the peacekeeper, the one who eases the lives of the unaware, getting sanctified by the lord go on an enduring journey to spread the Veda, dharma and satya for the betterment of the souls around and for attaining the affluent and the omnipresent God* (Rig Veda, 9.113.4).<sup>52</sup>

*Atithi* also had certain ways of living. The main qualification of an *atithi* is that there is no permanence to his coming and going, and he is someone not even remotely known

or related to the host. He comes unknown, uninvited, and unexpected. As *Manu* puts it: *Atithi is the brahman who stays only for one night (Manusmrit, i3.101).*<sup>53</sup> He is spoken of as an *atithi* because his stay is not permanent.

The responsibility of feeding such people (or *sanyasis*) lies on the shoulders of *grihasthas*,<sup>54</sup> the people who are settled as families, and who work and pay taxes to generate a working economy. Hence, the *Mahabharat* describes: *Just as all living beings live under the protection of their mothers, so do all the asramas derive sustenance from the Grhasthasrama (Anushasana Parva, 141).*<sup>55</sup>

It can be observed that *anna-daan* was a part of the state's responsibility and part of its governance structure. Food security initiatives were taken up through *brahma deya* (tax-free land given to Brahmanas) and *deva deya daan* (offerings given to God). *Griha gurukula* was an educational system in ancient India where the teacher used to shelter his students at his house or near his house to impart education. These residential schools were most of the time completely and sometimes partly funded by the state. The set-up took care of every need of the students including food, this was known as *brahma deya*. *Deva deya* was the funding given to temples and other charitable institutions to provide food and shelter for the poor, the destitute, travellers, and pilgrims. It took the form of *Dharmachatrams* (place where free lodging with food was served) and *Annachatrams* (communal kitchens where free food was served).

In every village, there used to be an *anna-daan chatra*/shelter home. There were also hospitals under these *chatras*. Stay, food, and local medicines were provided to everyone from local villagers to travellers free of cost. *Chatrams* are still functional.

### **Advice for the king as grihastha in Apastamba Dharmasutra**

In the *Apastamba Dharmasutra*,<sup>56</sup> there is a reference to the king as a great *grihastha* and advice for him to settle his capital<sup>57</sup> and to serve. *Let the Agni, the household-fire, burn unceasingly at all places: the vesma, the avasatha and the sabha (Apastambha Dharma Sutra, 2.25.6).*<sup>58,59</sup>

In the *Apastamba Dharma Sutra* (Hindu religious text), thus, the king is essentially a *grihastha* (a householder), except that he looks after not one but three *agnis* (fire), or he runs three households, one for his immediate family, the other for a multitude of people to whom he provides personal hospitality, and the third for the *sabha* (a public meeting). He lives a life of austerity, never living beyond what his elders, teachers, and counsellors can afford. He should constantly ensure that nobody living in his land suffers from hunger.

### **Types of anna-daan in practice**

*Anna-daan* is done in different forms and ways. Even to this day, *anna-daan* is practised in almost all these forms. The third, *vaaranna*, is not much in practice in recent times.

1. Daily food offering to the needy (*nitya anna-daan*)
2. Food offering in remembrance of a deceased member of the family (*shraaddh*)
3. Weekly food offering to students (*vaaranna*). This concept is of recent origin
4. Large-scale food offering on festivities



## 2.3 Etiquettes of feeding

### **Daan in its purest form is perceived as vital**

The practice of *daan* in the past was very much associated with accountability. There would be a document to record the quantity of *daan* given, the source of *daan*, and how the giver had earned the required asset and in what form it was shared. It was ensured that nothing was given from income earned through wrongful means. Using illicit wealth to organise *daan* to get rid of one's guilt feeling was disallowed. In other words, the source of earning was important when *daan* had to be taken and given as well. Further, the scriptures also advise that only to the deserving (*paatra*) and not the undeserving (*apaatra*) is the *daan* to be given. However, this stipulation was not applicable to food as *daan*. The essential element is that one should perform *daan* sincerely, wholeheartedly, without any regret, doubt, or expectation.

### **Offering the best quality food with respect is important**

The primary directive is that the food which one likes to consume oneself should be given in *daan* with a very simple logic behind being that nobody would prefer to have old and stale food. Food being given as *daan* should be fresh, delicious, and nutritious. *Aatmavatsarvabhooteshu*, treat everyone around as you expect yourself to be treated. Hence, giving or *daan* of leftover food is not acceptable. The householder should not offer any food to the guest that he (the householder) cannot eat. Medhatithi and other commentators explain that the guest should be offered the best food available in the house. The host should not partake of superior foods like fine soups, ghee, curd, sugar, etc., unless these have been offered to the guest also.

*If an atithi arrives after the food from which offerings to the vaisvedevas and others have been made is exhausted, then the householder should prepare food afresh for him to the best of his abilities.*<sup>60</sup>

(Manusmriti, 3.108)

*To the guest who appears at the door, offer an appropriate seat to rest upon and water for ablutions, and then with proper ceremony serve him food, which ought to be made specially presentable to the best of one's abilities.*<sup>61</sup>

(Manusmriti, 3.99)

*Food should be offered with all ceremony and honour. Serving of food should never be undertaken with an attitude of indifference; it should be done with such care that all varnas feel revered and honoured.*<sup>62</sup>

(Ramayan Balakanda, 13.14)

*Never give anything to anyone with indifference or contempt. Never affect such indifference or contempt even in playfulness. Indifference or contempt shown towards the receiver destroys the giver: there can be no doubt about it.*<sup>63</sup>

(Ramayan Bala kanda, 13.33–34)

### **Ancestry should not be inquired**

It was important that ancestry should not be inquired into during *anna-daan* and should be given with utmost devotion and care.

*A vipra should not disclose his kula and gotra to seek food. One who extols his ancestry for the sake of food is known amongst the wise as vaantaashin, the partaker of foul food (Manusmriti, 3.109)*<sup>64</sup>

The *Mahabharat*, incidentally, lays down the reverse discipline in a similar context: *it advises the host to refrain from enquiring about the ancestry, lineage or learning of the guest.*

Shri Krishna telling Yudhisthir in the *vaisnavadharmaparva*:

*Young married women, young unwed girls, the sick, and the pregnant women, ought to be fed, even before the guests. The householder need have no hesitation in this regard.*<sup>65</sup>

(Manusmriti, 3.114)

## **2.4 Food quality and consumption attributes**

Hindu scriptures mandate elaborately the kind or the quality of food that should be consumed by self and given to others as well. Since mind and body co-exist, human beings cannot take just any food and feel good. Food that is nature friendly and good for health should be consumed and shared. Food should not be taken just for taste or to fill one's stomach; it must be friendly to personality holistically. Further, food consumed should be diverse, as there are diverse environments; it should vary according to the place one is stationed at, seasons, nature of one's body, and age.

### **Types of food and its nature**

The *Bhagavad Gita* mentions the existence of three kinds of food: *satvik*,<sup>66</sup> *rajasa*,<sup>67</sup> and *thamasa*.<sup>68</sup> Based on this classification, it is also suggested that the consumption of these foods will have a proportional impact on the mind, i.e., consumption of *satvik* food will make the consumer kind and compassionate towards the whole universe. Similarly, consumption of *rajasik* food will result in the mind becoming corrupt with vices, and consumption of *thamasik* food will result in cruelty, selfishness, and lethargy.

Accordingly, *satvik*, *rajasic*, or *thamasik* foods have been defined according to the impact they leave on the mind and body of the consumer. *Snigdhaah*, *sthiraah*, or *hrudhyaah*, that which is juicy, stable, and fresh food, is known as *satvik* food; *katulavana*, *atyushnateekshnarooksha*, foods which have high amounts of tanginess, salt, and spices and are very strong in taste are *rajasik* food. Foods that are old, dry, stale, and leftovers are known as *thamasik* food.

There is enough evidence in *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Ramayana*, and *Mahabharata* to establish that only vegetarian food is *satvik* by nature. Flesh or meat can be obtained only by causing harm or violence to an animal. This kind of food is *thamasik* food and is forbidden for consumption by humans. *Anna*, which should be rightfully and peacefully

obtained, can never be obtained from the killing of animals. The *satvik* food shall be obtained from *oshdhis*, which are plants of short life like paddy, *ragi*, *jowar*, wheat, and *vanaspati*, and long-life plants like coconut palm, mango, jackfruit, papaya, etc. However, not all vegetarian foods are also friendly to the human body. Some are detrimental to the body too because of their *rajasik* and *thamasik* properties. Consumption of onion would not give tranquillity to the human mind; it will instead instil agitation and aggression in the consumer. Many such foods of plant origin are found to make the consumer negative in nature; hence, they come under the category of *thamasik* food.

### *Expected food implications*

Food should generate *satva* (nutrition), *bala* (physical strength), *arogya* (health), *such* (pleasing of the senses), and *preeti* (love for the universe). The food that is shared should contain all the aforementioned traits. Every physical living body has three *gunas* (nature) – namely, *kapha*, *vaata*, and *pitta*,<sup>69</sup> and, in every person's body, one of the three *gunas* would be dominant. The food one consumes should therefore align with the predominant *guna* of the body. It is connected to *saptadhaatus* (seven aspects), i.e., *tvak* (skin), *mamsa* (flesh), *rudhira* (blood), *snayu* (muscle), *asthi* (bones), *majja* (bone marrow), and *shukra* (reproductive cells), and these should get enhanced by the food. Inner, outer, subtle, and gross body should benefit from the food consumed.

### *Food production should be pure*

Food, according to the scriptures, should be produced in the right manner using the right inputs as this impacts the consumer in the end. The Hindu scriptures further recommend natural farming, which is mostly dependent on rain, natural fertilisers, and natural seeds. Food grown under such conditions only can be nutritious and pure.

*Taittiriya Upanishad*<sup>70</sup> says *If we give anna or food with purest of thoughts and action then we get back food in a similar style; if we give anna or food with mediocre thoughts and action then we get back food in a mediocre style and if we give anna or food with indifferent thoughts and action then we get back food that is unhealthy and does not do any good.*

*Anna* has its effect at four stages – *the first being the feeling with which the producer of anna, the farmer, has produced it. The second stage is that of cooking, the third is that of serving, and the last stage is that of consuming.* Scriptures express that the people who perform the aforementioned jobs should all have magnanimity and a sense of gratitude towards each other such that there is *dharma* all over.

A farmer is supposed to produce food with *dharmic* (virtuous) feeling. Only then will the *anna* produced by him will be pure and free of toxins. If he starts treating food production as a business or a way of making money, then he will resort to ill practices like the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides to keep all the food that is produced for sale and maximise profits. Similarly, the person who cooks is required to do so with all reverence and devotion to induce health and spirituality in the consumer. Likewise, the person who serves the cooked food is required to ensure there is a fair distribution of food to all those gathered to eat. Finally, the person who consumes should be grateful and

appreciate all the good that has gone into the food which is before him and will give him sustenance. This way everything should revolve around *dharma* (cosmic law underlying right behaviour and social order).

*Anna is further described as that which eats and that which is eaten by us, i.e., what we eat is anna and that which eats us is also anna which means when taken without any limit, discipline, order, and system, anna would cause damage to us and be detrimental instead of being beneficial to our health.*

According to *Annachakra* (the cycle of anna) *life takes birth by anna, anna takes birth from rain, rain originates from yagn and yaaga gives rise to karma* encompassing all social, spiritual and economic activities (*Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 3, verse 14).<sup>71</sup>

## 2.5 Anna-daan practices in temples

Temples, the places of worship of the Hindus, are not only marvels of architecture but also perform the functions of the public treasury, town halls with a stage for performing arts, schools of learning, rest houses for pilgrims and animals, and, of course, community kitchens with warehouses for storage of foodgrains for feeding the local and the floating population during festivities and calamities.<sup>72</sup>

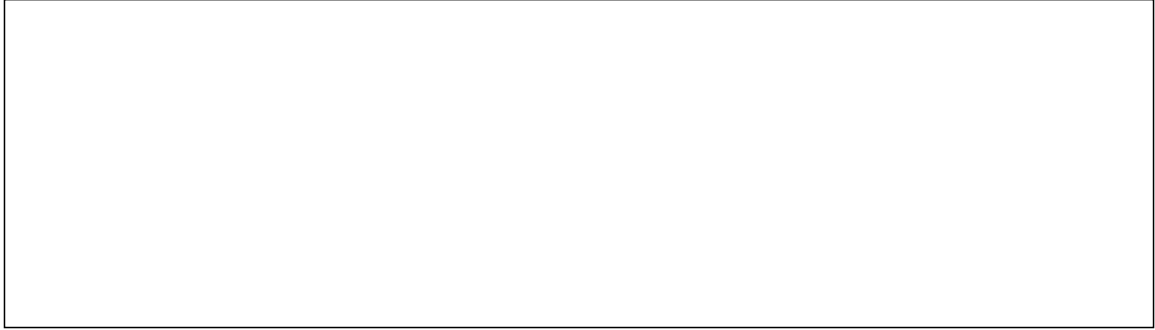
According to Kenneth G. Zysk,<sup>73</sup> a professor specialising in Indology and ancient medicine, Hindu *mutts* and temples had by the 10th century attached medical care along with their religious and educational roles. This is evidenced by various inscriptions found all over the country. An inscription *circa* AD 930 mentions the provision of a physician at a *mutt* for the care of the sick and the destitute. Another inscription dated 1069 at a Vishnu temple in Tamil Nadu describes a hospital attached to the temple, listing the nurses, physicians, medicines, and beds for patients. Similarly, a stone inscription in Andhra Pradesh dated 1262 mentions the provision of a *prasutishala* (maternity house),  *vaidya* (physician), an *arogyashala* (health house), and a *viprasattra* (hospice, kitchen) where people from all social backgrounds could be fed and cared for. According to Zysk, both Buddhist monasteries and Hindu religious centres provided facilities to care for the sick and the needy in the 1st millennium.

According to George Michell,<sup>74</sup> one of the most distinguished architectural scholars in the world, Hindu temples in South India were active charity centres, and they provided free meals to wayfarers, pilgrims, and devotees, as well as boarding facilities for students and health services for the sick.

The 15th- and 16th-century Hindu temples at Hampi, Karnataka, featured storage spaces (temple granary, *kottara*), water tanks, and kitchens. Many major pilgrimage sites had *dharmashalas* (places where free shelter and food were offered) since early times. These were attached to Hindu temples, particularly in South India, providing beds and meals to pilgrims. They relied on voluntary donations from visitors and on land grants from local rulers to run these facilities. Some temples have operated their kitchens on a daily basis while others only during major community gatherings or festivals.<sup>75</sup>

A team of archaeologists from Virarajendran Archaeological and Historical Research Centre studied the inscriptions at the historic Vikramachozehswar temple at Kannapuram. The inscriptions in the temple suggest the practice of taxing the rich (progressive taxation) and giving *anna-daan* (free food) to pilgrims and other visitors at temple existed 1,000 years ago. It is indicated that the temple in the name of King Vikrama Chola was built over 1,000 years ago and has around seven inscriptions with the first engravings on

the premises dating back to 1088 AD. The first inscription, which belonged to the Abhimana Chola Rajathirajan regime, describes the practice of providing free food in the temple complex. At the Vaikom Mahadev Temple, in Vaikom Kerala, before closing the main gates of the temple, one of the staff from the temple has to call out aloud at all the four main gates “Is there anyone who is starving for dinner tonight?”



#### *Duty of kings with respect to temples: Daan (gift) and Paalan (protection)*

Kings had a major role to play in the temple traditions in India. The majority of the *daans* made by kings are the so-called grants of lands and even grants of entire villages. Here it is important to realise that kings had only the right to receive revenue from land in return for rendering protection, and when a king donates some land or even an entire village, what is being gifted away is only the revenue due to him and nothing else. For instance, we can see the glory of *daan* in Rajaraja’s endowments to the Great Temple at Thanjavur<sup>76</sup> (c.1010). Carved figures on the walls of the Brihadeeshwara Temple indicate that Rajaraja ensured a regular income for the temples by assigning revenue from various villages of his empire.<sup>77</sup> Murals in the Brihadeeswara Temple also inscribe details of records of allowances paid to 612 functionaries,<sup>78</sup> which is interesting, as they were welfare oriented and holistic. Further, the inscription also notes a system that was put in place with detailed guidelines.<sup>79</sup>

*Paalan* (protection of the temple wealth) takes precedence over *daan*. While *daan* or making gifts for religious and charitable institutions was a very important *dharma* or duty of the kings and every householder and earned them great *punya* or reward, it was *paalan*, protection, which was considered the supreme duty of the kings. *Paalan* or protection meant the protection of all properties, and income, especially the endowments of revenue and lands made to the temples and their functionaries by the earlier kings and devotees, and more importantly, ensuring the functioning of the temple as per its *sampradaya* (customs and traditions).

All the *shasanas* (legislations), copper plates and stone inscriptions, and other records of these endowments declare that the endowment is to last as long as the Sun and Moon shine (*achandrarka*) and cite, in the end, a number of verses from the *smritis* (*dharma-shastras* and *purans*) which emphasise the importance of *paalan* and the terrible sin that would befall one who violates this *dharm*. Thus, the primary duty of the king is the protection of *dharma*.<sup>80</sup>

Texts of all ages from different parts of India emphasise the importance of ensuring an abundance of food and sharing it widely before eating it oneself.<sup>81</sup> Besides, even as late as the beginning of the 19th century, the kings of Thanjavur seem to have cared as

deeply about assuaging the hunger of all within their kingdom as the kings of Indian antiquity.<sup>82</sup>

The kings were advised by their illustrious peers and the sages to ensure that systems should be in place to protect everyone, particularly the marginalised, to ensure that the seasonal variations, like the failure of rains, do not affect the livelihoods. In the Indian context, they held the king as morally responsible for seasonal extremes. It was believed that seasons and rains remain orderly in the reign of a righteous king, and during the reign of an unrighteous one, even nature begins to deviate from its proper course.

## 2.6 Historical perspective

Any Hindu ceremony or gathering, and even everyday life, is accompanied by *anna-daan*. This has been a part of Hindu society since the Vedic times. This is evident in the Vedic verses which refer to *Balivaishvadeva yagn and atithi yagn*, as seen in the earlier section, as well as the etiquettes which had to be followed while performing *anna-daan*. The *Ramayana* (an epic of India) and *Mahabharat* (an epic of India) are the most reliable and earliest sources of Indian history. They are also identified as the historical texts of India in the Indian classical lore segment of scholars. The texts obviously are the earliest recorded sources of the performance *anna-daan* on a large scale by the then Kings Dasharath, Shri Ram, and Yudhisthir.

### Anna-daan during yaagas<sup>83</sup> and yagnas<sup>84</sup>

The Valmiki Ramayana describes two great *yagnas*, the one that King Dasharath performed at the beginning of the epic and the other performed by Shri Ram. The *yagnas* of King Dasharath involved great rituals and a grand recitation of Vedic verses by the gathered priests and scholars. All the rituals and recitations took place amidst great and continuous *anna-daan* as the centre of all activity.<sup>85</sup> Praises and blessings were showered on the king and his lineage.<sup>86</sup>

Similarly, during the conduct of *Ashvamedha yaaga* (grandest of the Vedic religious rites of ancient India performed by the king to celebrate his paramouncy) by Shri Ram's<sup>87</sup> exchange of honours between Shri Ram and the kings for a whole year, at *Naimisaranya* was a grand and unending feast, under the competent, careful, and enthusiastic direction of Sugriv and Vibhisan.<sup>88</sup>

In the same way, Yudhisthir's *Rajasuya yaaga*<sup>89</sup> in Mahabharat is largely a description of how Yudhisthir and his brothers, through their great valour and the unrivalled political acumen of Shri Krishna, achieve a position of pre-eminence amongst the kings. The *yagna* proceeded amidst plenty of food magnificently arranged.

The *yagna* of Harshavardhan<sup>90</sup> as described by Hiuen-Tsiang narrates in minute detail that the responsibility for sharing food was placed more widely in society and considered a righteous living.<sup>91</sup>

## 2.7 Anecdotes and folktales on anna-daan

There are numerous stories, anecdotes, and folktales in the Hindu scriptures that extol the virtues, glory, and significance of *anna-daan* and describe it as one of the most superior forms of *daans*. The *purans* particularly (*Veds* and *shastras* do not have stories) have

always tried to convey messages through stories that are appealing. They convey the messages through characters which live on in these stories across languages, regions, and cultures, and exhort one to remain ethical in the face of adversities and tragedies. Even to this day, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are popular epics that are intertwined with value systems and are being analysed all over the world. The *Bhagavad Gita* (holy book of the Hindus) has been discussed in various management schools across the globe for emphasising the supremacy of purpose before self. Similarly, characters in these great epics are most popular among children. Given this context, we have drawn some of the interesting stories in the scriptures that have proliferated the significance of *anna-daan*. We have summarised these stories and their key messages in Annex 5 Table A5.1 (for detailed stories refer to endnotes) that have made *anna-daan* popular, continuing the tradition even to this day.

The story of Lord Shiva and Parvati conveys the message of the importance, respect, need, and sharing of food irrespective of one's position. Similarly, the story of *Karna and the Cycle of rebirth* claims that the feeding of the poor and the needy gives salvation. The story of *Sudama and Shri Krishna* conveys that *anna-daan*, irrespective of the quantity donated, remains a sublime act. Hence, the spirit behind *daan* is most important. The story of Rantideva, the generous king, indicates that a leader should do *anna-daan* even in the face of daunting difficulties to alleviate the suffering of people in need. The story of *King Janasruti Pautrayana and the Cart Driver* conveys the message that service should be done with the spirit of serving and with no other intentions or expectations or desire of achieving *moksha* (salvation). The *story of Sveta* points out the imperative order that what is not given cannot be enjoyed, and therefore the one who has not assuaged the hunger and thirst of others during his life is bound to remain hungry and thirsty forever. So, sharing *anna* is the discipline of life. *Anna-daan* is thus a *sadaavratha*, the vratha that must be performed always. The *story of Aputran* reveals that the practice of *anna-daan* is common to all sections of society and that even a beggar cannot fulfil his hunger alone without sharing his alms with others (source: Puranas).

In summation, it is indicated that we should begin to pay attention to the lands and to the fulfilling of the inviolable discipline of *annam bahu kurvita*. But we cannot continue to be indifferent to the hunger around us until the abundance arrives. Because, as classical India has taught with such insistence, hungry men and animals exhaust all virtue of people. Such a nation is forsaken by the *devas*, and no great effort can possibly be undertaken by a nation that has been so forsaken. In fact, not only the nation in the abstract, but every individual *grahasta* (householder) bears the sin of hunger around him. We have been instructed, in the authoritative injunctions of the *Vedas*, that anyone who eats without sharing eats in sin.

Therefore, even before we begin to undertake the great task of bringing abundance back to the Indian lands, we must bring ourselves back to the inviolable discipline of sharing. We must make a national resolve to care for the hunger of our people and animals. There is not enough food in the country to fully assuage the hunger of all, but even in times of great scarcity, a virtuous *grahast* and a disciplined nation would share the little they have with the hungry. We must begin such sharing immediately if the task of achieving abundance is to succeed.

## **Box 1 Feeding the students – informal arrangements during the 1960s**

### **Feeding students during examinations**

With no public examination centres in the majority of the villages and small towns, students would travel to the nearest town that had a recognised school that facilitated the public examination “Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC)” for the students. These students had to commute every day to write the exams or would find accommodation in the town. Given that the transport services were not good, students would stay in the town. Not all students had friends/relatives; hence, they would resort to staying in unused hotel spaces, wherein the teacher took the pains to cook for the students, besides teaching, showing dedication and bonding between teacher and student. Apart from the teachers, several philanthropists in the town would support the programme of feeding these students. However, this practice of feeding examination students is not in practice in towns or cities given that the situations have changed with all schools having examination centres, but the concern and involvement are worthy beyond what words could explain.

### **Midday meal at homes**

Given that not all villages and towns had schools/colleges beyond a certain level of education, some students would be connected with some houses for providing lunch, mainly done as a friendly gesture and concern, although they could afford to have sent food to their children. Proper nutritional care was a concern therefore the preference was for home-cooked food rather than cold food or a meal in a restaurant. The reciprocation for such arrangements would usually be the supply of fuel wood, vegetables, milk products, seasonal fruits, etc, which was beyond a transactional relationship and a long tradition of mutual exchange of material and other help and of patron-client relationship often extending beyond the village of one’s residence. Besides these arrangements, there were several temples and religious monasteries/mutts that fed travellers and the poor. Students were fed in these mutts.

### **Vaaranna: one-day-a-week food**

One of the noblest institutional arrangements for feeding students poor and rich alike is *vaaranna*. In the local South Indian language, the Kannada term for *vaaranna* means food for a day in a week. The arrangement was for the student to go to the enrolled houses once a week in a residential locality in turns on assigned days. For these assigned meals, either breakfast, lunch, or dinner, he would have it based on the arrangements made. The student either lived in the same locality or a nearby village in a rented or rent-free accommodation. This model also was meant for boys like other models of feeding. This informal friendly arrangement welcomed students belonging to different economic and social groups given that it would divide the economic and labour burden on one single family to take care of a student, thus encouraging students to pursue education.



### Students as home guests

Live-in arrangements with friends of the family or close kinfolk was another practice for finding food and accommodation for students pursuing studies outside of their hometowns, a practice adopted for both girls and boys. These arrangements lasted usually till the course was complete. These arrangements were made largely when the school was situated close to the host's family or when there were no available hostel facilities and arrangements were made with mutual consent.

(source: Karanth, 2014)

## 3.0 *Anna-daan* in temples – an overview of current practices

This section outlines an overview of *anna-daan* in practice in the current times. It describes institutional structures in temples of India and financing sources for the same. Besides, it draws upon the case studies to describe the enormity of food-sharing practices in India. As pointed out in Nadkarni's (2007) article, social concern of Hinduism in practice is evidenced and assessed at three levels – as reflected in codification in law books, in day-to-day behaviour of people, and as reflected in institutions. In the context of *anna-daan*, the values and codification were discussed in-depth in the previous section, while the current section highlights how *anna-daan* is institutionalised in practice.

### 3.1 Institutional arrangements in the management of temples in India

In earlier times, temples were centres of dance, art, and decentralised trade networks and were managed by local communities. Every temple had charitable endowments for the benefit of the community. The temples had properties like *paathashalas*,<sup>92</sup> *gaushalas*,<sup>93</sup> and institutions for the enhancement of the education of the poor. During the British period, temples were used for the purpose of colonisation and conversions by bringing temples under the control of the government with the introduction of the Madras Regulation VII of 1817, especially in South India.<sup>94</sup> Later, there was a directive from the East India Company in 1840 to return the temples to their trustee. Thus, temple management was slowly handed over to the trustees. Later with the act the Religious Endowments Act of 1863, temple administration was handed over to the trustees appointed by the British government. Trustees would run the temples in accordance with the doctrine applicable to the temple. Further, the Hindu Religious Endowment Board was introduced, and they assumed powers to administer the temples.

At present, the central government does not interfere with or manage any of the Hindu temples in the country; it only monitors the working of some of the temples which are recognised under the Hindu Religious and Endowment Act. Each state government has a Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowment Department that is responsible for monitoring the functions of temples. In addition, big temples such as Venkateshwara temple<sup>95</sup> and Vaishno Devi<sup>96</sup> have their own management trusts with a government nominee (usually an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer) among others. However, since the temples have regular revenues<sup>97</sup> from properties such as guesthouses, marriage halls, etc., and jewellery (such as coins and gold articles given as offerings by the devotees) worth crores of rupees, there should be some monitoring authority, without which

it may lead to corruption and misuse of funds. Also, as temples are bound by a single legal framework, it allows the government to allocate the money without bias and avoid misuse of donations.

Across states, there are different approaches to the management of temples and their funds across various developmental activities. For instance, in the state of Karnataka, the management and administration of the temples are carried out under the provisions of the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowment Act 1997 and the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act and Rules Amendment 2012. It is the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Department which is a part of the revenue department that owns and manages most of the temples. According to this Act, many notified temples fall under the regulation/control of the Endowment (*muzrai*) Department of the Karnataka government.

This department is headed by a commissioner at the state level and a deputy commissioner at the district level (see Annex A4). Specific to *anna-daan*, there are various services available under the department, viz., release of government grants for the development/renovation of religious institutions, *anna-daan* schemes, cash grants, annuity, and Tasdik<sup>98</sup> schemes, and providing basic infrastructure and amenities like food and accommodation to pilgrims visiting notified institutions<sup>99</sup> besides other facilities like drinking water, rooms, etc. The department also implements various schemes such as the Aradhana scheme.<sup>100</sup>

In Karnataka, there are around 34,559 temples under Muzrai Department, and Bengaluru alone has over 1,000 temples. Few of these are very ancient, and *pujas* are no longer performed because they are under the care of the Archaeology Department.<sup>101</sup> Based on their revenue, the temples coming under the department are classified into three categories – A, B, and C. Please see Table 2.1 for more details. A part of the revenue generated by the A- and B-category temples is used for the upkeep of temples in the C category. There are several temples run by private trusts across the state which do not come under the department.

Similarly, in the state of Kerala, it is the Devaswom Boards (Sanskrit, meaning property of God), the socio-religious trusts, that manage the Hindu temples and their assets. The boards comprise the members nominated by the government and the community. Hence, most of the temples in the state are managed by either the state government-controlled Devaswom Boards or private bodies/families. The state has five Devaswom Boards, located in Guruvayur, Travancore, Malabar, Cochin, and Koodalmanikyam, which manage nearly 3,000 temples. These boards make available materials for the performance of the daily pooja at thousands of temples in Kerala.

In the state of Andhra Pradesh, administration of temples, utilisation of funds, etc., come under the purview of the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments (APCHRIE) Act, 1966 (as replaced by APCHRIE Amendment Act 1987). In the state of Tamil Nadu, the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act was passed by Madras Presidency in 1923. In 1925, the government constituted the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Board consisting of a president and two to four commissioners nominated by the government to function as a statutory body. In 1960, it was renamed the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department by the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act XXII of 1959.

The Hindu Religious Institutions have been classified under sections 46 and 49 of the Act as listed and non-listed institutions based on their annual income and classified as

Table 2.1 Management of temples in South Indian States

	Karnataka	Tamil Nadu	Andhra Pradesh	Kerala
Act	Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act, 1977	The Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959	APCHRIE Act, 1966 (as replaced by APCHRIE Amendment Act 1987)	The Act XIX of 1951 (Madras) as amended in 1954 Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious Institution Act, 1950 (Act of XV1950) Guruvayur Devaswom Act of 1978 (Act 14 of 1978)
Department	Endowment (Muzrai) Department of the Karnataka Government	The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department		Devaswom Boards, independent boards that manage Hindu temples Devaswom Boards are socio-religious trusts with government or society/community nominated members as trustees to manage temples and their assets and ensure the smooth functioning of temples per traditional rituals and customs. There are five Devaswom Boards – namely, Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), Cochin Devaswom Board (CDB), Koodal Manikyam Devaswom Board (KDB), Guruvayur Devaswom Board (GDB), and Malabar Devaswom Board (MDB).
Classification of temples	Based on the temples' revenue generation, the temples coming under the department are classified into three grades – A, B, and C. Grade A: annual income above Rs. 25 lakhs Grade B: annual income Rs. 5 lakhs to Rs. 25 lakhs Grade C: annual income below Rs.5 Lakh	Based on their annual income, temples are classified into four categories – Annual income of less than Rs.10,000 – Annual income in the range of Rs.10,000 to less than Rs.2 lakhs – Annual income between Rs.2 lakhs and less than Rs.10 lakhs – Annual income of Rs.10 lakhs and above	Based on their annual income, temples are classified into three categories. Those which have an annual income of Rs. 25 lakhs and above, Rs. 2 lakhs to Rs. 25 lakhs, and below Rs. 2 lakhs	TDB classifies its temples into Grade I, II, III deposits KDB and CDB divides its temples into Grade A, B, C, and D, and GD Bhasten temples that are treated as <i>kezhedams</i> of the Guruvayur Temple. MDB temples are classified on the basis of their annual earnings. "Special Grade" temples are those whose annual earning is Rs. 75 lakhs or more; Grade A temples have earning range between Rs. 25 lakhs and Rs. 75 lakhs; Grade B temples are those which earn Rs.10 lakhs to Rs. 25 lakhs per annum; Grade D temples have an income range of Rs. 3 lakhs to Rs.10 lakhs; those which earn up to Rs. 3 lakhs come under Grade D.

Number of temples	Grade A: 205 Grade B: 163 Grade C: 34,221 Total: 34,559 Also, there are a large number of temples run by private trusts across the state which do not come under the department.	38,646 temples (381,911 temples earning less than Rs.10,000 annually 3,550 temples earning between Rs.10,000 and less than Rs.2 lakhs annually 672 temples earning Rs.2 lakh and less than Rs.10 lakh annually 331 temples earning Rs.10 lakhs and above per annum)	37,419 temples (148 temples earning Rs. 25 lakhs and above annually 1,141 temples earning Rs. 2 lakh. to Rs. 25 lakhs per annum 36,130* temples earning less than Rs. 2 lakhs per annum)	2,978 temples (TDB): No. of temples: 1,249 (Grade I: 237, Grade II: 479, Grade III: 481, personal deposits: 52) <sup>@</sup> Cochin Devaswom Board: No. of temples: 402 (Grade A: 42, Grade B:76, Grade C: 255 and Grade D: 29) Guruvayur Devaswom Board: No. of temples: 10 treated as <i>kezhedams</i> of the Guruvayur Temple MDB: No. of temples: 1317#Special Grade: 21, Grade A: 34, Grade B: 129, Grade C:116, Grade D: 1017)
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Source: Compiled from various websites – <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2019/apr/30/muzrai-plans-to-make-permission-a-must-before-serving-prasadam-food-1970715.html>, <http://indiafacts.org/utilisation-of-temple-funds-in-karnataka-a-factual-report/>

\* Audit Report (Revenue Sector) for the year ended 31 March 2013, Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, Demand No.47, Policy Note, 2016–2017).

@ Travancore Devaswom Board, 2013  
# Compiled from (List of Temples, 2014).

seen in Table 2.1. Since 1991, no religious and spiritual leaders have been involved in the maintenance and administration of the Hindu Temples and Charitable Endowments.

In Karnataka, the state government has issued a circular to launch *Anna Dasoha* under which free meals would be available in all 205 Category A temples. The state government has also directed these financially stable temples to provide basic amenities like drinking water, toilets, and bathrooms. The hospitality arrangements, hygiene, and quality control besides accountability of donations made by devotees are overseen by a supervisor. Similarly, in the state of Tamil Nadu, the state government provides free meals under a scheme *Thiru Kovil Annanathan Thittam* at 752 temples, benefitting a total of 65,735 devotees every day, at a cost of Rs.16.43 lakh per day.

### 3.2 Anna-daan in practice: insights from case studies across India

*Anna-daan* has always been a part of the spiritual tradition in Indian culture. Temples are centres of *anna-daan*, with millions performing this marvellous act. As highlighted by a team of archaeologists from the Virarajendran Archaeological and Historical Research Centre, the inscriptions at the historic Vikramachozehswar temple at Kannapuram suggest *anna-daan* at temples existed 1,000 years ago. According to the same team, the temple that stands in the name of King Vikrama Chola and was built over 1,000 years ago has around seven inscriptions with the first engravings on the premises dating back to 1088 AD, and belonging to the Abimanachola Rajathirajan regime, which talk about free food distribution in the temple *mandapam* (*anna-daan* at temple existed 1,000 years ago) (*The Hindu*, 18 April 2016, 05:33 IST).

The current section captures the practice of *anna-daan* that is in practice even to this day at the most popular temples in India. The case studies were identified, keeping in view the food charity ritual with three criteria in mind: (1) food charity that is happening daily, (2) food charity that has been happening for long periods of time, and (3) food charity that is happening in large numbers. However, the tradition of *anna-daan* in smaller forms and occasions is in practice in all the temples. We wanted to know the people's views on practising this pious act. Most of them felt that devotees who travel from long distances are provided with food, which is considered a noble act (51.8%) while 41% felt that it was auspicious and brings good luck. Another interesting view was that food sharing brings harmony among fellow beings. The rest of the reasons were positive feeling, blessings, instilling devotion, and feeding the poor.

#### Types of *anna-daan*

In large temples, *nitya anna-daan* (daily food sharing) is performed at least once every day. In some of the temples, for instance, Male Mahadeshwara temple, Chamarajanagar, and Karnataka, *anna-daan* is performed three times a day (including breakfast, lunch, and dinner). In some other temples, food is served twice daily, covering lunch and dinner. In addition, *anna-daan* is also performed on specific days of the week or for specific seasons. Yet another type of *anna-daan* is performed on special occasions. For instance, Maruti Temple in Nagrabhavi, Bengaluru, provides *anna-daan* on the day of Hanuman Jayanti, which is usually held in the month of December every year.

As we can see in Figures 2.2 and 2.3, the number of devotees served food varied across states. It ranged from the highest of 200,000 devotees served at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, during the peak season, to 160,000 devotees served in normal time. However, when we

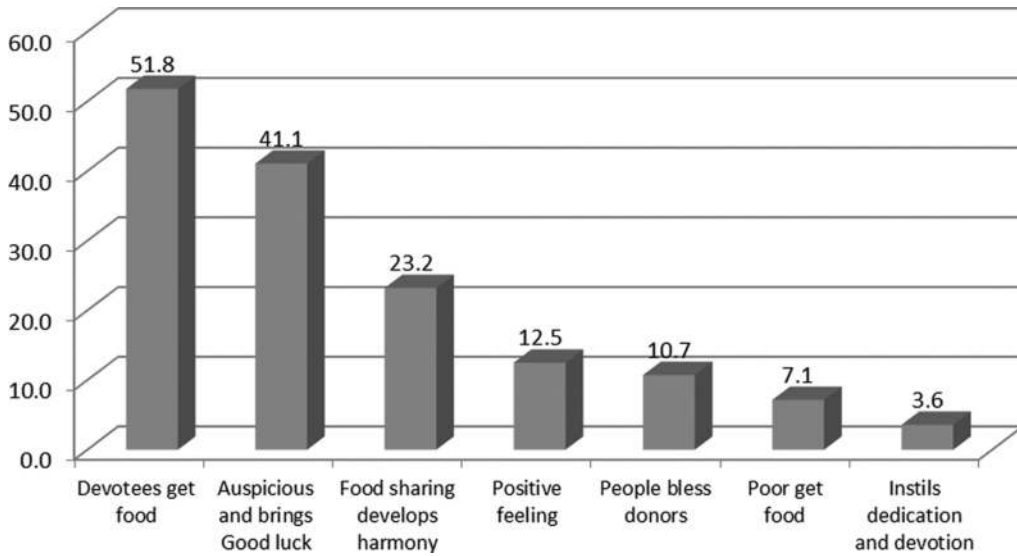


Figure 2.1 Reasons for performing *anna-daan*.

Source: Compiled from case studies, 2021.

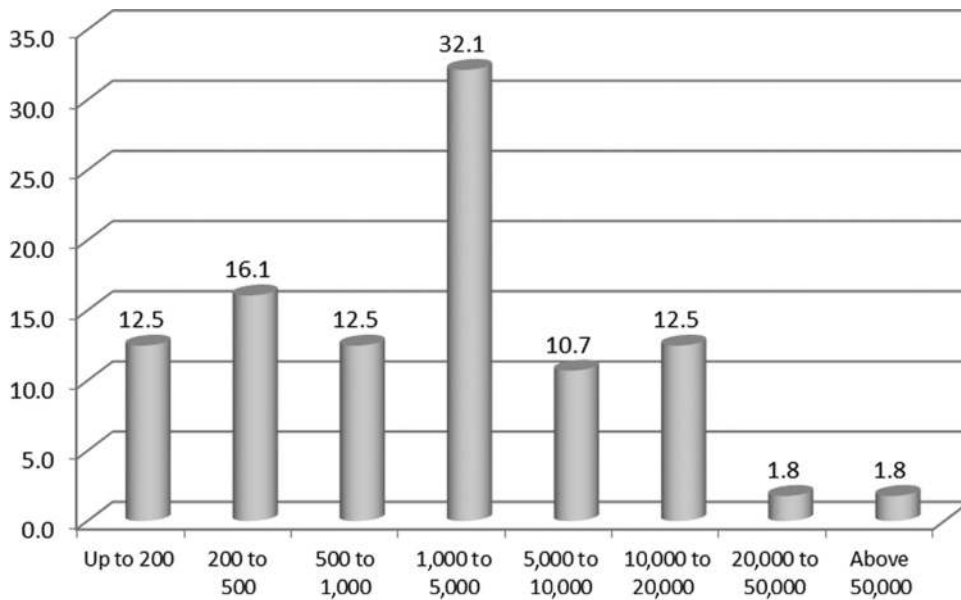


Figure 2.2 Number of devotees served during normal season.

Source: Compiled from case studies, 2021.

observe across states, the minimum number of devotees served was up to 200 (12.5%). The highest percentage (32%) of the temples provided food to devotees ranging from 1,000 to 5,000. As can be seen in Figure 2.2, some 13% of temples (among the highest) fed as many as 10,000 devotees. Besides, the numbers would get even higher. During the peak season, the number of devotees served food may reach higher than 100,000 (Figure 2.3). The reason for these generous acts of charity is not far to seek. The practice of *anna-daan* is entrenched in our culture and is a part and parcel of the tradition of

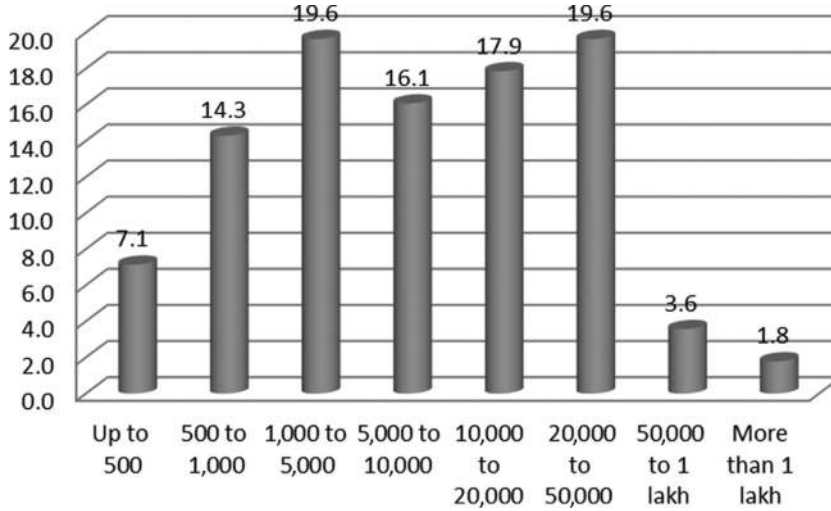


Figure 2.3 Number of devotees served during peak seasons.

Source: Compiled from case studies, 2021.

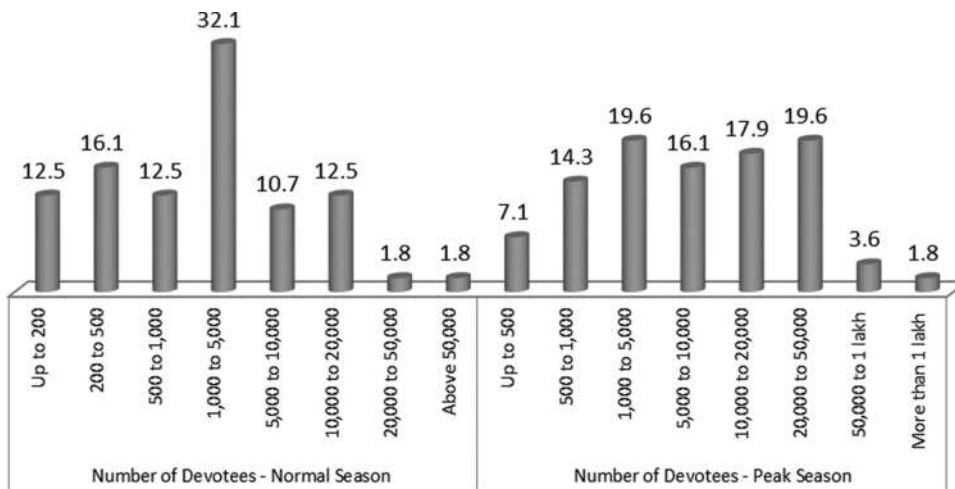


Figure 2.4 Number of devotees – normal and peak season.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

*giving*. Devotees believe that the *prasadam* served in temples is a blessing and accept it with utmost reverence. Proof of this observation is that most devotees visit temples during the peak season, which is associated with festivals and special days. They seem to attach more piety to *prasadam* distributed during the peak season and stand for hours in queues to receive the *prasadam* and the blessings of the Lord.

To cater to these large numbers of devotees, dining halls are constructed in temples. The number of dining halls ranged from 1 to 5 across temples (Figure 2.4). The majority of them had one dining hall (57.1%). Some temples have more than one dining hall catering to floating devotees. All such halls were well-equipped and maintained well. The majority have tables and chairs (69.6%). The temple management used the best technology to serve the devotees, indicating a high level of organisation and professionalism.

Serving happens daily and in many places three times a day (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). Some temples serve only lunch, while others serve lunch and dinner. Figure 2.5 indicates the capacity of the dining halls. The seating capacity of dining halls ranged from a minimum of 200 to a maximum of 15,000. Several dining halls have the capacity to feed 4,000–8,000 devotees at a time. The majority of the dining halls (30.4%) have the capacity to feed 200–500. Food served was in steel plates, or more eco-friendly plantain leaves, or areca plates.

The graph in Figure 2.8 shows the deployment of human resources as kitchen managers, cooks, servers, and cleaners. The majority of the temples have up to 5 cooks (60.7%) while 8.9% engage more than 20 cooks. The majority of them have senior kitchen

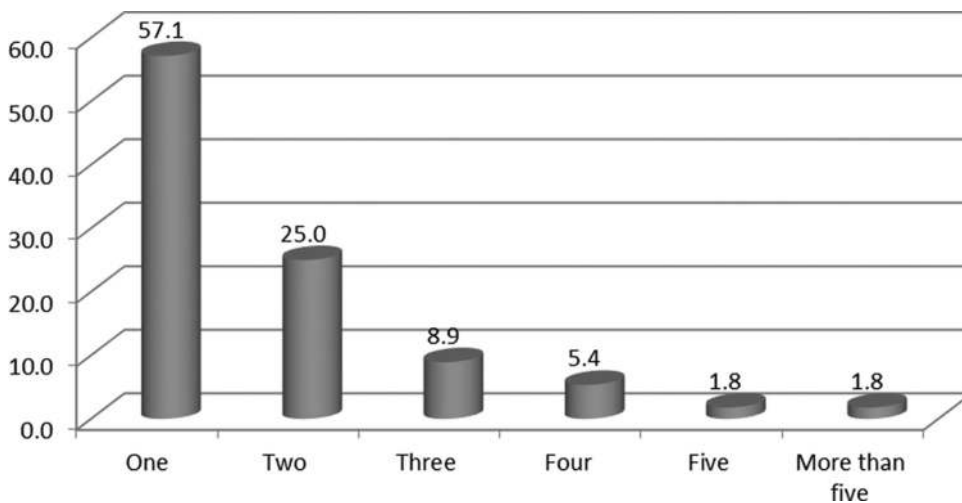


Figure 2.5 Number of dining halls

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

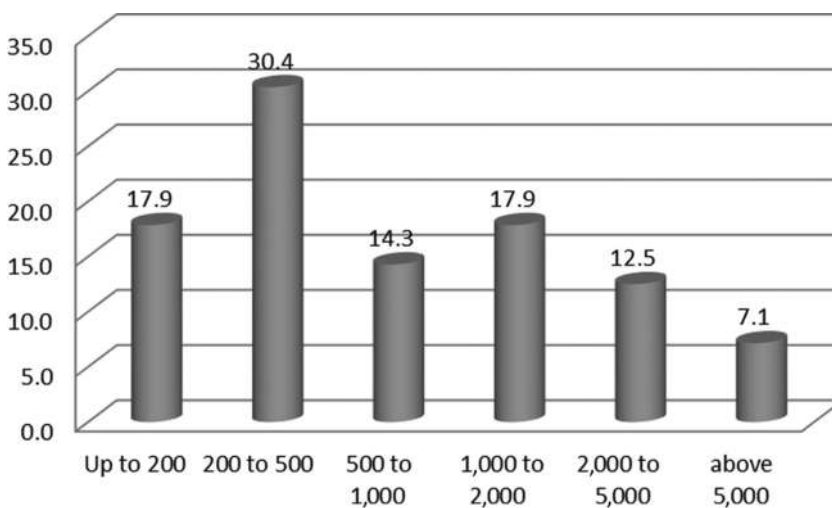


Figure 2.6 Capacity of dining halls.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.



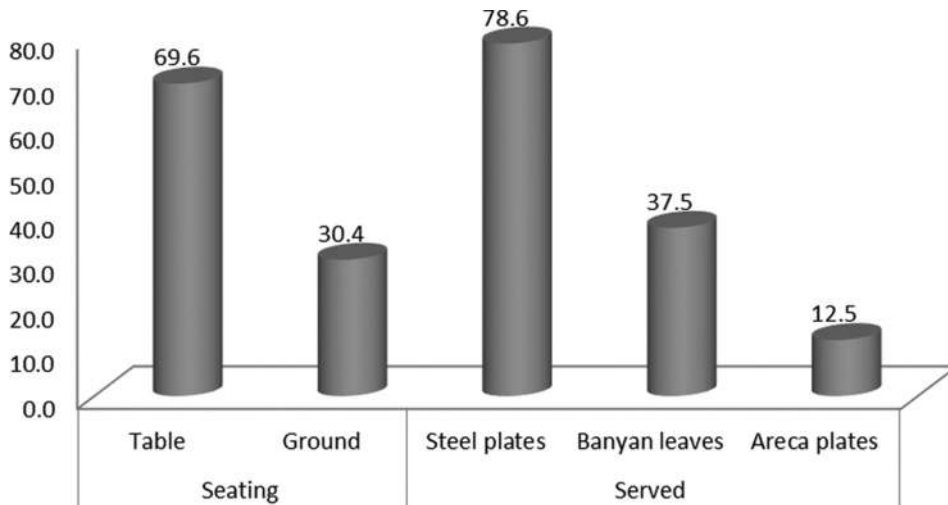


Figure 2.7 Arrangements made during serving.

Source: Compiled from case studies, 2021.

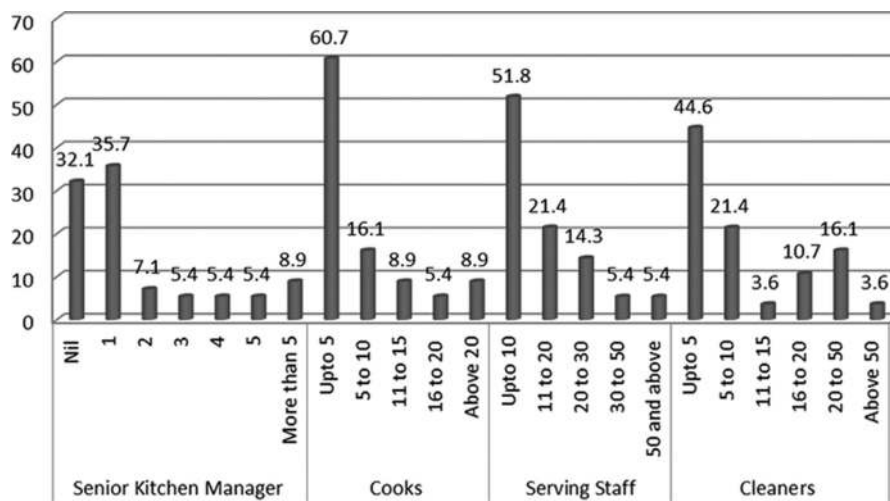


Figure 2.8 Deployment of human resources in temples.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

managers to oversee *anna- daan* activities (35.7%). Some temples had high numbers of staff engaged in *anna-daan* management (Table 2.2). For example, Tirupati, one of the most popular temples in India, had more than 500 people in the food charity section, while Dharmasthala had about 365 dedicated to food charity.

By and large, food charity is considered a holy and benevolent act and has rituals associated with it (Figure 2.8). For example, in all the temples, *prasadam* is first offered to God and then to the devotees. At the same time, there were temples where no ritual was performed. At more than half of the temples covered in the case studies, it was a custom to offer payers before starting the cooking process. Some 80% of the temples had the custom of placing flowers and performing *aarti* to the *prasadam* before serving meals. At some temples (3.6%), a brief talk is given about the significance of *anna-daan*, while at a

Table 2.2 Temples with large staff

Temples	Actual numbers
Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh	>500
Sabirimala Ayyappa, Kerala	>500
Dharmasthala Manujnatha, Karnataka	365
Mahavir Mandir, Bihar	165
Kukke Subramanya Temple, Karnataka	141
Swaminarayan Temple, Gujarat	129
Adyapeeth, WB	117
Karshni Ashram, Mathura, UP	124
Sri Sai Baba Mahasansthan, Maharashtra	320

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

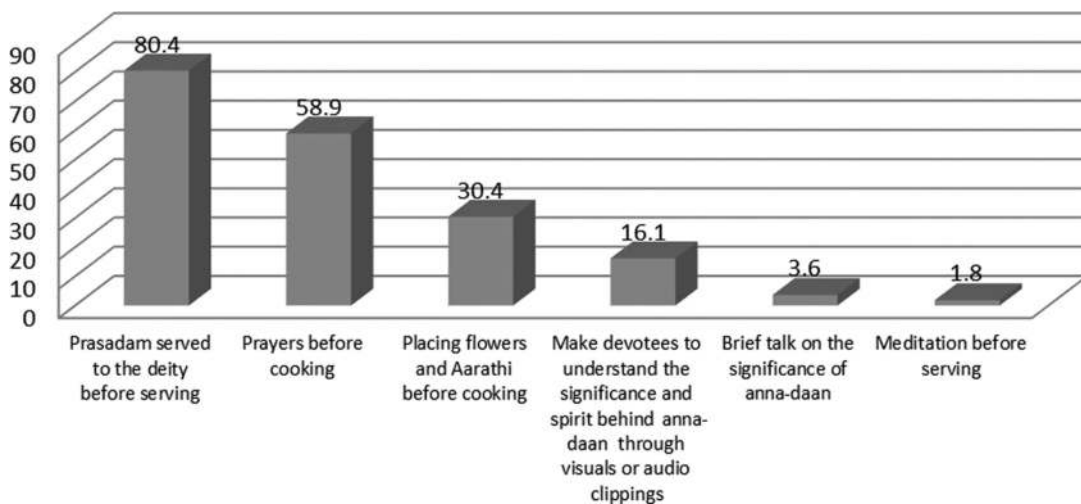


Figure 2.9 Rituals associated with food charity.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

few other temples (16.1%), video or audio clippings are played to highlight the importance of *anna-daan*. Very few temples (1.8%) practised meditation before serving. The whole idea behind these rituals is to create awareness about food charity, highlight the traditions associated with it, and create a sense of meaning and purpose to the whole act of food charity rather than treating it as just a routine act.

There are several reasons for an individual to organise or contribute to a food charity (Figures 2.9 and 2.10). Philanthropy is a major reason (44.6%) followed by “would bring them luck” (28.5%), is an “auspicious act” (28.5%), “vows to be fulfilled” (14.3%), and “spiritual purposes” (16%). Some of them had a firm belief that no one should go to bed hungry. Besides, several of them had more than one reason to practice *anna-daan* (Figure 2.10).

Understandably, several people had a combination of reasons for supporting food sharing. Although in themselves these were good reasons, there was a lack of awareness of the real reasons as described in the scriptures for doing *anna-daan*. This deeper sense of *giving* and its meaning need to be popularised among the people through awareness

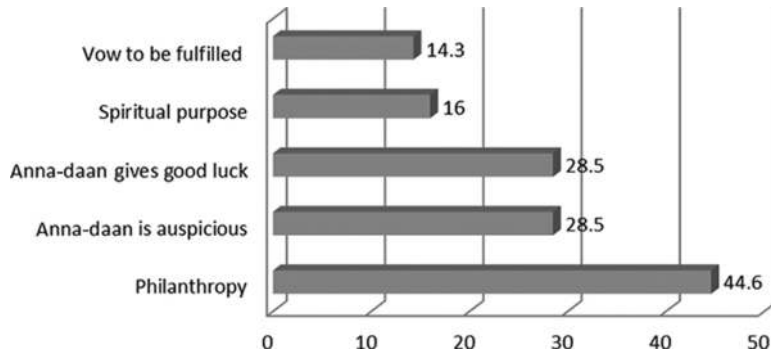


Figure 2.10 Reasons for practising *anna-daan*.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

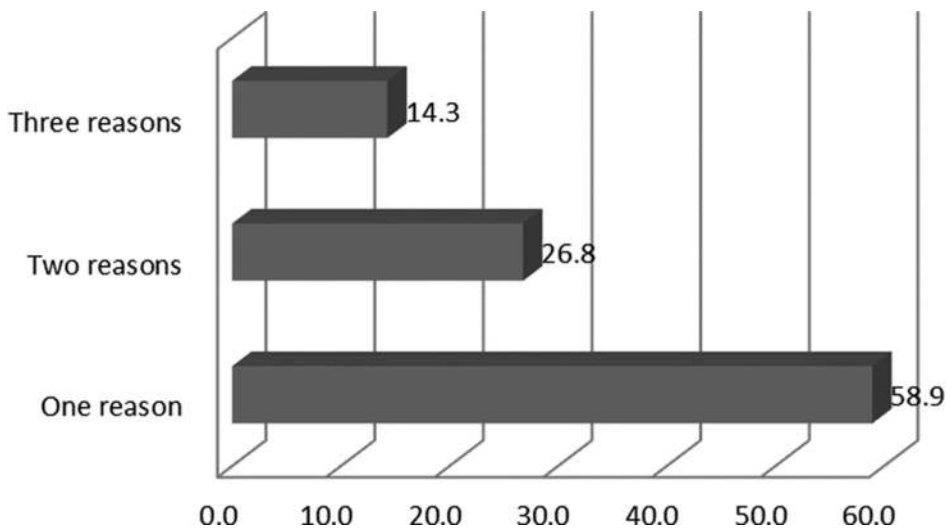


Figure 2.11 Multiple reasons for practising *anna-daan*.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

programmes to make it more meaningful. Nevertheless, irrespective of the belief systems, *anna-daan* is a noble act beyond any doubt. This act has for sure built social connectedness, harmony, and unity in society.

As can be seen in Figure 2.11, the number of times food was served varied across temples. Around 40% of the temples served all three major meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) daily, while 25% of them served lunch and dinner, and the rest provided only lunch (35.7%). All these temples have been doing this for decades.

Rice was the main staple in the vast quantity of food cooked for devotees (Figure 2.12). The quantity of rice cooked ranged from 50 kg (10.8%) to 1,000 kg (27%) in normal and peak seasons, respectively. Rice was served with *sambar* (made from *daal* and vegetables), vegetable curry, curd, or buttermilk and sweet. Similarly, Figure 2.13 indicates the quantum of *sambar* (50–500 L) across temples which increased to more than 10,000 L in exceptional cases.

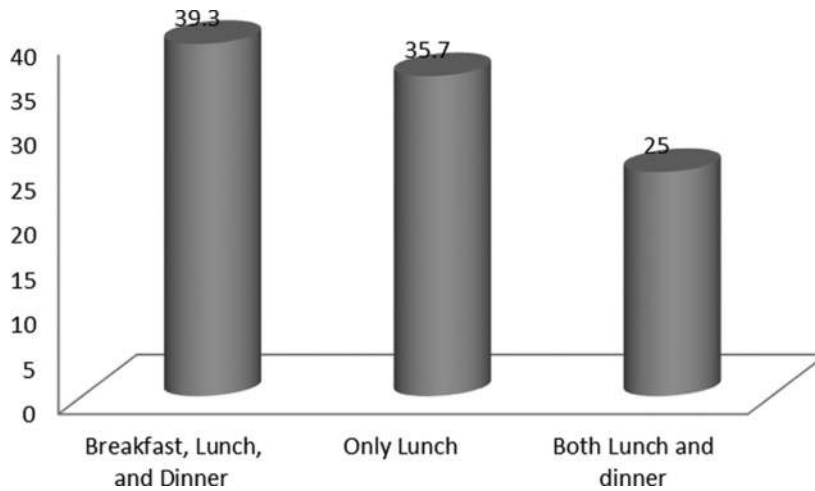


Figure 2.12 Food servings

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

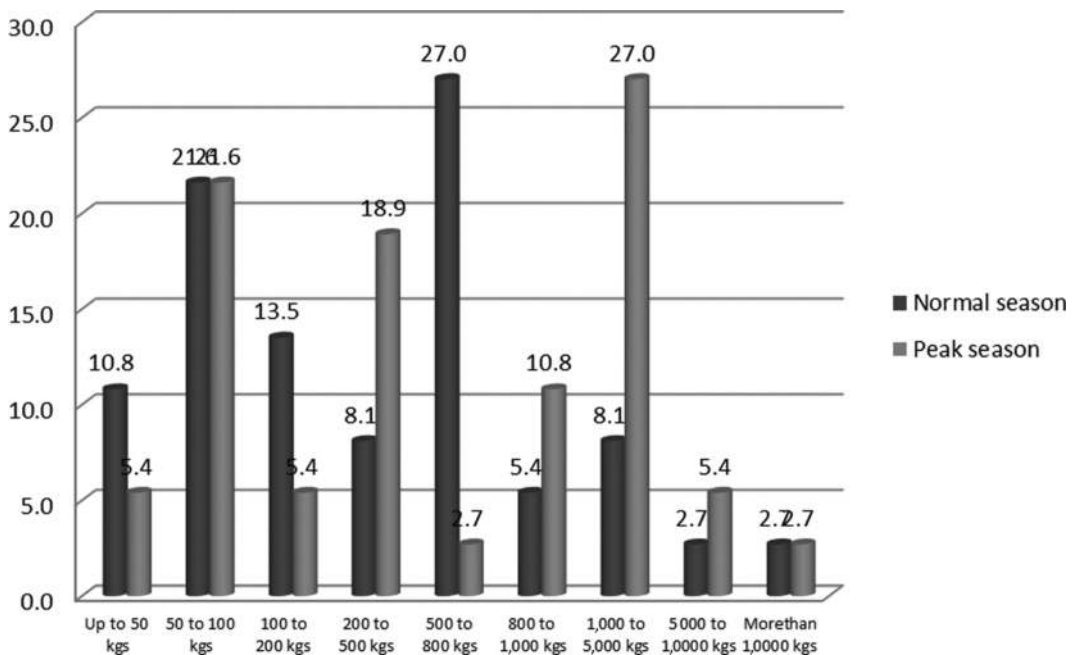


Figure 2.13 Quantity of rice cooked (per day in kilograms) in peak and normal seasons).

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

It is a humongous task to prepare meals which are not just in huge quantity but which also meet the quality norms and are served to devotees on time and in adequate quantity. The majority of the temples followed the queue system (82.1%) and a few of them had a token system (17.9%).

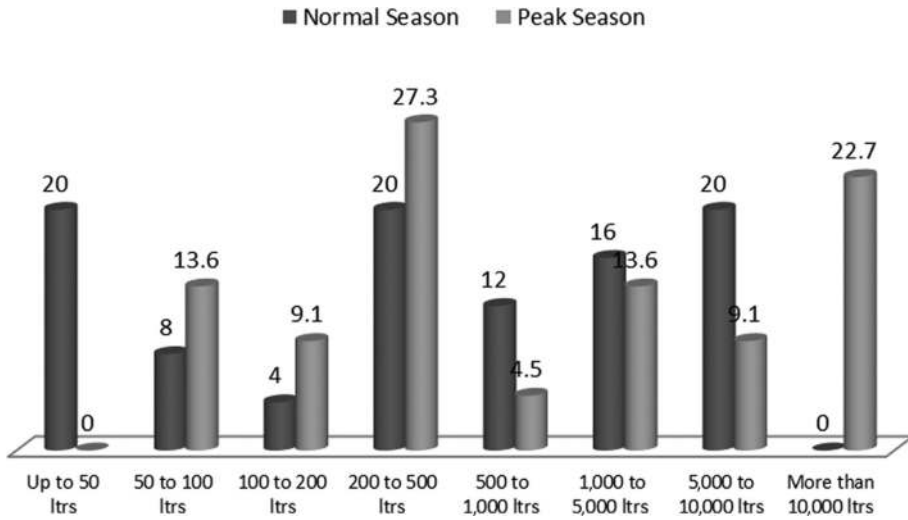


Figure 2.14 Quantity of sambar (normal and peak seasons) in litres.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

*Maintaining quality and safety standards*

Raw materials are procured with utmost care. In most temples (44%), management is involved in the procurement operation; some followed the tender system (12%). Besides, a quality inspection was done by government officials in some temples. Special care was taken to clean vegetables and sanitise them before cooking. Several of the temples had cold storage facilities to ensure the freshness of vegetables. Sterilisation was practised in several temples (60%). In some temples, (34%) training is provided to the cooking staff to make them aware of the importance of hygiene and the need to maintain quality standards. Several temples (66%) hire quality control officers.

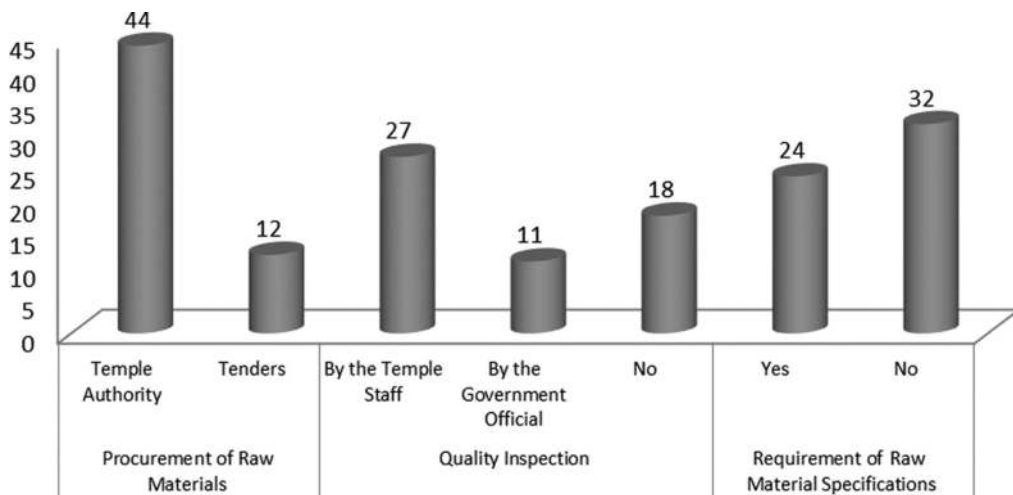


Figure 2.15 Ensuring safety standards.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

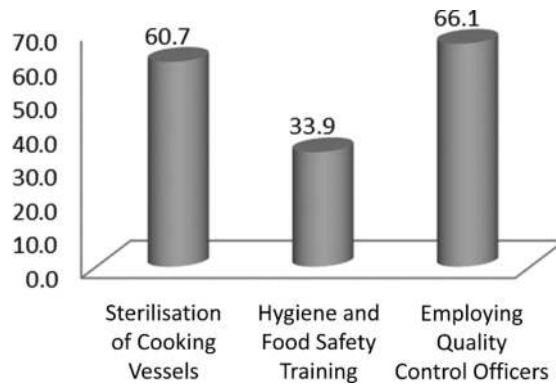


Figure 2.16 Ensuring hygiene.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

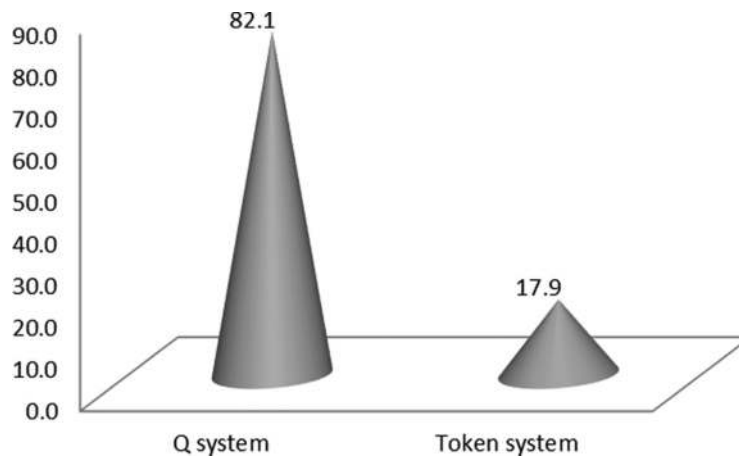


Figure 2.17 Crowd management.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Technology played a pivotal role in efficiently managing the whole process of food charity across temples. Technology was used extensively in various forms. For management, online payments played a significant role in accountability besides ease and convenience. Announcements via sophisticated mike systems are made to streamline the crowd, and CCTV cameras kept an eye on the happenings on the premises besides ensuring safety. An online booking system was operational in about 20% of the temples and helped in a big way, as it can be used at any time of day and night by people wanting to donate to food charity or to make bookings for visiting the temple. CCTV was installed at 57% of the temples. These measures helped address the organisational and security concerns to manage the temple activities more efficiently.

To ensure fast and fresh cooking, the majority of the temples had steam boilers (64.3%) and were able to cook rice in 20 minutes. Besides, they had hot insulated vessels (41.1%), roti-making machines (12.4%), and Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants (79%). Many temples also had RO Water Treatment Filters. To maintain hygiene, hot water was used for washing vessels. Vegetables were washed with chlorine-mixed water. Another interesting

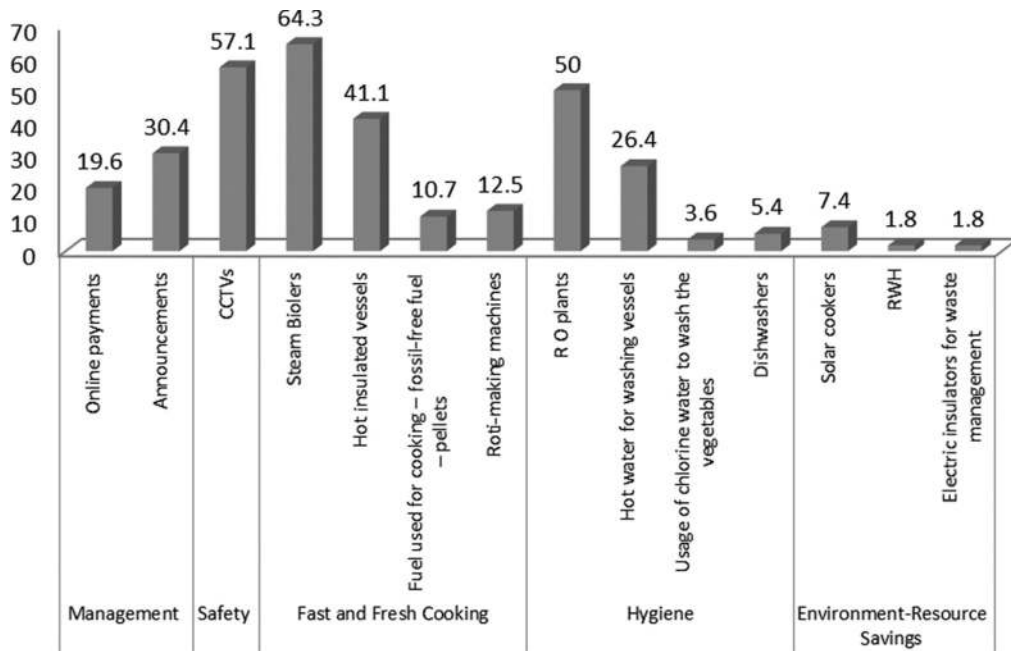


Figure 2.18 Technology adoption.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

aspect was that some temples used solar cookers and had rainwater harvesting installations as eco-friendly measures to tide over resource shortages.

Most temples segregated their kitchen waste into wet and dry. In several temples, wet waste was composted and used as manure (35.7%). Dry waste was handed over to local government authorities or city corporations (26.8%) or sold to *kabadiwalas* or private agencies. Kitchen waste was used as feed for cows in temple-managed *goshalas*<sup>102</sup> (12.5%).

Some temples used their kitchen waste in biogas plants to generate fuel for the kitchen. Cow dung and mule dung (in the case of Vaishno Devi Temple) were used in the biogas plant (14%) to produce fuel for use at Gulshan Langar. Mule dung was converted into manure and used in the kitchen garden to grow vegetables. Some temples disposed of their kitchen waste in the dumping yard (16%), and in one of the temples, they use flowers to make natural colours, while some dumped them in rivers and forests as food for fish and monkeys.

### Finance for *anna-daan*

Generally, funds to organise *anna-daan* and other activities in most temples come from donations made by devotees/donors from all over the world. These donations are deposited in nationalised banks and the interest earned on them is used to meet the expenditure on organising various services. The donations are exempt from income tax.

In all temples, the main sources of revenue are *hundis*, offerings, donations, and revenue from the sale of tickets for *darshan*. These revenues are used on providing *prasadam*, free meals, and accommodation, etc., to pilgrims. In every temple, the devotees donate to fund *nitya anna-daan* and other activities. For instance, Sri Satyanarayana Swamy temple in

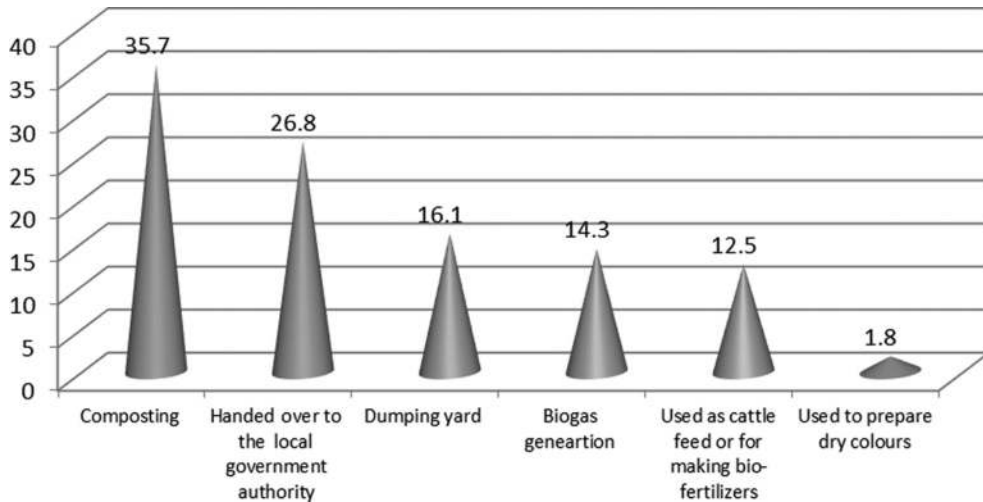


Figure 2.19 Waste disposal.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

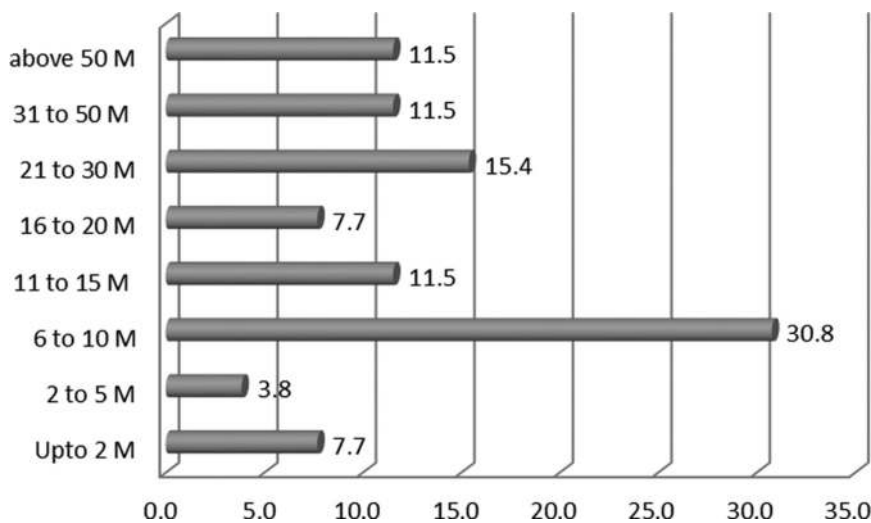


Figure 2.20 Finances for *anna-daan*.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Annaram, East Godavari district received donations of Rs. 2.50 crore during the financial year 2013–14 for its *anna-daan* programme. As of today, the temple has a corpus of Rs. 23 crore, which earns an interest of Rs. 2.26 crore. According to the temple authorities, nearly 8 lakh devotees are provided free meals under the temple’s *anna-daan* programme (source: [https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/satyanarayana-swamy-temple-receives-rs-2-50-cr.-donation-for-114041101321\\_1.html](https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/satyanarayana-swamy-temple-receives-rs-2-50-cr.-donation-for-114041101321_1.html), accessed on 12 September 2020).

Figure 2.19 shows the expenses for food sharing across temples. The majority of the temples (30.8%) spent Rs. 6–10 million on their *anna-daan* programmes, while those which spent up to Rs. 2 million (the minimum) comprised 7.7%. The temples that spent



the maximum represent 11.5% (more than Rs. 50 million), while an equal number of temples (11.5%) incurred an expenditure of Rs. 31 to 50 million.

### Key issues

#### ENSURING FOOD SAFETY

Ensuring food safety and managing hygiene in the kitchen and dining halls are of utmost importance at all temples catering to large numbers of eaters daily. There have been incidents of food poisoning at a few temples. To tackle it, the project BHOG, or Blissful Offering to God, was conceived in 2015 and is now being implemented across the country. BHOG is an initiative of the Association of Food Scientists and Technologists of India (AFSTI) along with the FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards India) to ensure that clean and safe *prasada* is offered to devotees. Under the initiative, training is organised for *prasada* handlers and vendors on the importance of food hygiene. In addition, routine inspection of temple kitchens is done by the state Food Safety and Drug Administration FSDA to ensure compliance with its food safety guidelines. As of January 2018, over 250 temple staff had been trained in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. Temples in some of these states have also implemented the quality initiative.<sup>103</sup>

After the Suluvadi incident in North Karnataka and Thekkeda Madan Nada Siva Temple, Vembayam in Kerala, the endowment department has made it mandatory for temples to register under the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA). With the registration of temples, the organisers (who have been made accountable for any untoward incident which may take place) must take all necessary precautions to ensure food safety. The temple authority must provide details such as sources of water, menu, place, and date of purchase of food items, etc. Besides, it is mandatory to install CCTV cameras in the kitchen. The health inspectors are compulsorily required to visit these temples and check the *prasadam* before it is distributed. These guidelines are limited to temples that come under the Muzrai Department, as the department has no control over private temples (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/Registration-must-for-Anna-daanam/articleshow/46802915.cms> accessed on 13 August 2020).

### Summary

The chapter has brought to the fore the significance of food sharing as an important ritual carried out as a tradition successfully even in current contexts. This important tradition is based on several important tenets, customs, and procedures and is considered the noblest among the *daanas*. *Anna-daan*, the sharing of food, is a manifestation of the *Mahayagn*, thus indicating that it is part of one's duty to offer food to the needy, including all living beings, thus, emphasising humanity. Another deeper meaning is “[t]hat which gives life is *anna*”; it is not only to meet the physical requirements but encompasses the spiritual too. At the physical level, *anna* is essential for the body to remain healthy and strong; at the spiritual level, a healthy body makes room for the soul to get purer. Therefore, *anna* is extended to *gyana daan* also. In brief, all these meanings and practices of *anna-daan* in its various forms are captured to showcase *anna-daan* as a living tradition in our society. It has shown the role society plays in providing food security, social connection, and harmony through these informal ways carried out voluntarily. Besides,

it also delineates the importance given to food sharing in our scriptures and the purpose and spirit in which it must be carried out as an important element that needs to be further highlighted at the temples.

## Notes

- 1 It is depicted in *Puranas* as the dhaana-dharma parva.
- 2 Shrimad Bhagavad Gita: Shradda Traya Vibhag Yog: Chapter 17: Verse 8 <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/chapter/17/verse/8>.
- 3 दुधाज धारण पोषणयोः
- 4 The Mahabharata of *Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa*, Book 8: translated by Karna Parva, Kisari Mohan Ganguli, tr. published between 1883 and 1896. Available at <https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m08/index.htm>.
- 5 अथ हैनमसुरा ऊचुः, ब्रवीतु नो भवानति; तेभ्यो हैतदेवाक्शरमुवाच द इति; व्यज्जासष्टिः इति; व्यज्जासष्टिमेति होचुः, दयध्वमति न आत्थेति; ओमति होवाच, व्यज्जासष्टिः तदेतदेवैषा देवी वागनुवदति स्तनयतिनुर द द इति—दाम्यत दत्त दयध्वमति; तदेतत्त्रयं शक्तिश्—दमं दानं दयामति ॥ ३ ॥ इति द्वितीयं ब्राह्मणम् ॥
- 6 अथ यत्तपो दानमार्जवमहसा सत्यवचनमतिता अस्य दक्षिणाः ॥ ३.१७.४ ॥
- 7 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C4%81na>
- 8 दातव्यमति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिण | देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्विकं स्मृतम् ॥20 ॥  
यत्तु परत्युपकारार्थं फलमुददशिय वा पुनः | दीयते च परकिलिष्टं तद्दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥21 ॥  
अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते | असत्कृतमवज्जातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥22 ॥
- 9 Shrimad Bhagavad Gita: Karma Yogam: Chapter 3: (Part-1) Karma Yogah: Yoga Of Action. Verse 26 available at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/chapter/3/verse/19>.
- 10 Shrimad Bhagavad Gita: Karma Yogam: Chapter 3: (Part-1) Karma Yogah: Yoga of Action. Verse 26 available at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/chapter/3/verse/19>.
- 11 Bhagavata Purana (Set of 2 Books) by Ramesh Menon, publishers Rupa & Co.
- 12 Religious scriptures of the Hindus.
- 13 Curu Dutt (Commentary), Ishavasyopanishath, Translated by Mrs. Rupa Srikumar, Editors: Duran Kumar Jiwani, Hindi Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, Edition 2015.
- 14 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 15 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 16 Charles Johnston, Chandogya Upanishad, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.
- 17 *Duahay* is not a word, but it is the root of a verb or a root verb which will go on to become the word *daana* after further processing.
- 18 “The Taittiriya Aranyaka”, 3 vols. in one, Chapter 9, Verse 2, edited by A. Mahadeva Sastri et al., 1985 (Motilal Publishers).
- 19 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 20 Sankaracarya, Swami Madhavananda (Translator), Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, published by Advita Ashrama, India, 1997.
- 21 Swami Gambhirananda (Author). Aitareya Upanishad, Advita Ashrama, India 2010.
- 22 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 23 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 24 The Mahabharata, Book 13: Anusasana Parva, Kisari Mohan Ganguli, tr. (1883–1896).
- 25 *Prana, apana, vyana, daan* and *samaana* are the five systems that keep the body functioning as described in Hindu scriptures.
- 26 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 27 Swami Gambhirananda (Author), Taittiriya Upanishad, Advita Ashrama, India 2010.
- 28 Swami Gambhirananda (Author), Taittiriya Upanishad, Advita Ashrama, India 2010.
- 29 Veda Vyasa (Author), Kisari Mohan Ganguli (Translator), Mahabharata: Ashvamedhika Parva (Book 14) Kindle Edition.
- 30 BK Chaturvedi (Author), Agni Purana, Published by Diamond Books, 2002.
- 31 S N Khandelwal, Brahma Purana (set of 2 Volumes), published by Chaukhambha, 2016.
- 32 The Rig Veda: Anthology, Doniger Wendy, Penguin Books Ltd.
- 33 The Mahabharata, Book 13: Anusasana Parva, Kisari Mohan Ganguli, tr. (1883–1896).

- 34 <https://www.skaifoundation.org/anna-Daanaam-project/> Accessed on 16 June 2020.
- 35 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 36 The Rig Veda: Anthology, Doniger Wendy, Penguin Books Ltd.
- 37 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 38 *Vedas. Rig-Veda, Saaynacharya (Comm.), Rik Sanhita, Astaka IV, Ganapat Krishnaji publishers, 1810.*
- 39 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 40 *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa: Text in Devanāgarī and Translation*, Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sāstry Institute of Vedic Culture.
- 41 Swami Gambhirananda (Author), Taittiriya Upanishad Advita Ashrama, India 2010.
- 42 Swami Gambhirananda (Author), Taittiriya Upanishad Advita Ashrama, India 2010.
- 43 Charles Johnston, Chandogya Upanishad, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.
- 44 Swami Gambhirananda (Author), Taittiriya Upanishad, Advita Ashrama, India 2010.
- 45 *Mahayajna=Maha+yajna*, i.e., maha meaning greatest and *yajna* being best deed which everyone is ought to perform.
- 46 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 47 *The Rig Veda: Anthology*, Doniger Wendy, Penguin Books Ltd.
- 48 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 49 R. L. Kashyap, *Athrvā Veda*, Published by Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, 2011.
- 50 R. L. Kashyap, *Athrvā Veda*, Published by Sri Aurobindo Kapali Sastry Institute of Vedic Culture, 2011.
- 51 Manu Maharaj, The Manusmriti, Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, January 2017.
- 52 *The Rig Veda: Anthology*, Doniger Wendy, Penguin Books Ltd.
- 53 Manu Maharaj, The Manusmriti, Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, January 2017.
- 54 The word *grihasta* is a combination of the words *gruha* (home) and *stha* (settlement).
- 55 The Mahabharata, Book 13: Anusasana Parva, Kisari Mohan Ganguli, tr. (1883–1896)
- 56 Patrick Olivelle, *The Dharmasutras: The Law Codes of Ancient India*, OUP Oxford, 2 September 1999.
- 57 Detailed advice for the king was capital should have an entrance facing south, and set up his personal house, *veshma*, in the centre of the capital. In front of this personal house, to build a greater house, *avasatha*, for welcoming and offering hospitality to all who come to meet him, build an assembly hall, *sabha* (to meet his counsellors, and receive embassies from other lands). Besides, the king is asked to light the household fire in all three and thus become a householder thrice.
- 58 Religious scripture of the Hindus.
- 59 Pandit A. Chinnaswami Sastri, *Apastamba Dharmasutra*: Digital Library of India Item 2015.485587, 1932.
- 60 Manu Maharaj, The Manusmriti, Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, January 2017.
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- 62 Robert P. Goldman (Author), *The Ramayana of Valmiki*, Vol.1: Balakanda: An Epic of Ancient India, Motilal Banarsidass 2007.
- 63 Robert P. Goldman (Author), *The Ramayana of Valmiki*, Vol.1: Balakanda: An Epic of Ancient India, Motilal Banarsidass 2007.
- 64 Manu Maharaj, The Manusmriti, Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, January 2017.
- 65 Manu Maharaj, The Manusmriti, Arsh Sahitya Prachar Trust, January 2017.
- 66 Pure vegetarian diet that includes fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, seed fresh herbs, milk and diary products, honey, whole grains, pulses, and sprouts.
- 67 Rajasic foods are **very hot (spicy), bitter, dry, or salty**. Excess flavouring of salt and spices is given to food to make it tastier.
- 68 Tamasic foods are overprocessed, no longer fresh, and difficult to digest. Foods that are prepared with a distracted mind are Tamasic in nature. Also, if the person preparing the food is angry or in a negative mood while cooking it, then that food is also considered a Tamasic food.
- 69 A combination of each element results in three humors, or doshas, known as vata, kapha, and pitta. These doshas are believed to be responsible for a person's physiological, mental, and emotional. Each of the three doshas has a unique personality determined by its combination of

elements and qualities. At the end of the day, each dosha naturally governs specific physiological functions: Vata governs movement and communication. Pitta oversees digestion and transformation. Kapha provides cohesiveness, structure, and lubrication. While the doshas can be observed everywhere in nature, they are particularly supportive in understanding living organisms.

- 70 Swami Gambhirananda (Author), *Taittiriya Upanisbad*, Advita Ashrama, India 2010
- 71 Shrimad Bhagavad Gita: Karma Yogam: Chapter 3: (Part-1) Karma Yogah: Yoga of Action. Verse 26 available at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/chapter/3/verse/19>
- 72 <https://theprint.in/opinion/indian-govt-wont-be-any-different-from-british-if-hindus-cant-manage-their-own-temples/218210/>. Accessed on 8 July, 2020.
- 73 <https://vhpthailand.org/hindu-temple/>
- 74 [https://www.hmoob.in/wiki/Hindu\\_Temple](https://www.hmoob.in/wiki/Hindu_Temple)
- 75 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu\\_temple#Hospitals,\\_community\\_kitchen,\\_monasteries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu_temple#Hospitals,_community_kitchen,_monasteries). Accessed on 6 August 2020.
- 76 The great Chola king Rajaraja I who ruled from 985 to 1014 AD, constructed the magnificent Rajarajeswvra or Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur. The construction begun in 1003, and the *kumbhabhishekam* performed on the 275th day in the 25th year of his reign, which is said to correspond to 22 April 1010 AD. During the period 1010–14, Rajaraja also made substantial gifts and endowments to the temple to ensure that it functioned as one of the richest and most magnificent temples of the period.
- One inscription gives details of 196 functionaries, along with the names of the 144 villages from which they were drawn, and who were to pay for these functionaries. Among these are 174 *brahamacharis* (for temple *paricharya*) who were to get 1 padakku of paddy each day (amounting to 61 kalams a year) and 4 kalams each at the end of the year and similarly for several others.
- 77 For instance, the total revenues assigned by Rajaraja to the great temple at Thanjavur, add to 144,500 kalams of paddy and 2,800 kalanju of gold (which was roughly the cost of 11,200 kalams of paddy at that time). The total revenue thus assigned amounts to about 9,350 tons of paddy. The inscriptions give details of the revenue assignments in 40 villages in Cholamandalam and 16 villages spread over the empire. Clear mention of the extent of lands in each village from where revenue could be demanded was an average of 100 kalams of paddy per veli of land. Besides, grants were made by Rajaraja to a host of shepherds for maintaining 4,124, cows, 6,924 eves, and 30 buffaloes. In return for maintaining 16 buffaloes or 48 cows or 96 eves, the shepherds were required to supply 1 ulakku of ghee each day to the temple. In this way, the temple received 158 ulakku of ghee per day, adequate to sustain 158 lamps lighting. There is detailed documentation about production and productivity that prevailed in about two thousand localities in the Chengalpattu region that surrounds the city of Madras in the 1760s.
- 78 Details are specifically noted defining precision and inclusiveness, viz., donations were given to 400 temple dancers (devadasis) who were to get a house each, their names, names of the 69 temples where they served, location of the house allotted. Also, 212 other functionaries are mentioned who were to receive 180 shares – 6 dance masters (2 share each), 5 singers (1.5 share each), 16 musicians (0.75 share each), and so on.
- 79 Guidelines indicated that for those shareholders who die or emigrate, the nearest relations were to receive that allowance and do the work. If the nearest relations were not qualified, they were to select other qualified persons. If there were no relations, the other incumbents of such appointments were to select qualified persons.
- 80 To understand the primary responsibility of the state in relation to the temples, it is important to understand the essentials of *rajadharm*a in relation to society and its institutions. *Paalan*, or protection, is the primary duty of state in India.
- <http://indiafacts.org/temples-and-the-state-in-the-indian-tradition/>. Accessed on 9 September 2020.
- 81 Buddhist Tamil text, the Manimekalai, pointedly disparages the Vaidika tradition in many ways; it tells the touching story of Aputran who, being left alone on an uninhabited island with an inexhaustible pot of food in his hands, prefers to die of hunger rather than eat from that pot without sharing it with others. The elderly in the state of Tamil Nadu still remember how their parents used to wait outside the house before every mealtime for some seeker to come and

- accept food from their hands, and on the days that no seeker appeared, the parents went hungry too.
- 82 In a fascinating letter written by Raja Sarfoji, the king of Thanjavur, in 1801, to the British who had by then set themselves up as colonial overlords, the Raja describes the *chatrams* (rest houses) that abounded in his state, especially along the road to the great pilgrim centre of Rameswaram, which had been running since the times of his ancestors. In these *chatrams*, all comers received food throughout the day, and at midnight, bells were rung to call upon those who may have been left behind to rush and receive their share. The Raja goes on to describe in detail how the *chatrams* took care of those who fell sick during their stay and of the dependents of those who happened to die there. The running of the *chatrams*, the Raja felt, was what gave Thanjavur the title of *dharmarajya*, and this was the title, the Raja told the British he valued above all other dignities of his office. He implored the British to ensure that whatever else might happen to his state, this tradition of providing for the hungry was not abridged or eliminated.
- 83 *Yaaga* is oblation, sacrifice, ceremony in which oblations are presented.
- 84 *Yagna* is a holy ritual, sacrifice.
- 85 The epic describes the *anna-daan* thus, throughout that great yagna, “there is none who looks tired or is in hunger”, an unending feast is on with all present, the brahmans, tapasvins, sramanas, ordinary people, old, sick, women, and the children are eating well, “those who serve are being continuously urged to give food”. “Everyday there is sumptuous food, prepared with great care”; “men and women that have arrived from distant places are being looked after with abundant food”.
- 86 “The food is delicious; it is properly cooked and served. We are indeed contented. Let all auspiciousness visit you”.
- 87 Marks the culmination of his reign and ends with the return of Sri Sita to the welcoming lap of goddess earth, whose daughter she is.
- 88 Valmiki describes the scene of the *yagn* and the feasting grandeur that the people were very hospitable and served the guests till they were satiated. The food served had varieties with several sweets. Everyone present seemed to exude well-being, was well-fed, and in high cheer.
- 89 Rajasuyayajna is a yagna that involves the subduing of all kingly dynasties on Earth.
- 90 Among the great kings that have ruled India in this period, most revered is Harshavardhan, from the detailed records of the Chinese scholar, Hiuen-Tsiang, who visited India during his time. Every few years, he emptied his treasury and distributed all the accumulated riches of the empire among the people.
- 91 Mahabharat Asvamedika parva 90.115.
- 92 *Patashalas* are traditional Hindu schools where children are taught in Sanskrit.
- 93 *Gaushalas* are protective shelters for cows in India. *Gaushalas* focus on treating cows well because of their religious significance in Hinduism and consequent cultural sensitivity towards their welfare.
- 94 Sanjeev Nayyar opines that Indian government will be like the British if Hindus are not allowed to manage their own temples and is critical that the tradition that started with the British wanting to control Indian temples’ riches continues even today. The Print, 8 April, 2019 11:12.
- 95 Venkateswara Temple is situated at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, India. It is the richest temple in the world in terms of donations received and wealth and is visited by about 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims daily, while on special occasions and festivals, like the annual *Brahmotsavam*, the number of pilgrims shoots up to 500,000, making it the most-visited holy place in the world.
- 96 Vaishno Devi is a Hindu temple in Katra, Indian, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- 97 Sources of revenue for the temples include donations by the devotees in the form of cash; gold and silver; jewellery; sale of tickets for different *sevas* (special rituals), like *archana*, *alankaras*, *abhishekasetc*; sale of *prasad*; tickets for *darshan*; etc.
- 98 The amount payable to any religious, educational, or charitable institution under section 32 or 49 of the Act shall be paid to the trustee, manager, or other person in charge of the institution already on the records.
- 99 Notified institutions are temples that come under the Religious and Endowment Department.
- 100 The *anna-daan* scheme was initiated in 1990–91, and grants are sanctioned for various purposes. Specific to *anna-daan*, separate guidelines for implementation of the *anna-daan* scheme were issued.

- 101 Archaeological Department under the Ministry of Culture is responsible for the conservation and preservation of cultural monuments in the country. Hence it takes over temples of archeological significance.
- 102 Temples maintain cows in the temple premises, and such facilities are called *goshalas*.
- 103 This project was conceived in 2015 when Mr. Sanjeev Patil, CEO of Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai, Maharashtra, stated that foreign pilgrims are sceptical about eating the *prasada*, suspecting its cleanliness. Later, this was conveyed to Probodh Halde, the all India president of AFSTI. Halde came up with the BHOG concept involving FSSAI. The first pilot project was started at Siddhivinayak Temple.
- In 2016, the first workshop organised by FSSAI was conducted in Delhi in which all stakeholders (health ministers, representatives from well-known temples like Meenakshi Temple in Tamil Nadu and Somnath Temple in Gujarat, and officials from AFSTI) participated. The implementation of the project is the responsibility of both the state government and the FSDA.

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# Anna-daan

## Jain Agamas theory and practice

Pratibha Parshwanath and N. Latha

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*Eating constitutes the greatest obstacle to self-control; it gives rise to indolence.*

Mahavir

### 3.1 Jainism: the background

Jainism is one of the oldest religions in India. In Jainism, the main goal of human life is to liberate the soul from its *karmic* bondage and the miserable cycle of birth and death. To achieve this, Jainism has given to mankind the original, independent, scientific, distinct, and unique system of philosophy encompassing metaphysics, anthology, logic, and ethics. These originated from Lord Adinath, the first *tīrthankar*<sup>1,2,3</sup> till the 24th *tīrthankar* Lord Mahavira by their *kevala gyan*.<sup>4</sup>

In Jain philosophy, the doctrine of *karma*<sup>5</sup> occupies a significant place and is linked with a universal chain of cause and effect. According to Jain philosophy, *karmas* are the consequence of good and bad actions of mind, body, and speech, and passions like anger, pride, greed, and deceit. The *karmas* simply cover the soul's space points like ashes cover the fire but do not destroy the inherent nature of the soul. The actions which promote spiritual advancement lead to the influx of auspicious *karma* known as the bondage of *punya karma*<sup>6</sup> (*shubh karma*), and inauspicious *karmas* are responsible for the bondage of *paap karma*<sup>7</sup> (*ashubh karma*).

The *karmas* are responsible for different states of the soul's existence, and suffering from endless births and deaths is called *samsara*.<sup>8</sup> *Samsara* is a worldly life characterised by continuous rebirths and reincarnations in various realms of existence. *Samsara* is described as mundane existence, full of suffering and misery, and hence is considered undesirable and worth renunciation. The *samsara* is without any beginning, and the soul finds itself in bondage with its *karma* since the beginningless time. The Jain *karmic* theory attaches great responsibility to individual actions and eliminates any reliance on some supposed existence of divine grace or retribution. *Moksh*<sup>9</sup> is the only liberation from *samsara*.

To understand Jain Agamas' (Literature) perspective of *anna-daan*, one should have a good understanding of the theoretical background of Jain philosophy. Hence, we undertook an exhaustive study of literature on the topic comprising Jain Agamas like *Rathnakarandaka Shravakachara*, *Tatthvartha Sutra*, and *Dravyasangraha*, which were written by well-known Jain *acharyas* Samanthabhadra Umaswamy and Nemichandra, respectively, which provide a theoretical framework on understanding of Jain philosophy and ethics, *daan*, *anna-daan*, and their significance in Jainism.<sup>10</sup>

*Anna-daan* in Jainism is a kind of *ahaar-daan*,<sup>11</sup> one among the four types of *daan*. In Jain scriptures, it is described as a virtue and one of the essential duties of the followers of Jainism. Even though Jain doctrine holds that no one can achieve liberation in this corrupt time, the Jain religious goal is the complete perfection and purification of the soul. This occurs only when the soul is in a state of eternal liberation (*moksh*) from corporeal bodies. Jain renunciants do not seek immediate enlightenment; instead, through the disciplined and meritorious practice of non-violence, they pursue a human rebirth that will bring them nearer to that state.

### **Rathnatraya: the path of purification**

As Jain philosophy indicates that the ultimate objective of human life is to make the soul pure from *karmic* bondage, the ascetic physical and meditative discipline of the monk is the means to attain omniscience and thus liberation – the *moksh*. *Yoga*<sup>12</sup> is the cultivation of true knowledge of reality, faith in the teachings of the *tirthankaras* (spiritual teacher), and pure conduct; it is thus intimately connected to the Three Jewels called *rathnatrayas*, that is, right faith, right knowledge, and right practice, which are also known as *samyak darshan*, *samyak gyan*, and *samyak charitra*, respectively. These *rathnatrayas* are based on the ethical principles *ahimsa*, the non-violence, and *aparigraha*, the non-possession.

### **Samyak darshan (Right faith)**

In the *Tatthvartha sutra*,<sup>13,14</sup> it is said that “*tathvārtha shraddhānām samyak darshanam*”, which means that belief in the existence of the true nature of the substance of the universe is the right faith or right belief. Belief in six substances (or *dravyas*) like *dharma* (medium of motion), *adharma* (medium of rest), *akash* (space), and *kaal* (time); seven *tathvas*, like *jīva* (animate), *ajīva* (inanimate), *asrava* (influx of *karmasrava* into soul), *karma bandha* (bondage of soul by karmic matter), *Samvara* (stopping influx of *karmasrava*), and *Nirjara* (removal of existing karmic matter); and adding *paap* and *punya* to the seven *tathvas* is known as *nava padārtha* (Nine Fundamentals). Belief in this is the right faith according to Shri Nemichandra *Siddhanta Chakravarthi*<sup>15</sup> in the book *Bruhat Dravya Sangra*.

### **Samyak gyan (right knowledge)**

Shri Nemichandra Siddhartha Chandravarthi holds the view that *samyak gyan* or perfect knowledge is full comprehension of the real nature of the soul and matter free from doubt perversity and indefiniteness.

### **Samyak charitra (right conduct)**

The seeker of right faith and right knowledge must proceed on the path of right conduct. Right conduct implies a life of self-discipline through self-restraint as against a life of self-indulgence. Right faith gives confidence, right knowledge clears the mind, and right conduct helps in attaining equanimity, non-attachment, and self-restraint in mind, body, and speech. Hence, the Jain philosophy has laid great emphasis on right conduct, which promotes ethical actions by destroying all passionate activities like attachment, infatuation,

evasion, and hatred and leading to non-attachment. The good and ethical actions like compassion, kindness, and a spiritually disciplined way of life are integrated nature of *Rathnatraya* leading to the liberation of the soul from *karmic* bondage and moving towards self-purification.

The objective of destruction of *karmas* can be achieved by observing rules of conduct in the form of five great vows: *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *achourya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (celibacy), and *aparigraha* (non-possession), which are considered as ethical principles and are observed by followers of Jainism.

### **Chaturvidha Sangh**

The followers of Jainism are divided into fourfold orders, which are known as *chaturvidha sangh*. They are *muni* (monk or ascetic) in the *Digambar* sect,<sup>16</sup> *sadhu* (always a male) in *Shwetambar*,<sup>17</sup> *aryika* in the *Digambar* sect, *sadhvi* in the *Shwetambar* sect (always a woman), *shravaka* (a laymen), and *shravaki* (a laywomen). The laymen and women together constitute *shravakaru*, the laypeople. The first two groups belong to ascetics who have renounced their worldly possessions and observe five vows completely and are called *mahavratis*. The last two observe five vows in a limited way and are called *anuvratīs*.

### **Jain ethical principles**

Jain ethics is the most glorious part of Jain philosophy because of its simplicity and its outstanding characteristics. The ethical code of Jainism is based on five vows known as *anuvratas* (minor vows) for laypeople and *mahavratas* (major vows) for ascetics. The reason for observing the minor vows is to look after their family and adjust themselves to the social, economic, and political conditions of the society in which they live. But the ascetics have no such obligations since they have sacrificed all material possessions and pursue a spiritual path for salvation. The purpose of observing vows either by the ascetics or the laypeople is to prevent the influx of *karma*. But directly and indirectly, the observance of these vows acts as positive implications on both individuals and society in the form of compassion and kindness.

Five vows (*anuvratas*): To prevent *karmic* particles from sticking to and tainting the soul, Jainism teaches five ethical duties, which it calls five vows. These come in two main forms, the *anuvratas* for Jain laypeople and *mahavratas* (major vows) for Jain mendicants. The five types of *anuvratas* are as follows:

#### **Ahimsa**

The ancient Jain scripture *Acharanga Sutra*<sup>18</sup> states that one should not cause harm to other human beings and other living beings including animals and plants. Every living creature in the universe has a soul, and no living creature has a right to kill another living creature. The aphorism *parasparopagraho jivanam* (all life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence) has been accepted as the motto of Jainism. It stresses the philosophy of non-violence and ecological harmony on which the Jain ethics and doctrine – especially the doctrines of *ahimsa* and *anekantavada* – are based.

### Satya

The basic intention of the vow of truth is the purification of the soul and removal of harm in the form of pain to self and others.

### Asteya

*Asteya* is the strict adherence to one's own possessions without the desire to acquire others'. One should remain satisfied by whatever is earned by oneself honestly.

### Brahmacharya

One should live a chaste life and abstain from sexual activities. It prohibits the consumption of items which stimulate sexual desires.

### Aparigraha

*Aparigraha* lays stress on non-attachment to material and psychological possessions, avoiding craving and greed. It prescribes limits on desires, possession of wealth, and control over sense organs. The passion of hoarding wealth, property, and objects that bind the soul from all directions is known as *parigraha*. The absence of *parigraha* is known as *aparigraha* or *parigraha parimānu*. The objective of this chapter is to explore *daan* in the overall context, and specifically how *anna-daan* is conceptualised over time in the Jainism religion, associated cultural practices, and elicit spirit/reasons for continuing *anna-daan* over time. A review of the literature was sourced from religious texts; philosophical texts situate the charity in terms of food in the Jain Agama scriptures. While the initial sections of the chapters will focus on the scriptures, the remaining sections deal with data and comparative analysis of various case studies, based on types and structures, captured across India in the current context.

## 3.2 Emerging of *daan* concept in Jainism

The Jain philosophy prescribes the five *anuvratas* for purification and liberation of the soul from *karmic* bondage for both ascetics and laypeople. The vows are like a moral code for every human being who is willing to go on this path. Among these five *anuvratas*, supreme importance is given to *ahimsa* and *aparigraha*, which are pillars of Jainism.

The concept of *parasparopagraho jivanam* (live and let live) of *ahimsa*, together with the non-attachment character of the *aparigraha* vow, prepared the ground for the followers of Jainism to adopt four kinds of *daan* known as *chaturvidha daan*.

### Chaturvidha dāan

*Ratnakaradaka Shrāvākāchāra*<sup>19</sup> mentions four kinds of *daan*

Āhāroushadhayorapyupakaranāvāsa sayōshcha Dānēna |  
Vaiyyavrutyam Bruvathe Chaturātmavēna chaturasraha ||

The fourfold charity known as *chaturvidha daan* is

- *Ahaar-daan* – Gift of food
- *Aushadh daan* – Gift of medicine
- *Abhay daan* – Gift of shelter for protection from fear
- *Shastra daan* – Gift of spiritual books to impart knowledge of the nature of reality

### **Ahaar-daan (gift of food)**

It is a gift of food to the ascetics, *vratikas* (the laypeople strictly observing vows), and needy people. In the scripture *Rathnakarandaka Shravakachara*,<sup>20</sup> it is mentioned that among all kinds of *daan*, *ahaar-daan* is the most important *daan* from the point of view of ascetics, *Vratikas*,<sup>21</sup> and needy people. Ascetics give up all types of possessions and become *aparigrahi*.<sup>22</sup> For their spiritual upliftment, the ascetics regularly practice fasting, meditation, austerity, and many more such spiritual activities. In *chaturvidha sangh*, it is the responsibility of *shrāvaka* and *shrāvaki* to give proper and *satvik* food to ascetics and worthy people to help them remain committed to the spiritual path. From the socio-economic perspective, offering food to needy people is also very significant, which is mentioned in various scriptures.

### **Aushadh daan (gift of medicines)**

In the scripture *Rathnakarandaka Shravakachara*, there is a detailed mention of *Aushadh daan*, that is, donating medicines to the ascetics and needy people. This type of *daan* plays a major role in reducing all kinds of diseases and keeping the ascetics and *vratikas* focused on spiritual activities, such as practising vows, meditation, austerity, fasting, and reading spiritual books.

### **Shastra daan (gift of spiritual books)**

*Shastra daan* means the distribution of holy books to ascetics and others to spread spiritual knowledge. In Jainism, prominence is given to the acquisition of spiritual knowledge to discriminate between the good and the bad, *dharma*<sup>23</sup> and *adharma*,<sup>24</sup> *paap*<sup>25</sup> and *punya*,<sup>26</sup> and to walk on the righteous path. Many people donate books to *Grantha Bhandaras*<sup>27</sup> maintained at temples and to the ascetics regularly and on special religious occasions. At present, Jains are helping to impart temporal and secular knowledge either by building educational institutions with their own funds or by contributing large sums of money to the existing public institutions.

### **Abhay daan (gift of shelter for protection from fear)**

The *ahimsa* slogan *live and let live*, *parasparopagraho jivanam* encouraged laypeople to do *abhay daan* where *abhay* means to provide space to people, especially ascetics and *vratikas* who are meditating, reading spiritual books, and performing other activities of the spiritual path. *Munis* and *aryikas* renounce *samsara* and are roaming in different parts of India throughout the year except *chaturmas*<sup>28</sup> to spread the philosophy of the

Jain religion. It is the responsibility of the laypeople to protect them from extreme natural calamities. Most of the Jain temples have *munitiyagi nivas*<sup>29</sup> for ascetics and *dharmshala*<sup>30</sup> for devotees.

While in the spiritual context, *abhay daan* is to protect the life of ascetics and *vratikas*, its broader meaning is to protect the life of all living beings or offerings made from compassion to anyone who deserves it, being hungry, thirsty, diseased, distressed, disabled, helpless, and the like. This is known as *karuna daan*. Hence, the Jain devotees construct and maintain *pinjrapoles*<sup>31</sup> and *goshalas*<sup>32</sup> to protect the life of birds and animals. At present, Jains take care of 12,000 *goshalas* out of a total of 16,000 in the country. In Hubli, Karnataka, Mahaveer Youth Organisation feed nearly 250 kg of wheat to 30,000 pigeons every day.

### 3.3 Daan: one among the six essential duties of Jains

In Jainism, the ultimate goal of every component of *chaturvidha sangh* is to liberate the soul from *karmic* bondage. The Jain scripture *Rathnakaradaka Shrivakachara* describes six essential duties for the laity to gain enlightenment and purity of soul.

- *Devpooja* (worship of God): Worship of *Jina* (those few individuals who have achieved enlightenment) which has the potency of destroying sinful *karms*.
- *Gurupasti* (veneration of preceptors): One should always offer veneration and service to the preceptors.
- *Svadhyay* (self-study of scriptures): *Svadhyay* is one of the instruments for acquiring true knowledge for liberal beings.
- *Saiyam* (self-restraint): Self-restraint is defined as the practice of control over the senses and mind, along with an attitude of compassion towards all living beings.
- *Tap* (austerities): *Tap* is the understanding of penances to shed the *karms* off.
- *Daan* (giving): It is the renunciation of wealth or property for the benefit of the self (soul liberation) or other living beings.

The two other essential duties prescribed for the laypeople in scriptures *Shrivakachara*<sup>33</sup> of *Acharya* Umaswami and *Rayanasara*<sup>34</sup> of *Acharya* Kunda are:

- Fourfold *daan* to the worthy people
- Daily worship of the true deity, scriptures, and preceptors

Apart from these, the Jain *Agamas*<sup>35</sup> such as *Dharma Sangraha*, *Shraddha Vidhi*, *Upadesa Prasada*, *Shravaka Pragnapti*, and *Shrivakachara* describe the six daily duties of laypeople. Hence, in Jainism, *daan* is one of the essential duties of its lay followers whether belonging to the *Digambar* or *Shwetambar* sect.

#### Daan in the Jain context

In the Jain context, *daan* is a religious gifting. It is defined as the art of giving something to worthy and needy people without expecting anything in return from them. The survival of the Jain community is dependent upon *daan* because Jain ascetics must obtain all their requisites, including food, from laypeople to move on the spiritual path. This

religious gifting to ascetics can increase the *punya karma* (pious deeds) and the destruction of *paap karma* (bad deeds) of the donor. The Jain scripture like *Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara* has provided the spiritual benefits of the donor in the *shiksha vrata*,<sup>36</sup> the vow of *atithi samvibhāga*.<sup>37</sup>

### **Description of daan under the shikshavrata<sup>38</sup> in the form of atithi-samvibhag**

For self-purification and for the destruction of *karma* apart from *anuvratas*, the Jaina ethics also provides for *shikshavratas* known as *educative/disciplinary vows*. *Āchārya Samanthabhadra* in *Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara* has explained four kinds of *shikshavrata* (educative vows) in the order *desavakasika*,<sup>39</sup> *Samayika*,<sup>40</sup> *Proshadhopavosa*,<sup>41</sup> and *Vaiyyavrutya*.<sup>42</sup> These vows teach the ascetic way of life to the householders.

*Vaiyyavrutya* also called *atithi-samvibhag* is a vow of hospitality to righteous persons like ascetics and needy people who have religious tendencies. This is a limited charity vow. One should give food, clothes, medicine, and other articles of their own possessions to monks, nuns, and pious people. The food offered should be pure and with reverence. Services should be offered to the ascetics and the needy to help them to attain self-purification without any obstacles. There are five components in the process of *daan* mentioned in *Atithisam vibhag*.

### **Recipients or donees**

There are three kinds of donees: *Uttam* (Maximal), *Madhyam* (Medial), and *Jaghanya* (Minimal). The sky-clad monks, nuns, and saints (practitioners of the path of righteousness) are the maximal donee. The medial donees are the laypeople practising vows. The minimal donees are the needy persons who have the right faith without vows. The aforementioned three are considered *supatra* (trustworthy donees). The *daan* should not be given to *kupātra* and *apātra*. *Kupatra* are deficient donees who are devoid of righteousness but practising repetitive chants and austerity. *Apatra* are unworthy donees devoid of righteousness, good conduct, and vows. *Daan* given to *supatra* increases the *punya karm* and to *kupatra*<sup>43</sup> and *apatra*<sup>44</sup> increases *paap karm* of donors.

### **Qualities of donors**

*Acharya Samanthabhadra* mentioned the following seven qualities of donors known as *bhav* (sentiment) to get spiritual benefits

- *Aihikaphalanapeksha*: Donor must not expect any reward in exchange for gifts given by him/her.
- *Kshanti*: The donor should give calmly without anger in this pious act.
- *Muditva*: The donor must possess the feeling of happiness/pleasure at the *time* of giving *daan*.
- *Nikshapatata*: The donor should give sincerely without deceit.
- *Anasuyatva*: The donor should have no feelings of jealousy.
- *Avishaditva*: The donor should not have any feelings of sorrow or repentance.
- *Nirahankaritva*: The donor should not have any sense of pride in giving *daan*.

The donor can develop such qualities for *daan* only when he is detached from worldly possessions.

### **Methods of donation**

All the *daans* mentioned in *chaturvidha daan* should be given to the recipients with the utmost respect, adhering to the ninefold devotion known as *navadhabhakti*,<sup>45</sup> which includes a statement about the purity of foods.

### **Donating materials**

Donating food to *satpatra*, especially *Digambar muni* (ascetic) and *aryika*, is the highest meritorious activity for the spiritual benefit of donors since the recipients live a life of renunciation and have food only once a day.

### **Fruition of donation**

*Daan* offered to the *uttama* or worthy donees yields heaven and shows the path of salvation to the donor. All four kinds of *daans* to *uttama* are meritorious activities for the spiritual upliftment of the donor. But *kupaatra* or *apaatra* are eligible to get only food donations, and other kinds of donations to them will add *paap karma* to the right faith donor since there is a possibility of misuse.

### **Description of daan in Dashalakshana Dharma<sup>46</sup>**

The popular festival of Jains for self-purification is through observation of ten universal virtues which is celebrated as *Dashalakshna Parva*<sup>47</sup> by *Digambars* and *Paryushana Parva*<sup>48</sup> by *Shwetambars*, respectively, every year in the auspicious month of *Bhadrapada*<sup>49</sup> of the Indian calendar. It is the festival of forgiveness and fasting, representing the tenfold facets of *dharma*, including forgiveness, modesty, simplicity, purity, truthfulness, self-restraint, penance, renunciation, non-attachment/non-possessiveness, and celibacy. These virtues are universal and do not belong to any sect. There is a need to practise these by all the people in their everyday life. Among these, the virtues of renunciation (giving up the love for internal and external possessions) and non-attachment (embracing the pure state of non-possession) give greater scope for *daan* in Jainism.

Hence, *ahimsa*, *aaparigraha* of *anuvratas*, *atithi-samvibhag* of *shikshavratas* and *uttam tyag*, and *uttam akinchanya dharma* of *Paryushan parva* motivated the Jain community to do *daan*. In *Rathnakarandaka Shravakachara*, it is explained that the rich can help the needy by doing four kinds of charities, and for that, every day, they should keep aside 10% of their income. Against this backdrop, we study the significance of *anna-daan* from the view of Jain spirituality and analyse the Jain way of doing *anna-daan*.

## **3.4 Review of literature**

Literature proposed for review included *Agamas*, published research books, articles written by both Indian and foreign authors, and information gleaned from the internet. However, it was discovered that only research information was available on the practice



of *anna-daan* in places of worship. Various Jain scriptures give elaborate accounts of the duties and practices of Jain laypeople. When we examine the significance of charity or *daan* in Jain scriptures, the early canonical text *Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara* of Acharya Samantabhadra, a Kannada-translated book by Mirji Annarāya, minutely describes the four kinds of *chaturvidha daan* and its spiritual significance. It is mentioned that all these *daans* are meritorious and will lead to the rebirth of the layman in heaven or *bhoga-bhumi*,<sup>50</sup> a place of enjoyment. This scripture further mentions six essential duties for laypeople. *Daan* is a religious gifting and is a meritorious act which causes an influx of *punya karma* for the donor. Even giving a small quantity of *daan* to worthy people like ascetics and *vratikas* is like a tiny seed of fig which if sown in good soil and produces a tree which gives magnificent shade. According to Hampa Nagrajaiah,<sup>51</sup> *daan* is an obligatory duty of all Jains irrespective of *Digambar* and *Shwetamber*. The importance of *daan* is emphasised in philosophical and literary texts.

*Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara* and other canonical texts elaborately clarify what constitutes appropriate *daan* and clearly lay down that *daan* should be given to *supatra* and not *kupatra* or *apatra*. As for *supatra*, *Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara* of Acharya Samantabhadra and *Jaina Bharati*<sup>52</sup> of Ganini Gnānamathi specify that ascetics, *vratikas*, and pious laymen are the righteous persons and that *daan* would cause an influx of positive *karma* for the donor only if given to these recipients.

The Jaina philosophical ethics are *ahimsa* and *aparigraha*, which are considered basic pillars of Jainism. There is this Jain icon depicting a cow and lion drinking from the same tub of water which is titled *jiyo aur jinedo* (*live and let live*), *parasparopagraho jivanam* (*all life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence*), reflecting the Jain philosophy on life. We are for others and others are for us. This sentiment, which emerges from the *ahimsa* principle echoed in the Jain script *Tathvartha Sutra* of HH Acharya Umaswamy, upholds equality of the souls of all living beings. *Aparigraha* is non-possessions, which describes that external material possessions are not permanent and prohibits the economic idea of unlimited possessions. More possessions mean more violence, which leads to more *paap karma*. *Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara* also prescribes that 10% of a person's income should be utilised for charity. As a result of this, Jain followers donate generously to gain positive *karma*.

In analysing the giving of alms, Nalini Balbir emphasised that the Jainism practice of laypeople offering food or alms to ascetics is a basic aspect of the broader concept of giving *daan*. Even now, it is the most valuable practice from a spiritual point of view both in the *Digambar* and *Shwetambar* sects. In Jainism, since the ancient time, the propagation of ethics and values to Jain followers through story telling has been a common practice. Offering food to Jain ascetics and needy people is central to Jain beliefs, and the values and practices relating to food are spread through various stories and scriptures. Literature analysed the negative influx of *karma* if proper food is not given to Jain ascetics.

From the literature, offering *ahaar-daan/anna-daan* to the Jain ascetic is a service of the highest merit, whereas providing *anna-daan* to needy people is associated with compassion known as *karuna daan*. Hence, Jains follow two different value systems in *ahaar-daan*. The *moksh marg* (path of liberation) focuses on ascetics, on the one hand, and the more worldly *shravaka* ethics of the lay practitioners on the other. The rich people can provide both services to ascetics and laymen.

The Jain epigraphs and other records show that the tradition of *ahara-daan* for Jain ascetics and *anna-daan* for needy people in the place of worship which was attached to

the monasteries was prevalent even in the early medieval period. This was registered in gifts for the Jaina ascetics and monasteries in Karnataka during the 5th to 12th centuries. Ram Bhusan Prasad Singh (1975, 2008)<sup>53</sup> concluded that a regular supply of food for the Jain ascetics, as well as the sick, poor, and destitute, was another important function of the Jain monasteries. The Kadamba copper plate inscriptions of the middle of the 5th to 6th centuries speak of the provision of food in the monasteries. Copper plates also show that donors took special care to provide food to the follower of *Digambar* Jain ascetics.

The settled monks at monasteries erected and renovated Jain monasteries and added charity houses to them for the benefit of the Jain ascetics, as well as sick and poor persons. Hence, settled monks possessed both movable and immovable economic resources which were used for the renovation of Jaina *basadis* (religious places of worship), food for ascetics, needy, and poor persons. These properties were gifted by kings, queens, royal merchants, and pious devotees. The gifts were in the form of agricultural land, gold, oil mills, gardens, and cash for the maintenance of monasteries attached to temples and educational institutions.

From epigraphical records, it was found that during the early period, food distribution was practised every day in all temples and in other places. The epigraph of the year 1145 refers to the erection of the Jain Temple by Devaraja, minister of Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana. The king granted him land for the purpose and funded the free distribution of food at the temple. The Nanje Devaragudda stone inscription of Sompur, Hassan district, mentions an interesting account of food distribution at the *Abhinava Shanthideva* Jain Temple in Dora Samudra (now Halabedu). The Hoysala king gifted two villages to his teacher Vajra Nandi Siddhanta Deva in 1192 for free distribution of food there. Elaborate provisions were made for the maintenance of *daan shala* (charity houses) in Jain monasteries which were later called *mutts* headed by settled monks known as *bhattarakas*. Hence, monasteries played a major role in rendering valuable services to Jain ascetics and providing relief to the poor during the early medieval period.

These inscriptions give no account of the practice of *anna-daan* at *basadi* and other places of worship during the late medieval period, which coincided with the decline of Jainism. Padmanābha Jaini (2014) in the book *Jaina Path of Purification* mentions that Jain communities in both north and south fell upon rather hard times during the 12th and 13th centuries (p. 306). Shantinatha Dibbada (2003) in his research study mentioned the decline of Jainism after the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD due to the spread of *Vaishnavism*<sup>54</sup> and *Saivism*.<sup>55</sup> Most Jain temples lost their royal patronage. Some *basadis* and other Jain places of worship were converted into temples of other religions or demolished. Vasanthakumari (2012) in her book *Socio-Religious Life of Jains during Mysore Arasas* (kings) period refers to a report in which the British scholar Francis Buchanan (who had come to India to study the economic condition of Jains of the Mysore region) mentions that the British and Tippu Sultan used *basadis* to store arms and ammunitions. This led to the decline of the practice of *anna-daan*, which became confined to a few *mutts* in South India.

Since ancient times as traders, bankers, businessmen, and moneylenders, Jain entrepreneurs dominated all principal ports and commercial marts of north and west India and southwest coastal regions. Padmanabh S. Jaini (1979, 2014)<sup>56</sup> in the book highlighted Max Weber's statement (1958, 2000) that the honesty and wealth of the Jain traders were widely acknowledged and that more than half of the trade of India passed through their hands.

In *Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara*, it is mentioned that it is the responsibility of rich people to take care of poor people. However, the Jain entrepreneurs as philanthropists were inspired by the vow of *ahimsa*, *aparigraha*, and *karuna daan* and involved themselves in uplifting the masses during emergencies such as famine, flood, earthquake, and pandemic. The individual entrepreneur of the 17th century, Virjivōra, distributed food to the masses affected by the severe famine of 1630–32. Various newspapers and websites reveal that various Jain entrepreneurs and their organisations and other Jain organisations involved themselves in distributing food packets and food kits during emergencies. Hence, the objective of the research study is to explore the age-old practice of *anna-daan* in the Jain community with respect to changing circumstances over time.

### 3.5 Anna-daan – concept and definition

#### **Rationality behind anna-daan**

In Jainism, as stated earlier, the objective of every human being is to liberate the soul from *karmic* bondage, and liberation is possible only in human life. A person taking birth as a human being is the fruit of his *daan* and other good work that he has done in his previous births. The doctrine of *karma* is linked with a universal chain of cause and effect. Every living being is responsible for his own actions, and the fruits of those good and bad actions put him in the vicious circle of birth and death called *samsara*. However, the *karma* doctrine does not promote any kind of bad actions; instead, it always promotes good acts like compassion, humanitarianism, and philanthropy to all kinds of living beings.

To enhance good *karma*, one should cultivate *chaturvidha daan*. Among them, *ahaar-daan* is foremost. The scripture *Ratnakarandaka Shravakachara* minutely explains the benefits of *ahara-daan* to ascetics and needy people. The donor can take birth in *bhoga-bhumi* – a region of enjoyment wherein people are busy enjoying, as all their worldly desires are fulfilled by the wish-fulfilling trees. They have or can acquire right belief and right knowledge but are unable to practise right conduct. Therefore, they invariably go to heavens in their next birth but are not able to achieve liberation. Apart from this, the positive slogans of *live and let live* and *parasparopagraho jivanam* of *ahimsa* doctrine make provision for the right of all kinds of living beings to live. Hence, *ahar-daan* is significant from both spiritual and humanitarian points of view.

#### **Etiquettes of eating**

The Jain scripture *Ratnakarandaka Shrāvakachara* mentions basic guidelines for eating (what to eat, what not to eat, how and where to eat). The heart of Jainism is *ahimsa*, which made Jains strict vegetarians, forbidding them to consume living beings with *Ekendriya* (one sense organ), *Dvindriya* (two sense organ), *Tindriya* (three sense organ), *Chaturendriya* (four sense organ), and *Panchendriya* (five sense organ) to prevent injury and pain to them.

#### **Rules of the Jain diet**

The food choices of Jains are based on the value of *ahimsa* since it is a known fact that more *hinsa* means more *karma* is injected, which disturbs the spiritual path of both ascetics and lay followers.

- Traditionally, Jains have been prohibited from drinking unfiltered water. During the ancient period, wells and *baolis/bavadis*<sup>57</sup> were sources of water. Even today, it is practised by some strict *munis*,<sup>58</sup> *Aryikas*,<sup>59</sup> and *vratikas*. These ascetic groups use a piece of cloth to filter water and return the micro-organisms to the original body of water.
- Avoid consumption of underground root vegetables like onion, garlic, potato, carrot, beetroot, sweet potato, radish, and the like to prevent harming the micro-organisms. Strict observers are also not supposed to eat herbs.
- Jains in their everyday life make every effort not to harm plants. Age-old inscriptions describe the same sentiment. Jains avoid using green leafy plants, tubes, sprouts, and vegetables on the day of *Ashtami*,<sup>60</sup> *Chaturdashi*,<sup>61</sup> *Ashtanhika parv*,<sup>62</sup> and *Dashalakshana parv* in deference to *ahimsa* and *abhay daan*.
- Lacto vegetarianism is mandatory for all Jains out of respect for non-violence.
- Jains do not hurt even the smallest of insects or animals while preparing or partaking of meals.
- The entire Jain eating etiquette is directed toward the protection of the environment and the life of minute organisms to uphold *ahimsa*. Since time immemorial, cooking and eating food at night has been prohibited among the Jains for two reasons: Firstly, small insects get attracted to lamps and fire and perish, and, secondly, the digestion capacity of humans reduces considerably after sunset. Indigestion affects health, which in turn affects the spiritual path. Hence, Jains eat food between sunrise and sunset.
- Strict Jains do not consume food which has been stored overnight due to suspected growth of micro-organisms. Many do not consume curd, *idli*, and *dosa* batter, which are prepared through culture.
- Jain diet is *satvik*, which means that it is based on the qualities of goodness, lightness, and happiness. On the other hand, onions, eggs, plants, and garlic are considered *tamasik*,<sup>63</sup> as they are believed to have a quality of darkness, lethargy, and a putrid smell. Consumption of *tamasik* food arouses libido, which in turn affects the spiritual path of the person in question.
- Jain *Agamas* advise that food should be eaten in silence and sitting mode. Before and after eating the food, the ascetics and *vratikas* chant *Namokar Mantra* (a most significant mantra and first prayer recited by the Jains) and also seek forgiveness from all living beings which may have been impacted during food preparation and consumption.
- Jain *Agamas* allow the partaking of the *satvik* food<sup>64</sup> prepared at the home of a Jain family only, and not at hotel or in the house of non-vegetarians.
- The Jain cuisine is therefore an *ahimsa*-based and spiritually motivated diet for healthy life.

### 3.6 Anna-daan: A psychological perspective

The spiritual components of Jainism motivate the Jain followers of both *Digambar* and *Shwetambar* sects to lead a simple life and involve themselves in offering food to ascetics regularly and needy people in case of emergencies. Jain followers believe that among the four kinds of *daans*, serving *ahaar-daan* is a pious charity. Serving *ahaar-daan* to worthy people like spiritual seekers and ascetics and *anna-daan* as a basis of *karuna daan*, a gift

of compassion to anyone who deserves it, is a fortune for them. The devotees who donate for *anna-daan* either in cash or kind with dedication and devotion believe that they receive blessings from deities. From a spiritual point of view of the ascetic groups and the societal point of view, the poor and needy can get food. The scripture *Rathnakarandaka Shrāvākāchāra* mentions: *Do daān for needy people, which develops sēva bhav (service motto).*

### **Ahaar-daan (anna-daan): theory and practice**

*Ahaar-daan* is first and foremost among the *chaturvidha daan*, and sharing it is an exemplary act. Jains believe that liberation of the soul can be attained by offering food to Jain ascetics, *vratikas*, and needy people. The scriptures repeatedly mention that offering food to hungry ascetics is a noble act on the part of the donor and can shorten his birth cycle. The ascetics are held in so much reverence that if they enter a village or town, they are offered food first. It is only after they have finished eating that the donors can offer food as *prasad* (food offered to the deity in religious places) to local devotees. According to Jain philosophy, the tradition of offering food and receiving food is associated with *karma*. It means every living being will get food based on their own *karma*, and those who have good *karma* can get food, and it is applicable to all types of living beings. Jain *Agamas*<sup>65</sup> mention the importance of *ahara-daān* which was practised and is still being practised by a large number of Jain followers.

### **3.7 Anna-daan in Jain tirthakshetras – an overview of current practices**

This section outlines an overview of current practices of *anna-daan* in Jain places of worship called the Jain *tirthakshetras*. Since ancient times, the *basati* (Jain temples) were places of worship as centres of *pathashala*,<sup>66</sup> *dharmashala*,<sup>67</sup> *annasatras*,<sup>68</sup> in addition to religious rituals, educational, cultural, and social activities. Devotees believe that these sacred places show the path to salvation. As a result, a large number of ascetics and devotees throng these places throughout the year, as well as on special occasions such as *Mahavīr Jayanti*,<sup>69</sup> religious *Aradhana*, *Shravanmas*, and *Navaratri*. They were all offered *satvik* food during their visit and stay in *tirthakshetras*. *Mutts*<sup>70</sup> at *tirthakshetras* run *gurukulas*<sup>71</sup> even today, imparting both secular and spiritual education, as well as offering free food to students. Another interesting practice is that of buying rotis by the devotees from roti makers or nearby commercial *bhojanalayas*<sup>72</sup> to distribute among the poor and *doli* lifters<sup>73</sup> who carry devotees to the top of the hill.

### **Anna-daan during Mahamastakabhisheka at Shravanabelagola**

The *Mahamastakabhisheka* refers to the *abhishek* (anointment) of Jain images. It is an important Jain religious festival which is held once in 12 years in different parts of India and Karnataka where a huge Lord Bahubali or *tīrhankara* statue is located. In Karnataka, Lord Bahubali's images have been located in four places since ancient times (Shravanabelagola, Gommatagiri, Karkala, and Venuru) and more recently at Dharmasthala (1982) and Kanakagiri Kshetra (2017). In all these places, the anointment

of the Lord Bahubali is conducted once every 12 years in the presence of a large gathering of ascetics, devotees, and volunteers. Food for these people is organised by the *mutt/trust*.

Accordingly, the world-famous *Mahamastakabhisheka* of Lord Bahubali at Shravanabelagola was performed in February 2018. It was a mega event which was attended by ascetics, devotees, and volunteers from all over India and abroad. To manage the crowd at mealtimes, the *Mahamastakabhisheka* food committee under the leadership and directions of HH Swastishri Bhattaraka Swamiji had opened counters for VIPs, North Indians, South Indians, volunteers, *pooja* performers, police staff, media, and the general public. These counters served a variety of hygienic Jain *satvik*, tasty food to all, irrespective of caste, creed, or religion. During the event, as many as 5,000–100,000 persons per day were served food at each counter. In addition, special *ahara-daan* halls were set up for ascetics who were served food by devotees. The challenge was to avoid wastage of food and maintain discipline and cleanliness in the dining halls and at the counters. This was well managed by the volunteers, scouts, and guides wing. The Jain *mutt* had received a huge quantity of food grains from donors across India and abroad.

### **Anna-daan during Mahamastakabhisheka at Dharmasthala**

Dharmasthala is a place of worship for Hindus, as well as Jains, where a 39-foot-high Lord Bahubali was installed by Dharmadhikari Shri D. Veerendra Heggade<sup>74</sup> and family. The *Mahamastakabhisheka*<sup>75</sup> event at Dharmasthala was performed in February 2019, which attracted more than 20,000 devotees and Jain ascetics who came to watch the glory of *Mahamastakabhisheka* of Lord Bahubali. Hygienic and quality Jain food was offered to all the visitors three times a day.

## **3.8 Anna-daan initiatives**

### **Natural and manmade emergencies**

During natural and manmade disasters such as tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, lockdowns during COVID-19, and landslides which leave millions of people homeless and without food, informal Jain institutions and individual philanthropists play a dominant role in helping the affected people.

**On the lines of corporate social responsibility: An ancient initiative.** The purpose of a similar initiative is to give back to the community what we have taken from it. The Jain community has deep-rooted philosophy, ideology, value system, and culture within the framework of transcendent ideology. In this community, most of the entrepreneurs and traders are observed to be strongly governed and guided by the complex and multi-layer value system of the philosophy and high-level motivation to take up various commercial, as well as philanthropical activities, for a better society.

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility among Jain entrepreneurs is not new. Many Jain epigraphs show that the people belonging to the upper strata and mercantile group of Jain society made large donations. They made their wealth available for larger use. The reason behind this magnanimity was their belief in *chaturvidha daan*, *ahimsa*, doctrine of *karma*, and *aparigraha*. They led austere lives, eschewing greed and accumulation of wealth.

They deployed their resources for setting up dispensaries and almshouses throughout India for the welfare of human beings and animals. A 5th-century Chinese traveller Fa-Hein was astonished to see hospitals and other charitable institutions offering free services. The traveller remarked on the influence of Jainism upon the people. The concern for social responsibility was reflected in the conduct of Virjivōra of Surat, a great 17th-century merchant of India.

Even today, Jain entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial organisations have become global organisations, establishing their branches all over the world, committed to doing social services and spreading the uniqueness of Jain philosophy among others. One such organisation is JITO (Jain International Trade Organization). It is a global organisation practising the philosophy of compassion towards all living beings. As a part of Corporate Social Responsibility, JITO Bengaluru launched the *Mānav Sēva* project to feed the poor and the needy during lockdowns due to COVID-19 in 2020. JITO distributed 46,000 packed meals to the needy and another 24,000 packets to stranded migrant workers in different parts of Bengaluru every day from 29 March to 3 May 2020. A total of more than 11.25 lakh meals were distributed. At the palace grounds, the JITO set up a master kitchen managed by over 200 people to prepare and distribute *satvik*, quality and hygienic Jain food. This was the largest voluntary initiative during the COVID-19 crisis in India, involving more than 500 volunteers. Many other Jain organisations such as Anandji Kalyanji Trust, Ahemadabad, and Rajasthan Youth Association, to name a few, participated in the distribution of food packets daily to the needy and hungry.

### **Informal institutions**

Informal institutions are community organisations which have socially shared rules usually unwritten that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of official channels (Helmke and Levitsky, 2006). These informal institutions are merged with ethical values, beliefs morals, norms, habits, and codes of conduct. Community organisations are stepping in to help needy people during emergency situations (Table 3.1).

Karnataka Jain Association, Bengaluru: It is one of the important informal organisations in Karnataka and was actively involved in *anna-daan* during the lockdown period of COVID-19, distributing 340,009 food packets to people (within 40 km of Bengaluru) who had been deprived of their jobs. This initiative was done between 1 April and 3 May 2020 with the objective of *live and let live*. Ācharya Shanti Sagar Foundation: The Foundation launched *Jeevan Samman Mission* with the motto of *Sabka Bhojan-Sabaka Dhyana* under which it distributed 458,534 food packets and 3,770 food kits. In August 2019, the Belgavi district and the adjoining areas were completely flooded for more than 12 days. People lost their homes and standing crops. The Ācharya Shanti Sagar Foundation, with the help of local volunteers, distributed survival kits like water, food items, and 2,000 food kits consisting of food material for the marooned people. AYSG, Rajkot, supplied 30,000 chapatis daily during the first wave of COVID-19. Vidya Sanmathidas Mumukshu Seva Samiti: Under the leadership of Jain muni Ācharya Chandraprabha Sagar, his devotees distributed more than 2,500 food packets in areas surrounding Kolhapur. Funds were collected from donors with the active participation of Jain youths. Kalyanji-Anandji Trust provided lunch to 4,000–5,000 needy people in different parts of India. Some informal organisations regularly provide unlimited quantities of food to needy people at low prices. Mahavira

Table 3.1 Anna-daan by informal organisations during emergencies

Sr. no	Community organisation	Emergency situation	Number of food packets prepared	Number of food kits distributed
1	Karnataka Jain Association, Bengaluru	COVID-19	340,009 food packets from 1 April to 3 May 2020	
2	Jeevan Samman Mission, Bengaluru	COVID-19	458,534 food packets from 1 April to 3 May 2020	3,770
3	Ācharya Shanti Sagar Foundation	Flood – 2019, Maharashtra, Karnataka Border		2,000
4	Rajasthan Youth Association, Bengaluru	COVID-19		5,375
5	Vidya Sanmathi Das Mumukshu Seva Samithi, Kolhapur	Flood – 2019, Maharashtra, Karnataka Border		2,500
6	Araham Yuva Seva Group (AYSG), Rajkot, Gujarat	COVID-19	30,000 chapatis every day	
7	Anandji Kalyanji Trust, Palithana Junaghad, Ranakpur	COVID-19	4,000–5,000 per day	
8	Vidyananda Annapurna, Delhi	COVID-19	400–500 per day	

Source: Authors compilation.

Foundation, Hubballi, which runs *Rotigbar*,<sup>76</sup> provides quality food at Rs. 1 per plate to 250 to 300 needy people. The Foundation also feeds 2,000 kg of wheat to nearly 2,500 birds every day.

To understand how the process of *anna-daan* is carried out covering various aspects such as serving food and maintaining hygiene and safety, procuring raw materials, managing crowds, and administration, five case studies were carried out across India. Five *tīrhakshetras* were selected across India – namely, Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand, Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra, Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu, Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh and Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka. In Jaina, *tīrhakshētras* Annadaān is common from the age-old period.

Jain places of worship are mainly classified into two, *siddhakshetra*<sup>77</sup> and *athishayakshetra*,<sup>78</sup> and both together are known as *tīrhakshetra*.<sup>79</sup> In South India, Jain temples are called *basti* or *basadi*. *Tīrhakshetras* vary in size located in small-isolated spots to large temple cities built on mountains or hills or at their foot. The best Jain temple cities in India are Sammeda Shikharji, Mahavirji, Shatrunjaya, Shravanabelagola, Girnar, Palitana, and Mudubidre. In India, there are more than 20,000 Jain temples, out of which Karnataka has 705. Most of them belong to the ancient period. Many of these are associated with the birth, lives, and salvation of the 24 *Tīrthankaras*, as well as great Jain scholars and saints.



### **Administrative management**

In general, the *tirthakshetras* are run by a committee or trust. These bodies are named after 24 *tirthankaras*, or place of the temple's location, or the place of significance. In North India, some temple cities have many trusts to manage clusters of temples, *dharma-shalas*, rest houses of pilgrims, and *bhojanalayas*, places for offering food to pilgrims. For different portfolios, there are Executive Committees with members. In South India, most of the places of worship are managed by religious *mutts* (monasteries) headed by *bhattarakas* (heads of the Digambara Jain institutions) and very few by *basti* trusts. Table 3.2 provides details on the administration among the case study temples.

As mentioned earlier, in Jain, *tirthakshetras anna-daan* has been common since ancient times. The administration procedures across the *tirthakshetras* vary, which is either trust management or board management. However, Bhataraka Swamijis make decisions on *anna-daan*.

### **Government schemes for anna-daan**

Under *ahara-daan* schemes, introduced by the Karnataka state government in 1990–91, grants are sanctioned for the construction of marriage halls, community halls, temples, prayer halls, and the like in places inhabited by members of scheduled castes and tribes and minorities like Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis, and Anglo-Indians. Under this scheme, many Jain *basti* temples of Karnataka constructed *Samudaya bhavana*,<sup>80</sup> which is used for religious, cultural, and other multi-purpose social gatherings. These have been attached to *bhojanalay* for serving food on special occasions. However, for *anna-daan*, no special funds are allocated to Jain temples.

### **Peoples' perceptions**

We wanted to know the people's views on practising this act and observed that it varied from person to person. We see a strong connection between the spirit behind the religion and its practice. In Jainism, the *ahimsa*, *aparigraha*, *karma doctrine*, *Atitisamvibhag*, *karuna daan*, and related spiritual aspects of Jain philosophy have motivated followers of Jainism to continue the tradition of *anna-daan*. This spiritual aspect of *anna-daan* creates a positive feeling and develops harmony in the society (Table 3.3).

### **Types of anna-daan**

In all the *tirthankaras*, it was observed that *nitya anna-daan* (daily food sharing) is performed three times a day, which includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner except at Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand, where food was provided twice a day.

As mentioned earlier, in *tirthakshetra*, *anna-daan* is served three times daily to a normal assembly of devotees as well as to a very large number of devotees who gather on Jain festivals. As a result, the number of people served in *tirthakshetras* varies widely. In *mutts*, the number of people served can swing from 100 to 5,000 depending on the popularity of the place of worship. For instance, in Shikharji Kshetra, the situation is different, as more than 20,000 devotees visit the holy place every day.

Table 3.2 Temple administration

Temple administration board	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, TN	Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
<b>Year of constitution</b>	2015	1934	1998	2005	Centuries ago
<b>Total number of board members</b>	35	27	5	13	
<b>Role in temple administration</b>	Maintenance and	Management committee	Committee headed by Swastishree Dhavalakirthi Bhattaraka Swamiji	Trust members with Munishri 108 Pragyasagarji	Committee headed by Swastishri Devendra kirthi Bhattaraka Swamiji
<b>Role in handling <i>anna-daan</i>*</b>	All work related to <i>anna dana</i>	Management committee	Decision-making and handling of <i>anna-danna</i> by Swamiji	Trust president, members headed by Swamiji	Devendra Kirthi Bhattaraka Swamiji

Source: Compiled from case studies.

Table 3.3 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu	Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
Philanthropy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anna-daan is auspicious	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Anna-daan gives good luck	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Spiritual purpose	Yes			Yes	
Good luck	Yes		Yes		Yes
Impact on society			Yes	Yes	Yes
Poor get food		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
People get food				Yes	Yes
People bless donors		Yes		Yes	
Positive feeling			Yes	Yes	
Develops harmony			Yes	Yes	
Instils dedication and devotion				Yes	

Source: Compiled from case studies.

As seen in Table 3.4, breakfast is offered to a minimum of 50 people during the normal season and is as high as 1,000 devotees during peak season. While lunch and dinner have a minimum of devotees (50) during the normal season, this swells to 4,000 during peak season.

The history of *anna-daan* practice in Jainism indicates that food was offered to devotees in temples and needy people in *annasatras*, which were patronised by affluent Jain entrepreneurs. Therefore, offering food to devotees in a right and specific place is important. Accordingly, the case study data show most temples have one to three dining halls with a capacity to accommodate 200 to 500 devotees. Most of the time the food is served on steel plates. Queue and self-service systems are common in most of these places, while a token system is followed in some *basti* temples for convenience. Dining halls and tables are cleaned frequently to maintain hygiene (Table 3.5).

### Human resources

The *tirthakshetras* are not only places of worship but also key centres of economic activity. For *anna-daan* activities, the management employs manpower to keep a check on food quality, cooking, storekeeping, cleaning the dining hall, washing vessels, serving, vegetable chopping and other kitchen activities. Thereby, they provide employment to unskilled local people. During peak season, the management hires more people. In

Table 3.4 Number of times, number of people, and volume of food served per day

	Case study 1		Case study 2		Case study 3		Case study 4		Case study 5	
	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak
<b>No. of times <i>anna-daan</i> is performed</b>										
Breakfast	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lunch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dinner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>No. of people served per day</b>										
Breakfast	No	No	400	1000	200	500	50	100	500	1,000
Lunch	50	500	400	1000	400	1000	50	100	500–1,000	3,000–4000
Dinner	50	500	400	1000	300	600	50	100	500–1,000	3,000–4000

Source: Compiled from case studies.

Table 3.5 Dining hall to provide food to devotees

Dining hall	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu	Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
Number of dining halls	2	1	2	1	3
Capacity	200	500	210	200	1,000
Seating – ground	No	No	Yes	No	No
Seating – table	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Served in plates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Served on banana leaves	No	No	No	Sometimes	No
Served in areca bowls (locally called <i>donne</i> in Karnataka)	No	No	No	Sometimes	No
Q system	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Token system				Yes	No
Cleaning (number of times)	4	2			Frequently

Source: Compilation from case studies data, 2021.

addition to hired hands, volunteers also offer their services for all types of work like cleaning, serving food, and managing crowds (Table 3.6).

Deployment of staff and volunteers is very important for the proper execution of *anna-daan*. Data shows the temple trust/board/*mutt* appoints personnel on a regular and temporary basis. In some temples, extra manpower is employed during peak season. Both skilled and unskilled manpower (ranging from senior kitchen manager to cleaners) is employed. As Swamiji of the *mutt* opined that local manpower is employed to the extent possible to keep costs low. Temple board/trust/*mutt* appoints manpower based on the size of devotees visiting the *Tirthakshetra*. Volunteers are involved only for specific purposes like managing crowds and serving food, especially during peak season.

The location of the *tirthakshetras* decides the type of food to be served in the *bhojanalaya*. All the *tirthakshetras* provide sumptuous and unlimited food to devotees and visitors (Table 3.7).

### **Maintaining quality and safety standards**

Groceries are purchased on a large scale to ensure quality and to minimise the cost. Besides, several devotees under the influence of *karma* doctrine donate good quality groceries to these holy places (Table 3.8).

The Jain scripture *Rathnakarandaka Shravakachara* mentions the duration during which groceries should be used; it prohibits the use of expired groceries in accordance with the *ahimsa* principle. During our discussions, Swamiji of the *mutt* informed us that

Table 3.6 Number of people involved in anna-daan

Particulars	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand		Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra		Shree Kshetra Arihantagiri, Tamil Nadu		Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh		Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka	
	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak
<b>Regular paid staff</b>										
Senior kitchen manager	2		1	2	1	2	1		1	2
Quality control manager	2		6		1	2	1		1	1
Cooks	12		2	13	5	10	6		5	10
Cleaners	3				4	12	8		10	20
Serving	-				10	30	10	30	10	20
Watchman	1				1	2	4		1	1
<b>Volunteers for specific purposes</b>										
Cleaning and cutting vegetables					4	10				5
Cleaning utensils					4	12				
Cleaning dining hall					2	10			2	20
Serving people					2	20			2	10
Managing crowd					6	12				
<b>Hours of work</b>										
Temple staff /management	8		6		8	12	8	12	8	8
Cooks	8		6		8	12	12	18		
Cleaners	8		6		12	18	18	18		
Suppliers	8		6		12	18	12	18		
<b>Weekly off</b>										
Senior kitchen manager	One day		No		One day		One day		One day	
Quality control manager	One day		No		One day		One day		One day	
Cooks	One day		No		One day		One day		One day	
Cleaners	One day		No		One day		One day		One day	

Source: Primary Survey (2021).

Table 3.7 Volume of food served per day

	Case study 1		Case study 2		Case study 5	
	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak	Normal	Peak
Plain rice	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg	20 kg	50 kg	30–35 kg	150 kg
Rice item*	—	3 to 10 kg			25–30 kg	150 kg
Roti/chapati	50 to 200	100 to 2,000	20 kgs	50 kgs	—	—
Dal	1 to 3 kg	3 to 7 kg	3 kg	8 kg		Festive days
Sambar	No	No	3 kg	8kg	50 litres	100 litres
Payasa	No	No	40 kgs	100 kgs	5 kg	25 kg
Vegetable curry	1 kg	3 to 5 kg	25 kg	70 kg		
Buttermilk	No	No	50 litres	125 litres	25 L	50 L
Sweet	1 kg	1 to 5 kg			2 kg	10 kg

\* *Puliyogare*, vegetable bhat, ghee rice, *bisibele bhat*, Pongal, etc.

Source: Primary Survey (2021).

Table 3.8 Raw material procurement

Quality assurance	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu	Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
<b>Quality assurance during procurement of raw materials</b>					
Selection of suppliers	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Quality control process	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Quality inspection	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Meeting the requirement of the Food Safety Standards Act 2006	Yes	Yes		Yes	
<b>Storage, handling, and preservation of raw materials</b>					
Sanitised before cutting the vegetables	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cold storage facility	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Quality and safety during cooking</b>					
Sterilisation of cooking vessels	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regular personal hygiene and food safety training	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Employing efficient officers	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes

Source: Primary Survey (2021).

all good quality groceries are purchased at a fixed price only from APMC to ensure food safety and to meet the requirement of the Food Safety Standards Act 2006. The case studies show pictures of the procurement of groceries and sanitisation of vegetables before the preparation of food and the use of sterilised cooking vessels before and after cooking. Swastishri Swamiji also indicated that quality check officers are employed to look after the kitchen and also to train and guide the cooks and helpers in hygiene and food safety.

### **Food purchase and distribution**

Since Jains are strict vegetarians, it is mandatory to have *bhojananalay* (food serving halls) in *tīrthakshetras*. To organise food for its moderate number of regular devotees who come from far-off places, the temple management hires a full-time cook, managers, and staff. But in smaller temples, the management hires cooks and requests the *basti* temple volunteers to distribute the food to the devotees. Sometimes the management must purchase food and distributes it in the temples. In small *basti* temples, management can purchase food only from a Jain catering service since devotees are vegetarian. The groceries are procured from varied distances. While some of the donations come from long distances, several of them are got from closer distances as well (Table 3.9).

### **Food safety**

In India, offering food to devotees in places of worship is considered a pure and sacred act. Since the number of devotees is large, the quality and safety of food are very important. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has initiated a project called Blissful Hygienic Offering to God (BHOG) to encourage those involved to strictly enforce quality and hygiene standards at the food preparation and distribution stages.

Jain food by itself is eco-friendly, disciplined, and hygienic, as its preparation is associated with non-violence and *karma* doctrine. In most places of worship, the management/trust is trying to enforce discipline in preparing and serving food.

- In some *tīrthakshetras*, a coupon system is followed to receive food.
- During peak season in every *bhojanalay*, irrespective of the number of devotees, separate queues are formed for men and women.
- Food is either served on a dining table, through a buffet system, or through seating arrangements on the floor.
- Some places of worship have one dining hall, while some others have more than one to cater to the devotees during the peak season.

### **Role of technology**

Some places of worship have moderate and regular kitchens. Others have modern kitchens, while some are under modernisation. For safety, hygiene, and speed, modern cooking and grinding equipment have been deployed at places of worship which have many devotees coming in (Table 3.10). High-tech equipment such as steam boilers and roti-making machines have played a major role in tackling sudden surge of devotees by facilitating a vast quantity of food in a short time.



Table 3.9 Groceries used

Groceries	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand			Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Hombuja, Karnataka		
	Quantity	Place of procurement	Distance	Quantity	Place of procurement	Distance in km
Rice	1 kg to 3 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	120 to 8 quintal	Shimoga	57
Tur dal	1 to 3 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	15 to 30 kg	Shimoga	57
Chana dal	1 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	3 to 12 kg	Shimoga	57
Moong dal	1 to 3 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	2 to 10 kg	Shimoga	57
Green gram	1 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	6 to 14 kg	Shimoga	57
Black gram	1 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	3 to 25 kg	Shimoga	57
Chickpeas	1 to 3 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	1 to 5 kg	Shimoga	57
Cowpeas	1 to 3 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	-	Shimoga	57
Rajma	1 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	-	Shimoga	57
Sugar	1 to 3 kgs	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	8 to 50 kg	Shimoga	57
Salt	1 kg	Madhuban to Giridih	32 km	12 to 25 kgs	Shimoga	57

Source: Primary Survey (2021).

Table 3.10 Role of technology

Technology	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu	Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
Announcements			Yes		
Solar cookers	No	Yes	No	No	No
Stream boilers	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
RO plants	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hot water for washing vessels	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Usage of chlorine water to wash the vegetables	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Roti-making machines	No	Yes	No	No	No
Hot insulated vessels		Yes	No	Yes	No
Usage of surgical steel vessels	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
CCTVs	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Time taken for cooking (in hours)	2 hrs	3 hr	4 hrs	4 hrs	3 hrs
Serving time (in minutes)	25 minutes	30 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	No batch system Continuous during serving hours

Source: Primary Survey (2021).

The use of technology is very important to save time and to reduce operational costs, as well as to serve hygienic food. The case study data shows that some temple trusts/*mutts* visited by a large number of devotees use cooking equipment incorporating the latest technology, such as steam boilers, RO plants, roti-making machines, and solar cookers. Modernisation drives at some temples have yet to take off due to financial constraints.

### **Management of excess food**

It is the responsibility of the temple management and devotees to make places under their charge sustainable. Encouragement to eco-friendly practices in temples is the need of the hour from both environmental and economic points of view. The practices are in the form of biogas units, degradation initiatives, zero waste programmes, and minimum food waste. Food waste has become both an environmental and an ethical issue in the world where around 800 million people suffer from hunger. In general, temple waste, including food, forms about 25% of urban green waste. Many places of worship providing free meals to devotees generate large volumes of kitchen and food waste, along with plastic plates, tumblers, and vermilion packets. All such wastes need to be managed through proper disposal and recycling. In the case study, *tirthakshetras*, excess food, is collected, segregated, and sometimes mixed with fodder for cattle at the *mutt*-owned *goshalas*. Otherwise, excess food is distributed to family members of the maidservants and needy people in the vicinity.

### **Waste management**

In a few places of worship, wastage is segregated into dry and wet food. In South India, all Jain *mutts* have their own agricultural land where solid wet wastes and wastewater (drained into the land) are used as organic fertilisers and for irrigation. In general, in some places, waste management needs urgent attention.

### **Finances**

#### *Funds for anna-daan*

Both *Digambar* and *Shwetambar* trusts raise funds from devotees for providing various religious services under the slogan *Seva kam karne daan* (do charity since it is service). In addition, several other options are tapped to raise funds (Table 3.11). There are:

- **Hundis** (*gupt daan*): In every *bhojanalay* there is a donation box in which devotees can drop their donations for *anna-daan*.
- **Ascetic ahar fund** (*Sadhu/Sadhvi Ahaar fund*): Money collected under this fund is used to meet the expenses of providing *satvik* food for ascetics.
- **Bidding fund**: This fund is made of the bid money which devotees give for the privilege of performing rituals on occasions such as *Mahavir Jayanti*, *Deepavali*, *Panchakalyana*, *Mahamasthakabhisheka*.
- **Charity fund**: This fund is raised to provide any kind of *daān* of under *chaturvidha dāan*.
- **Food donations** (*Bhojan shala* fund): Donations are collected from philanthropists and devotees to provide meals to pilgrims, guests, community people, volunteers,

Table 3.11 Financial aspects of *anna-daan*

Sources	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Kumboj Maharashtra	Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Ponnur, Tamil Nadu	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
<b>Source of finance</b>				
Donations in cash (Hundi)	Donations	Rs. 15 lakh per year	Donations	Rs. 48.70 lakhs per year
<b>Total fund required for <i>anna-daan</i> per year</b>				
Breakfast	–			13.00 lakh
Lunch				22.00 lakh
Dinner				14.20 lakh
Total	2,500,000 per year	1,500,000 per year		49.20 lakh

Source: Compiled from case studies.

devotees, and needy people. *Anna-daān* donations can also be raised to celebrate special days in the life of devotees such as their birthdays, marriage anniversaries, and in the names of their parents, families, and the like.

- **Tulabhara:**<sup>81</sup> Donations can be accepted in kind such as rice, *jagri*, and other major food items under *tulabhara*.
- **Humanitarian fund:** Funds are raised by the *basti* temple management to meet expenses of food for animals, birds, and *goshalas*.

Amount for *ahara-daan* for daily, monthly, and yearly and special occasions is fixed and displayed on notice board. In places where *ahara-daan* is organised daily, philanthropists regularly donate vegetables and food grains; some of the required vegetables and cereals are grown on the agricultural land belonging to the *mutt*/temple.

### Management of funds

Funds in the form of contributions and donations from devotees and philanthropists are managed by trusts under the *baila* system. In South India, *mutts* manage *bhojanalaya* funds through a manager and other staff under the guidance of *bhattarakas*. Funds at Jain temples at Palitana, Ranakapur, Maharvirji, Shikharji, and many other places are managed by trusts. In North India, there is a practice at some trusts of unanimously appointing a needy Jain family to look after the *bhojanalayas* in the *tīrthakshetras*. In return for their services in operating and managing food for devotees at the *bhojanalayas*, the trust takes care of the family by providing basic facilities. Compared to *Digambar* temples, the *Shwetambar* temples have more funds to manage *ahaar-daan* since they charge a minimum price for the meals. Also, most of the *Shwetambar* Jains are big businessmen, and they contribute generously to their temples.

### Financial accountability

The temple trusts are not engaged in profit-making activity since they are repositories of public money for the performance of religious rituals. However, they are answerable for

the use of money collected from devotees, donors, and philanthropists. The Jain scriptures also tell us that misuse of temple funds leads to *paap karma*. Hence, they maintain cash books, donation registers, registers of assets, general ledgers, members' registers, visitors' books, receipt books, and the like on a regular basis. Day-to-day transactions are also recorded. Every year, a statement of accounts is made, which is audited by chartered accountants.

### Capital expenses

Expenses incurred on the purchase of hardware such as kitchen equipment, dining tables, chairs, solar panels, modern serving vessels, hot containers, *chapati* and *roti* (Indian bread) makers, dishwashing machines, trolleys for washing vessels, and plates aimed at increasing the efficiency and capacity of the physical infrastructure for offering *anna-daan* are capital expenses. There are other expenses which are incurred on the purchase of rice, flour, lentils, oil, spices, vegetable, etc., to provide free meals to ascetics and devotees. Most of the *bhojanalayas* are well maintained, and some are under modernisation. The investments and O and M costs are discussed in Tables 3.12 and 3.13.

Table 3.12 Investment\*

Investment on infrastructure	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
Construction of kitchen	2,500,000	New building under construction	2,500,000
Steam boilers			250,000
Solar cookers			
Huge vessels	50,000		50,000
Plates	150,000		150,000
Glasses	25,000		10,000
Bowls	5,000		10,000
RO plants	60,000		50,000
Gas stoves	60,000		25,000
Gas cylinders	55,000		20,000
Cauldrons	30,000		10,000
Trolleys	10,000		50,000
Dal/sambar tanks	–		15,000
Cutting boards	40,000		5,000
Knives	1000		2,000
Construction of dining hall	2,500,000		4,000,000
Tables	30,000	350,000	100,000
Chairs	10,000	250,000	70,000
CCTVs	20,000	170,000	20,000
<b>Total investment</b>	<b>485,000</b>		<b>7,377,000</b>

Source: Compiled from case studies based on Primary Survey (2021).

\* For Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu, and Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh, we were not able to get information

Table 3.13 Operational and maintenance (O &amp; M) costs

O & M costs	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
Salary of employees	1,500,000	800,000	1,000,000
Procurement of vegetables	76,000	300,000	1,150,000
Procurement of groceries	500,000	2,000,000	4,950,000
Transportation cost	75,000	40,000	160,000
Fuel cost		350,000	400,000
Power cost	200,000	65,000	150,000
Housekeeping cost	50,000	100,000	
Repairs and maintenance of equipment			110,000
Maintenance of kitchen/ dining hall			160,000
Any others			200,000
Total	2,400,000	3,655,000	7,980,000

Source: Primary Survey (2021).

\* No information available for Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu, Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh

In almost all the *tirthakshetras*, temple administrators invest in getting the basic infrastructure in place, *viz.*, steam boilers, RO plants for safe potable drinking water, kitchen vessels, dining tables and chairs, and the like to prepare and serve food in the right place which is required for *anna-daan*. In some of the *kshetras*, *bhojanalayas* have been renovated, and some are newly constructed to provide food for the ever-increasing number of devotees at *Kshetra*.

O & M costs at holy places vary between Rs. 24 lakhs to Rs. 80 lakhs and are incurred on procurement of vegetables and groceries, kitchen equipment, and cleaning of the dining hall. All the funds are accountable and managed with a proper audit in place. Not all *kshētras* get adequate funding support for maintenance.

### Key issues

Most *tirthakshetras* trust/board/*mutt* have funds mainly because the inflow of devotees at these places is less. People wasting food, talking loudly, jumping the queue, and not maintaining hygiene are some of the other issues (Table 3.14).

### 3.9 Summary

This chapter dealt in detail with the concept of *anna-daan* and its practices in Jainism. Being among one of the oldest religions of India, the main goal of human life in Jainism is to liberate the soul from its *karmic* bondage and cycle of birth and death as the doctrine of *karma* occupies a significant place and is linked with universal chain of cause and effect. The destruction of *karmas* is achieved by observing rules of conduct in the form of five great vows – *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *achourya* (non-stealing), *brahm-acharya* (celibacy), and *aparigraha* (non-possession), and these are considered ethical principles of Jainism. Among these, *ahimsa* and *aparigrha* are of supreme importance

Table 3.14 Key issues in *anna-daan*

Key issues	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra	Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu	Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh	Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
Shortage of funds	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Not experienced
No continuous flow of funds at times	Yes	Yes due to COVID-19	Yes	Yes	Occasionally
People waste food	—	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
Talking loudly and not observing the sanctity of the place	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	—
Not following the queue system	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	—
Not maintaining hygiene	Yes	—	—	Yes	—

Source: Primary Survey (2021).

and considered pillars of Jainism. Specific to *daan*, in Jainism, it is religious gifting and is defined as an act of giving something to worthy and needy people without expecting anything in return from them. The survival of the Jain community is dependent upon *daan* because Jain ascetics must obtain all their requisites, including food, from laypeople to move on the spiritual path.

*Daan* is described as a virtue and duty in Jainism. It is considered an act of compassion and must be done with no desire for material gain. Four types of *daan* are discussed in the texts of Jainism: *ahaar-daan* (donation of food), *Aushadha daan* (donation of medicine), *Jnana daan* (donation of knowledge), and *Abhaya daan* (giving of protection or freedom from fear, asylum to someone under threat). *Daan* is one of ten means to gain positive *karm* in the soteriological theories of Jainism. Medieval-era texts of Jainism dedicate a substantial portion of their discussions to the need and virtue of *daan*. *Yashastilaka's* book VIII section 43 is dedicated to the concept of *daan* in Jainism. The religious texts also indicate the different types of donees and how *daan* given to specific sections of society has an impact on the donors. It throws light on the seven qualities of donors required in order to achieve the *punya karma* and the destruction of the *paap karma* of the donor.

*Anna-daan* in Jainism is a kind of *ahaar-daan*, one among the four types of *daans*, as mentioned in scripture *Rathnakarandaka Shravakachara*. According to Jain *Agamas*, *anna-daan* is one of the essential duties of the followers of Jainism. It is a gift of food to the ascetics, *vratikas* (the laypeople strictly observing vows), and needy people. It is the responsibility of *shravaka* (male disciple) and *shravaki* (female disciple) to give proper and *satvik* food to ascetics and worthy people to help them remain committed to the spiritual path. In *Rathnakarandaka Shravakachara*, it is explained that the rich should keep aside 10% of their income to perform *daan*. Offering food to Jain ascetics and needy

people is central to Jain beliefs. *Anna-daan* to hungry ascetics is a noble act on the part of the donor and can shorten his birth cycle. Jain philosophy says every living being will get food based on their own *karma*.

The five case studies on Jain temples show the significant importance given to religious institutions. There are various initiatives incorporated to carry out *anna-daan* in an effective way, thus upholding the practice of *anna-daan* as preached in Jainism.

## Notes

- 1 A Bhaṭṭāraka (Jain Prakrit: **holy one**) heads traditional Digambara Jain institutions. He is responsible for training scholars, maintenance of libraries, managing endowments, presiding over installation ceremonies, and running Jain institutions.
- 2 A building devoted to religious or charitable purposes, especially a rest house for travelers.
- 3 A tirthankar is an omniscient teacher who preaches the dharma (righteous path).
- 4 Omni science, perfect, absolute, isolated knowledge. It is a knowledge of all substances (*Dravyas*), including the self or soul, in all of their possible modes (*paryaya*), including their temporal aspects (past, present and future).
- 5 A type of extremely subtle matter (*Pudgala*) that is come in contact with the soul by actions of body, speech and mind.
- 6 Merit actions that are beneficial or ethical and that cause a minimum of harm (*himsa*) to other living beings bind varieties of *karmas* that cause rebirth in circumstances conducive to spiritual development.
- 7 Unwholesome *karma* bondage due to sinful mind, body, and actions. Hiralal Jain, *contributions of Jain religion to Indian culture* (2004, p. 219).
- 8 *Samsara*: The basic process through which one is held in the cycle of trans migration. The defiled condition of the soul leads to its continuous re-birth in various states of embodiment, characterized by desires and sinful actions (Sarvārtha siddhi, sutra 801, Padmanabha Jaini, *Jaina path of purification*, 2014, p. 107).
- 9 A state of eternal liberation
- 10 The supportive books like *Compendium of Jainism* by T.K. Tukol, *Jaina Bharathi* by Ganini Jnanamathi, *Jaina Path of Purification* by Padmanabh Jaini, *Jainism the World of Conquerors* by Nathubhai Shah, *Contributions of Jaina Religion to Indian Culture* by Hiralal Jain, *A to Z of Jainism* by Kristi Wiley helped to cover the entire gamut of Jain philosophy. Rambhushan Prasad Singh's *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka, Kannada Shasanagala Samskrutika Adhyayana* by Chidananda Murty, *Mysuru Arasara Kaladalli Jainara Samajodddharaka Jivana* by Vasantakumari, *Jaina Samskruti Samikshe* by Shantinatha Dibbada, Jaina system and other supportive documents provided the information about the theory and practice of *anna-daan* in Jainism, historical perspective of *anna-daan* and helped to identify the research gap. The research articles like "The Gift of Giving: Changing Practices of Charity Work and Donation in the Contemporary Jain Diaspora" by Tine Vekomons, kannada, and English newspaper data and other secondary sources provided the actual facts of both theoretical and practical functioning of *anna-daan* in Jainism. Overall, the review provides insights of *anna-daan* in Jainism and its dimensions, supported with case studies.
- 11 Donation of food.
- 12 The word *yog* is derived from the Sanskrit root "Yuj", meaning "to join" or "to unite". The practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with universal consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body
- 13 *Tattvartha Sutra*, Edited by Lambert M Surhone, Mariam T Tennoe, Susan F Henssonow, Betascript Publishing, 2011. ISBN 6136361418, 9786136361413.
- 14 An ancient Jain text written by Acharya Umaswami in Sanskrit, sometime between the 2nd and 5th century CE.
- 15 One of the most distinguished of the Jain spiritual teachers.
- 16 One of the two principal sects of the Indian religion Jainism, whose male ascetics shun all property and wear no clothes.



- 17 One of the two principal sects of the Indian religion Jainism “Śvetāmbara” means “white-clad” and refers to the white clothing.
- 18 *The Sacred Books of the East* translated by various Oriental scholars and edited by F. Max Müller Vol. xxii, *Gāiṇa Sūtras*, translated from Prakrit by Hermann Jacobi in two parts. Part I – *The Ākārāṅga Sūtra*, *The Kalpa Sūtra*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1884.
- 19 Ratnakaradaka Shrivākāchāra (Jain House Holders Code of Conduct), by 108 Swami Sri Samantabhadra Archarya, Interpretations by Late Sri Champat Rai Jain, Barrister-at-Law, Compiled and Published on Internet by Nitin P, www.jainheritagecentres.com.
- 20 Ratnakaradaka Shrivākāchāra (Jain House Holders Code of Conduct), by 108 Swami Sri Samantabhadra Archarya, Interpretations by Late Sri Champat Rai Jain, Barrister-at-Law, Compiled and Published on Internet by Nitin P, www.jainheritagecentres.com.
- 21 A devotee.
- 22 88 the renounced.
- 23 The religious and moral law governing individual conduct.
- 24 That which is not in accord with the dharma.
- 25 Sin.
- 26 Pious activities.
- 27 Collection of a large literature on the Jain philosophy.
- 28 The period of the four months of monsoon – Shravan, Bhadrapada, Ashwin and Kartik – in the Hindu calendar.
- 29 A shelter for saints.
- 30 A public resthouse or shelter.
- 31 An animal shelter.
- 32 Protective shelters for cows in India.
- 33 Umaswami – Shrivakachar, by Acharya Jugal Kishore Jain ‘Mukhtar
- 34 Rayanasara of Acharya Kundakunda with Ratnatrayavardhini (Sanskrit commentary and Hindi translation) In two vols. Hindi edition by Parampujya Ganacharya Shri 108 Dr Viragsagar Ji Maharaj (author), published by Bharatiya Jnanpith, January 2021.
- 35 *Agamas* are canonical texts of *Jainism* based on Lord Mahavir’s preaching.
- 36 Shikshāvrattha: It is an educational vow of ascetics as well as householders for self-purification. Samanthabhadra Acharya, *Rathnakarandaka Shrivakachara* Kannada translated book by Mirji Annaraya, p. 223.
- 37 Jaina ethical code of conduct enjoining honoring of one’s guests.
- 38 Meditation vow wherein the Jain taking this vow should meditate for 48 minutes every day.
- 39 *Dēsavakasika* is the type of educational vow that an individual can limit his movement to a house, to a village, to a town for the period varies from a day, to a few days, month, a few months, or a year (ibid., Sutra 62, pp. 223–27).
- 40 *Sāmāyika* is a kind of meditation for attainment of equanimity and abandonment of all sinful acts of mind, body, and action (ibid., Sutra 67–105, pp. 228–40).
- 41 *Prōshadhōpavāsa* is a kind of fasting and abstaining from food and all types of worldly activities (ibid., Sutra 106–10, pp. 241–47).
- 42 *Vaiyyavrutya* is a vow of hospitality treating the ascetics and *vratikas* with respect offering meals, medicines, scriptures, and rendering services to them to move in the path of purification (ibid., Sutra 111, pp. 247–61).
- 43 A term for a person unworthy to receive gifts.
- 44 Unworthy or unfit as a recipient.
- 45 *Navadhakṣhanti*: It is a ninefold devotion chanted by *shravakas*. If offering food to Jain ascetics without chanting, the ascetics will not accept the food. This involves (1) respectful procedural reception; (2) offer of high seat; (3) washing of ascetic feet; (4) worshipping; (5) bowing, statement about purity; (6) mind; (7) body; (8) speech; and (9). food (Ganini, Jnanamathi, Jaina Bharati, *The essence of Jainism*, Digambar Jain Trilok Shodh Sansthan, Hastinapur, 2007, p. 184).
- 46 *Dashalakshana parva* or *dharma*: Parva means festival. It is a festival of ten supreme virtues to be observed for ten days devoting a day for the contemplation of one virtue for self-purification. Uttamakshamārdavārjavasatyasanyamatapagyakinchanya brahmacharyāni Dashalakshanadharmaha (Tattvarthasutra, Sutra 6, chapter 9).

- 47 Festival celebrated by the Digambara Jains.
- 48 The main Jain celebration celebrated during August–September.
- 49 The sixth month of the Hindu calendar.
- 50 *Bhōghabhumi*: In Jain, cosmology it is a realm of enjoyment where one's needs are satisfied without effort. All necessities are provided by ten kinds of wish fulfilling trees and people do not engage in any occupations (Bruhatdravya sangraha, pp. 120–40). English translation by Kristi L. Wiley, *A to Z of Jainism* (p. 58).
- 51 Indian scholar in Kannada language and Jainism.
- 52 Jain Bharti, Hindi edition by Dr. Shreeranjana Suridev
- 53 Ram Bhusan Prasad Singh (1975, 2008). Prasad, S. R. B. (1975). *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka (AD 500–1200)*. Singh, R. B. P. (2008). *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka: CAD 500–1200*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishes.
- 54 One of the major forms of modern Hinduism, characterised by devotion to the god Vishnu and his incarnations (avatars)
- 55 A branch of Hinduism devoted to the worship of Lord Shiva.
- 56 Jaini, P. S. (1979). *The Jaina Path of Purification*. Berkeley.
- 57 A reservoir in which water can be stored.
- 58 A sage in Hinduism.
- 59 Also known as Sadhvi, is a female mendicant (nun) in Jainism.
- 60 *Astami*: it is the eighth day of the dark half or Krishna *paksha*. Jain followers will fasting or have food once in a day to minimize eight types of *karmas* known as *Astakarma*.
- 61 *Chaturdashi* is the 14th day of the waxing phase or waning phase of the moon. It is the day prior to new moon (*amavasya*) or full moon (*pournami*). Jain followers will fasting or have food once in a day to reach fourteen gunasthana of spiritual path.
- 62 *Asthanhika*: It is a festival celebrated for eight days three times a year in the month of karthika, phālguna and Āshādhā of Indian calendar. It is celebrated from the eighth day of waxing moon's cycle (shuklapaksha till full moon day every year).
- 63 Vengeful.
- 64 A *satvic* diet is a regimen that places emphasis on seasonal *foods*, fruits if one has no sugar problems, nuts, seeds, oils, ripe vegetables, legumes.
- 65 K. L. Chanchreek, Mahesh K. Jain, Jain Agamas: *An Introduction to Canonical Literature*, Shree Publishers & Distributors, 2004.
- 66 A school.
- 67 A building devoted to religious or charitable purposes, especially a rest house for travellers.
- 68 A place where food is served free of cost.
- 69 The festival of *Mahāvīr Jayantī* is celebrated annually in commemoration of the birthday of the 24th Jina, Mahāvīra.
- 70 Means “institute or college”, and it also refers to a monastery in Hinduism.
- 71 Type of education system in ancient India with students living near or with the teacher in the same house.
- 72 A eating house.
- 73 People (usually four) who carry other people (in a chair like designed lifter) who cannot walk/climb usually in religious places of worship located on hills.
- 74 Religious head who is an educationist, philanthropist, and social reformer.
- 75 Refers to the anointment of the Jain image held on a large scale. The most popular one is the anointment of the Bahubali Gomateshwara Status at Shravanabelagola, Karnataka, India.
- 76 A eating house.
- 77 *Siddhakshetra*: A place where someone reached final liberation.
- 78 *Athishaya Kshetra*: Athishaya means miracle. A place where any remarkable event took place. It could be a sacred place because of miracle or the presence of any guardian deity or powerful image.
- 79 *Thīrthakshetra*: All places of worship whether siddhakshetra or Athishaya kshetra.
- 80 A eating house.
- 81 *Tulābhāra*: It is known as tulādāna and is an ancient practice in which a person is weighted against a commodity. The equivalent weight of that commodity is offered as donation in the place of worship.

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# **Anna-daan in Buddhism**

## Deciphering the nexus\*

*Saroj Kanta Kar and Abhimanyu Chettri*

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*By giving away food, we get more strength.*

Buddha

### **4.1 Introduction**

Citing penance and asceticism as a means to attain *panna* (wisdom in the Pali language), Gautam had for years wandered in the forest with complete abstinence from food and human interaction. On one such day, while meditating under a Bodhi tree, he was approached by a village girl named Sujata, who believed the tree to have mystical powers. She mistook Gautam for the physical form of the tree god and offered him *kheer* (rice pudding) in a golden bowl. As the flakes of the rice touched Gautam's lips, he got immersed in recurring thoughts on food, materialism, and the larger goal of human existence. Though he ingested the food, he cast off the golden bowl; the food helped him realise *annatta*, a state of becoming beyond the self and letting go. He realised that a life without any suffering is a life lived in the middle path. Believed to have attained *paññā* shortly after this incident, Gautam later inducted Sujata as his first female disciple.

The virtue of generosity is integral to the Buddhist doctrine of *dhamma*. A virtuous deed of charity, they believe, is not just an act of helping the other but a self-reflexive process that helps one overcome greed. While the desire to accumulate is seen as a root cause of suffering, *dhana sutta* (seven treasures: faith, virtue, learning, charity, insight, fear, and shame) describes performing *daan* to attain spiritual *panna*. The story of Gautam and Sujata accentuates how Buddhist philosophies thoughtfully connect the ideas of giving, materialism, and enlightenment. Gautam's acceptance of the offering by Sujata highlights the importance of food to human life; however, his rejection of the

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golden bowl depicts the fine line between necessity and materialist accumulation. Similarly, Sujata's generous offering of food is free of all desire for gain; nevertheless, Buddhist tenets view that no act of generosity goes without recognition.

The *dhamma* and Buddhist scriptures preach generosity through similar stories and tales; one such account describes a generous prince named *Vessantara*. He performed compassion and generosity to the extent that he bestowed all his possessions, including his kingdom, children, and wife, without any intention of personal gain. These stories aspire to inculcate love, compassion, and care for fellow living beings to anyone who envisions walking the path of *dhamma*.

Buddhism and its doctrines, with their roots in the Indian subcontinent during the 6th century, have evolved thoroughly and been sculpted into various geographic and cultural contexts. Thus, there exists no uniform Buddhist practice and tradition with each varying from one context to another. It would be a fallacy on the authors' part to insist on a single course to delineate the conceptions and practices of *daan* in Buddhism. Nevertheless, a common ideological origin and fundamental similarity exist across these practices as *daan* or giving is an integral part of all sects within Buddhism. In its various forms, such as charity, offering, and patronage, *da* to Buddhists constitute survival's mainstay.

Hailed as one of the prominent pan-spiritual, pan-cultural beliefs and practices not only in Buddhism, the practice of *daan* is essential to all the Vedic and non-Vedic religious traditions, as in *Puranic Brahminism* and Jainism. Among various forms of *daan*, *anna-daan*<sup>1</sup> is prominent, as it is an essential and urgent commodity for survival. In the given context, this article attempts to decipher the understanding of *anna-daan* across various Buddhist traditions and practices.

This chapter draws extensively from the Buddhist doctrines and current practices within the monasteries; in doing so, it aims to foreground the practices around *anna-daan* and highlight the evolving understanding of *anna-daan* within Buddhism, motivations, beliefs, and the social structures that sustain *anna-daan*. The first section of the article visits the philosophical and scriptural interpretations of *daan* within Buddhist traditions. In doing so, we discuss *daan* in the broader social, religious, and spiritual context and discuss its components and approaches. Further, in the coming section, we consider the Buddhist understanding of food, *karm*, and *anatta* to locate the more comprehensive explanations of *anna-daan* within the practices and doctrines of Buddhism. The present research conducts an extensive survey of various Buddhist religious scriptures and the available secondary works of literature that explore the relationship between food and the practice of charity. Various texts such as *Vinaya-piṭaka*,<sup>2</sup> *Upasaka sutras*,<sup>3</sup> and *Dharmasagraha*<sup>4</sup> extend our understanding of the context in which *anna-daan* is performed and provide a glimpse of the social structures and religious contexts against which the conceptions of *anna-daan* were formed. Most of these texts are written either in Pali or Sanskrit; therefore, the translated versions of these texts have been deployed.<sup>5</sup> Both the primary and secondary sources foreground the practices around *anna-daan* and highlight the evolving understanding of *anna-daan* within Buddhism, motivations, beliefs, and the social structures that sustain *anna-daan*.

## 4.2 The context of *dāan* in Buddhism

The virtue of *daan* (generosity) is integral to the Buddhist doctrine of *dhamma*. *Daan* is not just an act of helping the other but also a self-reflexive process that helps one

overcome greed and ego. While any desire for accumulation (of worldly things) is seen as a root cause of suffering, *daana sutta* (in elaborating seven treasures, such as faith, virtue, learning, charity, insight, fear, and shame) describes performing *daan* to attain spiritual wisdom/intuition (*prajna/panna*). It is also enumerated under *Chatvari saṅgraha-vastunī*<sup>6</sup> and *Sat paramitas*.<sup>7</sup> *Chatvari saṅgraha-vastunī* (four bases of collection or accumulation are *danam* (generosity), *priya-vachanam* (kind words), *artha-charya* (usefulness or fruitfulness, requirement), and *samānārthatā* (similarity of purpose)).<sup>8</sup> All four have social import, and *daan* being enumerated implies that it is primarily a social activity. It is further included within six spiritual perfections or virtues, which indicates that *daan* is also spiritual activism. It has both spiritual and social fecundity.

Buddhism and its doctrines, with their roots in the Indian subcontinent, have evolved thoroughly and been sculpted into various geographic and cultural contexts. For this reason, there exists no uniform Buddhist practice and tradition – each varies from another to a certain extent in a particular context. In such a situation, it would be a misconception to insist on a single course to delineate the conceptions and practices of *daan* in Buddhism. Nevertheless, a common ideological origin and fundamental similarity can exist across these practices, proving *daan* as an integral part of all sects within Buddhism. In its various forms, such as charity, offering, and patronage, different forms of *daan* to the Buddhists constitute the mainstay of survival.

Hailed as one of the prominent pan-spiritual, pan-cultural beliefs and practices across not only in Buddhism, but also in Jainism, *Puranic Brahminism*, and all the Vedic and non-Vedic religious traditions, *daan* is considered one of the essential humanitarian duties and a prominent spiritual dispenser. Among the various forms of *daan*, *anna-daan* is prominent, as it is an essential and urgent commodity for the survival of life. In the given context, this chapter attempts to decipher the understanding of *anna-daan* across various Buddhist traditions and practices, drawing extensively from the Buddhist doctrines and current practices within the monasteries. It highlights the foreground of the practices, motivations, beliefs, and structure of *anna-daan* and the evolving understanding of *anna-daan* within Buddhism. The first section of the chapter visits the philosophical and scriptural interpretations of *daan* within Buddhist traditions. In doing so, we discuss *daan* in the broader social, religious, and spiritual contexts and approaches by considering the Buddhist understanding of *karm* and *anatta* to locate the more comprehensive explanations of *anna-daan* within the practices and doctrines of Buddhism.

All Buddhist traditions conceive a fundamental difference between a layperson (*upasakalupasika*) and a practising monk/nun (usually referred to as *bhikṣu/bhikkhunī*, *lama*, *acariya*, or *meme*). While the monk/nun takes a vow of celibacy and lives by the monastic rules (*vinayas*, *patimokkha*), a lay practitioner of Buddhism stands by the five essential Buddhist teachings (*panchasikkhapada* or five precepts, such as avoiding killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxication) which lead to heedlessness.<sup>9</sup> *Despite a distinct contrast between monastic living and a lay Buddhist's life, an organic tie exists between the monastery and the laypeople.* The mendicants were supposed to depend upon the laypeople and live by the *anna-daan* and practise meditation and cultivate virtue (*sila*), meditative absorption (*samadhi*), and insight (*prajna*). The excess *daan* the monasteries receive has contributed extensively towards the welfare of the underprivileged and oppressed. Among the various forms of *daan* recognised by the accumulation of merits (*dharmasamgraha*), *anna-daan* is widely appreciated and encouraged in Buddhism. Thus, the practice of *dāna* is central to the reciprocal relationship between the

monastery and the lay devotees. As one of the fundamental spiritual actions, *daan* is a universal humanistic virtue.

It is tempting for one to question the custom of *daan* to the monks as the layperson works hard to earn a living and donates a part of it while the monks enjoy it without any such sacrifice. The Buddha himself faced such criticisms frequently. In one of his rounds for alms, he encountered a farmer who asked the Buddha, “Why is the Buddha not cultivating, and why is he not producing his food rather than living off somebody else’s share?” In his reply, the Buddha said, “He was cultivating *silā*, *samadhi*, and *prajna*, and his cultivation is for the inner being”, and his spiritual cultivation benefits himself and all others.<sup>10</sup>

There is another reason why *daan* and *anna-daan* are so essential and why the Buddhists are not growing their food. Buddha viewed attachment (a type of *upadana*) as the root of all suffering (*dukkha*). Possession of any substance beyond the basic survival need is such an *upadana*. For this reason, the monks may abstain from growing or accumulating any material or growing food grain. Any activity or possession would entice them to attachment, pride, and ego that the monks must eschew and resist for their practice.

On the other hand, begging (*bhikṣa*) by them and charity (*daan*) from the laypeople will keep the Buddhists egoless and without arrogance, and simultaneously make the laypeople generous. The spiritual benefit is another dimension that benefits all. Therefore, the laypeople bear the burden of their survival and existence by performing *daan*, particularly *anna-daan*.

### **Daan and anna-daan: types, merits, and qualifications**

The components or forms of *daan* in Buddhism vary across traditions, and various scholars have propounded categories per the context they are writing. For any *daan*, there must be a donor, a receiver (definite or anonymous), and something to be donated. If there is the receiver, then the donation is possible, like in the case of donations for constructing roads, Buddha statues, or temples, among many others; the donation is not a *daan* proper, but an offering, resulting in higher merits. There are three broad categories of *daan* (*Tatra danam trividham, tad yatha*): (1) *dharma-danam* (the gift of the *dharma*), (2) *amiṣa-danam*<sup>11</sup> (the gift of material things), and (3) *maitri-danam* (the gift of friendliness). While lay devotees perform the *daan* of worldly things and friendliness, the monks and nuns perform *dharma*, gifts and friendliness.<sup>12</sup>

For simplicity of understanding and convenience of categorisation, “in the context of the stress of modern *Theravada*<sup>13</sup> and Buddhist societies, *daan* is broadly recognised in two forms: *daan-dhamma* and *dhamma-daan*. The former means charity as *dhamma*, i.e., charity/gifting/donating anything material. Lay devotees and people give something material to the Buddhist precepts, monks, and nuns. In this process, they automatically develop and receive spiritual merit, which is called one type of *dhamma-dana* or spiritual merit as (return) charity. *Dhamma-daan* also means gifting in the form of helpful teaching and advice, such as knowledge, insight, training, learning. For others, looking from these points of view, there are two types of *dhamma-daan*. (i) One is automatic resultant merit that (a) will be developed in the donor and (b) some merit that will be received from the receiver. (ii) The other is the teachings and advice from the receiver monks/nuns, which can help the donor to develop the merit: (ia) is auto-resultant retribution in the form of spiritual merits that comes from the receiver to the donor (i.e., the transformation of merit) and (ib) is an auto-resultant positive reaction that happens in the donor.

Table 4.1 Auto-retribution of spiritual merit

	To whom alms are given	Auto-retribution of spiritual merit
1	Alms are given to animals.	100 times the alms
2	Alms are given to those who even have violated the precepts.	1,000 times the alms
3	Alms are given to those who observe the precepts.	100,000 times the alms
4	Alms are given to non-Buddhists who relinquished desires.	1,000,000 times the alms
5	Alms are given to those who are nearly <i>srotapannas</i> .	1,000,000,000 (one thousand million) times of the alms
6	Alms are given to those who are nearly <i>sakdāgamins</i> , up to the Buddhas.	Immeasurable

Source: Compiled by authors from scriptures.

The quality of resultant retribution and resultant reaction depends upon the donor's personality, his/her intention in the donation, and the situation". The auto-retribution of spiritual merit of simple almsgiving is praised in different intensities and<sup>14</sup> presented in Table 4.1.

Alms or any food offering as *anna-daan* has the same results as merit or *punya*. Of course, the merit in the mystical sense of the driving force of good fortune is not comely experiential matters of facts. However, the psychological, emotional, and spiritual merit in elevating the person's inner being in the process of alms or food offerings is vividly experienced by the people of subtle self-observation and introspection.

"*Daan* accrues inconceivable spiritual merit, so also the *anna-daan*. The excellence of its merit happens not only when it is done to excellent and needy people but also when it is done even to (1) the evil ones, (2) precept violators, (3) foes, (4) frauds, (5) nonbelievers in causality, (6) coercive solicitors, (7) harsh scolders (8), the angry (9), the ungrateful, (10) the powerful, and (11) the wealthy.<sup>15</sup> It is because, as understood here, a donor could overcome his/her own mental and emotional hindrances like hate, enmity, and miserliness and be qualified with *maitri* and *karuṇa*, among many more. In comparison, it is making *daan* to these 11 types of people. It may be that *daan* to these kinds of people be made in necessity or sacrifices, or in a conflicting moral situation, not in everyday situations". It may also be the case that to these kinds of people, more than any *daan*, *anna-daan* and *dhamma-daan* would have a better result.

Sometimes, the donor makes some mistakes that hinder the auto-generation or transformation of spiritual merit. These are,<sup>16</sup>

- (1) before *daan*, one declares that he/she has nothing to give;
- (2) or while doing *daan*, one does not offer equally;
- (3) or after *daan*, one harbours doubts;
- (4) or after *daan*, one finds fault in the recipients;
- (5) or after *daan*, asks for something in return;
- (6) or after *daan*, the donor asks the recipient to pay the double value of alms;
- (7) or after *daan*, one chides the recipient;
- (8) or after *daan*, the donor joyfully appraises himself/herself.

These faults in *daan* should be avoided.



“*Daan* yields the best spiritual merit with certain conditions. (a) If a *daan* is made without attachment, where the recipient is also free of attachment, (b) and the object of *daan* is lawfully earned, (c) and it is given in pleasantly, with a belief in the results of *karma*,<sup>17</sup> then the *daan* yields the best results.<sup>8</sup> Further, *daan* and the donor should be qualified with good intentions. For example, at the *daan* process (d), one should not have any ambition to be famous or take some advantage, (e) nor aspires to any worldly prizes. (f) *Daan* should be made with the thought of wholesomeness of all”. By this, one can achieve perfect knowledge (*anuttara-samyaksambodhi*).<sup>18</sup>

### 4.3 Anna-daan: ethos and practices

*Anna-daan* is made from different perspectives. It is also evaluated from diverse points of view. These define the character and kinds of *anna-daan* in a given situation. The perspectives are essential, as perspective neutrality is almost impossible in any citation, description, or evaluation of *anna-daan*. Hence, some of these may be understood in a nutshell.

#### Social and religious ethos of anna-daan

Among *daans*, *anna-daan* is an indispensable hallmark of Buddhist society and spirituality. *Daan* in general, including the *anna-daan*, is first social activism, and then it comes under spiritual activism, as it is enumerated under four accumulations (*chatvari sangraha-vastuni*) mentioned earlier. *The monastery functions as a base of all spiritual, community, and administrative activity in a Buddhist society. Each dominant Buddhist village usually has a monastery that is overseen and taken care of by the residents. The villagers sustain the monastery by cleaning the complex, helping in construction and maintenance, and providing essentials such as food; the monastery and monks, in return, cater to the spiritual and physical needs of the villagers.* The Buddhist monks/nuns do not have any other source of livelihood and live by the *daan* and specifically by *anna-daan*; this makes a layperson and the monastery link alive, and the activism of *dāan* is one way through which this connection gets strengthened. The monks/nun residing in a monastery (*sangharama*) of an area regularly beg within a locality. Gradually, they become familiar faces. Monks, in turn, help laypeople in times of calamity and with their knowledge of astrology and medicines. In many societies, they educate the children and take care of the old in villages and towns around them. This generosity of the monks gets reciprocated by providing them with food, clothes, and shelter. This social interaction gradually turned into spiritual and religious involvement.

#### Spiritual and religious ethos of anna-daan

In one of the daily alms begging rounds, when a farmer asks the Buddha to earn his livelihood, the Buddha substantiated his stance by explaining that he was cultivating *sila*,<sup>19</sup> *samadhi*,<sup>20</sup> and *prajna*,<sup>21</sup> and these turned into spiritual merits (*punya*), of which a portion goes to the person who gives him alms. “Buddha’s view here rightly summarises the spiritual essence of charity”. *Upasaka sutra* explains *daan* as a way to mount compassion within an individual.<sup>22</sup> It further views that *daan* generates spiritual merit or *punya* for the donor. The belief in *punya*<sup>23</sup> was not a posthumous reward but somewhat help in this

life. When the layperson as a donor gives alms and other life-supportive items to others, they perceive having received the spiritual merit, as described in detail in the context of *dhamma-daan* and resultant merit (in the earlier discussion). *Daan* helps overcome the possessiveness, attachment, and conceptions of self by giving away material possessions.<sup>24</sup> For this, it is observed as a forward step towards *nirvana*.<sup>25</sup> Specific *daan* is performed either on the announcement or invitation of the monasteries or other occasions like *Purnima*,<sup>26</sup> marriage, childbirth, funeral, and other ceremonies.

Performing *anna-daan* is considered to uplift both the donor and the receiver spiritually. A wealthy donor is expected to donate and not feel proud about his contribution. For a poor donor, the very process is about overcoming the attachment, figuring out the necessity, and donating the surplus. The donors habitually encounter conflicting thoughts while practising *daan*. When they ultimately decide to offer, they confront and overcome intrinsic human hindrances, such as greed, ego, and attachment. Thus, they are spiritually awakened individuals who could resist material longings and attachment to wealth.

### **Philosophical ethos of anna-daan**

The philosophical root of *anna-daan* is deep in Buddhism. It is not morally obligatory but is suggestive understandably, spiritually, and from a humanitarian point of view. Every believer in Buddhism is encouraged to perform it generously. In the process of being generous, by sacrificing (*chaga/tyaga*), one abandons or wins over attachment (*raga*), selfishness (*mamattva*), and the ego or “I” consciousness (*aham*). As described earlier, the person also overcomes many emotional impediments and inglorious reactions. By this process, one overcomes unwholesome roots (*akusalamula*) to dwell in the wholesome roots (*kusalamula*) of himself; this is the fundamental reason why *daan* not only uplifts the donors spiritually but gets them closer to liberation (*nirvana*) as well.

Further, from a philosophical perspective, *daan*, as one of the virtues of perfections or excellencies (*paramirtas*), helps man gain perfection. The Buddhist texts identify *daan*, *sila*, *ksanti*,<sup>27</sup> *vīrya*,<sup>28</sup> *dhyana*,<sup>29</sup> and *prajna* as six essential human virtues. The practice of any one of them brings perfection in life, as one of them is believed to lead to the other. *Daan* and particularly *anna-daan* performed consciously is thought to bring immeasurable well-being.

### **Motivations for the anna-daan**

Various extrinsic and intrinsic factors motivate individuals to receive and perform *anna-daan*. Though theoretically understood to be a selfless act, various intrinsic factors such as earning fame, respect, ego, or goodwill can motivate one to donate. Similarly, the receiver too may be influenced by greed, anger, doubt, or expectations while making or receiving *dāan*. *Anguttara Nikaya*<sup>30</sup> mentions some motives or practices of *daan*,<sup>31</sup> such as if someone donates due to annoyance or with an insult (*asajja danam deti*), fear (*bhaya danam deti*), in return for favour now or in the future (*adasi me ti danam deti* or *dassati me ti danam deti*), or for gaining a good reputation (*imam me danam dadato kalyano kittisaddo abbhuggacchati ti danam deti*), the donation becomes defiled. On the other hand, such donations are praised if the offering is made for cleansing the mind (*cittalan-kara-cittaparikkarattham danam deti*) or just because it is a good act (*sadhu danam ti*

Table 4.2 Positive motivational factors involved with *daan*

Donor's objective	Receiver's objective	Universal objective
Desiring meritor Desirelessness	Essential/urgent need to mitigate hunger and fulfil physical requirements Thankfulness for the donor/ encouragement	The well-being of all through sympathy, honour, and responsibility

Source: Compiled by authors from scriptures.

*danam deti*) or the food is offered with the altruistic consideration that it is proper that “I should offer cooked food to them who could not cook (*aham pacami, ime ne pacanti, na arahami pacanto apacantanam adatun ti danam deti*). Some also donate desiring or expecting heaven”. The best of the offering is that it should be without any expectation (*na sapekhō dānam deti*<sup>32</sup>). Apart from that, the following (Table 4.2) are a few positive motivational factors involved with *daan*, which is relevant to *anna-daan*.

- Well-being is the universal and foremost aim of *anna-daan*. The generosity of the donor must bring the well-being of all and the receiver through the charity; *daan* is misplaced if the well-being gets hampered.
- Fulfilling the receiver's (*gabita*) need is the second objective of *anna-daan*. If it does not fulfil the need, then it is thought to be misplaced. Sometimes, the donor offers more than the receiver's need, out of honour or pride or desire for merit, but if the surplus is unused and amassed, that leads to the demerit of the receiver, violating the conduct of non-possession.
- The third objective of *daan* is the expiation (*prayaschitta*) of some wrongdoing or thoughts, and it goes by some injunctions or religious or similar rituals or celebrations. Here *daan* (generosity) becomes *tyaga* (renouncement).
- The fourth and the lowest objective behind *anna-daan* is a desire to show off or prove one's superiority or desire for merit.

For the sake of the universal objective of well-being, the donor has sympathy, honour, and responsibility. He observes non-violence both in the means and ends of *daan*. The harm of any kind gets restrained as well-being is the ultimate motivation. For fulfilling the receiver's needs, the donor reads out the need of the receiver, not the wish. It may become a spontaneous or eventual study of the needs in certain situations to donate; before the condition changes, the needs to be fulfilled; otherwise, the donation may be modified. Scriptural prescriptions and injunctions define the extent and the recipient of the *daan*.

Further, philanthropic well-being, need-based offerings are adopted. *Anna-daan* must not be a matter of fame or pride. The spirit of *anna-daan* goes with sacrifices and renunciation, and therefore must not be claimed with pride or ego, basically because *dāan* eliminates them, and these also damage all spiritual merits of *anna-daan*.

### **Worthiness for receiving anna-daan**

The receiver of *anna-daan* has his or her worthiness for the same. Expecting alms<sup>33</sup> or possessing good character for survival<sup>34</sup> does not make them worthy of any *dāan*, especially *anna-daan*. To be worthy of it, one should be a renunciate in the true sense, not have any expectation, and be engaged in the path of spirituality to earn spiritual merit, some of which gets transferred to the donor. The *Magha Sutta*<sup>35</sup> of *Sutta Nipāta*<sup>36</sup> describes the virtues of the *arahants*,<sup>37</sup> which made them worthy of receiving alms. Generally, the offering to people with fewer blemishes will bear better fruit.<sup>38</sup>

Sakka<sup>39</sup> asked the Buddha about the best results of the gifts. The Buddha answered that gifts to the *Sangha* generate the best results. The *Sangha* should be worthy to its terms,<sup>40</sup> and the *Sangha* must have the renunciates and mendicants. In the establishment of the *Sanghas*, i.e., monastery, they must have four types of mendicants, viz., stream-enterer, once-returning, non-returning, and *arahant*.<sup>41</sup> This can make a monastery worthy of alms. Feeding the Buddha and the *Sangha* is more meritorious than feeding the Buddha alone. It is even more meritorious to construct a monastery for the general use of the *Sangha* of the four quarters of all times. Taking refuge in the Buddha, *dhamma*, and *Sangha* is better still. Abiding by the five precepts is even more valuable. Nevertheless, better still is the cultivation of *metta/maitri*, loving-kindness, and, best of all, the insight into impermanence, which leads to *nibbana*.

*Anathapindika*, a follower of the Buddha, lamented before Buddha that he had lost his wealth and now can only afford a coarse mixture of broken rice grains and sour gruel for monks. The Buddha said that the quality of food is not essential, but only the heart of the donor is essential. Whether the charity of food is casual or considerate and done devotedly, whether the recipients are worthy or not, counts the most. The Buddha, then, narrated the story of the great gifts made by Velama. Though the gifts were great, Velama could find no holy persons as recipients. The Buddha then explains that taking refuge under *dhamma*, the observance of good conduct, the practice of amity, and the thinking of impermanence, are more significant than the giving of alms.<sup>42</sup>

### **Anna-daan as action and event: role of intentionality and notability**

*Anna-daan* could be an action or event. As a form of offering, donating, or gifting, it is an action performed outwardly. In the Buddhist understanding, the action is of three varieties: mental, verbal, and physical. The action is appropriate where intention or awareness is associated. As stated earlier, the Buddha says, *Chitto'ham Kamma vadāmi*, i.e., "I say the mind or mentation is action proper". The previous statement indicates that mentation is a qualifier for action proper. Unintentional actions may have consequences, but responsibility cannot be imposed rigorously on the actor. In such cases, the actor is not a principal cause or condition but an auxiliary one. It further implies that an action is proper when the actor's intention or consciousness qualifies it.

*Anna-daan*, if performed consciously or intentionally by both the ends the *daata* and *grahita* is well appreciated. It is the action for any of them, who is conscious of the *daan* and who is not conscious of the offering; for him, it is only an event. (a) In the case where one keeps some food for the birds and a roaming mad, hungry person happens to eat it, the action of *dāan* gets done by the donor, but for the receiver, it is an event because he did not beg for it, nor was it destined for him. Even if destined for him, as he is not aware

of it, it is not an act of donation. (b) If the person throws away the food items with the intention that somebody may eat them, then it may be his action of *daan*, but it is only an event for the recipient. (c) Similarly, if someone throws away some food as it is not eatable by him and somebody eats the same without the awareness or sense that it has been discarded and it is fulfilling his need, then, in this case, the whole matter is not any action of food charity for both the ends, who throws away the food and who eats it as it is not performed by intention. However, the former has the action of discarding, and the latter has the action of eating the discarded, and whatever is discarded is not called food proper. For another example, a person may throw away some weeds from his field, or vegetable vendors may throw away some vegetables, and the same may happen to fulfil the hunger of some others. Since the person who throws away has no intention of charity and the intention that it is food for anybody, the matter cannot be considered under *anna-daan*. (d) Sometimes, *anna-daan* happens unconsciously, and in that case, it becomes an event, not an action. For example, when some people leave their temporary camp hurriedly, leaving the foodstuffs behind, and if a hungry person happens to eat that food, it becomes an event. Here, too, *anna-daan* happens unconsciously. The intention of *anna-daan* must be with the donor to call the action so and so, as the recipient and the context of receiving may happen after that. Even without intention, the whole matter happens to be an event, the natural return of every event will happen by the force of Nature, and accordingly, the person who throws the food away will get its result.

Along with the intentionality, there goes the noticeability in *anna-daan*. The Buddha, his disciples, and the mendicants visited the villages and streets to beg for alms. They used to approach houses for alms – chanting the *Triratna*, which acted as noticeability, and listening to these, excellent and able people, the house owners offered them food. Later, Buddhism developed monastery culture and religious ritual worship, wherein the noticeability was familiar to all *anna-daan*. In any individual case, the donor with the intention of *anna-daan* searches for the receiver and requests him/her to accept the *daan*. This request is noticeably an *anna-daan*. Sometimes, the recipients are invited before accepting the *daan*. As described in several instances in Buddha's life, noble persons of villages used to invite the Buddha, his disciples, or any of them to receive food in his or her house. Sometimes, they would send the offerings to the monastery. The practice was institutionalised slowly after the Buddha. Later villages were assigned and arrangements of revenues were assigned to serve the purpose of food and other requirements of the monastery, as in the cases of Nalanda *vihars* in Bihar, and Puṣpagiri and Lalitagiri *vihars* in Odisha; this is a form of institutionalised *anna-daan*.

### **Is *anna-daan* a due?**

*Anna-daan* is made, and in reciprocity, the spiritual merit is gained, yet *anna-daan* is not due. *Daan* is an offering, with no expectations or any return, as described earlier. It is also not given for something the donor owes, like in Hindu culture, a son offering *pinḍa-daan* to the dead forefathers, as the former owes to the latter. *Anna-daan* also may not be dictated or forced upon the recipient's end, but the donor may be forced to donate per his/her capacity in some instances, where donation becomes a human duty. It is a duty not in reciprocity but with a deep sense of religiosity or humanity. Duty is always due. However, this duty is not due in the proper sense of the term, as the person disagreed with it.

Nevertheless, it is still a duty as the person stands within a moral and humanitarian field or situation or context, demanding the action of donation. If a person provides food to family members, the dependents are his social duty; providing the same to the monastery is a religious duty, and donating to jobless people during COVID-19 is a humanitarian duty. *Anna-daan* thus is not a due but social responsibility and draws its status as duty and is performed with consciousness and sometimes outside of religious sense, humanitarian sense, and as an entirely self-promulgated act.

### **Anna-daan as a reciprocal humanitarian duty**

It is essential to note that in some countries and cultures of Buddhism, *anna-daan* is humanitarian participation. If people do not feed them, how do they survive<sup>43</sup>? People practise offering foods and eatables or support for foods on humanitarian grounds. Inculcated through religious teachings, these values of humanism are guiding forces behind *anna-daan*.

In Tibet, Vietnam, and other Buddhist societies, local traditions offer one child from the family to join the *Sangha* and embrace monasticism. The child is educated and taught by the monastery. Living the monastic way of life, they go for alms, as they are dependent on *anna-daan*. When any family feeds any child-mendicant from the monastery affectionately, relating to the child as their own on a personal level, the monastery is treated as an extended home for their child.

In such societies, the monastery reciprocates to the supporting society by providing education, health, and social services like cleaning and helping people during calamities and other disasters. The monastery also helps solve minor disputes, provides spiritual insight and practices, and mediates performing the rituals required in childbirth, marriage, and death. In all these activities, the monastery becomes an inalienable part of the Buddhist society. Like other homeless spiritual followers, the Buddhist monks and nuns depend upon the people's donation of food and other items from lay people or *upasakas* living in villages and towns.<sup>44</sup> The monasteries also act as equalisers by collecting the *anna-daan* from the privileged and dispersing it among the needy. It does attempt to stabilise the inherently unequal society.

#### **4.4 The rationale of merit for *anna-daan***

The rationale behind *anna-daan*, as mentioned earlier, is augmented by natural and mystical merits. Natural in the sense that these can be understood and practised by everybody, therefore commensurable as humane and moral. What is not natural can be subsumed as mystical because it is not commensurable to everyone. The *anna-daan* mitigates hunger and therefore is natural. Nevertheless, the beliefs, such as *anna-daan* generating merit or *punya*, which is carried to the next birth as meritorious content or force of action (*karma*) bearing good fortune, describe the mystical aspects of the merit. The natural and mystical aspects relate to the person and his spirit, thus performing a spiritual act.

*Daan*, in its pure form, refers to the offering, donating, or gifting with the pure, sound, higher mind, generosity, honour, or sympathy to a deserving or needy person without expecting any return. Any of these qualifiers missed or violated means the *daan* loses its purity. The donor is called *daata*, and the receiver is called *grahita*. The same applies to

*anna-daan*, and in this context, the following will briefly explicate the nuances of (*anna daan*) along with its specifications.

Numerous mentions in the *Pali*<sup>45</sup> and other Buddhist scriptures describe people receiving good fortune, wealth, and superiority because of the merit they amassed by making *anna-daan* in previous births. For example, a generous princess who offered and supplied great charity, including food, to thousands of monks for some years, and the spiritual merit generated out of that made her a deity, and eventually, she became the goddess *Tara* in *Tantra* Buddhism.

### **Inverse variation of merits and notability in *anna-daan***

There is an inverse variation of merits of *anna-daan* when contrasted with the presence or absence of intentionality and notability. Generally, intentionality, along with noticeability, plays its role in *anna-daan*. Both the offeror and receiver are aware of what they are doing, who they are, and who the receiver is from a moral point of view.

However, from the spiritual merit or *punya* view, it is better if neither the offeror nor the receiver knows each other. Sometimes, the offeror keeps himself unknown to the receiver or does not want to know the receiver. This type of charity is an act of un-notability. In Thailand, people leave food items in a large open field so that needy people can come and take whatever they require. Such un-notable *anna-daan* primarily helps avoid the psychological effects of the offeror's superiority or arrogance and the receiver's inferiority. *Anna-daan* performed in anonymity is regarded as more meaningful and is claimed to hold more merits. The merit resulting from different types of *anna-daan* may be understood as the following (Table 4.3).

To explain Table 4.3, suppose good intentional *anna-daan* results in (supposedly) 100% merit, then forcible *anna-daan* or that with the expectation of merit, or something in return or with arrogance or pride results in less merit. Unintentional *anna-daan* results in more than 100% merit, and if it is an un-notable one, it produces more and more merits. If one deprives himself or takes the risk of life by *anna-daan*, the merit is more than any type of merit.

The donor type may vary from impoverished to wealthy, of different ages, and in different situations. The type of donation is most valued depending upon its necessity. In this sense, *anna-daan* is the best one for the hungry. Similarly, the donation given to the needy is of high value. If the donation pinches the pocket, it demands sacrifices from the donor, and if the donor is economically very weak, they become the best type of donor. Similarly, if the recipient is pious and lives with scant needs, these qualities make him the best recipient.

Table 4.3 Merit resulting from different types of *anna dana*

<i>Anna-daan</i>	Merit
Good intention	100%
Arrogance/expectation/forcible	-100%
Unintentional	+100%
Un-notable	++100
Depriving himself and risking his own life	+++100%

Source: Compiled by authors from scriptures.

The type of mentation depends upon sincerity and simplicity, and the intention of the donor to bring solace to the recipient, and have affection and honour towards the recipient. The mentation in intention and emotion is more valued than the knowledge factor or type of donation here. The story of Ghatikara (potter) is the best example of this. This *sutta* records a unique story of almsgiving. Chikara, the potter, was looking after his blind, aged parents. The potter had won the trust of the Buddha by the nobility of his conduct and devotion. One day, the Buddha Kassapa went to his house for alms, but Ghatikara was out. His parents told Buddha that being blind, they were helpless and invited the Buddha to take his alms from the pot. The Buddha did so. When Ghatikara returned and inquired who had taken the food, his parents told him that the Buddha had come when he was away and that they had requested him to take the food from the pot. Ghatikara was very happy to hear this. The joy and happiness (*piti-sukha*) he experienced did not leave him for two weeks.

The same *sutta* reports that on another occasion when the monastery's roof started leaking, he sent the monks to Ghatikara's house to get some straw. He was away from his home. The monks came back and said that there was no straw available except what was on the roof of the potter's hut. The Buddha told the monks to go back and pick up some straws from the roof. On hearing the sound from the roof, the parents of Ghatikara asked who was there. When they came to know what was happening, they told the monks to take all the straws. When Ghatikara heard about this, he was deeply moved by the trust the Buddha had reposed in him. He was without a roof, but it is said that the rains did not enter the house. On both occasions, he and his parents felt happiness that lasted them for weeks.

#### 4.5 Types of *anna-daan*

*Anna-daan* has no restrictions. After keeping some for themselves and dependents and future requirements, people can donate some portion of their possession. One may donate if he is entitled to it. One may donate to a deserving or needy person, though it is sometimes difficult to decide who is deserving or the needy. In the case of *anna-daan*, anyone who is hungry or destitute deserves charity in the form of *anna-daan*. The merit of *anna-daan* is more if one donates by depriving himself or risking his own life. Among the types and levels of *daan*, starting from the donation of materials to sacrifices of one's body parts (as in the case of King Śivi, narrated later in this chapter) for a charity of food or even life marks the pinnacle of *anna-daan*. The classification may be depicted in the following way (Table 4.4).

*Daan* can be in the form of food, eatables, materials, money, and labour. Extraordinary *daan* can be in the form of sacrifices. There are accounts of sacrifices that have motivated others for *daan*. One such account of sacrifice is mentioned next.

In the form of a dove, god Indra was once chased by a hungry hawk (god Agni) who wanted to eat the dove. The dove entered the palace of King Śivi to save itself from the hawk. The hidden purpose of the gods was to test the generosity of the king. To save the dove and still satisfy the hunger of the hawk, Śivi offered flesh from his body as a substitute meal for the hawk. Flesh, taken from his body repeatedly could not match the weight of the dove, and at last, Śivi offered his entire body. Eventually, having tested the king's generosity, the birds revealed themselves to be gods Indra and Agni and restored the king to his original form.



Table 4.4 Types of *anna-daan*

	<i>Dimension of time</i>	<i>Dimension of space</i>	<i>Dimension of kinds</i>
<b>Ordinary</b>	Regular (daily or periodical)	In-home	Material (eatables or any other)
	Occasional	Temple/monastery	Money
	Festival Ritual		Labour
<b>Extraordinary</b>			Sacrifices of property Body parts Life

Source: Compiled by authors from scriptures.

The story depicts the king's obligation to protect and be compassionate to the dove (his subject) and be just and generous towards the hawk (also his subject). King Śivi became a *bodhisattva*<sup>46</sup> due to this generosity. A similar story is of a hare jumping into a fire to provide food to the sage to dissuade him from leaving the forest life. An ordinary person cannot make such extraordinary *daan* or show such a high level of unattachment.

#### 4.6 Etiquettes of *anna-daan*

*Anna-daan* goes with specific etiquettes on different occasions. Guests are treated like gods in the *sanatan* culture, and in the same way, the uninvited or invited Buddhist guests are treated in the context of the *anna-daan*. The donor invited the Buddha and his disciples with honour and affection. At the arrival of the Buddha and his disciples or just the disciples without the Buddha, they used to be treated as divine arrival with reverence and devotion. The householder used to wash their feet with fragrant water and offer them honourable seats to rest and water to quench their thirst. After exchanging pleasantries, if midday was yet to approach, they used to listen to some advice, a light-hearted story, or discuss or sort out their doubts about *dhamma*-related issues or any such pertinent matter. After that, *anna-daan* used to be served with complete veneration and honour. On some occasions, the guests were given presents when departing after partaking in the food. In the tradition of later monastic practices that continue to date, etiquette is modified as suitable to a place and other traditions. In Buddhist countries, the monastery is an inalienable part of the society, and for this reason, monasteries share some food from the society in different formal and informal ways. Generally, people make donations in the form of food or cash on different auspicious occasions. Such donations are used to feed the monastery's residents, including visitors and caretakers of the monastery. The etiquette followed for this feeding is just humanitarian or religious traditions with celebrations and chanting.

#### **Anna-daan: a psychological (emotional) perspective**

*Anna-daan* needs a pure or blessed mind and heart. A pure mind means a neutral mind having no thought, intention, agenda, or arrogance. Having good intentions makes the mind suitable for *daan*. A higher mind possesses blessed thoughts, like friendliness (*maitri*) and sympathy (*anukampa*). This mental aspect is the intentional or psychological aspect and is most important in the spiritual or religious aspects of *anna-daan*. The *daan* is celebrated depending upon the excellent intention or no intention, good emotion or no emotion.

Neutralising the emotional attachment to generosity is praised the most. The story of Prince Vessantara<sup>47</sup> is highly relevant in this regard. He practised *daan* at its ultimate level without any emotional attachment. He gave away the royal elephant to the people of a rival kingdom when they asked for it. He gave away his children and even his virtuous wife. Though the story gives rise to many questions from the modern perspective, it depicts to what extent one can be generous and unattached.

Awareness or knowledge of the recipient and types of *daan* and the intention constitute an essential factor of *daan* to make the donation proper. However, it may be argued that in the case of *anna-daan*, so much knowledge and intention for getting merit is not required. If such expectations are entertained, *anna-daan* will be attached to the donor's selfish interest, which will mar the purity of the *anna-daan*. Instead of this, if the donor offers food and other eatables to relieve the recipient of his hunger, that will give emotional delight to the donor and make the donation pure and fruitful.

### **Positive and negative ways of promulgation for anna-daan**

*Anna-daan* is promulgated in both positive and negative manners in religious and philosophical scriptures. A person wanting to offer *anna-daan* develops compassion, love, and kindness, from which all charity originates. By this, he may have tremendous psychic advancements. His understanding, conscience, and emotional levels get refinement and reach sublime satisfaction during *anna-daan*. This adds to the religious promulgation of *anna-daan*, and the donor acquires the spiritual merits. Both the psychic advancement and the spiritual merits keep people positively engaged with *anna-daan*.

Similarly, if someone does not share food with the hungry or offer refuge or alms to mendicants, he acquires demerit or sin and meets misfortune. Actions, inner satisfaction, and acquiring merits are positive promulgations, whereas the fear of losing the merit and acquiring demerit resulting in misfortune is negative. Scriptural knowledge of how actions, intentions (*karma*), and their results revolve around making the future journey of the personality as described variously starting from the primary elaboration of four *arya satya*, *pratītya samutpada* as *dvadasanga janma Marana chakra*, and *sat paramitas* are the fundamental promulgations, which encourage men for good conduct and make charity. These are augmented by the later descriptions of different stories of people of good conduct and other scriptures. It was helped by the negative descriptions and fear of hell and misfortune. All these establish the actions or *karmas*, their results, their meritorious or de-meritorious energy for the person, and where the charity is required to help.

*Anna-daan* promotes overcoming unwholesome psychic roots (*akusalāmula*) and helps in the purification of the mind, leading to spiritual freedom. Craving (*tanhā*), greed (*lobh*), and miserliness are rooted in mine-ness and ego, and these get relegated in the process of *daan* in general and *anna-daan* in particular. It is said that a person struck by desire and greed faces a war-like situation when going to donate (*dānam ca yuddhan ca samanam abu*). He psychologically fights against these unwholesome psychic factors. Finally, the person defeats these unwholesome psychic roots when he donates.<sup>48</sup> In fighting against hindrances (*nivaranas*), the strategy is to adopt opposite good qualities and virtuous actions. The same is adopted here; for example, charity can overcome miserliness (*jīnekadariyamdānena*), as the *Dhammapada* says.<sup>49</sup>

To fight against such unwholesomeness, one needs spiritual strength. The *Latukikopama Sutta* illustrates that a lack of spiritual strength makes it hard to give up things we are comfortable with or attached to.<sup>50</sup> Wherefrom is the spiritual strength gained? It is gained

from good conduct, and practice of *sīla*, and cheerful and positive promulgations. A little practice of *sīla* positively affects *karma*, and it can result in increasing spiritual strength, which enables one for charity and produces more spiritual strength, which leads to more charity. There is always some acceleration of spiritual strength with the charity and *sīla* and *vice versa*, gradually cancelling unwholesome psychic roots. For this, it is required to remove meanness and doubts about the actions of charity. Otherwise, the charity may not be fruitful unless the unwholesome psychic roots are removed (*macchera ca pamada ca evamdānamnadiyati*).<sup>51</sup>

#### **4.7 Continuation of practices of *anna-daan* in the later period**

Buddhism has evolved across ages, and so it has its rituals and practices. These practices go beyond the traditional scriptures as the followers have embedded their viewpoints and personalised these traditions to gratify their indigence. Consequently, the scopes and forms of *anna-daan* have forged new limits as well. Profoundly embedded with the virtue of compassion, Buddhist practitioners view every creature with a sincere sense of empathy. Preaching on “purification” of *karma*, many Rinpoche and Lamas have called upon people to feed living creatures such as fish, birds, and stray animals. Providing the helpless creatures with food that helps them survive is deemed to be a noble act. It is common to see Buddhists chant the mantra in a prayer wheel and feed pigeons, squirrels, and stray dogs. Many monasteries provide stray dogs with meals and veterinary services; these dogs regularly roam around the monastery complex, and some even permanently stay there.

Similarly, these monasteries feed the birds and even attend to the wounded birds. There are many reasons for this act of charity towards other creatures; while it could be a simple act of humanity, some hold deliberate religious grounds. They believe the act of feeding the animals is a way to escape their bad *karma*. A few others view it as a charity of fearlessness as well.

#### **Feeding on the loss of someone**

Though Buddhist doctrines formally discard the existence of the soul, the cultural implications have injected the practice among Buddhists where the deceased’s family voluntarily organises an *anna-daan* at a funeral. While there is no formal invitation, all the relatives from far and wide, every village resident, monks and nuns, family, friends, vagabonds, and deprived individuals are welcome to join the feast. The family believes this helps the dead person rest in peace and attain *moksh*. In addition, many families organise *anna-daan* in monasteries, orphanages, old age shelters, or asylums. This act helps the family grieve and grant good *karma* for the deceased. There is no religious mandate for this. The event is organised primarily based on the financial strength of the affected family.

#### **Feeding during calamities and mass destruction**

The Buddhist society is tightly knit and acts as a solid support base for all fellow members. The community provides relief during calamities such as the Nepal Earthquake in 2011, the COVID-19 pandemic, and countless cyclones and landslides. Overcoming many hostile and inaccessible terrains, they set up a community kitchen and feed the affected people. The monasteries facilitate relief by collecting and dispersing donations; the relief work does not usually get advertised or published and is performed anonymously.

#### 4.8 Buddhist monasteries in India and the practice of *anna-daan*

While every Buddhist village has a monastery, the devotees habitually tend to interact more with the village monastery itself. This section outlines a few of the popular monasteries in India; in doing so, we aim to highlight the important places popular among the practitioners of Buddhism and assess the stipulations of *anna-daan* in these monasteries. Unlike other religions where food is served to the devotees who visit the religious places, *anna-daan* happens within the monastery wherein the monks are taken care of with food and other things. “The monks have certain responsibilities and devotedly follow them”. However, children from several families are sent to these monasteries, and to that effect, the responsibilities of those children are taken care of by monasteries. In other words, the monasteries shoulder the responsibility of these children who are also beneficiaries of holistic development, which includes *anna-daan*. “People donate to the monasteries and *anna-daan* is one aspect of it”. Just to highlight, for instance, Namgyal Monastery, Dharmasala (also known as Namgyal Tantric College), is the centre of Tibetan Buddhism in India.

The official monastery of His Holiness Dalai Lama houses more than 200 monks.

*Padma Samye Chokhor Ling, Sarnath*

Lord Buddha, after his enlightenment, is thought to have preached his first sermon under a Bodhi tree in Sarnath, and this positions Sarnath as one of the holiest places in Buddhism.

Similarly, attracting hundreds of devotees every year, Padma Samye Chokhor Ling houses 30 monks from all across the Indian subcontinent.

#### **Gaden Namgyal Lhatse, Tawang**

Popularly known as Tawang Monastery, Gaden Namgyal Lhatse is the biggest monastery in India. The monastery has 65 residential buildings that house more than 300 Buddhist monks. There are other popular monasteries: Tergar Monastery, Gaya, is one of the most visited Buddhist sites in Gaya where Buddha attained enlightenment. It houses 50 monks. Besides, the Tergar Monastery attracts thousands of monks and devotees every year who are provided *anna-daan*. Dharma Chakra Centre, Rumtek, is one of the most beautiful monasteries in India. Rumtek Gumpa is in the Himalayan state of Sikkim and is home to approximately 500 Buddhist monks.

#### 4.9 Summary

In summation, there are principles, traditions, and practices of *anna-daan* as food supports life and hence, in principle, should be given to all living beings, particularly the needy. “There are several anecdotes/incidents to support that this tradition was in practice”. The usual tradition of the monks going for seeking alms is practised and often is invited by wealthy and local people regularly and on special occasions. The Buddhist monks would share the food that they collected through alms, prior to eating, with the needy and with animals towards the end of the day. The collected alms, if in material form, would also be shared with the needy, and as a principle, they were not supposed to save/store them. However, with the establishment of the monastery system with the monks getting older, making it difficult for them to move around, food grains received in the form of donations were stored in these monasteries to support them, to feed the visitors who

came to the monastery and as donations to the poor. Monasteries also distribute food to locals on special occasions and festivals. There are other practices, like in some South Asian countries, people donate a small portion of their earnings to and through the monastery. Similarly, in some Buddhist countries, people keep their donated food in a decided spot or open place on some special occasions so that needy people can collect the same.

As a noble act, *anna-daan* holds immense reverence across religions. It is a religious obligation for some, whereas others perceive it as a primary duty of humanity, as social accountability that assists the underprivileged. *Daan*, as a formal religious act, is explicitly directed to a monastic or spiritually developed person. In Buddhist thought, as described earlier, it has the effect of purifying and transforming the giver's mind. Generosity developed through giving leads to the experience of material wealth and possibly being reborn in happy states. Generosity (denoted by the Pāli word *cāga*, which can be synonymous with *daan*) is identified as one of the four traits conditioning happiness and wealth in the next life—conversely, lack of giving leads to unhappy states and poverty.

*Daan* leads to one of the *paramitas* or “perfections”, the *dāna paramita*. This can be characterised by unattached and unconditional generosity, giving, and letting go. Buddhists believe that giving without seeking anything in return leads to more incredible spiritual wealth. Moreover, it reduces the acquisitive impulses that ultimately lead to continued suffering from egotism. *Dāna*, or generosity, can be given in both material and immaterial ways. Spiritual giving – or the gift of noble teachings, known as *dharmadāna*, is said by the Buddha to surpass all other gifts. This type of generosity includes those who elucidate the Buddha's teachings, such as monks who preach sermons or recite from the *Tripitaka*, teachers of meditation, unqualified persons who encourage others to keep precepts or help support teachers of meditation. The most common form of giving is material gifts such as food, money, clothes, and medicine.

Favouritism (*Chanda*), ill will (*doṣa*), and delusion (*moha*) are also listed as motives for donating. Sometimes alms are given for the sake of maintaining a long-standing family tradition. The desire to be reborn in heaven after death is another dominant motive. Giving pleases some, and they give with the idea of winning a happy frame of mind. *Anna-daan* in Buddhism essentially consists of but is not limited to the giving of alms by lay devotees to the practising nuns and monks. While certain sects continue with monks/nuns collecting alms, quite a few of them have abandoned the practice to adopt new modes of survival. Though guided by identical philosophies, the contemporary forms of *anna-daan* have significantly departed from traditional doctrines.

The law of *karma* is rigorously guiding the Buddhist understanding of *daan*, as a selfless act of charity is considered to induce well-being and deliver prosperity. Additionally, it helps one overcome various intrinsic emotions and external constraints and make one's way towards enlightenment. Nonetheless, beyond the textual interpretations, most *anna-daan* in concurrent circumstances is performed purely on humanitarian grounds.

## Notes

- 1 *Dāna* means gift, charity or donation, and *anna* means food. It has many forms and extended ways, like donating food grains, arrangement for food, food-grain, of food support for survival or growth or continuation. Certain sects in Buddhism prefer to use the term *bhikṣa* over *dāna* to denote charity, as they believe the act of giving and receiving is beyond the worldly exchange and rather a spiritual journey both for the receiver and giver.

- 2 The book of the discipline Vinaya-piṭaka (Vol. Suttavibhaṅga) (1949). (I. Horner, Trans.) Oxford University Press.
- 3 The Sutra on Upāsaka Precepts: 45. (2006). (S. Heng-Ching, Trans.) Bdk English Tripitaka.
- 4 Dharmasagraha, by Nagarjuna under the title *Buddhist Technical Terms*, text by Kenjiu Kasawara, Ed. by F Max Müller and H Wenzel, 1885, tr. by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, (Ver. 1.1, Feb. 2017)
- 5 Further, several other secondary works have explored the Buddhist notions of food and charity (but they have ventured separately), of which *Dāna: Reciprocity and Patronage in Buddhism* by Anand Singh (2021) is of prime importance in the context of this study.
- 6 Sanskrit word literally means four methods of pacification, which is essential for the bodhisattva to take across the sentient beings – Dāna (almsgiving), Priyavacana (loving speech), Arthakriyā (conduct and action that benefits other) and Samanārthatā (co-operation with others)
- 7 Is a Buddhist term often translated as “perfection”. *Pāramī* and *pāramitā* are both terms in Pali, but Pali literature makes greater reference to *pāramī*, while Mahayana texts generally use the Sanskrit *pāramitā*.<sup>[1][2]</sup>
- 8 Dharmasagraha, by Nagarjuna under the title *Buddhist Technical Terms*, text by Kenjiu Kasawara, Ed. by F Max Müller and H Wenzel, 1885, tr. by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, (Ver. 1.1, Feb. 2017).
- 9 The book of the discipline Vinaya-piṭaka, 1949.
- 10 Dharmasagraha, by Nagarjuna under the title *Buddhist Technical Terms*, text by Kenjiu Kasawara, Ed. by F Max Müller and H Wenzel, 1885, tr. by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, (Ver. 1.1, Feb. 2017), p. 22.
- 11 Āmiṣa here does not mean non-vegetarian food as the word is commonly meant. It is also called paccaya dāna.
- 12 Dharmasagraha, by Nagarjuna under the title *Buddhist Technical Terms*, text by Kenjiu Kasawara, Ed. by F Max Müller and H Wenzel, 1885, tr. by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu, (Ver. 1.1, Feb. 2017), The Dharma Collection – 105, p. 80.  
Āmiṣa here does not mean non-vegetarian food as the word is commonly meant. It is also called paccaya dāna.
- 13 An older of two major Buddhist traditions that base their philosophies on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.
- 14 MK. III. 255.
- 15 T. 24, No. 1488, fol. 1060a09-12. Bhikṣuṇī Shih Heng-Ching, trans., *The Sutra on Upāsaka Precepts*, California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1994: 130.
- 16 T. 24, No. 1488, fol. 1058b10-6. Bhikṣuṇī Shih Heng-Ching, trans., *The Sutra on Upāsaka Precepts*, California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1994: 123.
- 17 Karma refers to action driven by intention which leads to future consequences.
- 18 *The Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, T. 32, No. 1666, fols. 581c21–22. D. T. Suzuki (trans.), *Aśvaghōṣa’s Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*, Chicago: Open Court, 1900: 129.
- 19 Right conduct.
- 20 The highest state of mental concentration that people can achieve while still bound to the body and which unites them with the highest reality.
- 21 Wisdom.
- 22 Bhikṣuṇī Shih Heng-Ching, trans., *The Sutra on Upāsaka Precepts*, California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, (1994), 2006: 45.
- 23 Is referred to as good karma or a virtue that contributes benefits in this and the next birth.
- 24 The Vajra-cchedikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra says, “If bodhisattvas practice charity without attachment, their merits are immeasurable”. *The Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, T. 08, No. 0235, fol. 749a15–16. Charles Muller (trans.), *The Diamond of Perfect Wisdom Sutra*, Chung Tai Translation Committee, 2009: 4.
- 25 Represents the ultimate state of soteriological release, the liberation from dukkha and saṃsāra.
- 26 Buddhist festival that is celebrated in most of East Asia and South Asia commemorating the birth of the Prince Siddhartha Gautama.

- 27 Patience, forbearance, and forgiveness.  
 28 *Buddhist* term commonly translated as “energy”, “diligence”, “enthusiasm”, or “effort”.  
 29 Meditation.  
 30 Buddhist scripture.  
 31 Anguttara Nikāya iv, 236.  
 32 Anguttara Nikāya.iv, 62.  
 33 Vinaya. 3.46, 4.63–64, Digha Nikāya. 2.344.  
 34 Vinaya. 3.249–50.  
 35 A discourse of Gautam Buddha on the subject of “blessings”.  
 36 A *Buddhist* scripture.  
 37 One who has gained insight into the true nature of existence and has achieved nirvana.  
 38 Dhammapada. 356–59.  
 39 Is the ruler of the Trayastrīṃsa Heaven  
 40 Sakkasamyutta Nikāya, S.I.233.  
 41 Cattari purisayugani, attha purisapuggala, Vinaya. I.319.  
 42 Anguttara Nikāya, iv, 392-95.  
 43 Cattari purisayugani, attha purisapuggala, Vinaya. I.319.  
 44 Vinaya.1.110, 4.166.  
 45 Rune E. A. Johansson, Pali Buddhist Texts; *An Introductory Reader and Grammar*, Copyright Year 1981, by Routledge.  
 46 One who seeks awakening.  
 47 Jory, P. (2016), Thailand’s *Theory of Monarchy: The Vessantara Jataka and the Idea of the Perfect Man*, SUNY Press.  
 48 Devatasamyutta, SN.I.18, 20.  
 49 Dhammapada, 223.  
 50 Latukikopama Sutta, M.I, 449.  
 51 SN.I.18.

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# **Anna-daan practices in Sikhism**

## Manifestations of the institution of *langar* (community kitchen)\*

*Manvinder Singh and Natasha Kalra*

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*One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what he has – O Nanak, he knows the Path.*<sup>1,2</sup>

Guru Nanak (GGS, p. 1245)

### **5.1 Introduction**

Sikhism is one of the world's youngest religions, founded by Guru Nanak in the Punjab region of South Asia in the early 16th century. The religion is based on the teachings of Guru Nanak, the first guru, and his nine successors. The holy book of the Sikhs is *Guru Granth Sahib* comprising a collection of teachings of all ten gurus, running into 1,430 pages. The *Guru Granth Sahib*<sup>3</sup> envisions a society based on divine freedom, mercy, love, and justice without oppression of any kind. Guru Nanak had an interesting perspective on charitable giving. In the context of many South Asian traditions, a person's salvation is dependent on his charitable acts. Guru Nanak provides Sikhs with a new ethical framework in which people who are fit to work are required to earn a living through honest means while sharing the fruits of their earnings with sections of society that are the most needy and vulnerable.

One of the institutions that come out of this ethical framework is the *langar* (community kitchen). The *Darbar Sahib* – also known as the Golden Temple – in Amritsar, Punjab, serves free food to 100,000 people daily, regardless of their status or religious affiliation. Consequently, it is said that no one in Amritsar has slept hungry in the last four centuries.

### **Context of daan in Sikhism**

In Sikhism, there is a strong tradition of *daan*. It is a form of giving to an individual who may or may not be in distress or need. As mentioned earlier, the Sikhs believe in three main principles or pillars: (a) *Kirat karo* (work honestly), (b) *Naam japo* (recite God's name), and (c) *Vand Chhako* (share with others). The third pillar emphasises the spirit of

\* The first part of the chapter was written by Dr. Manvinder Singh, and the case studies part of the chapter was written by Ms. Natasha Kalra.



giving and sharing, which is an important message from the guru – Guru Nanak. *Vand Chhako* ordains Sikhs to share their resources with others in the community and outside or to give charity to those who need such help. In Sikhism, every Sikh is expected to contribute 10% of his wealth or income, which is called *dasvandh*<sup>4</sup> in the name of God to needy people or community and outside. It is a religious requirement that is highly valued. The concept of sharing is not only restricted to humans; it extends to animals and plants in the immediate surroundings. The concept of *dasvandh* was implicit in Guru Nanak's own *Gurbani*:<sup>5</sup>

ਘਾਲੀ ਖਾਇ ਕਛੁ ਹਥੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹੀ ਮੇਇ ॥੧॥

One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what he has – O Nanak, he knows the Path (1).<sup>6</sup>

(GGS, p. 1245)

The fourth guru, Guru Ram Das, built the city of Amritsar on his own. In *Darbar Sahib*, the *langar* is always ready for the *sangat*. Guru Arjan Dev started this practice of *dasvandh* (tithe) among Sikhs for helping the needy and for *langar*.<sup>71</sup> The *masands* (representatives) were entrusted with the responsibility of collecting *dasvandh* (tithe) in their respective areas.

Bhai Gurdas Ji, the scribe of *Guru Granth Sahib*, also writes in his work *Kirati virati kari dharm Dee hathahu Day kai Bhalaa Manaavai*.<sup>72</sup>

(Who earn livelihood honestly and munificently confer favour on others)

*Kirat virat kar dharm di Lai Praasaad Ani Varatandaa*.<sup>73</sup>

(Then by righteous means he earns his livelihood and he distributes the hard-earned meal among the needy ones).

Bhai Gurdas also says that a *Gursikh* (Guru oriented person) eats hard earned money and shares that hard earned money with other *Gursikhs*.

*ghaali khaai gursikh mili khaana*<sup>76</sup>

(The *gurmukh*, Guru oriented person earns his livelihood by hard labour and shares his victuals with other Sikhs.)

Donations should only go to the right and needy person so that *dasvandh* (tithe) can be used properly. Guru Nanak says that the donation made from the hard-earned money of the *sangat* should go into the right hands. He says,

*Akalee keechai dhaan*<sup>79</sup>

(Wisdom inspires us to give in charity.)

Sikhism mentions that giving to the hungry is like giving to God, but only if it is a genuine giving from the heart. Sikhism stresses that a Sikh should balance work, worship, and charity. In addition, it also emphasises sharing food with fellow human beings, irrespective of caste and religion.

The objective of this chapter is to explore how *anna-daan* is conceptualised over time in Sikhism, associated cultural practices, and elicit spirit/reasons for continuing *anna-daan* over time. Literature was sourced from the religious text *Granth Sahib* and other related literature on *anna-daan*. While the initial sections of the chapter focuses on the

scriptures, the remaining sections deal with data and comparative analysis of various case studies, based on types and structures, captured across India in the current context.

### **Rationality behind anna-daan**

The rationale behind the *langar* is *kirat karo*. The *langar* reflects the aspect of charity in three ways. First, it welcomes the hungry. Second, it functions as a symbol of charity which has a link to the two words often cited in early Sikh documents: *deg* (large cooking vessel) and *teg* (sword) where the cooking vessel is a symbol of sharing and charity, and the sword is a symbol of victory over tyranny. Third, volunteers, before completing their duties, bring the leftover food for distribution to those in need. The tradition of *langar* had started in *Kartarpur*<sup>7</sup> during the time of Guru Nanak, but the development of the doctrine of *langar* was greatly enhanced during the time of the second guru.<sup>2</sup>

### **Karah prasad**

In Sikhism, *karah* is a type of whole-wheat flour *halva*<sup>8</sup> made with equal portions of whole-wheat flour, ghee, and sugar to emphasise the equality of men and women. The *sevadar*<sup>9</sup> serves it out of the same bowl to everyone in equal portions. It is offered to all visitors at the *Darbar Sahib*<sup>10</sup> in a gurdwara.<sup>11</sup> It is regarded as a treat for attendees of *gurmat*<sup>12</sup> seminars. As a sign of humanity and respect, visitors accept the *karah* sitting, with hands raised and cupped. The offering and receiving of this food is a vital part of hospitality protocols. The institution of *karah prasad* is an abbreviated form of *langar* manifesting the same principles that all are equal before God and equally entitled to food for body and spirit.

### **Deg tegh fateh**<sup>13</sup>

Victory to charity and arms is a Sikh slogan that signifies the dual responsibility of the *Khalsa*<sup>14</sup>: to provide food and protection for the needy and the oppressed. While retaining its literal meaning, it has come to stand in the Sikh tradition for the ideal of public welfare or general benevolence. Guru Nanak, in one of his hymns, likens Earth to a *deg* from which sustenance is received by all living beings (SGS, 1190). Similarly, *tegh* has also acquired a wider connotation and has been used in the Sikh tradition as a symbol for chastisement of the evil and protection of the good.

*Deg* and *tegh* both are Persian words meaning the kettle and the sword, respectively. The literal meaning of the *deg* is large cooking pot, which symbolically stands for free kitchen or *langar*, and *tegh* means sword, which represents dignity and power. The term *deg* refers to serving food to the community and strangers regardless of caste and religion, and *tegh* means sword for protecting the dignity of humanity and protecting the oppressed. So, *deg* is a symbol of service, and *tegh* is a symbol of power and dignity.

According to Guru Gobind Singh, the *deg and tegh* should go hand in hand. Because without these two together, the religious movement he led would not have been able to function.

*Deg Teg Jag mai doo chalai*<sup>8</sup>

O Lord! With the thy Grace, let the free kitchen and Sword be for the protection of the lowly

### **Institution of langar**

Many members of the Sikh community associate the institution of langar with the event of a *sacha sauda* (pious deal) related to the life of Guru Nanak. When the first Sikh Guru Nanak became an adult, his father gave him 20 rupees and sent him off on a trading expedition. The father told his son that a good bargain makes for a good profit. On his way to buy merchandise, Guru Nanak met a group of *sadhhus*<sup>15</sup> living in a jungle. He noticed the emaciated condition of the naked holy men and decided that the most profitable transaction he could make with his father's money would be to feed and clothe the hungry *sadhhus*. Guru Nanak spent all the money he had to buy food for the holy men. When Guru Nanak returned home empty-handed, his father punished him severely. Guru Nanak Dev insisted that true profit is to be had in selfless service. In doing so, he established the basic principle of *langar*.

That is how the first seeds of *langar* were sown. In the anecdotes recorded in his *janam sakhis*,<sup>16</sup> there is a reference to the institution of *langar* that when the time comes to eat food, the cook used to stand behind Guru Nanak while he preached at the congregation. *Langar* was served to the congregation two times a day.<sup>16</sup> Thus, there is an indication that the *sangat* at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) used to bring offerings bought from their earnings to sustain the *langar* of the gurdwara and thus the *langar* institution was established. Gradually, the Sikh *sangats* started giving *dasvandh* (a tenth of their earnings) for the cause of *langars* at the gurdwaras. Thus, *langar* became an integral part of Sikhism, initiated by Guru Nanak. The aim of the *langar* as an organisation is to unite mankind based on humanity and togetherness by eliminating the discriminations based on caste, creed, and colour prevalent in the world. Thus, *langar* is the leading practice in the development and organisation of the Sikh *Panth*.<sup>17</sup> According to the *Guru Granth Vishva Kosh*, the Persian word *langar* literally means the place where the poor and orphans receive food. In its expanded form, the arrangement of eating and drinking at a public place by any person for those living in his shelter or for his followers, *sadhhus* (saints) *fakirs* (ascetics or poor), and the needy is also called *langar*.

Thus, *langar* evolved as a community kitchen in the gurdwara to serve meals to all free of charge, regardless of religion, caste, gender, economic status, or ethnicity. People sit on the floor and eat together, and the kitchen is maintained and serviced by Sikh volunteers. The meals served at a *langar* are always vegetarian. The second guru of Sikhism, Guru Angad, is remembered in Sikh tradition for systematising the institution of *langar* in all Sikh temple premises, where visitors from far and near could get a free simple meal in a simple and equal seating. He also set rules and training methods for volunteers (*sevadars*) who operated the kitchen, placing emphasis on treating it as a place of rest and refuge, and being always polite and hospitable to all visitors.

*Langars* are held in gurdwaras all over the world, most of which attract members of the homeless population. The volunteers feed people without any discrimination, alongside the Sikh devotees who gather. Almost all gurdwaras operate *langars* where local communities, sometimes consisting of hundreds or thousands of visitors, join together for a simple vegetarian meal. Anyone can volunteer in a *langar*, regardless of whether or not they are Sikh adherents. Besides, volunteers take responsibility for all food preparation and clean up and offer their services of their own accord.

The gurdwara is not just a place of worship for the devout; it plays the role of a school for students and a hospital for the sick; it is a place which provides food for the hungry

and safety for women and is a resting place for pilgrims coming from far and wide. Sikhs treat all with kindness while serving *langar*. Love and passion are very important in the service of *langar*. No guest or needy person is made to feel small. Even an enemy is not banned from coming to the *langar* for food.

### **Etiquettes of feeding**

In Sikhism, the word *langar* possesses a special feature. Food is imbued with spirituality when eaten with *sangat* (holy congregation). Spiritual food and physical food can be had only by sitting in a *pangat* (row). This is the uniqueness of *langar* which has given a different look to the Sikh society.

The code of conduct regarding the distribution of *langar* is also of special importance, and this is mentioned in the *Rahit-nama*.<sup>18,19</sup> Some of the codes are: while preparing or serving *langar* one should keep the hands clean and maintain silence. The use of stagnant water in the *langar* is also prohibited. The decision as to what to bring in the *langar* or what kind of food to prepare is taken in accordance with Sikh traditions. The cooking and serving of the *langar* is done jointly and no one is discriminated against. Equality is practised in *Guru ka langar*. Permission is sought from *satguru* (God) through *ardas* (prayer) to distribute the *langar*. Till the time everyone in the *pangat* (row) is served and starts eating with the *sangat* (congregation), chant *naam* (the name of God). Everything cooked in the *langar* is distributed equally. No separate or special menu is prepared for anyone. In Sikhism, the concept of *sarbat da bhala* (blessing for everyone) is very important. It is the faith that the one who involves himself or herself in *seva* (service) his or her perspective changes. The purpose of *Guru Ki Golak* (community chest) is to fulfil the needs of the poor. Guru Sahibs during their lifetime accepted the social and economic challenge to eliminate social and economic inequality through *langar*. It was said that as soon as the *langar* was ready to be served, there used to be an announcement to ensure that nobody living in the vicinity of gurdwara should go to bed hungry. Guru Nanak says that the diet should be such that both the body and the mind are at ease.

## **5.2 Historical facets of langar organisation**

There are two facets of the origin and development of *langar*. One is the doctrinal aspect based on divine experience, and the other is the social aspect in the form of institutions and rituals. There are doctrines based on divine experience, but the social aspect of religion i.e. the existence of institutions is very important for the development of religions. The aim of Sikhism is to bring about social upliftment as well as personal development and therefore it is very important to highlight the social institutions which are the doctrinal aspect of the religion. With the rise of Sikhism came the beginning of its institutionalisation.

Guru Nanak's mission was to establish a society with healthy values. He wanted to create a society where all are equal without any distinction of caste, creed, and colour. The *langar sanstha*, a fundamental and important institution of the Sikh faith, was a means to achieve the objective of equality. Guru Nanak had already realised that before introducing high values of spiritual life in the society, it was necessary for the people to be mentally and physically satiated. For this purpose, he started the tradition of *langar* where free food was provided to the poor and needy. Guru Sahib himself did farming,

and his entire crop of grains was used for the *langar*. The *janam sakhis*<sup>20</sup> (life stories of Guru Nanak) testifies to this fact. The tradition of *langar* run by Guru Nanak is also called *roti da mandir* (temple of food). According to Prof. Puran Singh, the first temple built by Guru Nanak was the temple of food or *Guru ka langar*. In this common temple of food, all are equal.

When Emperor Akbar visited Guru Amar Das, he had to sit in *pangat* and eat at the *langar*. Emperor Akbar was greatly impressed by the social service and the sense of equality of humanity behind the tradition of *langar*.

To strengthen and spread the *panth* (Sikhism), *Manji Sanstha* (22 devoted Gursikh dioceses) was established.<sup>28</sup> *Manjidars* (dioceses) established *dharamshalas* in their respective areas and arranged *langar* in them. This led to the development of the principle of share what you have among the *sangat* (congregation). Several gurus served the *langars* in different ways. Guru Amar Das made a significant contribution and conveyed the message to the Sikhs that on occasions like *Gurpurab* (celebration of the birth anniversary of the first Sikh Guru, Nanak), *Baisakhi* (a festival closely connected with harvesting), and *Diwali*, all Sikhs should come together and prepare *karah prasad* (sacred food, symbolising humility, respect, and equality) and distribute it to the entire *sangat*.

### **Instilling spiritual components in langars**

Later, during the time of the fourth guru Ram Das, the services associated with the *langar* institution gained spirituality. Guru Ram Das gave a very inclusive meaning to the institution of *langar*. That is why the services related to *langar* such as cooking, feeding, serving water, and seating *sangat* (congregation) in *langar* are seen to be imbued with spirituality.

According to Guru Ram Das:

*aape dharti aape hai rahak aap janmai pisavai.*  
*Aap pakavai aap bhande dei parosai ape hi bah khavai.*  
*Ape jal ape de shinga ape chuli bharavai*  
*ape sangat ape de shinga ape chuli bharavi.*<sup>32</sup>

(He Himself is the field, and He Himself is the farmer.

He himself grows and grinds the corn.

He Himself cooks it, He Himself puts the food in the dishes, and He himself sits down to eat.

He Himself is the water, He Himself gives the toothpick and He Himself offers the mouthwash

He Himself calls and seats the congregation and He Himself bids them goodbye.)

Guru Arjun and his wife Mata Ganga set an excellent example of service. Both used to serve in the *langar* and eat with devotees who visited *Guru Sahib*. They used to stay at night in the circumambulation of the Golden Temple. Besides, due to the recitation of the *Adi Granth*<sup>21</sup> at *Harmandir Sahib*, Sikh *sangats* visited the place in increasing numbers, which necessitated the running of a bigger *langar*.

As the institution of *langar* gained spirituality in Sikhism, all the services related to *langar* also got high respect and status of spiritualistic bliss. For example, we can see the

reference to Bhai Manjh in this context. Bhai Manjh was the disciple of the fifth guru, Arjan, and he used to collect wood in a jungle near the village Sultanwind, Amritsar, and bring them to the *langar*. One night when Bhai Manjh was returning with wood on his head, he fell into a well following a storm. Bhai Manjh kept the wood on his head the whole night to ensure that it did not get wet. The next morning when Guru Arjun and his followers threw a rope inside the well to take out Bhai Manjh Bhai, he insisted that the wood should be taken out first so that *langar* could be prepared. Only after the wood was taken out of the well first did Bhai Manjh come out. Then Guru Arjan honoured Bhai Manjh and said, “Manjh is beloved of the Guru and Guru of the Manjh”. Now the gurdwara named *Bhai Manjh Da Khooh* (gurdwara Bhai Manjh’s Well) has been built in the village of Sultanwind near the city of Amritsar.

### **Preaching equality and promoting langars**

During the time of the seventh guru, Har Rai, the institution of *langar* contributed to the further elimination of discrimination and difference between high and low in the *sangat*. Guru Har Rai told his devotee Bhai Gonda to visit Kabul and spread the Sikh religion. Bhai Gonda accepted the task and went to Kabul where he established a gurdwara and started the community kitchen.<sup>35</sup>

Guru Harkrishan became the eighth guru at the age of 5. He also kept the community kitchen running at Kiratpur. In 1664, when Aurangzeb called Guru Sahib at Delhi, Guru Sahib continued the process of *langar* community kitchen there too. The place where Guru Sahib stayed is known as Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, which was made under the supervision of Sardar Baghel Singh in 1783.

Guru Tegh Bahadur became the ninth guru in 1664 after the demise of Guru Harkrishan at the age of 8 years. He established Anandpur and started the *langar* there. Wherever Guru Sahib went during his pilgrimage in eastern India, he started the practice of *langar*. During the time of the tenth guru Gobind Singh Sahib, Anandpur Sahib had become an integral part of Sikhism. Innumerable pilgrims visited the place and were offered *langar*. The virtue of *langar* had also commenced at Paunta Sahib, Damdama Sahib, and Hazoor Sahib Nanded near the end of his life.

### **Preserving principles in practice**

It is believed that to check *maryada* (code of conduct) and preparations of *langar*, Guru Gobind Singh disguised himself and visited the *langar*. He discovered that *langar* was made according to proper *maryada* only in Bhai Nand Lal’s *deg*. Gurbilas Patshahi Dasmin, an important work of 1797 AD, refers to the fact that the tenth guru Gobind Singh ordered the *sangat* for the last time to provide *langar* at Nanded gurdwara every day, and this continues till today.<sup>37</sup> In the city of Nanded (Maharashtra), there is also another gurdwara – namely, gurdwara *Guru ka langar* – near the main gurdwara *Sach Khand Shri Hazoor Sahib*.

### **Ensuring sustainability**

The various gurus entrusted the management of the *langar* to a competent and service-minded Sikh. For example, Mata Khivi, the wife of Guru Angad, took care of the

*langar* herself. Similarly, at the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the responsibility of *langar* was given to Bhai Nand Lal. Sometimes the work of *langar* was entrusted to a competent person, though he may be a *bhandari* (cook). The distribution of *langar* to a large number of Sikh *sangats* assembled at fairs or festivals is marked by the beating of drums to signal the commencement of *langar* so that no one in need of food is deprived of it.

Guru Arjan Dev ordered Bhai Bahorhe, Bhai Bahilo, Bhai Manjh, and other Sikhs to run *langar* for the Sikh community. Guru Nanak freed *Gorakhmata* (Nanakmata) in the present-day Uttarakhand, from the *yogis* and gave the service of *langar* to Almast<sup>22</sup> at that place. Bhai Garhia was responsible for the propagation of Sikhism in Kashmir as well as running the *langar*.

The sixth guru Hargobind ordered Bhai Roop Chand to run *Guru ka langar* (guru's community kitchen) and the descendants of Bhai Roop are still running the *langar* in the same way. The seventh guru, Har Rai's Masand Goinda, is very well-known for serving *langar* in Kabul. Bhai Bhagat preached Sikhism in the Malwa and served the *langar* to Guru Har Rai with great enthusiasm. Bhai Garhia continued to serve the *langar* at Baba Bakala during the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur. During Guru Tegh Bahadur's journey to Malwa, Bhai Shiha served the *langar* with great devotion. Similarly, Bhai Jaita from Patna is very famous for serving *langar*. Food and the Sikh spirit of service were considered blessings from the guru. The Sikh leaders such as Diwan Darbara Singh, Nawab Kapur Singh, and Baba Aala Singh, etc., of the 18th and 19th centuries served the *langar* with great devotion. Some Sikhs like Bhai Manjh, Bhai Manak Chand, Bhai Jhanda, etc., have become very famous in Sikh history for their services of collecting firewood for *langar*. After the guru's demise, Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundari also took care of the *langar*.

### 5.3 *Anna-daan* in places of worship – an overview of current practices

#### ***Gurdwaras – the Sikh religious institutions and the langars***

Cooking and serving food for the *langar* is all done inside the gurdwara. Therefore, the *langar* is a part of the gurdwara institution. As such, the *langar* is a divine institution, and that is why shoes are taken off, feet are washed, and head is covered before eating *langar*. The *langar* institution is a special part of the unique lifestyle of the *Khalsa*. The most important and special form of *langar* at gurdwara Sahib is due to *Guru Shabad* or *Gurbani*. *Langar* is not only found in gurdwaras but also organised at a Sikh home after the Akhand Path Sahib. Apart from this, *langar* is also organised at fairs, *gurpurabs* (celebrations or commemorations based on the lives of the Sikh *gurus*), etc.

In principle, the institution of *langar* is run by the Sikhs with their *dasvand* and the contribution of devotees of other religions. It is a tradition at *Guru ka langar* that no single donor howsoever big will have complete control of the *langar*. In Sikhism, a *langar* is served only for subsistence. Hence, it cannot be called *Guru ka langar*, which is a place where food is served not only to satisfy the physical hunger but also the spiritual hunger through *Guru Shabad*. Such *langars* only are authentic *Guru ka langars* in Sikhism. Two rules apply to *Guru ka langar* – firstly, the donation given in the *langar* should be an earning of an individual, which means, a true and pure earning, and, secondly, the food donation should be given directly to the guru's treasury.

In Sikhism, it originated from Guru Nanak when the guru's followers set up several *sangats* and arranged for the distribution of food among them. The contribution of this activity to the realisation of Sikh principles and to the dissemination of Sikh culture on a global scale can never be underestimated. Besides, the *langar* is a unique form of tradition in Sikhism which distinguishes Sikhism from other religions.

### **Management of gurdwaras**

Before India gained independence, the British government passed the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act, 1922, which envisaged a committee nominated by the government to take control of the gurdwaras. However, the Akali leaders did not accept this, and an agitation started. Later, the government passed another draft where the principal demand of the *Akali*<sup>23</sup> leaders to hand over the management of the shrines to a representative body of the Sikhs was approved. Later, the Council passed the bill, and it was published in the Punjab Government Gazette on 7 August 1925, and it became operative on 1 November 1925 as the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 (Punjab Act VIII of 1925). The act provided for a central body called Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) for the management of gurdwaras. The SGPC directly manages historically important Sikh gurdwaras. The members and the trustees of SGPC hold office for five years, but they may continue in office till a new committee is elected. The act contains detailed provisions regarding the finances of the SGPC and its committees.

In India, the gurdwaras are managed by the gurdwara committees, which are generally elected by the *sangat*, the people of the Sikh community who meet and worship in the gurdwara. The gurdwaras in the three states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and the union territory of Chandigarh are managed by SGPC. The SGPC looks after the facility maintenance, security, finance, and religious aspects of gurdwaras. Wherever there is a gurdwara, it is considered mandatory to set up a community kitchen there. Along with this, it provides relief to the people during natural calamities. Moreover, SGPC also runs various charitable hospitals and educational institutions, and contributes much to social welfare programmes.

### **Social, spiritual, and economic aspects of langar**

Gurdwara (place of assembly and worship for Sikhs) and *langar* (community kitchen) work in social and spiritual harmony. Gurdwara is an auspicious place that brings people together; *langar* works towards ensuring equality accompanied by the feeling of gratefulness towards *Guru Sahib*. Besides, doing selfless service in *langar* satisfies the respective individual spiritually.

From *langar*, the efficiency of the dignity of labour can be felt and observed. To a Sikh, Sikhism is his utmost priority. It has been made very clear in Sikhism that hard work is considered to be at the top because it is the divine law that man must labour to earn his livelihood. Hard work done by keeping God in mind first and feeling his presence is real honour and respect. Anything served selflessly and accompanied by humane feelings is accepted by both the people and also Lord's court. *Guru Granth Sahib* tells people to work hard and rise above their own self and their families and to contribute some part of their earnings to help the needy. Anyone obeying such teachings is blessed by the almighty. In the Sikh religion, salvation must be achieved in this world by remaining engaged in



worldly affairs. The spirit of brotherhood can be clearly seen in the *langar*. According to *Guru Granth Sahib*:<sup>24</sup>

*Ek pita ekas ke ham barik tu mera gur hai.*<sup>45</sup>

The one God is our father, we are the children of the one God. You are our guru.

According to *Guru Granth Sahib*, God is one and he is the creator of the whole universe. Thus, all human beings are children of that God. No one can be considered bad due to race, religion, or other social reasons. If we look at the doctrine of sharing in Sikhism in a broad sense, it does not only mean that we have to share and eat *langar*, but it also means that man has to share everything that is available in nature whether it is food, land, sky, trees, plants, wind, water, light, and sunshine. According to Guru Nanak:

*Kudrat khana pina painhan kudarat sarb piar.*

*Kudarat Jati jinasi rangi kudarat ji jahan.*

By His Power we eat, drink and dress, by His Power all love exists.

By His Power come the species of all kinds and colours, by His Power the Living beings of the world exist.

The concept of *seva* is also an important part of Sikhism. The *seva* can be of different kinds; it can take the form of serving the guru and following his and God's teachings. But in practical form, the *seva* like waving the fan for *sangat* (congregation), distributing water in the *langar* (community kitchen), cleaning utensils, cooking *langar*, and brooming the floors; taking care of the luggage of the *sangat* is performed with the feeling that one is blessed as the chosen one by the guru to perform these acts. The fourth guru, Ram Das, also says that the service of water, the service of the fan, and the service of grinding i.e. every kind of service helps to lead man to the path of God.

It is often said while serving *langar* that:

*Bread and water belong to the Lord and the desire to serve the pleasure of the Sikhs.*<sup>54</sup>

Thus, *langar* has played an important role in eradicating caste and racial discrimination. Before Guru Nanak, the society was a victim of various forms of discrimination. Guru Nanak openly condemned the practice of casteism. The hymns of *bhagats* (saint) like Kabir, Ravidas, and Namdev are recorded in *Guru Granth Sahib*. These *bhagats* also belonged to the so-called lower castes. Guru Nanak belonged to the high caste Khatri (name of caste), and he did not have to live the kind of miserable life like that of Ravidas, Kabir, and Namdev. In spite of that, Guru Nanak associated himself with the so-called lower strata of the society.

Another record of the caste system prevalent in India in the early 11th century is found in Al-Biruni's book *Al-Hind*,<sup>56</sup> written in 1030 AD. Al-Biruni writes, "It was very important for each of the four castes to not to have people of different castes at the time of *Seh Bhoj* (taking food together). If in the *pangat* (row) of a Brahmin there are people of another caste and they are close to each other, it was important to make a shield by either placing a plank/cloth or at least a line to be drawn between them, and they were considered separated from each other".<sup>57</sup> According to Guru Nanak, a man is by what he does not by what he is by birth, status, or belief. So, in the guru's time, no man who believed

in caste had a place in the Sikh *sangat*.<sup>60</sup> The people who came to the guru's *sangat* were those who had lost their fear of caste barriers.<sup>61</sup> In this context, it is worth mentioning that all the people in the *langar* sit in one place and eat.<sup>62</sup>

The fourth guru, Ram Das, built the city of Amritsar as the centre of Sikhism and brought it to the world stage. In Darbar Sahib, the *langar* is always ready for the *sangat*. Guru Arjan started this practice of *dasvandh* among Sikhs for helping the needy and for *langar*.<sup>71</sup> The *masands* (representatives) were entrusted with the responsibility of collecting *dasvandh* in their respective areas. At the same time, *langar* is not a common food, but it is a sacred gift bestowed by *Akal Purakh* (God), as *langar* is associated with *sangat*,  *pangat*, and gurdwara.

### Anna-daan of various forms and on special occasions

Even today, the *langar* organisation has always been at the forefront in eradicating all forms of discrimination in the society, as well as helping the needy, poor, and distressed people all over the world. A *langar* is made for the *sangat* (religious gathering staying at the gurdwara), and also, *langar* is distributed in the homes of Sikh devotees after the recitation of *Gurbani* (*Guru Granth Sahib*).

Large numbers of langars are set up in gurdwaras and cities associated with the *gurus* to celebrate their birth and death anniversaries. *Langar* (communal free kitchen) is served on a large scale during the annual celebration of *Prakash Purab* (birth anniversary). At the same time, the *langar* is served to the *sangat* while they are travelling from one place to another to mark the birth anniversaries of the *gurus*. These occasions are celebrated all over the world, and on these occasions, *langar* is served with a variety of sweets and food items.

## 5.4 Summary of case studies

This section provides the empirical and quantitative data on *anna-daan* practices among Indian Sikhs through case studies of gurudwaras at Bengaluru, Delhi, Amritsar, Bidar, and Taran Taran (Punjab). The summary of the case studies is discussed in Table 5.1. A detailed narrative of these case studies (one for each religion) is given in the latter part of this volume.

Table 5.1 Summary of case studies

Basic details	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4	Case study 5
<b>Name and address</b>	Gurdwara Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab	Gurdwara Guru Singh Sabha, Bengaluru, Karnataka	Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib, Bidar, Karnataka	Goindwal (Baoli) Sahib Gurdwara Tarn Taran, Punjab	Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, Delhi
<b>Year of establishment</b>	1588	1943	1948	1552	1783
<b>Established by</b>	Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of Sikhism	Under Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara	Unclear	Guru Amar Das	Sikh General Sardar Baghel Singh in 1783

Source: Compiled from case studies.

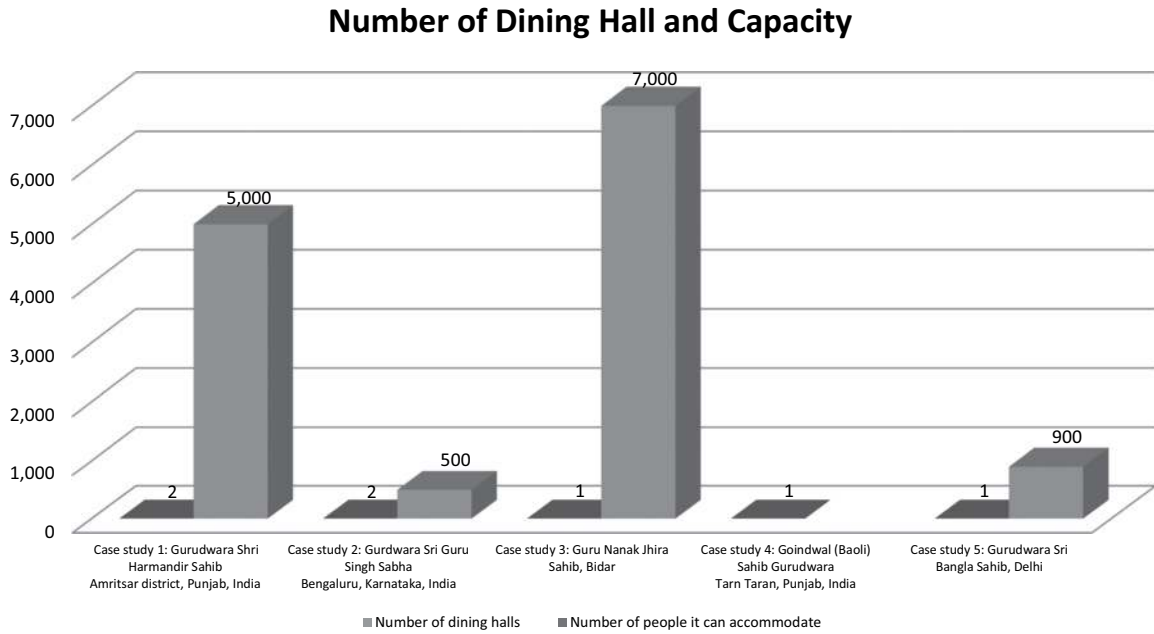


Figure 5.1 Dining halls and their capacity.

Source: Compiled from case studies.

Though the *langar* system was first established in 1521, this ancient practice of serving food to anyone irrespective of his/her caste, creed, or gender continues till today. The practice is done not only at the gurdwara but can be done by individuals after reciting a part or the whole of the holy scripture at their house or any place. The selected gurdwaras for the study provide meals three times a day to everyone.

The *langar* is served by Sewadaars (community volunteers). *Langar* is served in dedicated dining halls as indicated in Figure 5.1 and varies in their capacity across the gurdwaras. For instance, Golden Temple runs the biggest community *langar* in the world, serving around 70,000 people every day. It has 2 halls with a capacity of 5,000 each. The capacity of dining halls has been built keeping in mind the historical

Table 5.2 Reasons for *anna-daan*

Case studies	Reasons for <i>anna-daan</i>		
	Philanthropy	Anna-daan is auspicious	Spiritual purpose
Case study 1: Gurudwara Harmandir Sahib Amritsar, Punjab	✓	✓	✓
Case study 2: Gurudwara Guru Singh Sabha, Bengaluru, Karnataka	✓	✓	✓
Case study 3: Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib, Bidar	✓	✓	✓
Case study 4: Goindwal (Baoli) Sahib Gurudwara, Tarn Taran, Punjab	✓	✓	✓
Case study 5: Gurudwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi	✓	✓	✓
Total	5	5	5

Source: Compiled from case studies.

Table 5.3 Rituals and prayers before cooking and serving

Case studies	Rituals and prayers before cooking and serving		
	Prayers before cooking	After cooking, prasadam is served to the deity before serving	Meditation/prayer before serving
Case study 1: Gurudwara Shri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar	✓	✓	✓
Case study 2: Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bengaluru, Karnataka	✓	✓	✓
Case study 3: Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib, Bidar	✓	✓	✓
Case study 4: Goindwal (Baoli) Sahib Gurudwara, Tarn Taran, Punjab	✓	✓	✓
Case study 5: Goindwal (Baoli) Sahib Gurudwara Tarn Taran, Punjab	✓	✓	✓

Source: Compiled from case studies.

significance and the number of devotees visiting it. In addition, if required, *langar* is also served by installing temporary tents in the nearby empty plots. Historical gurudwaras witness high footfall and have the capacity to accommodate thousands of devotees dining together. The operation and maintenance of gurudwara and the langar is done through the funds generated through the donation made by the devotees.

From cooking to serving food, the cooks, as well as volunteers, are supposed to continuously recite prayers. No one can eat or sample food in the kitchen. Those serving food are also supposed to cover their head with a cloth and continuously recite prayers. Devotees are supposed to keep their heads covered while being served. Eating begins after *Jaikara* or war cry is called out loudly and responded to en masse by the *sangat*. Table 5.3 indicates the same.

### Frequency of anna-daan

As observed in the case studies, food is served three to four times a day with the kitchen at Golden Temple operating 24/7. Fresh food is prepared every day, and the volunteers play a significant role in the preparation of food. Even children are allowed to contribute to *langar* preparation and serving. To meet the continuous demand of cooking and serving, most of the gurudwaras now have automatic *roti*-making machines, rice boilers, grinders, etc. Food is cooked both on LPG and on woodfire. The cleaning of utensils is done after each serving.

### Number of People served food on normal days and peak (Gurupurab or Shaheed Diwas)

The number of people having food at the gurudwara increases many folds during occasions like *Gurupurab* (birth anniversaries), *Shaheed Diwas* (days marked for paying

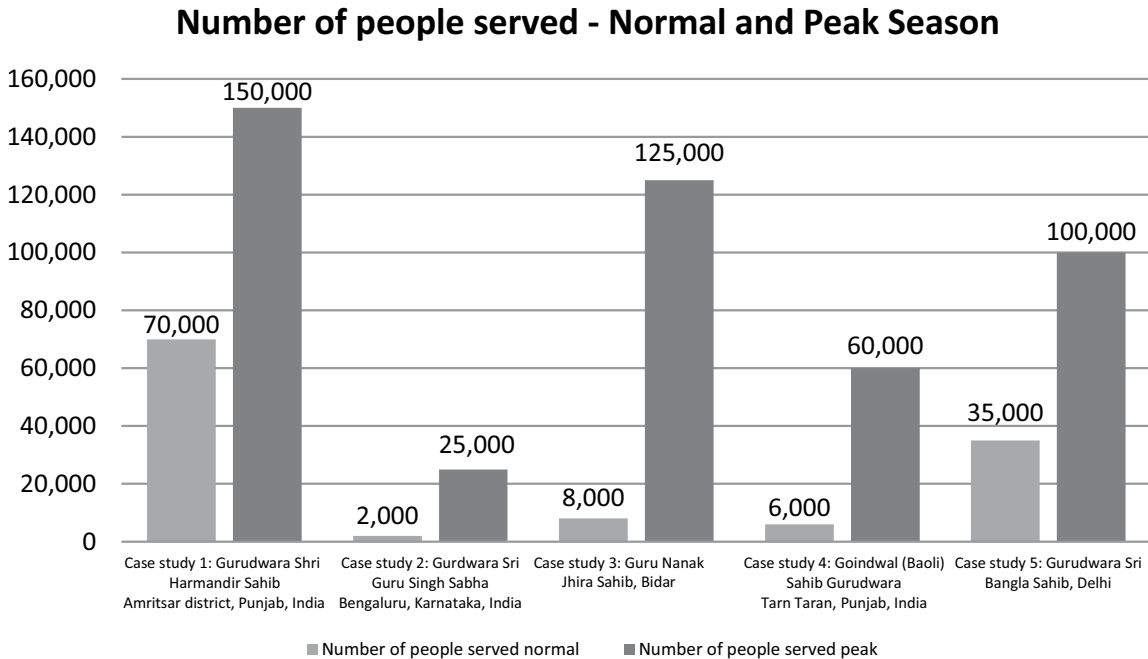


Figure 5.2 Number of people served during normal and peak seasons.

Source: Compiled from case studies.

tributes and remembering the sacrifices made by gurus), etc. As indicated in Figure 5.2, the number of devotees served food increases manifold (sometimes doubling) on special days like *Gurupurab*, martyr days, and festivals. The food served in the *langar* never goes out of stock, and no one ever leaves hungry from the *gurdwara*.

Similarly, on auspicious occasions, the volume of food cooked and served increases exponentially. Historical *gurdwaras* especially witness lakhs of devotees flocking in on special days. *Rotis*<sup>25</sup> are a significant part of *langar* in general, and in historical *gurdwaras*, the number of *roti*'s baked vary from 200,000 on normal days to 500,000–800,000 on special days. Preparation of food for special occasions starts two to three days before. Vegetables and other perishables arrive on the day of cooking, which starts the night before. Chopping of vegetables and preparation of food before cooking is done by the concerned staff and the volunteers.

### Volume of food served

As observed in all the case studies, the *langar* mainly serves vegetarian food, comprising mainly *dal*, *lauki* (bottle-gourd), rice, *chapattis*, *achar* (pickle), and a vegetable curry, along with a sweet (*kheer* or *halwa*). The menu changes every day and sometimes has to be changed at the last minute if a devotee offers, for example, a lot of vegetables or requests a certain dish to be served. There may be extra items on special occasions such as *Gurupurab*<sup>26</sup> and *Diwali*.<sup>27</sup> The volume of food served on special days increases manifold, as can be seen in Figure 5.3. In addition, it is interesting to know that the kitchens at historical *gurdwaras* also serve morning snacks – tea and snacks called *chai langar* at

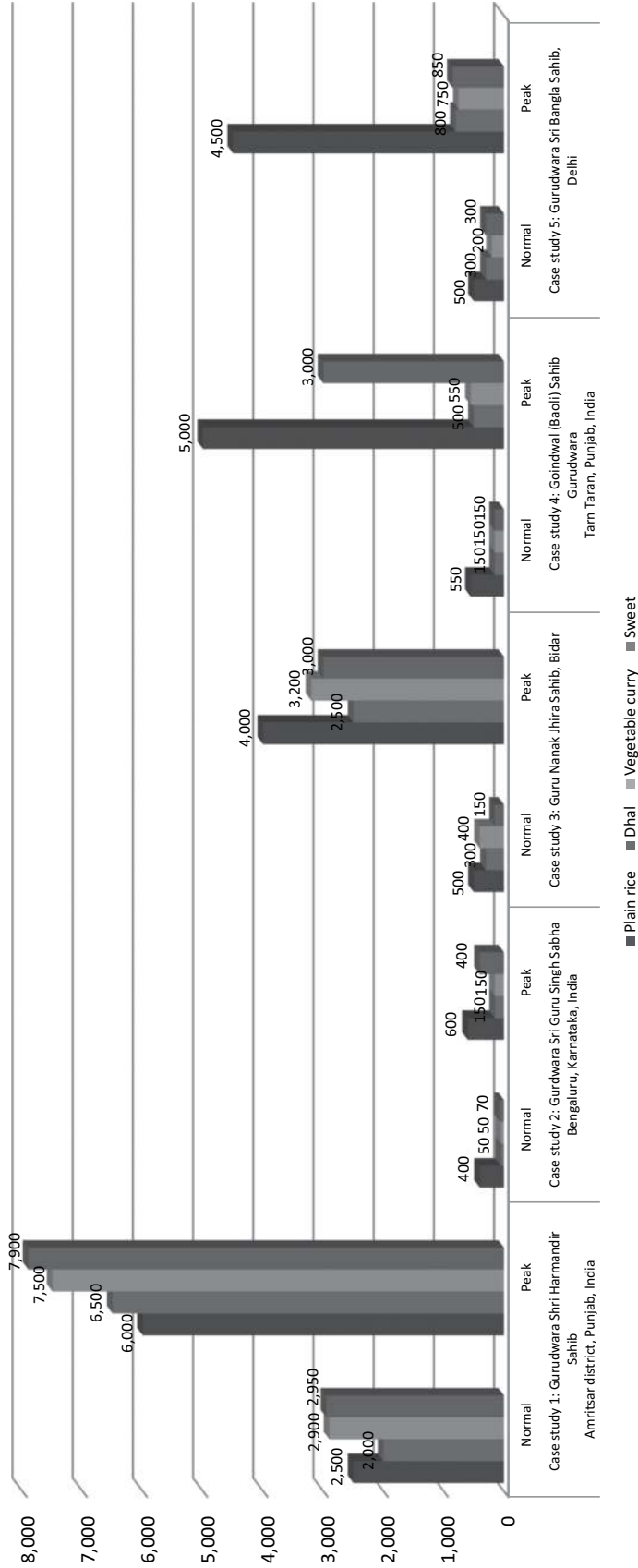


Figure 5.3 Volume of food served (kg).

Source: Compiled from case studies.

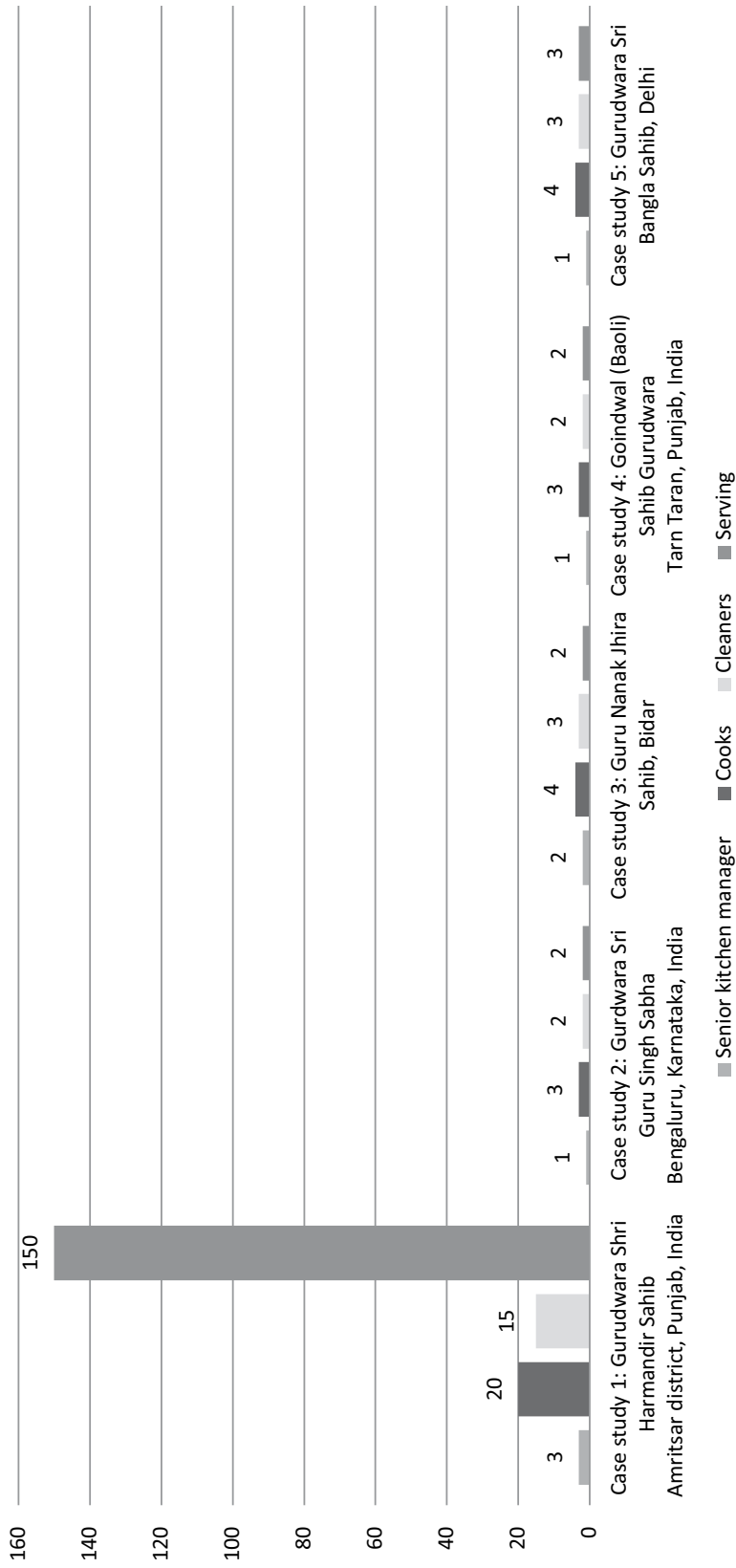


Figure 5.4 Human resources.

Source: Compiled from case studies.

5:00 am. For instance, at the Golden Temple, Amritsar serves an estimated 50,000 cups of tea and biscuits or bread between 5 am and 7:30 am.

The manager responsible for managing langar takes care of the inventory and quality of the food prepared. The quality of every item is checked before serving. As a result, the food served at *langar* is not only nutritious but is balanced as well.

**Human resource**

Though each of the five gurdwaras studied had official staff (as also indicated in the graph in Figure 5.4), the contribution of volunteers 24/7 is voluminous, and there is never a shortage of personnel to manage the premises. Most of the kitchens run all 24 hours, and most of the work is done by volunteers. They chop vegetables, make *rotis*, serve food to the devotees, and clean utensils and the *langar* hall. Volunteers of any age can choose the type of work they want to do. Even children are allowed to serve food, manage the footwear, sweep, mop, and engage in the flower décor of the gurdwara. To instil the emotion of *bhakti*,<sup>28</sup> children who volunteer are rewarded with sweets and small gifts on the podium in front of the devotees.

**Waste management**

Usually, devotees do not leave behind any uneaten food, and the same philosophy is promoted during *langar*. However, while cooking, the organic waste comprising vegetables peels, etc., is either sent for composting to nearby farms or taken by farmers to feed the livestock. Out of the five case studies, the gurudwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi, has a bio-gas plant installed on the premises. The gas thus generated has brought down the expenses of cooking food drastically. All five gurudwaras give their dry waste to the municipal-run vehicles, which regularly collect as indicated in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Waste management

Waste management	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4	Case study
<b>Segregation of waste</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Method of disposal of wet waste</b>	(1) To be used as compost in fields (2) Vegetable peels thrown in garbage dump	Given to municipal vehicles	(1) Used as feed for livestock (2) Used for composting	(1) Used to feed livestock (2) Used for composting in the gurdwara field	Biogas generation
<b>Method of disposal of dry waste</b>	Given to municipal vehicles	Given to municipal vehicles	Dry waste given to municipal vehicle	Given to municipal vehicles	Given to municipal vehicles

Source: Compiled from case studies.



## 5.5 Summary

As we have seen, in Sikhism, *langar* is an essential part of every gurdwara. In addition to food, a resting place is also provided to pilgrims coming from far and wide. As discussed earlier, *langar* is one of the basic blessings of Sikhism. It was also a practical necessity to establish the etiquettes of *langar* for the social expression of Sikh doctrines and to make the organisational structure of the *Sikh Panth* (Sikh community) more efficient and to strengthen mutual love by removing caste and creed discrimination from this world. Therefore, the institution of *langar* is an important institution, as it aims to eradicate the evil of discrimination among the people. Guru Nanak preached that we are all children of the same God. His aim was fulfilled through the organisation of *langar*. Even in the present age, the institution of *langar* is established not only in India but also wherever Sikhs reside in good numbers. Wherever there are Sikhs, there are gurdwaras, and all gurdwaras have *Guru ka langar* (guru's community kitchen). Today, a lot of changes are taking place in the *langar* kitchen to make it efficient to serve an increasing number of visitors and devotees. A *roti*-baking machine has been installed at Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar, Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, Delhi, and other cities. Earlier, women used to bake *roti*. Automatic machines are being used for making pulses and vegetables. To sum up, it can be said that the institution of *langar* (community kitchen) is the leading institution of Sikhism, which has done a commendable job of eliminating all kinds of divisions and discrimination in the world and has brought man closer to man. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, carried the message of one God and the world community. The fulfilment of that aim can be witnessed in *Guru Granth Sahib*, and the institution of *langar* *Guru Granth Sahib* contains the hymns of 36 great personalities, including 6 gurus; 15 devotees of North India, including Bhagat Kabir, Bhagat Ravidas, Sufi Baba Farid, Bhagat Ramanand, Bhagat Namdev, Bhagat Sain, Bhagat Jayjev, Bhagat Trilochan; and the hymns of 11 Bhattas and 4 Gursikhs. It is a *Granth* in itself from all over the world, which is a wonderful example of universal communion and world brotherhood. Guru Sahib has placed in front of us a spiritual dish in the form of *Guru Granth Sahib*. Now it is up to us to see if we can make our life successful with these spiritual objects or not.

In order to convey the message of *Guru Granth Sahib* to humanity in a practical way, the established institutions of Sikhism such as gurdwara (place of assembly and worship for Sikhs) *sangat* (congregation), and *pangat* (sitting together and eating *langar* together without any discrimination of cast, creed, and other social and economic differences), as well as the institution of *langar*, have established a unique identity of Sikhism with a world-wide message of brotherhood and universal communion. The way in which *langar* has served humanity in great crises and has been at the forefront of providing support to the downtrodden and the helpless is an unparalleled example in itself. Certainly, this institution of *langar* in Sikhism established by Guru Nanak will continue to serve humanity on a global scale in the future and spread the message of the oneness of God and universal brotherhood.

## Notes

- 1 Temple of the Sikhs or Place of worship.
- 2 Source: <https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Dasvandh>. Accessed on 20 February 2021.
- 3 Aad Sri, *Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. 1983 (Reprint). 1430 p. Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar.

- 4 *Dasvandh*, or *Dasaundh*, literally means a “tenth part” and refers to the practice among Sikhs of contributing in the name of the Guru one-tenth of their earnings towards the common resources of the community.
- 5 *Gurbani* is the term used by the Sikhs to refer to various compositions by the Sikh Gurus and other writers of Sri Guru Grantha Sahib.
- 6 Source: <https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Dasvandh>. Accessed on 20 February 2021.
- 7 Located in Shakargarh, Narowal District, in the Punjab province of Pakistan.
- 8 Karah Prasad (Pudding of blessings, sacred food).
- 9 Sevadar is one who performs seva through philanthropic, voluntary, selfless, service.
- 10 Darbār Sahib, meaning “exalted court”, is a Gurdwara.
- 11 Sikh holy place.
- 12 Guru’s wisdom.
- 13 A Sikh slogan and anthem in the Punjabi language that signifies the dual responsibility of the Khalsa: to provide food and protection for the needy.
- 14 Refers to both a community that considers Sikhism as its faith, as well as a special group of initiated Sikhs.
- 15 Saints.
- 16 Biographies of Guru Nanak, first guru of Sikhs.
- 17 Refers to the entire society, community, fellowship, or religious body of Sikhs all around the world.
- 18 W. H. McLeod, *The Chaupa Singh Rahit-nama*, University of Otago Press, 1987.
- 19 Code of conducts for Sikhs.
- 20 Harish Dhillon (Author), *Janamsakhis: Ageless Stories, Timeless Values*, Hay House India, 2020.
- 21 *Guru Granth Sahib*, sacred book of Sikhism.
- 22 Baba Almast was a Sikh preacher
- 23 A member of a Sikh political group.
- 24 Aad Sri, *Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. 1983 (Reprint). 1430 p. Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar.
- 25 Indian bread.
- 26 Celebration of an anniversary of a Guru’s birth marked by the holding of a festival.
- 27 A festival with lights held in the period October to November.
- 28 Devotional worship directed to one supreme deity.

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10. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1245.
11. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1330.
12. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 142.
13. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1429.

14. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 15.
15. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 16.
16. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 25.
17. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 293.
18. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 38.
19. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 457.
20. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 464.
21. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 470.
22. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 472.
23. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 522.
24. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 522.
25. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 611.
26. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 8.
27. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 881.
28. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 930.
29. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 966.
30. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 966.
31. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 991.
32. Gwil Kwie ikCu hQhu dyie [nwnk rwhu pCwxih syie] *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1245.
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72. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Var 17th, Pauri 12.
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# **Anna-daan in Christianity**

## Origin, meaning, and varieties

*James Ponniah*

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### **6.1 Introduction**

*I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

Jesus (John 6:35)

### **Clarification of terms in Christianity**

#### *Charity*

Though charity in Christianity is popularly considered the equivalent of *daan* in Indian religious traditions, these two terms do not fully correspond. While the *Oxford Dictionary* describes “charity” as the voluntary giving of help to those in need, the same dictionary also refers to its meaning in the Christian context, namely, the love of humankind. Charity (*caritas* in Latin) in the Christian tradition is considered the translation of the Greek word *agape*, which means universal love (all-encompassing love) and includes three-dimensional love – namely, love of God for humans, love of humans for God, and love of humans towards one another.

According to Christian thought, *agape* (*caritas*) is “the highest form of love, signifying the reciprocal love between God and man (*sic*) that is made manifest in the unselfish love of one’s fellow men (*sic*)” (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/charity-Christian-concept>). This idea of *agape* as love founded upon the reciprocal relationship between God and humans is elaborately articulated by St. Paul’s famous description of *agape* (*caritas*) in Chapter 13 of his letter to the Corinthians in the New Testament. The paradigmatic figure of this love is Jesus himself whose life, teachings, and death perfectly embody *agape*. One of the early Christian thinkers, St. Augustine, defines charity as “a virtue which, when our affections are perfectly ordered, unites us to God, for by it we love him” (*ibid.*), while the famous medieval theologian, Thomas Aquinas, considers *caritas* as the foundation of all other Christian virtues following St. Paul who names faith, charity, and hope as three cardinal virtues of Christian living and, among them, charity as the first and foremost Christian virtue.

## Almsgiving

*Daan* in Hinduism refers to gift, donation, and almsgiving (Werner 1997, 38). For the Hindus living in this *Kali Yuga*,<sup>1</sup> *daan* is prescribed as the most appropriate virtue and the means to attain salvation (Klostermaier 2007, 495). It is the concept of almsgiving in Christianity that comes close to the Hindu idea of *daan*. Almsgiving is generally understood as a merciful act of material assistance to those in need which corresponds to the conventional meaning of another English word *charity*, as we discussed earlier. But the Greek word used in the Bible for almsgiving *ἐλεημοσύνη* (*eleimosyni*) denotes not only some form of material assistance to the poor, but more broadly, it can “refer to attitudes or actions of mercy, kindness, or compassion”. (Downs 2016, 7).

The Christian scripture contains many sayings, parables, and living examples that advocate almsgiving. Scholars note that there are over 100 divergent passages in the Old and New Testaments (Finn 2006, 178) that strongly drive home the idea of almsgiving as a virtuous act. The Christian understanding of almsgiving expounded in the Bible is that it is not only a “religious act, inspired by compassion”, but it is also driven by a “desire for justice, whereby an individual who possesses the economic means helps materially his less fortunate neighbour” (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/alms-and-almsgiving-bible>). The understanding of almsgiving as a justice act is based upon one of the key notions in Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) – namely, covenant, a notion that governs the relationship not only between Yahweh (the God of Israel) and His people but also between His people themselves. Just as Yahweh acts with justice, so too do his worshipers. Just as God is loving, caring, and compassionate towards the people of the covenant, the latter should also practise love, care, and compassion among themselves as they are all equal before God as His children (Mal 2.10). It is this idea that obligated the affluent and wealthy people to show compassion and merciful love towards the poor and the less fortunate ones. That is why prophets like Amos denounced the oppression of the poor (Am 5.11–12, 24; 8.4; Is 10.2; Mi 2.2) and categorically demanded social justice (Am 5.24). “The Hebrew word for alms, *ṣedāqâ*, means justice or righteousness; the Old Testament notion of alms (concrete aid to the poor) is understood primarily in the context of justice. To return to the poor man his pledged cloak at nightfall so that he may sleep in comfort is justice (*ṣādāqâ*) before Yahweh<sup>2</sup> (Dt 24.13). Mindful of the poor, the Law prescribed that the land should lie fallow every 7th year (Ex 23.11) and that the gleanings from the harvest should be left for the poor in the field and vineyard (Lv 19.9–10; 23.22; see also Ru 2.2–8)” (ibid.). Scholars like William Countryman and Roman Garrison who examined the continuities between Jewish and Early Christian thought also show how the Christian practice of the Jewish idea of almsgiving helped to mitigate social divisions between rich and poor within the early Christian communities and functioned as “cement of unity” binding communities internally with bonds of mutual service (Finn, 2006, 29).

The purpose and meaning of almsgiving kept growing among both the Israelites and Christians over a period of time. For instance, the latter part of the Old Testament texts that were written in the post-exilic times (i.e., after the end of the Babylonian exile of the Jews in 538 BCE) were more articulate in conveying the religious motives of the individual’s practices of almsgiving than focusing on the justice dimension of almsgiving. For Job, it is his reverence for God that prompted him to give food, clothing, and shelter to the needy (Jb 31.16–23). Post-exilic texts in Bible advocate almsgiving for two reasons. Positively, it is recommended because “[a]lms purge away sin, deliver from death

(Tb 12.9; see also Dn 4.24), and bring God's favour on the giver (Tb 4.7)" (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/alms-and-almsgiving-bible>). Negatively, failure to give alms to the poor would fetch the wrath of God because God, who created the poor man, too, will hear the latter's cry (Sir 4.1–6).

The New Testament frames almsgiving as the *sine qua non* of a Christian. It is a concrete expression of love towards another human being without which one's love for God is only a void. "Jesus enjoins unostentatious almsgiving, together with prayer and fasting, as one of the pillars of the religious life (Mt 6.1–2, 5, 16, 19). It merits a heavenly reward (Mt 6.4, 20; 19.27–29; 25.40; Lk 12.33; 16.1–9) and makes the donor a true son of the Most High (Lk 6.35)" (ibid.). The New Testament considers almsgiving primarily as an act of religion of love. John Baptist's advice to share food and clothing with the needy (Lk 3.11), Christ's advice to lend money without thought of return (Lk 6.35), and Zacchaeus the chief tax collector's example of giving half his possessions to the poor (Lk 19.1–10) are other instances in the New Testament that exemplify almsgiving as a Christian virtue. Paul laboured to take care of the needs of others as well as his own (Acts 18.3; 20.34–35) and "organised collections for the poor (Rom 15.25–28; 1 Cor 16.1; 2 Cor 8–9), in order not only to alleviate want, but to break down prejudices between Jew and Gentile and to knit the members of Christ into a community of goodwill" (ibid.). For St. James, the true Christian religion demands that those in the Christian community who possess the means should help their needy brethren (Jas 1.27; 2.14–17). For John, God's love is not found in anyone who has the goods of the world yet refuses to help those in need (1 Jn 3.17), while Peter calls upon Christians to act as good stewards by serving one another with whatever gift each one has received (1 Pt 4.8–10).

Christian leaders in the first centuries of the common era also appealed to the Christians to give alms out of obedience to the divine command, which they found voiced by Christ in the New Testament and by his apostles Paul, Peter, and James in the New Testament. For instance, Cyprian considered almsgiving as "God's command" (*secundum praeceptum Dei*), which is incumbent upon Christians. Ambrose termed Christ's call in Lk 18.22 to give up one's possessions and to give the money to the poor as "*misericordiaepraeceptum*", i.e., "command of mercy" (Finn 2006, 117). The Christian tradition of subscribing strongly to the practice of almsgiving has continued into our present times and gets articulated at different times by Christian leaders. Pope Benedict the XIV for instance notes that almsgiving not only helps us to overcome the constant temptation of making the material rich an idol but also enables us "to respond to our neighbor's needs and to share with others whatever we possess through divine goodness" ([https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/lent/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20071030\\_lent-2008.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/lent/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20071030_lent-2008.html)). Thus, coming to the aid of others is "a duty of justice even prior to being an act of charity" (ibid.).

### *Different kinds of almsgiving*

David J. Down, who has written extensively on the concept of almsgiving in the Bible and Christianity, notes that there is "a clear and consistent distinction between meritorious almsgiving and atoning almsgiving" (Downs 2016, 7). Meritorious almsgiving is a merciful act

of material assistance to those in need as a means of accumulating some reward or treasure, usually for the donor (e.g., Sir 17.22; 29.12; Mt 6.1–4; Lk 12.33). This act

can also result in the accumulation of reward of another person, or a community associated with the donor. Atoning almsgiving is purely religious in its effect in that it functions as “a means of cancelling, cleansing, covering, extinguishing, lightening, or in some way atoning for human sin and/or its consequences”.

(Ibid.)

In this connection, Down observes, “Atoning almsgiving is, of course, meritorious, but not all meritorious almsgiving is atoning because often rewards other than reckoning with sin are envisioned” (ibid.).

Both expressions are ridden with different meanings and usages in Christianity. According to some writers, meritorious almsgiving yields this-worldly recompense for those who provide for the needy.<sup>3</sup> Atoning almsgiving is seen as the betterment of the conventional expression, “redemptive almsgiving”. Atoning almsgiving is more comprehensive in its usage than redemptive almsgiving. Roman Garrison’s book *Redemptive Almsgiving in Early Christianity*, defines “redemptive almsgiving” as the doctrine “that almsgiving not only wins favour with God, earning the individual entrance into the kingdom of God but even merits the forgiveness of sin” (Downs 2016, 9). According to some Christian thinkers, redemption only reflects one image of overcoming sin while excluding other metaphors (e.g., covering, cleansing, destroying, extinguishing, washing, etc.). According to Downs, “atonement” denotes in the broadest possible terms “a reconciled state of ‘at-one-ness’ between parties formerly alienated in some manner” (ibid.). This state of reconciliation, according to Christian theology, is “wrought through the Christ-event, with “atonement for sin” typically located in some connection with Jesus’ death and/or resurrection” (ibid.). While early Christian thinkers believed in and practised almsgiving “as having the potential to secure the future reward, and even the cleansing of sin” (ibid., 273), Biblical texts themselves (Prv 15.27; Tb 12.8-10; Sir 3.30) supported this idea, they were also voices within Christianity, especially in Reformed churches which were uncomfortable with this view because such a view that recognises the potential of almsgiving to cleanse sin underestimated the efficacy of atoning death of Jesus on the cross.<sup>4</sup> However, authors like David J. Downs point out that atoning the death of Jesus and atoning almsgiving were not viewed as mutually exclusive by early Christian advocates of “atoning almsgiving”.

What underlies the practice of almsgiving among early Christian communities is a set of historical, social, and religious factors. In the first place, one of the important social factors behind the practice of almsgiving was “sharp and growing social contrast between “the rich” and “the poor” in the nascent Christian movement” (Downs 2016, 15). In the Greco-Roman world of the first few centuries of the common era during which Christianity grew, the rich constituted 1% of the Christian population, while for the vast majority of the people, 75%–90% were poor, while the rest of the population were middle class. Against this social reality, the elite and affluent Christians were confronted with the two sets of Jesus’ message. The first group of teachings by Jesus condemned the rich and demanded the renunciation of possessions (e.g., Mt 6.24; 19.21–24; Mk 10.21–23; Lk 6.24; 12.13–21; 14.33; 16.13; 18.22–25). The second group of texts subscribed to the disposal of wealth to support needy members of the community, including wandering charismatic teachers (Mt 5.42; 6.1–4; Lk 6.30–35; 12.32–34). To the rich who were challenged by these Christian messages, atoning almsgiving provided a tidy solution as Downs notes. He observes, “The post-baptismal sins of wealthy Christians could be forgiven by the distribution of material resources to needy believers, allowing ‘the rich’ to maintain



their possessions while providing a soteriological sanction for charity” (ibid., 15–16). This practice may not have been theologically compatible with the belief that Jesus’ death was the all-sufficient act of elimination of sin. But it had at least removed the social conflict between rich and poor Christians while addressing the problem of the evil of wealth condemned by Jesus. Support for such acts of almsgiving was included in early Christian texts such as the *Shepherd of Hermas* and Clement of Alexandria’s treatise *Salvation of the Rich* (or “Who Is the Rich Man That Is Being Saved?”). They framed the reciprocal exchange between wealthy and poor believers this way: “the rich serve as benefactors of the poor through the giving of material blessings, while the poor serve as benefactors of the rich through spiritual advocacy” (ibid., 16). Secondly, it is to be noted that the division between the rich and the poor was not always static and rigid. In this regard, Downs argues that in the face of episodic poverty in the imperial Roman Empire during the 2nd and 3rd centuries, quite a few lower-middle-class people entered and exited the social category of the poor, and as a result, the division between the donors and the recipients of almsgiving also became fluid. “In many instances, an individual or community responsible for providing material assistance to the needy might soon enough be among those requiring assistance” (ibid., 17). Thus, sociologically speaking, there were two different models of almsgiving among early Christians: “philanthropic model” as exemplified in Clement of Alexandria’s *Salvation of the Rich*, a practice that operated on a vertical axis which enabled the funnelling of funds from wealthy people on the top to the poor ones at the bottom, and “mutualism model”, which represented “more horizontal exchange of resources among those of lesser means” (ibid.), as seen in Paul’s appeals to the Corinthians (2 Co. 8.1–15). Thirdly, through the practice of almsgiving, early Christians carved out a separate identity for themselves in the 2nd- and 3rd-century Roman Empire. The elite among the Greeks and the Romans did not, by and large, value the acts of beneficence to the destitute of society, probably because “Hellenistic and Roman religions did not tend to emphasize systems of reward in the afterlife for generosity in the present” (ibid., 24). In contrast, the Christian practice of atoning almsgiving gave them a strong Christian identity. Intensifying the Jewish tradition of caring for the poor inherited through the Old Testament, almsgiving for Christians became “a demonstration of solidarity with a community in which the poor were treated with dignity, value, and compassion – at least ideally” (ibid.).

Given this backdrop, the objective of this chapter is to explore how *anna-daan* is conceptualised over time in the Christian religion, associated cultural practices, and elicit spirit/reasons for continuing *anna-daan* over time. The research is based on a thorough review of literature sourced from religious texts and philosophical texts, the Old and New Testaments, and research studies on food charity. Christian scriptures contain many sayings, parables, and living examples that advocate almsgiving. While the initial sections of the chapters will focus on the scriptures, the remaining sections deal with data and comparative analysis of various case studies, based on types and structures, captured across India in the current context.

## **6.2 Feeding the hungry (*anna-daan*) in Christianity**

### ***Feeding the hungry as a key act of almsgiving***

While almsgiving came to be a distinctive phenomenon of Christianity and an identity marker for the Christians in the first few centuries of the first millennium in the Roman

Empire, sharing their resources with the needy, especially by way of feeding the poor, was part and parcel of Christian identity since its inception. In fact, the Christian mandate to feed the hungry goes back to Jesus himself, as we will see in this chapter. Jesus' teachings on feeding the hungry and the destitute in turn emanate from the Old Testament, which has several passages in this regard. For instance, through the Prophet Isaiah, God makes it explicitly clear to the people of Israel that feeding the hungry was an important part of true religion: "Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless" (Is 58.7). "If you give some of your own food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your darkness will become as bright as the noonday sun" (Is 58.10). Another prophet, Ezekiel, characterises the good qualities of a merciful giver in a similar vein: "He is a merciful creditor, not keeping the items given as security by poor debtors. He does not rob the poor but instead gives food to the hungry and provides clothes for the needy" (Ezk 18.7). We also hear more such voices in support of feeding the poor in Psalms and Proverbs. The psalmist, for instance, says, "He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry" (Ps 146.7), and Proverbs 22.9 reads, "A generous person will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor".

Continuing the Old Testament legacy, the New Testament texts make direct reference to feeding the hungry. It pictures God as feeding the hungry in the song of Mary, mother of Jesus, "He has filled the hungry with good things" (Lk 1.53). Similarly, John the Baptist, the one who came to announce the birth of Jesus, instructed the Jews likewise, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same" (Lk 3.11). In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus speaks of the need to look after the physical needs of the less fortunate: "I tell all of you with certainty, whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple will never lose his reward" (Mt 10.42). Jesus also directly urges his disciples to take the responsibility of feeding the people in the course of performing the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 – the only miracle of Jesus recorded in all four Gospels (see Mt 14.13–21, 15.32–39; Mk 6.30–44, 8.1–10; Lk 9.0–17; Jn 6.1–15). These passages exemplify the singular importance the Gospel writers and their respective Christian communities had towards feeding the hungry. They narrate how Jesus had called his disciples and spoke not only of his deep concern for the people who had come to listen to his message but of hunger's power to diminish life: "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way" (Mt. 15.32). Christians' concern towards those who are hungry and the former's obligation to feed the latter is emphatically and categorically articulated in the last judgement which Jesus Christ would deliver at the end of the world: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me". Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?" And the son of man (i.e., Christ who comes back at the end of the world for final judgement) will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Mt. 25.35–40). In this often-quoted passage by liberation theologians and scripture scholars, Jesus identifies himself with the poor and the hungry, driving home the central Christian notion that whatever is done to the needy is done to Jesus himself. This passage and many other-centred teachings of Jesus inspired his apostles and his followers to preach and write about the need to feed the hungry. For instance, James 2.15–16 states, "Suppose a brother or sister does not have any clothes or daily food and

one of you tells them, “Go in peace! Stay warm and eat heartily”. If you do not provide for their bodily needs, what good does it do?” In his context, James observes, “[F]aith by itself, if it does not prove itself with actions, is dead” (Jm 2.17). We read of Apostle St. Paul, citing the book of Proverbs, advising his people to feed those who regard us as enemies: “[I]f your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12.20b–21). The early church made it a point to distribute food every day to the needy widows in the church as we read in Acts 6.1. In fact, overseeing the food distribution was the task of the very first deacons. Stephen and the other deacons had the job of feeding the hungry in the church (Acts 6.2–6).

Following the spirit of the immediate followers of Jesus in charitable giving, one of the then-famous preachers in the 4th century CE, Basil, calls upon the rich and affluent to provide food and other basic things to the poor:

What keeps you from giving now? Isn't the poor man there? Aren't your warehouses full? Isn't the reward promised? The command is clear: the hungry man is dying now, the naked man is freezing now, the man in debt is beaten now and you want to wait until tomorrow? ... The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man. The coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the man who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has no shoes; the money which you put in the bank belongs to the poor. You do wrong to everyone you could help, but fail to help.

(Balasuriya 1977, 17–18)

He also exhorts his local community to feed the hungry by providing a theological motif of wiping out sin through a method of comparison: “destroy the original sin by freely distributing food. For as sin came through Adam's evil act of eating, so we ourselves blot out his treacherous consumption if we remedy the need and hunger of a brother” (Downs 2016, 3).

John Chrysostom (c. 349–407), one of the important early Church fathers and the archbishop of Constantinople, best known for his preaching and public speaking, is well-known for openly advocating feeding the poor and the needy as the key Christian virtue (Holman 2008). He has many sayings and sermons that uphold the practice of feeding the poor as the top-most Christian obligation. His often-quoted famous passage by later theologians was:

*Do you wish to honor the Body of Christ? Do not despise him when he is naked. Do not honour him here in the church building with silks, only to neglect him outside, when he is suffering from cold and from nakedness. For he who said “This is my Body,” is the same who said “You saw Me – a hungry man and you did not give me to eat.” Of what use is it to load the Table of Christ? Feed the hungry and then come and decorate the Table. You are making a golden chalice and you do not give a cup of cold water? The Temple of your afflicted Brother's body is more precious than this Temple (the church). The Body of Christ becomes for you an altar. It is more holy than the altar of stone on which you celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. You are able to contemplate this altar everywhere, in the street and in the open squares.*

(St. John Chrysostom, quoted in ICI Inf. Cath. Internat., 15, Aug.–Sep. 1974; As cited in Balasuriya 1977, 18)

In the passage, St. John Chrysostom interprets the body of Christ in two senses. The first sense of the body refers to the consecrated bread in the Christian liturgy, which Christians call the “Body of Christ”. The second sense refers to the body of Christ that is none other than Jesus who identified himself with the hungry, the poor, and the naked. Similarly, the temple of God is also interpreted in two senses. While its first sense refers to the Church as the place of God’s presence and worship, the second sense extends the idea of holiness to include the body of the afflicted and the needy human beings. According to Chrysostom, in both instances, the second sense takes precedence over the first sense. The body of the naked is more important than the body of Christ in the form of bread. Similarly, the temple of the spirit-made living body of the needy other is more precious than the stone-made inanimate building, called Church. It is amply evident then that Christians really take care of the body of Christ and the temple of God only when they care for the poor and the needy by feeding them and clothing them. That is why in another instance he also said, “To feed the hungry in the name of Christ is a work greater than raising the dead in Christ’s name. ...When thou work miracles, you are God’s debtor; when you give alms, God is your debtor” (<https://www.stgeorgepantry.org/almsgivingbyfathers>). He also calls a person who feeds the poor and succours those in need “an exceedingly high-souled man” (Schaff 2002, 181). For him, “it is truly a mark of a great soul, to despise one’s own comfort, but to care for that of others” (ibid.). Elsewhere he once again writes, “Every family should have a room where Christ is welcomed in the person of the hungry and thirsty stranger” (<https://www.stgeorgepantry.org/almsgivingbyfathers>).

In a similar vein, we also hear of strong advocacy for feeding the hungry and the poor from various Christian thinkers and leaders. For instance, Pope St. Leo the Great (390–461 AD) who championed charitable works during the famine in the then Roman Empire exhorts his community: “The price of the kingdom is the food you give to those who need it” (as cited in Tissa Balasuriya 1977, 18). St. Gregory Palamas, one of the bishops of Thessaloniki in the Byzantine Empire in the 14th century also says, “When you fast and are nourished with abstinence, do not store the leftovers for tomorrow, but, as the Lord became poor and enriched us, feed someone who does not want to be hungry, you who hungers willingly. Then your fast will be like the dove who brings and joyfully proclaims salvation to your soul from the flood” (<http://www.stewardshipadvocates.org/quotes-on-stewardship/>). Cyprian of Carthage, another important Christian thinker in the 3rd century who lived in North Africa also calls upon his Christian community to share food and drink in this world so that they “may join Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the heavenly banquet” (Rhee 2017, 47).

St. John of Kronstadt, a Russian Orthodox who lived in the 19th century, observes, “Look at all the earth supplies in summer and autumn! Every Christian, especially the priest, ought to imitate God’s bountifulness. Let your table be open to everybody, like the table of the Lord. The avaricious is God’s enemy” (ibid.). St. Cosmas Aetolia, a great monk in the Greek Orthodox Church of 18th century Asia Minor also makes a radical statement: “I have need of one hundred grams of bread a day, and God blesses it. He blesses those hundred grams, but not one gram more. So if I take 110 grams, I have stolen 10 grams from the poor” (<https://www.stgeorgepantry.org/almsgiving1>). According to Archimandrite Sophrony, one of the noted ascetic Christian monks of the 20th century, ignoring the hungry and allowing them to die is equivalent to letting Jesus die. He writes, “If a man has one day provided for all the bodily needs of the poor, but, being able to do so on the next day, neglects some of his brethren and leaves them to die of hunger, thirst

and cold” – then he has neglected and left to die Him who said: ‘Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me’ (Mt 25.40).

### ***Eucharist, agape, and the Christian tradition of feeding the hungry***

The central religious practice in Christianity is a ritual meal known as “Eucharist” or “Mass” or “Communion Service” which commemorates and enacts the last supper, the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples. During this last supper, Jesus took bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat of it; this is my body” (Mt 26.26). This ritual event performed by Christians today during their worship celebrates the free meal offered to all by Jesus in the form of bread that is believed to be the real body of Christ by Catholics and Orthodox Christians. The last supper Jesus shared with his disciples preceded his earlier preaching in which he said, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty” (Jn 6.35). This claim of Jesus bears similarity to the incident of God Yahweh providing to the people of Israel a special food from heaven, known as *manna*, during their 40 years of exodus from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan.

The early Christian communities often came together and celebrated the Lord’s supper. In these gatherings took part all Christians, the rich and the poor, and in such gatherings, the more well-to-do members of the community would share food with poorer members (Alikin 2010, 104) “This sharing of food gave the Lord’s Supper, *inter alia*, the function of a charity meal. That is why other sources call it also an agape (love-feast, ἀγάπη)” (ibid.). The food offered normally at the Christian meal may have mattered most to the poorest members (McGowa 2005, 148). Such gatherings, by and large, went smoothly and became a venue for the poor Christians being fed by the rich Christians. However, in some places, like the then metropolitan city of Corinth, there were issues which St. Paul takes up in I Corinthians 11.17–22 and exhorts the Corinth Christians not to be greedy and ignore the hungry. Justin Martyr, one of the early Christian philosophers of the 1st and 2nd century CE mentions in his work *First Apologia* that substantial amounts of food were brought to the Eucharist for those who are absent, especially the destitute and solitary, thereby making it clear that “the Eucharist also had the character of a charity meal” (Alikin 2010, 134). Similarly, Tertullian, one of the famous Christian theologians of the 2nd century CE from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa also emphasises the function of the Eucharist as a charity meal and remarks that “the *caritas* with which people love each other in the Christian community takes shape in their common meals, convivia, and that these meals are called *agape*” (Alikin 2010, 139).

“Was the *agape* (i.e., the meal of fellowship) the same as the Eucharist (namely, the religious ritual of commemorating Jesus’ words in the last supper as done today)? Or, were they different?” These were the questions that remained unsettled for a while by historians and theologians. Now there is a near-consensus that they were mostly one and the same in the 1st century CE but gradually got separated over the course of time in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. For instance, after the 1st century, while Eucharist was celebrated on Sunday morning for the whole community of Christians, the fellowship meal was organised in the evenings for the poorer members of the community (ibid., 132–46).

Be that as it may, what is important for this chapter is the charitable role of the *agape* meal. Hector Scerri considers the “Christian *agape* meal to be the unwavering social involvement of the members of the community in aid of the poor and the suffering”

(Scerri 2012, 71). As Adalbert Hamman has noted, based on his study, “[T]he principal scope of the meal was chiefly to feed the poor who lacked economic means” (as cited by Scerri 2012, 65). Such a meal was either organised by a private individual with “a sense of solicitude for the unfortunate” (ibid.) or by the Christian community, which took care of the necessary expenses in this regard from the common fund accumulated over some time to assist the poor. An important dimension of the *agape* to be noted in this regard is the sense of solidarity that existed between the affluent and the people on the margins. It is the rich Christians who played the host and gathered together the poor of the community described as “apprentices of the faith” (ibid., 67), as Tertullian notes. “In this way, the hungry were not humiliated, but honoured” (as cited by Scerri 2012, 76). The liturgical and canonical texts of the 3rd century (*Didascalia Apostolorum*) and of the 4th century (*Apostolic Constitutions*) not only mention that the offerings distributed to the indigent elderly women at the *agape* meal were of great assistance to them but also attest to the fact the Christian community held its weaker members in high esteem. These texts also refer to the practice of the portion of a community meal that was sent to the sick and the needy who were unable to be present but could consume the same at home. St. Augustine, one of the famous Christian philosophers and theologians, also refers to the meals organised on a larger scale by the rich to feed the poor. In his Sermon 259, he talks about the *agape* meal as follows: “Because we are seen to be serving at them, it is our goods that are being given, and by us that they are being given; and yet only things are being given which God has given us. It’s good, brothers and sisters, to make the distribution with your own hands. But those of you who are not in a position to give to all and sundry, should give what they can to the poor, and cheerfully” (Augustine 1993, 182).

While the sense of *koinonia* (communion) within the community was at the very foundation of the *agape*, it gradually gave way to other forms of charity from the 4th century. According to Hamman, though *agape* remained distinct from the Eucharist, the former was inspired by the latter. “The liturgical breaking of the one Bread and the sharing of the one Cup offered a moral impetus to the members of the community as they tried to alleviate social problems” (Scerri 2012, 66). The assistance is given to the poor in the form of a shared communitarian meal, or other charitable acts became “an outward sign of the Messianic community” (ibid.). In this regard, sharing, the manifest form of the *agape*, came to be understood as a foretaste of Christian *eschaton* – namely, the end of the world wherein God will put to end the distinction between the rich and the poor and provide access to eternal happiness for all based on their good past. Faced with the reality of death and the Christian understanding of the afterlife, it is natural then that the Christian funerary services included meals that had a charitable and social dimension. In this regard, Saint Augustine in Sermon 22, also points out that it was far more reasonable to feed the poor and the hungry rather than carrying out libations over the graves, pretending to “feed” the dead, a pagan practice of that time (ibid. 70). In other texts such as *the Apostolic Constitutions* and *De Helia et Ieiunio* by St. Ambrose and also in the Paleochristian art of the catacombs, there is a repeated mention of *apophoreta*, or food-stuffs, being distributed among the needy at funerals (ibid.).

Drawing upon the historical relationship and theological unity between the Christian virtue of *agape* and the Eucharist in Christianity, Christian leaders of the modern era also focus on and insist upon the inseparability between charity (especially feeding the hungry) and the Eucharist, the spiritual food of the Christians. For instance, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, a celebrated head of the Society of Jesus (one of the widespread Christian religious orders

for men spread in 112 countries), said, “[S]ocial dimension” of the Eucharist is that “we cannot properly receive the Bread of Life without sharing bread for life with those in want” ([https://jesuitportal.bc.edu/research/documents/1976\\_arrupeucharist/](https://jesuitportal.bc.edu/research/documents/1976_arrupeucharist/)), implying that Christians cannot meaningfully take part in the spiritual food of “Bread of Life” if they do not attend to the needs of the physical nourishment of the poor. In a similar vein, Pope Benedict XVI also observed, “Eucharist should make us attentive to the needs of the poor” ([https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/eucharist\\_should\\_make\\_us\\_attentive\\_to\\_needs\\_of\\_the\\_poor\\_benedict\\_xvi\\_teaches](https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/eucharist_should_make_us_attentive_to_needs_of_the_poor_benedict_xvi_teaches)). While pointing out that Jesus was “Born in Bethlehem, which in Hebrew means ‘house of bread’” (ibid.), the pope stated that Eucharist is “the school of charity and solidarity. He who eats of the bread of Christ cannot remain indifferent before those, who also in our day, are deprived of their daily bread” (ibid.). Elsewhere, he cited the living Eucharistic example of Mother Teresa who identified Jesus in the suffering, the needy, and the hungry and took care of them. ([https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20020602\\_ratzinger-eucharistic-congress\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20020602_ratzinger-eucharistic-congress_en.html), accessed on 20 February 2021). Pope Francis, the present pontiff of the Catholic Church, also echoes the same concern: “Eucharistic sharing is a call to mission, to feeding the poor” (<https://www.ncronline.org/news/world/eucharistic-sharing-call-mission-feeding-poor-pope-says>, accessed on 2 March 2021). According to Pope Francis, partaking in the Eucharist “demands the logic of love” from the Christians to share all they are and all that they have with others in need, and it certainly includes listening to Jesus’ instruction to his disciples then and all his followers today: “You give them something to eat” (ibid.). These examples in the Christian tradition stem from the biblical view of human beings who enjoy unique status as they are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1.27). This status confers upon everyone inalienable human dignity and, hence, all humans irrespective of gender, colour, creed, class, and caste need to be respected and treated with dignity and honour. This status also entails the right to live with dignity, as Pope John XXIII (1963) states, in one of his encyclicals *Pacem in Terris*, “Every man has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services” (No. 11). The aforementioned words of the pope should appeal to Christians to recognise that every human person has a right not only to life and also to the means of life such as food and other basics of life without which the development of human personality cannot take place. His statement should also be taken as a mandate to Christians to involve themselves in charity works and to be proactive in tackling poverty and hunger, and in providing basic needs to poor people so that they can live with human dignity.

### ***Various forms and types of feeding the hungry (anna-daan) in Indian Christianity: an overview***

As we have seen, Christianity has had a long tradition of feeding the hungry and the poor since its inception. While this practice is closely related to the central liturgical event of Christianity – namely, the Eucharist – over the course of time, it grew outside of it. In the light of this and other historical developments and practices, we can detect at least three types of feeding the hungry (*anna-daan*) in Christianity. They are *agape* meal or charity meal, feeding programmes of Christian organisations, and feeding others as an individual religious practice.

*Agape* meal (communal meal) or charity meal, as we have seen, has a long legacy in Christianity. This *agape* meal programme is also present in the contemporary world as the second part of the chapter describes later. In some churches in India, either regularly or occasionally such meals are cooked, served, and shared with all those who come to eat. In Mangalore, for instance, there is a practice of *sauhaardadoota* (friendship meal) which is becoming a new popular tradition in the Catholic churches of Mangalore. *Sauhaardadoota* is a common communal meal hosted on important occasions by Catholic Christians to the people of other religions in the locality followed by an inter-religious prayer. In some Pentecostal churches in India, popularly known as CPM (Ceylon Pentecostal Mission), now renamed as “The Pentecostal Mission”, there is a widespread practice of free community meals for the participants after every worship service. In the southern districts of Tamil Nadu (namely, Tirunelveli, Tutuhookudi, and Kanyakumari), there is a long tradition of serving a free meal on Good Friday for everyone in the village or town. The custom has it that this meal is made out of the offering of rice, grains, and pulses that every Christian home has saved out of fasting during the period of the Lenten season. Besides this, there is a custom of offering a free meal to the locals on other occasions such as Easter in Protestant churches, Parish Feasts in Catholic churches, and *Pongal*, *Onam*, or *Karam* celebrations in many churches across India.

Secondly, there are also different programmes of Christian organisations that feed the hungry, especially the children and the homeless in India, as elsewhere in the world. These are the Society of Vincent De Paul Society (<https://www.ssvpglobal.org/en/> accessed on 3 March 2021), the Missionaries of Charity (established by Mother Teresa), Compassion International (<https://blog.compassion.com/kitchens-around-the-world-fascinating-photos>, accessed on 8 February 2021), Samaritan Purse (<https://www.samaritanpurse.org/donation-items/hunger-relief-programs/>, accessed on 25 April 2021), Food for the Hungry (<https://www.fh.org/>, accessed on 20 February 2021), World Vision (<https://www.worldvision.org/>, accessed on 4 April 2021), Feed the Hunger (<https://www.feedthehunger.org/>, accessed on 13 January 2021), FMSC (Feed My Starving Children) (<https://www.fmsc.org>, accessed on 18 February 2021), Premier (<https://www.premier.org.uk/Projects/Feed-The-Hungry>, accessed on 9 March 2021), Feed the Hungry (<https://www.feedthehungry.org>, accessed on 13 April 2021), and Mary’s Meal, to name a few. These organisations, some of which operate in India, seek to put into practice the call of Jesus Christ to identify him with the poor following his very words: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat” (Mt 25.35).

In Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, there are also practices of feeding the destitute and the hungry by individuals and their families as part of a vow either as a request for a favour or as an act of gratitude for having received the favour. When people make a vow to Jesus, Mother Mary, or a popular saint while praying for various favours, such as childbirth or healing a sickness, they feed the beggars and the homeless to demonstrate their strong faith in the power of the deity to grant the requestor as an act of gratitude to the deity for the favours once they receive. While most of these vow-related *anna-daan* take place in Christian shrines and churches, there are times when they happen at individual homes too. For instance, it is a common custom in Pune that Catholics offer *math-asoru* (Mary’s rice) to the destitute at home before they undertake a pilgrimage to Velankanni (a Marian Shrine near Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu) in September for a specific favour. There is also another common practice among the Christians, particularly in Tamil Nadu, that the pilgrims receive on their way *anna-daan* offered by devotees of



the shrines who at times belong to different religions. For instance, pilgrims are provided *anna-daan* on their sacred journey to Velankanni or Poondi (famous Catholic Shrines in Tamil Nadu) just like Hindus too who feed the pilgrims on their way to Palani, Tiruchendur. More often than not, such feeding of the pilgrims is performed either to ask a favour from the shrine deity or an act of gratitude for the favours received. The vow-related *anna-daan* meals can be either vegetarian or non-vegetarian. For instance, the *mathasoru* that is offered in people's homes is invariably vegetarian, as the household of the devotee who has kept a vow strictly follows abstinence, i.e., avoidance of meat. But the free meal offered in the shrines as the fulfilment of a vow, more often than not, is non-vegetarian, as people cut goat or chicken as a sacrificial offering to the deity for the favours granted, cook it, and feed the destitute and the poor.

### **Beliefs and practices in Christian *anna-daan***

As we have discussed before, Christianity has different types of theological beliefs and indigenous or local practices associated with the Christian tradition of freely feeding the hungry. One of the central beliefs in this regard is theological or religious – namely, the notion that in feeding the hungry one feeds Jesus himself since such a practice adheres to the command of Jesus himself as we mentioned elsewhere in the chapter. Secondly, in the first few centuries when Christianity originated, there was a common belief that charitable acts such as feeding the poor help destroy the sins of the host. Another Christian instance of feeding the poor that took place in the context of performing rituals for the dead was informed by the belief that it was an effective “means of intercession on behalf of the souls of the dead” (Scerri 2012, 70). As evidenced in the 5th- and 6th-century epitaph at Aksaray in Cappadocia, the inscriptions on the tombs praised the deceased widow and deaconess, Maria, for the care of strangers and distribution of bread (Finn 2006, 117). To such deceased persons of goodness, one of the meaningful ways of performing the ritual of the dead and soliciting God's mercy for them is to feed the poor on their behalf.

There are many local Christian beliefs and practices associated with the tradition of *anna-daan* in India. Selvaraj, who has done extensive ethnographic work, especially on Tamil Catholic Christianity, has studied indigenous beliefs and folk practices in less-known but locally popular churches, some of which provide interesting data on shrine-based Christian *anna-daan* tradition. In his study on the annual festival of the Catholic Shrine of St. Anne at Arulanandarpuram near Madurai, he draws our attention not only to the free communal meal cooked strictly by the men of the village that would be served to all pilgrims including the poor, especially the childless women who “subject themselves to public social humiliation during the communal meal in an effort to redress a physical malady and its social implications” (Raj 2003b, 163). After having observed strict fasting, abstinence from sexual activity, and self-chosen pious rituals for days and months before the festival, barren women are expected to undergo obligatory ritual fasting on the final day of the festival when the communal meal is cooked. After the pre-dawn purificatory bath in a special well that belongs to the shrine, these women who have taken the vow to overcome barrenness are required to go into the village, beg for uncooked rice and vegetables from five houses, and bring them to the shrine to be cooked for the free communal meal. After the communal meal is first served to the children, these women have to kneel, recite a prayer, and beg for food from ten children. Having collected food this way, they sit next to the children in the row and eat their food. Local Christian belief

in this food-related practice is that “consuming food donated by the Children will yield offspring” (ibid., 164) and that “women who humble themselves in this fashion” (ibid.) will be granted the favour of childbirth by St. Anne, the local church patron and the maternal grandmother of Jesus.

Raj has also focused on another Tamil Christian free communal meal ritual tradition, popularly known as *ashanam* at the shrine of St. Anthony at Uvari, a coastal village near Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. It is a religious practice that is quite widespread in Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, and Kanyakumari. *Ashanam* is a ritual repertoire undertaken for specific intentions which range from overcoming illness to getting a successful crop to passing exams to getting a job overseas to finding a partner to becoming successful in business. *Ashanam* starts with fasting, abstinence, and penance at home, includes manyfold ritual performances in the shrine, such as taking a purificatory bath, shaving one’s head, or ritual sacrificing of a goat or chicken, and ends with feeding 13 beggars/poor persons/ destitute who are considered to be the ritual surrogates and honoured earthly representatives of St. Anthony. “The centerpiece of *ashanam* rites is the festive ritual meal prepared by devotees and offered to St. Anthony’s ‘honoured’ earthly representatives as a thanksgiving gesture for favours already received or as a promissory offering for blessings hoped for” (Raj 2003a, 183). *Ashanam* tradition requires that the vow-taker himself/herself serves the food on banana leaves to a group of 13 honoured “ritual guests” (ibid.). The climax of this *ashanam* is the act of reverse begging. Having served the meal to the “ritual guests” on banana leaves, the principal vow-taker goes on his/her knees in front of each of the 13 invited beggar guests and begs for a handful of food from each. With the food collected through reverse begging, s/he sits beside the 13 beggars and eats the ritual meal. While the host family takes special care to treat these ritual guests with utmost respect, reverence, and honour as they are considered to be the earthly representatives of St. Anthony himself, the act of begging from them is an enactment of begging a favour from St. Anthony himself. Feeding these guests satisfactorily and making them happy is equivalent to pleasing St. Anthony himself. Such a perception then results in the offering of cash and/or clothes to the ritual guests by some families. One of the thumb rules for an efficacious *ashanam* (eating) is that the leftovers of the meal are not to be taken back to the hosts’ home but to be distributed to the poor, thereby ensuring *ashanam* strictly remains as free food to the poor in the locality.

What is evident in this meal of ritual hospitality is the role reversal between the guest and the host that results in transcending the strict boundaries of social relations and religious distinctions (ibid., 187). Raj observes,

[T]wo disparate categories of people, i.e. the socially and economically superior host [ritual donor] and the inferior guest [recipient], are temporarily brought together in the mutually dependent relationship of the donor and donee in which both are simultaneously givers as well as receivers.

(Ibid., 186)

It is this reversal of roles that disrupts and reinscribes the hierarchical relationship between the host who gives and the guest who receives. When it takes place between a high caste and a low caste (as is often the case), it seeks to puncture the hyperbole of the Indian caste system which fixes people’s identity based on caste. By making a high-caste donor a beggar and a low-caste beggar a donor, and by placing the hosting Christian or

Hindu person at the receiving end of a Muslim beggar or vice versa, the *anna-daan* in the form of *ashanam* throws into disarray the labels of an identity fixed based on caste and religion in South Asia. As Raj observes, one of the social functions of this ritual sequence is “to provide the devotees a religious context and ritual platform to temporarily transcend the neatly defined social, caste, and religious identities and strictures that normally define human relationships in south India”. (Ibid.)

In this form of ritualised *anna-daan*, all roles are available to all. In reverse begging, the ritual host assumes the role of a guest, and the guest becomes a host; a Hindu or a Muslim can become either a sponsor or a receiver of a Christian *anna-daan*. Depending on the purpose, goal, and need, the individual can assume any role. Thus, by providing new avenues of self-respect for some and self-abnegation for others, this ritualised *anna-daan* produces an even playing field, making the ritual space an open, fluid, and volatile ground. It throws open an array of multiple roles and diverse identities into new sets of possibilities.

“Anti-structural interactions and reciprocities” (ibid.) which emerge in the context of liminal ritual *communitas*, to use Victor Turner’s terminology, render the participants, at least temporarily, as hybridised social subjects whose identities move beyond those of caste and religion inherited involuntarily by the individual actors. For Turner, temporary suspension of original identity in the context of *communitas* only leads to the consolidation of social hierarchy and inequality by letting off steam and neutralising the anger and hatred of the socially inferior groups towards the dominant. It makes the latter experience temporary but in real terms the humility, docility, vulnerability, and inferiority of the former, only to return to the previous situation of dominance. Selva Raj, who deliberates on the applicability of Turner’s theory to the phenomenon of *ashanam*, accepts its validity in the social realm but exposes its failure in a religious context. According to him, in the case of meaning-making processes innovated by the religious actors of Indian Christianity in India, Turner’s theory fails at least in two instances within and beyond the context of the *ashanam* (ibid., 187). The first instance has to do with the public manifestation of role reversals between Christians and Hindus. Quite contrary to the examples of Victor Turner, the Hindu devotees in the shrine “participate in Catholic rituals like reciting Hail Mary before the meal” (ibid., 188), and “the Catholic devotees perform Hindu-like rituals like animal sacrifice and hair-shaving” (ibid.). Thus, in this shrine, the common people act upon their newly found shared identity as the devotees of St. Anthony, suspending, transcending, and complementing their regular religious identity as Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. In pilgrim centres and shrines like Uvari, Veilankanni, Oriyur, or Nagore, people of divergent religious faiths converge upon “shared vows, shared space and shared deities” (Raj 2003c, 69–92). Secondly, these new forms of identity-blurring and ritual interactions between Christians and Hindus, Hindus and Muslims that occur in the liminal place of the shrine forge new but often lasting relationships that yield many social dividends beyond the ritual moment and context (Raj 2003a, 188). The impact of such ritual experiences tends to extend beyond the places of worship and find new forms of identification with the deity and the devotees. Upon returning home, the common folks are likely to install the pictures of these deities or shrines in their homes, co-opt these gods into their pantheon of *kulateyvam*<sup>5</sup> (clan deities), and welcome people of other religious traditions into their homes.

Thus, in the first place, this phenomenon of *anna-daan* in the form of *ashanam* concretely embodies the abiding sense of multiple religious belonging that exists among the common people in India. Secondly, the *ashanam* tradition “serves as a textbook case for

dialogue on the ground” (ibid., 188–89). This dialogue on the ground not only entails encounters between people of different religions in the sphere of ritual but also involves the exchange of religious practices across religious borders. The latter occurs when Christians adopt Hindu-like rituals such as the offering of the hair and the sacrificing of animals, while Hindus partake in Christian practices like reciting the Catholic rosary, participating in the Holy Eucharist, and offering votive objects to the Catholic Saints. In doing so, both Catholics and Hindus not only “transcend the rigid and apparently impermeable ritual boundaries of their respective traditions” (ibid., 189) but also display “an openness to incorporate the religious assumptions that undergird these rituals” (ibid.). While the performance of ritualised *anna-daan* like *ashanam* may have a “transforming effect on one’s or a group’s individual and collective identity, their understanding of and attitudes and relationships toward the other” (ibid.) can also inadvertently become “a medium for encountering the ‘other’ and a model of dialogue on a profoundly experiential and existential level”. (ibid)

Having learnt how both *daan*/charity and *anna-daan* were understood theologically and practised historically by the Christian communities in general and Indian Christians in particular, let us now turn our attention to the scenario of contemporary practices of *anna-daan* prevalent among the Christians of India today.

### 6.3 Anna-daan in places of worship – an overview of current practices

This section provides empirical and quantitative data on *anna-daan* practices among Indian Christians through the method of case studies conducted by different researchers on five different Christian phenomena of *anna-daan*. The summary of the case study covers two types of *anna-daan* practices mentioned earlier Section 6.2 – namely, charity meals and feeding programmes of Christian organisations. These cases were conducted across five places in India, namely Noida, Udupi, Chennai, and Kottayam. These cases describe the *anna-daan* practices in two places of worship – namely, in Udupi (St. Lawrence Basilica, Attur) and Chennai (CSI Church of the Victorious Cross, Ashok Nagar) – and three Christian organisations (BREAD-Noida, Salvation Army and Navajeevan Trust). A detailed narrative of these case studies is given in the latter part of this volume, while this section is in summary form, which focuses on the temple or organisational profile, its history, spiritual dimensions of *anna-daan*, human resources, administrative aspects, funding and technology necessary to run the programme, providing information on nutritional aspects of the food for distribution, and highlighting key issues related to *anna-daan* practices as provided by the organisation or the church administration. To know more about the details of the data that follows, kindly refer to the case study part of this volume.

### 6.4 Summary of the case studies<sup>6</sup>

The data provided in the earlier discussion shows that just like early Christians in the past as discussed in the first part of the chapter, contemporary Christians continue the ancient tradition of feeding the hungry through various modes and for various reasons. This practice of feeding the hungry takes place both within and outside the places of worship. While devotees and believers are fed on church premises, anyone regardless of his or her belief system is fed by Christian organisations outside the sacred sites. All three Christian organisations (Table 6.1) under study reach cooked food to the needy and the poor and

Table 6.1 Profile of *anna-daan* programmes of Christian organisations

Basic details	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4	Case study 5
Name and address	St. Lawrence Basilica, Attur, Karkala, Udupi	BREAD, A 262, Sector 19, Noida 201301, UP	CSI Church of the Victorious Cross, 1st Avenue, Sarvamangala Colony, Krupa Colony, Ashok Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Salvation Army, HRD Centre, Perianmastry Street, Vepery, Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Navajeevan Trust, Kottayam, Villooni P.O., Kottayam 686 008, Kerala, India
Year of establishment	1801	2004	1975	1950	Navajeevan was registered as a charitable trust in 1991. However, it is possible to track the origin of its philanthropic activities since 1969
Reasons for starting <i>anna-daan</i>	Spiritual and physical ( <i>prasada</i> as a gift from God and for feeding the hungry poor pilgrims)	To help the poor children who have interrupted their education due to poverty	Urge to fulfil the needs of the poor	Passionate towards hungry people	To achieve divine love, through the hands of humble humans
AD start year	2004	Mary's Meals started in 2004	1999 approximately	Tentatively 1950	1969
Initiated by	Parish priest Fr Francis Cornelio	Joson Tharakan John, IMS		Major Scott	P. U. Thomas

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

serve them in their respective environments instead of making the needy come to the organisation for the meals. When we look at the reasons why contemporary Christians feed the poor and hungry, they do not substantially vary from the past. As we have seen in the first part of the chapter, early Christians were involved in feeding the hungry not only during their religious gathering as part of their worship but also on other occasions for the remission of sins and to fulfil Jesus' command to recognise him in the hungry and feed them. In a similar vein, present-day Christians also feed the poor guests who come into church to pray for the well-being of their family members and to keep or fulfil a vow on their behalf. There seems to be lots of commonality between the past and the present when it comes to the purpose of feeding the poor. Just as in the past, today's Christians in India too generously feed the poor to obtain God's blessing and adhere to Proverbs 22.9 which says, "A generous person will be blessed, for he (*sic*) gives some of his (*sic*) food to the poor". Besides, as commanded by Jesus who identified himself totally with the destitute and hungry (cf. Mt 25.31–46), Christians across time and space consider feeding the hungry a Christian duty, as they see in the hungry the face of Jesus. The Christian mandate to feed the hungry is also built on a rationale that the affluent members of the community have the obligation to take care of the needs of the less fortunate ones. Such an instance is observed in the case of BREAD (Board for Research Education and Development), Noida, an organisation where the founder was inspired to feed and educate poor children while interacting with a group of poor women who, due to poverty, interrupted the education of their children. This happened in the winter of 2001 while conducting a legal aid camp in a village near Gajraula, Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. Subsequently, in the summer of 2002, he was introduced to Mary's Meals, the brainchild of the Scottish Catholic Magnus Macfarlane-Barrow to serve meals to children while on a visit to Glasgow, Scotland. To help the less fortunate, he started its Indian branch in 2004 through his congregation's social service wing. Such a rationale continues to inspire Christian communities today to reach out to the ones in need not only within the community but also across communities crossing the boundaries of nationalities and ethnicities.

Table 6.2 clearly indicates that the current *anna-daan* practices among Christians are a daily event, with one exception of a shrine at Karkala, Udupi. As we have seen in the first section, the history of *anna-daan* practices in Christianity indicates that the *agape* meal, equivalent to *anna-daan* practices today, also began as a weekly meal held every Sunday evening.

Table 6.2 Frequency of *anna-daan*

Case studies	Frequency of <i>anna-daan</i>	Number of times food served		
		Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Case study 1	Thursdays			
Case study 2	Daily			
Case study 3	Daily		✓	
Case study 4	Daily		✓	
Case study 5	Daily	✓	✓	✓

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

**Basic details of anna-daan: number of times, number of people, and volume of food served per day**

While more detailed information on the menu of the *anna-daan* meal served in Christian churches and organisations is provided in the latter part of the book in the section on case studies, the graph in Figure 6.1 contains important information as regards the number of people who are served and key ingredients that are used in Christian *anna-daan*. As regards the meals that are served under *anna-daan*, it is amply clear that Indian Christians have adopted the Indian culinary menu (that includes items such as *sambar*, drum stick, lettuce, coriander leaves) and have maintained a balance between vegetarian and non-vegetarian items depending on beneficiary’s need and the availability of resources. That being the case with contemporary Indian Christians, it is very likely that the early Christians served non-vegetarian meals to the poor during their *agape* meal. Besides, the tables and the graphs that follow describe Christian *anna-daan* not only in terms of its various items on the menu but also as regards their nutritional value. Such detailed information is not available for the *agape* meal served in the early Christian communities (Figures 6.1 and 6.2; Tables 6.3–6.5).

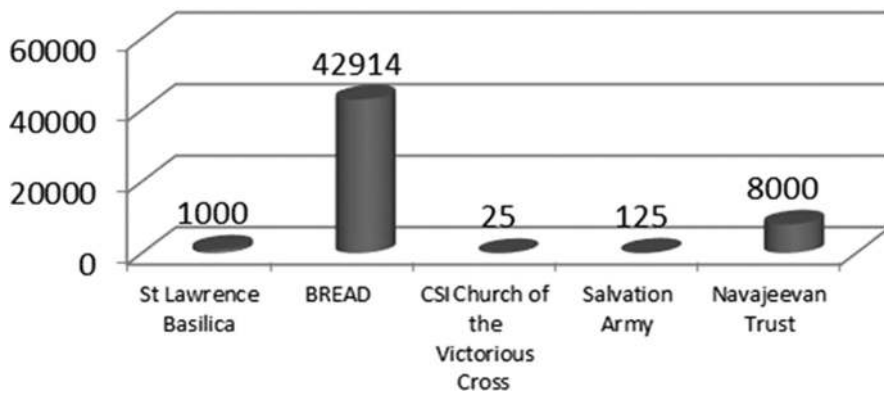


Figure 6.1 Number of people served.

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

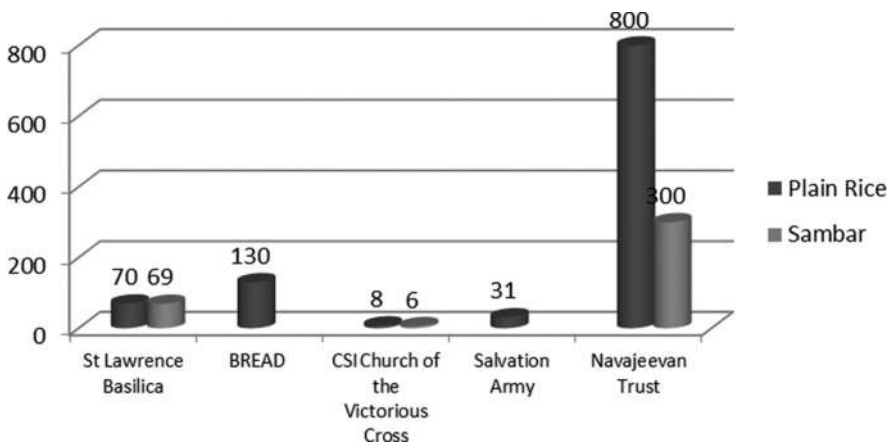


Figure 6.2 Volume of food served (kg).

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

Table 6.3 Reasons for practicing *anna-daan*

Case studies	Reasons for <i>anna-daan</i>					
	Vow to be fulfilled	Philanthropy	Anna-daan is auspicious	Anna-daan brings good luck	Spiritual purpose	Others
St. Lawrence Basilica BREAD	✓	✓				✓ To attract students and enrich them physically and mentally
CSI Church of the Victorious Cross	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Salvation Army	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Navajeevan Trust	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

Table 6.4 People's views

Case studies	People's views on Anna-daan							
	Impact on society	Poor get food	People* get food	People bless donors	Positive feeling	Develops harmony among people	Instils dedication and devotion	Media coverage and popularity
St. Lawrence Basilica BREAD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CSI Church of the Victorious Cross		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Salvation Army		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Navajeevan Trust	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Primary Survey (2020).



Table 6.5 Rituals and prayers

Case studies	Rituals and prayers before cooking and serving			
	Prayers before cooking	Ritual to be practised by people before having the food	Brief talk on the significance of anna-daan	Meditation before serving
St. Lawrence Basilica BREAD		✓		
CSI Church of the Victorious Cross		✓	✓	✓
Salvation Army	✓			
Navajeevan Trust	✓			

Source: Primary Survey, 2020.

### **Spiritual components of anna-daan**

Tables 6.3–6.5 bring together different reasons cited by contemporary Christians as to why they practise *anna-daan*. The case studies conducted for the project indicate that most of the Indian Christian respondents feel that Christian *anna-daan* is performed as an act of fulfilment of a vow or as a philanthropical activity. No doubt both reasons resonate with the Christian traditions of the past as described in the previous section of the chapter – namely, that they both see in the suffering the other face of Jesus who said, “I was hungry and you gave me food”. Interestingly, some of them feel that it is also performed for obtaining good luck and auspiciousness, while such reasons are not found among the early Christians to the best of our knowledge. As regards *anna-daan*’s impact on society, in one case study, people feel that this practice is a great social leveller, as it brings together the rich and the poor on the same platform and makes them eat together. Such a view was also rather prominent among early Christians. In the case of a Christian non-governmental organisation, it is believed that it serves twin purposes: elimination of hunger and empowerment through education. They also believe that it will serve as an incentive for attending school and enable children to rediscover their childhood. Most of them concur with the view that the beneficiaries bless the donors, and it helps develop harmony among people. The custom of saying a prayer before cooking was followed by two out of the three respondents. As far as the early Christians were concerned, prayer before the *agape* meal was a very common practice.

### **Human resources for anna-daan**

As Figure 6.3 indicates, people involve themselves in *anna-daan* meals both as paid staff and as volunteers. While we know for certain that early Christians rendered voluntary service to carry out the *agape* meal, we are not sure whether services such as cooking were paid for in the past. As regards the involvement of religious leaders of the past and present, they both played a pivotal role in organising these charities for the destitute.

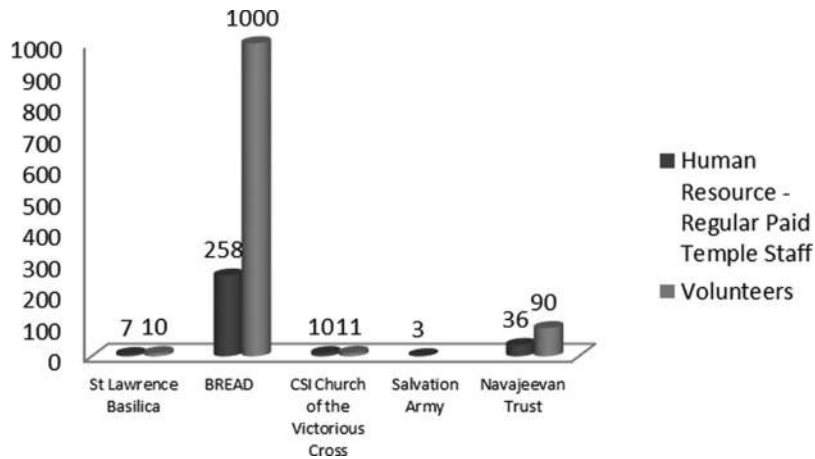


Figure 6.3 Human resources.  
Source: Primary Survey (2020).

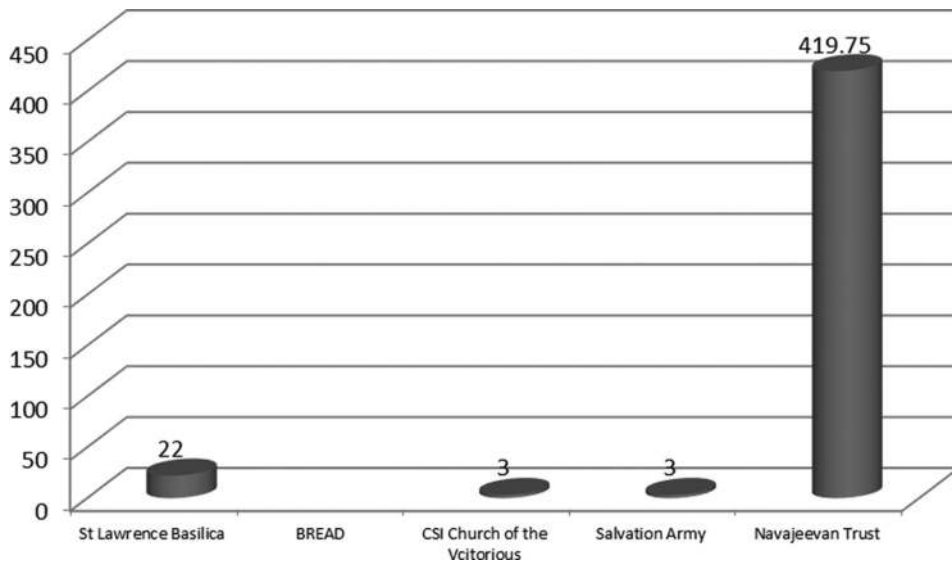


Figure 6.4 Total fund required for *anna-daan* per year (Rs. in lakhs).  
Source: Primary Survey (2020).

**Administration**

While the previous section contains some information about the management aspects of the *anna-daan* tradition among modern-day Christians (Table 6.6), such information for the early Christian practices is not available, as management as a discipline did not exist then.

**Finance for anna-daan**

This section deals with only some data on the financial aspects, quality assurance, and safety measures of the *anna-daan* programme as shared by respective organisations or churches.<sup>7</sup>

Table 6.6 Temple administration

Temple Administration Board	St. Lawrence Basilica	BREAD	CSI Church of the Victorious Cross	Salvation Army	Navajeevan Trust
Year of constitution	2004 (Shrine Committee) 2016 (Basilica committee)	2009	1975	1975	1991
Total number of board members	5 (until 2016) 8 (since 2016)	5	14	14	

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

It is seen across all the case studies that the main source of funds for *anna-daan* is a donation in cash (locally called *hundi*) or in-kind such as groceries and vegetables. There are provisions for the devotees to pay specifically to *anna-daan seva*<sup>8</sup> and special *seva* (like distributing food such as *puliyogare*, *bisibele bhat*, *pongal*) in some of the worship places. In some cases, people directly sponsor *anna-daan*, and in other cases, people either sponsor equipment or offer their free services, as in the case of Navajeevan Trust.

O&M costs incurred by various organisations and churches on *anna-daan* programme are indicated in Figure 6.5. As seen in the graph, the bulk of the costs are on the procurement of rice, vegetables, and groceries. While three organisations spend a big chunk on salaries, the other two depend largely on volunteers for their work. The study also reveals that those organisations which provide *anna-daan* directly to the beneficiaries spend a big sum on transport.

In Table 6.7, the procurement, storage, handling, and safety aspects of *anna-daan* programmes of the Christian churches and organisations are self-explanatory. As far as the

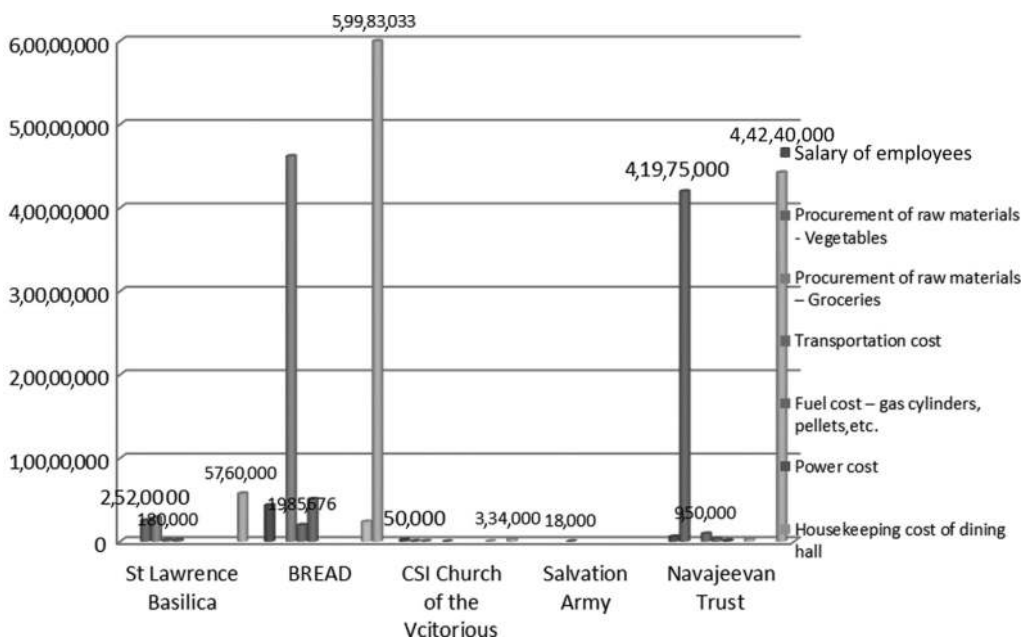


Figure 6.5 O&M costs.

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

Table 6.7 Raw material procurement, storage, handling, and safety during cooking

Case studies	Selection of suppliers through tenders	Quality inspection	Complying with the raw material specifications	Sanitised before cutting the vegetables	Cold storage facility	Sterilisation of cooking vessels	Personal hygiene and food safety training	Quality officers to monitor quality
St. Lawrence Basilica	✓							
BREAD	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
CSI Church of the Victorious	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Salvation Army	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Navajeevan Trust				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

Table 6.8 Technology absorption

Technology absorption	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4	Case study 5
Online payments		✓ All vendor payments, staff salary, and other payments are online WhatsApp groups and subgroups for various sections, monthly monitoring reports, and other tools shared online, including photos and impact stories			✓
Steam boilers		✓			✓
Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants			✓		✓
Hot water for washing vessels			✓		
Use of chlorine water to wash vegetables			✓	✓	
Hot insulated vessels		✓	✓		
Fuel used for cooking. Fossil free fuel – pellets		✓ Mostly coal, firewood and <i>uppala</i> (dried cow dung cake) are used for cooking in an energy-saving oven			
CCTVs	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Time taken for cooking	3–4 hours		2 hours		
Serving time	45–90 minutes		30 minutes		

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

procurement of materials is concerned, three organisations acknowledge that they choose suppliers through tender. Four of five organisations have quality officers to monitor food quality. While four organisations conduct training on personal hygiene and food safety, two of these have taken concrete measures of hygiene by sterilising cooking vessels.

As far as the use of technology (Table 6.8) is concerned, four out of the five Christian organisations we studied make use of CCTVs at their programme venues, while two of

them use online facilities both for donations and payments. Two of the five have installed RO water plants for cooking and drinking and use insulated vessels to serve food.

All three of the organisations that welcome poor people and the pilgrims to their venues for *anna-daan* programmes have a dining hall and serve food on plates, which are washed after every meal or twice a day. While two of them follow the queue system to serve food, the third organisation has adopted the token system for the same, while BREAD and Navjeevan supply food to the hungry at different places through other organisations (Table 6.9)

Food waste generated at three of the five organisations is segregated into wet and dry waste (Table 6.10). Two of these organisations feed the wet waste to domestic or farm animals, while at one organisation, this waste is used in a biogas plant.

Table 6.9 Dining hall

Dining hall	St. Lawrence Basilica	CSI Church of the Victorious Cross	Salvation Army
Number of dining halls	1	1	1
Number of people it can accommodate	600	50	90
Seating: Ground		✓	
Seating: Table	✓		✓
Served in plates	✓	✓	✓
Queue system	✓	✓	
Token system			✓
Cleaning (number of times)	After every meal	Twice a day	Two times

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

Table 6.10 Waste management

Waste management	St. Lawrence Basilica	BREAD	CSI Church of the Victorious Cross	Salvation army	Navjeevan trust
Quantity of wet waste generated (in kg/day)	20		3	NA	30
Segregation of waste	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	
Methods of disposal	Wet waste given to domestic animals			NA	Used for biogas generation Also given to animal farm owners

Source: Primary Survey (2020).

**Key issues in anna-daan**

As regards the issues and challenges encountered in organising *anna-daan* programmes, not much is reported. However, some of the issues which emerged are as follows:

1. BREAD is required to speedily bring many more students under its umbrella as applications for feeding 28,000 students are pending.
2. Salvation Army is in financial straits.
3. Navajeevan is facing a scarcity of clean water for cooking food. Only one of the eight wells that Navajeevan owns is providing good quality water; by treating the water from these wells, the problem of water shortage can be solved. But Navajeevan is unable to take up this exercise due to a lack of funds to install the treatment plant. The second problem which this organisation is facing relates to the disposal of water drained from cooked rice. At present, no affordable solution seems to be in sight.

**Suggestions to resolve the issues**

As regards suggestions for improvement, there were none from the organisations covered in the study, save one which related to better seating arrangements for beneficiaries, use of better technology for cooking and serving meals, and better waste management.

**6.5 Summary**

This chapter has elaborately dealt with the practice of *anna-daan* in Christianity with the help of data both historical and ethnographical. While the historical data in the first part of the chapter has shown that the practice of feeding the destitute goes back to Jesus himself who both in his words and actions gave special importance to *anna-daan*, his followers remained committed to Jesus' command to feed the poor all through history. This commitment is evidenced in the words of Pope Benedict XVI (2009) who in his encyclica *Caritas in Veritate* observes, "‘Feed the hungry’ (cf. Mt 25.35, 37, 42) is an ethical imperative for the universal Church as she responds to the teachings of her Founder, the Lord Jesus, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods" (No. 27). The second part of the chapter has demonstrated the strong continuity that exists between historical data and ethnographic data in Christian *anna-daan*. Based on the case study of five Christian organisations in India, the chapter establishes how the Indian Christian churches and organisations have effectively translated the command of Jesus to feed the poor into concrete actions for various groups of people such as the common public, i.e., the pilgrims in Karkala, Udupi; the poor children in Noida; and the destitute, the beggars, and the hungry in Chennai and Kottayam. The case studies not only reveal that Indian Christians' initiative in this regard has been both big and small, institutional and individualistic but also illustrate the new technological innovations and ecological awareness they have adopted in carrying out such works. As there is always more that needs to be done to feed the hungry in India and the world at large, the scope to translate one's religious mandate into concrete social commitments in new situations remains a pressing reality. Just as we live in an unequal world with a widening gap between the rich and the poor, especially in a country like India, not acting to bridge the gap is a sin of omission, to employ a Christian ethical category, as it amounts to denying the dignity of human life

to the poor. Those who possess more need to do more for the suffering other. One of the most significant ways to reach out to the suffering other is to feed the hungry and to ensure that they can fulfil their basic needs and can continue to have a decent human life. Hence, *anna-daan* is no more an option for Christians, especially for Indian Christians, but an obligation if they want to follow Christ, who identified himself totally with the suffering other (Mt 25.3–46).

## Notes

- 1 The fourth of the four yugas in a Yuga Cycle.
- 2 A form of the Hebrew name of God used in the Bible.
- 3 Susan K. Wood, “Catholic Reception of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification”, in *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification* (ed. David E. Aune; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 43–59 [48–51]; Michael Root, “Aquinas, Merit, and Reformation Theology after the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification”, *Modern Theology* 20 (2004): 5–22. On the historical development of indulgences and merit in late medieval Europe, see R. N. Swanson, ed., *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe* (BCCT 5; Leiden: Brill, 2006).
- 4 According to reformed thinkers, almsgiving and charity incumbent upon Christians is not so much to disbelieve in the all-sufficient salvific act of the Christ-event (i.e., birth, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus) but an act of gratitude and expression of transformation of the one who is saved by the power of divine love manifest in the salvific act of Jesus.
- 5 Deity.
- 6 The data furnished in this section is collated based on the information provided by Christian organisations or churches to the research team. We have tried our best to collect as much information as possible given the limitations of undertaking such a study during COVID-19. Wherever information was not provided or not available, the respective columns of the table in the following pages are left blank.
- 7 Since such information for the past Christian communities is absent, no comparison can be made.
- 8 Serving food.

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# **Anna-daan in Islam**

## Objectives, nuances, and variants

*M. A. Siraj, Mohammad Khalimullah, and Harshita Bhat*

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*God provides the food; men provide the cooks.*

Idries Shah, a Sufi scholar

### **7.1 Introduction**

For a religion that arose in the parched and desiccated Arabian Peninsula in the 6th century AD, amid rampant penury, building social solidarity must have been the prime urge of the time and society in which it emerged. It is in this context that Islamic concepts of charity, generosity, compassion, humanity, beneficence, kindness, altruism, justice, and even hospitality should be viewed and studied. Although these values form the basic principles of all the three Semitic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – differentiations and distinctions must be understood in order not to confuse one with the other.

The first part of the chapter in this study of *anna-daan*<sup>1,2,3</sup> in Islam deals with the definition and aims and objectives of almsgiving and charity and the philosophy that motivates people to engage in charity. Islam is an Arabic word meaning “submission” and in the religious context means “submission to the will of God”. It also looks at the variants of almsgiving and how they were occasioned. Furthermore, we try to situate the charity in terms of food in the *Quranic*<sup>4</sup> text and other media of Islamic guidance such as *Hadis* (the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH)), *Fiqh* (the interpretation of the ethos and Islamic laws in the light of *Quran* and the *Hadees*), and the way *Sufis*<sup>5</sup> propagated and promoted the idea of feeding the hungry.

The second part of the chapter explains how *anna-daan* or food charity came to be practised in Islamic societies and states, its variants, and institutionalised forms as they came to be adopted by the community. *Imarets*,<sup>6</sup> *langars*,<sup>7</sup> and the utilisation of sacrificial meat during the *Hajj*<sup>8</sup> are some of the institutions that have been profiled in this section.

### **Charity in Islam**

#### **Khairat (Charity)**

Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion. Oneness of God (*touheed*), belief in Prophets (*risalat*), and the Day of Judgement (*aakhirat*) are the three fundamentals of Islam. Islam organised the pagan Arab society, then existing there, along these beliefs. For Islam to

spread, it was considered essential to establish a society based on these principles. The Prophet being the principal architect of this society enunciated a wide range of values and personified them in order that his close companions emulated them and became the torchbearers of what the *Quran*<sup>9</sup> laid down and how he (the Prophet) internalised them. Charity and justice were the two basic cornerstones for bringing about solidarity in a society fragmented by pride of lineage, tribal divisions, competition and conflicts over scanty resources, and command and control of the holy precinct in *Makkah*<sup>10</sup> existing since Prophet Ibrahim<sup>11</sup> (Abraham). While charity was the emotional glue applied to a society racked with all kinds of divisions, justice was considered integral in bringing about social equilibrium in a society fraught with all sorts of inequalities and protecting it by punishing those who are out to disturb it.

Charity is mostly denoted by the word *khair* or welfare in the Arabic text, scriptural or otherwise. It constitutes a basic human value in Islam, and it is desirable for a Muslim to be suffused with it regardless of the context, both in times of war and peace. “Good men”, according to *Quran*, “are those who for the love of God, feed the poor, the orphan and the captive” (*Quran*, Chapter 76, Verse 8).<sup>12</sup> The *Quran* also asserts it and desires this to be active, collective, and universal in a way that it becomes a cementing factor among people. Charity covered a wide range of human actions. The Prophet is reported to have said,

*Every good is charity, even your smiling at your brother is charity; an exhortation directed at your neighbour to perform virtuous deeds is the equivalent of giving alms. Guiding one who had wandered away back to the right path is charity; helping a blind man is charity; removing stones, thorns, and obstacles from the road is charity.*<sup>13</sup>

Islam enjoins its followers to part with a portion of their earnings, as well as possessions (which in contemporary terms are called income and assets) towards the welfare of the poor, the indigent, the orphans, the wayfarers, and generally those in distress. The Urdu term *khairat* (charity in monetary or material form) is a derivative of Arabic *khair* (welfare). It embraces charity in cash and kind; feeding the hungry; providing rest, food, and accommodation to wayfarers; performing the last rites of the dead; succour to uncared for children, the old, and the disabled; rehabilitating the sick, mentally disturbed, or former convicts; and creation of facilities for learning for all and sundry. One comes across the concept of “giving” as a repetitive feature of the guidance by the *Quran*, the principal scripture from which major Islamic tenets, teachings, guidance, and the *shariah*<sup>14</sup> laws are derived.

Broadly, Islam desires people to engage in charity or welfare totally without any selfish motives. It ought to be for the sake of the pleasure of Allah,<sup>15</sup> should have no strings attached, should focus on helping the poor and the needy out of distress, rehabilitate them in the society, and should inflict no harm to the dignity of the recipients. Under no circumstance should the charity be for publicity, propaganda, and showing off.

### **Charity: aims and objectives**

The believers in Islam were exhorted to engage in charity with three prime objectives. Firstly, to dissuade them from material lust by voluntarily parting with a portion of what

they have earned and gathered. Secondly, it was to help raise a caring society where individuals develop a concern for those unfortunate ones who were not able to gather enough to fulfil their needs and inculcate in them a commitment towards the collective good. Thirdly, charity serves as atonement for sins by the believers.

In sharing their resources through giving, a Muslim does not and should not have the impression of being dispossessed of a portion of his wealth or being deprived of what should be legitimately his or hers. He is expected to consider it giving back to God a small fraction of what has been generously bestowed upon him or her. It is a kind of homage that a person who is amply blessed by God pays to Him and thus earns His reward for the life hereafter. The following verses from the *Quran* summarise the notion of charity:

*You will not attain unto piety until you spend (in the way of Allah) that which you love.*

*(Chapter 3, Verse 92)*

*O ye who believe! ...Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and rancour: fear Allah, for Allah is strict in punishment.*

*(Chapter 5, Verse 2)*

*And there are those who amass gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah. Announce to them the tidings of a painful chastisement.*

*(Quran Chapter 9, Verse 34)*

*Those who in charity spend of their wealth in Allah's cause by night and by day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord; and shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.*

*(Chapter 2, Verse 274)*

*If you dispense your charity publicly, it is well; but if you conceal it and pay it to the needy in secret, it will be even better for you. This will atone for several of your misdeeds. Allah is well aware of all that you do.*

*(Chapter 2, Verse 271)*

## **Almsgiving**

As is very well-known, Islam prescribes five principal duties on believers which are called *shahadah* (verbal profession of faith), *salah* (five-time prayers), *zakat* (charity out of one's legitimate earnings and possessions), *siyam* (fasting during the month of *Ramzan*), and *Haj* (performance of pilgrimage (held annually) to Makkah once in a lifetime by an individual who can afford it out of his/her own means). As can be seen, *zakat* occupies third place among the five major practices prescribed for a believer.

*Zakat* literally means "purification". Its English translation as "poor-due", however, does not convey all that it connotes. What it implies is that by giving charity to the poor, a believer purifies the possessions that remain with him. While *khairat*, i.e., welfare or doing good to others, is a general term and denotes expectation from one who is a

follower of Islam, *zakat* is a specific duty which must be paid after assessment of wealth in possession of an individual at an appointed time every year in a specific measure. Observes Roland Miller,

The word almsgiving is used over 80 times in the Holy *Quran*. It is a legal duty that expresses a primary principle of behaviour, and through its requirement the *umma* (the Muslim community) is reminded to take care of the poor and the disadvantaged. It is invariably coupled with worship, as though God does not want to be worshipped by those who forget the poor: Establish worship, pay the poor-due, and bow your head with those who bow (in worship).

(Chapter 2, Verse 43)

### **Philosophy of almsgiving**

*Zakat* was initially purely voluntary. But as Islamic society transformed into a state, it was made obligatory and took the form of a “tax” by the time Abu Bakar<sup>16</sup> took over as the first caliph of the tiny State of *Madina* (*city in Saudi Arabia*). It was necessitated due to the rampant poverty among the expanding body of believers in the wake of the influx of migrants and poor into the fold of Islam. However, Muslim societies were never in doubt about *zakat* being a charitable action and religious obligation. An average Muslim individual looks beyond the legalistic structure of *zakat* and undertakes it as a spiritual exercise in rising above material preoccupations. It is construed as a means to replace selfishness with selflessness and a departure from individualism to collectivism. He thinks of it as returning to God a fraction of what he received from Him thereby accomplishing a pious deed. In fact, *sadqah*, another term for almsgiving in Arabic too conveys the same meaning, i.e., assertion of truth. It is helpful in two ways: (1) The charity-giver’s gesture of generosity retains its spontaneity since it is based on religious conviction. (2) The charity-receiver who approaches the giver for “God’s goods for the love of God” maintains all his human dignity. “Charity” thus conceived and legalised loses the humiliating aspect, which it sometimes assumes with regard to the beneficiary. The wealthy part with it as “a right of the poor” rather than “a gift left to their discretion”. The fact that it could be demanded by force by the state, if necessary, imparts it the status of an absolute obligation of justice. Almsgiving is therefore very characteristic of values of both charity and justice, as it expresses religious purification of wealth on the one hand and contributes to and complies with the state’s duty to promote equality among its citizens on the other. The law even prescribes which forms of wealth are taxable, how much to be taken out, and when to be deposited or whom to be given.

### **Forms of almsgiving**

Though the rising of a well-knit society retained the basic thrust within the Islamic society, a lot of variants were suggested in the earliest period of Islam. As Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula, the existing norms of charity in other cultures – mainly Persian, Turk, and Indian – got subsumed within it.

## Zakat

A core part of the Muslim faith is giving charity and supporting those in need who are less fortunate. One of the Five Pillars of Islam and officially meaning “that which purifies”, *zakat* is an obligatory payment that carries its own set of expectations and requirements. One of which is that you must hold enough wealth to meet the *nisab* threshold, a value which is calculated from 87.48 grams of gold or 612.36 grams of silver. The minimum amount of *zakat* you must give is 2.5%, but there is no upper limit. Only the following groups of people can receive *zakat* as mentioned in the *Quran*.

- The poor
- The hungry
- Those responsible for distributing *zakat*
- Those in captivity and slavery
- Those living with unmanageable debt
- Those who fight in the name of Allah
- Stranded or struggling travellers
- New Muslims and friends of Muslim communities

Both *zakat* and *sadqah* are based on helping others, although there are key differences between them. *Zakat* is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and is an obligatory annual payment made to purify all wealth held above the *nisab*<sup>17</sup> threshold value. *Sadqah* is not at all obligatory; it is simply a kind gesture made with the intention of helping others.

As one of the five fundamentals of Islam, *zakat* occupies the second position, the first being prayer (*salat*). This word is derived from *zakd*, which means to grow (a plant). The second derivative of this word carries the sense of purification, e.g., *Qadaflaha man zakakaha* (he is indeed successful who purifies himself). The other word used for *zakat* both in the *Quran* and the *Hadees* is *sadqah*, which is derived from *sidq* (the truth). Both of these words are highly meaningful. The spending of wealth for the sake of Allah purifies the heart of man of the love of material wealth. The man who spends it offers that as a humble gift before the Lord and thus affirms the truth that nothing is dearer to him in life than the love of Allah and that he is fully prepared to sacrifice everything for His sake. Secondly, *zakat* is the most effective measure to improve the economic condition of the have-nots. It is not, however, a mere tax, but a form of worship whereby a man comes close to his Lord. The Muslims have, therefore, been enjoined to pay *zakat* with the same sense of earnestness and devotion in which the seeker of the Lord observes the prayer. The primary motive of *zakat* is religious and spiritual, while the social and economic aspects are subservient to it. Its social significance is that it awakens in man the sense of brotherhood with less fortunate members of society, and stirs his moral conscience to make sacrifices for their sake. From the economic point of view, it discourages hoarding and concentration of wealth and helps its steady and constant flow from the rich to the poor. It is in fact a good means of providing purchasing power to the poor, for ameliorating their hard lot, and enabling them to stand on their own feet.

It should also be remembered that *zakat* or *sadqah* in Islam is not a voluntary act of charity which a rich man gives to the poor out of his own sweet will, but it is an obligatory act which every Muslim is enjoined upon to perform if he is sincere in his belief in God and the hereafter. Thus, there is no burden of obligation on one who receives *zakat*,

but a sense of thankfulness and gratitude on the part of the giver since he has been enabled by the recipient to discharge his obligation that he owes to God and society.

(O Prophet), take *sadqah* (*zakat*) out of their property – thou wouldst cleanse them and purify them thereby (Quran, ix. 103). And away from it (the Hell) shall be kept the most faithful to duty who gives his wealth, purifying himself (xcii. 17–18).

So much is the importance of *zakat* in Islam that it has been mentioned in 82 places in the *Quran* in close competition with prayer. The companions of the Prophet knew its basic importance in Islam. It is a known fact that after the death of the Apostle of Allah when some of the tribes, who believed in the oneness of God and observed prayer, refused to pay *zakat*, the first Caliph Abu Bakr Siddiq, in an answer to the advice of *Hazrat Umar* to show tolerance towards such people, said in explicit terms: “by Allah, I would definitely wage war against them who dissociate prayer from *zakat*”. *Zakat* is paid on the surplus of wealth which is left over after the passage of a year. It is thus a payment on the accumulated wealth. Leaving aside animals and agricultural yield, *zakat* is paid at almost a uniform rate of 2.5%. The minimum standard of surplus wealth over which *zakat* is charged is known as *nisab*. It differs with different kinds of property, the most important being 200 dirhams or 521 tolas (nearly 5,000 gm), in the case of silver, and 20 *mithqals* or 71 *tolas* (nearly 7,000 gm) in the case of gold. The *nisab* of cash is the same as that of gold and silver.

As regards the persons to whom *zakat* is to be paid, they have been clearly described in the *Quran*: “Alms are only for the poor, the needy, the officials charged with the duty of collection, those whose hearts are inclined to truth, the ransoming of captives, those in debt, in the way of Allah, and the wayfarer” (ix 60).

*Zakat* must be given annually, as long as you have held wealth exceeding the *nisab* threshold for the previous Islamic calendar year, and when you choose to give it is up to you. Many Muslims choose to give their *zakat* during *Ramzan* and often in the last ten nights of *Ramzan* when the rewards are said to be much greater, and it is also when *Laylatul Qadr* (Night of Power) falls.

*Zakat* is intended to strengthen the Muslim community, the *ummah*, by redistributing wealth to the poorest of our society and ensuring they get the resources they need to live.

Of course, the remaining one among the five cardinal duties which a Muslim must carry out is subject to the availability of resources, opportunity, and physical capability to fulfil them. The *Quran* established the entitlement of the *zakat* in the following verse:

The alms are only for the poor and the needy; those who collect them (i.e., administer the system of collection and its distribution); those whose hearts are to be reconciled; to free the captives and debtors; for the cause of Allah; and, wayfarers.

(9, Verse 60)

*Zakat* was made obligatory upon all those who possessed wealth in excess of the value of roughly 88 grams of gold (in terms of dollars, it is equivalent to \$4,708 as per valued by Islamic Relief Worldwide in March 2021) or 612 grams of silver (valued at \$ 503).

While countries like Saudi Arabia enforce *zakat* by levying taxes on earnings and deposits that have stayed in one’s accounts for more than a year, nearly all other Muslim countries allow their citizens to disburse it the way they would like individually or to donate to not-for-profit civil organisations. A majority of the *ulema* (religious scholars who run Islamic theological schools known as *madrass* in South Asian countries) insist upon *zakat*, whether in cash or kind, be placed in the hands of those who actually need



and deserve it. This is based on the concept of *tamleek*, i.e., to make the recipient the owner of the money or the goods he receives in the form of *zakat*. They also argue that *madrassas* deserve the *zakat* the most, as the poor and orphans are fed, clothed, sheltered, and educated in these institutions. But the new breed of contemporary scholars counter the same and say that poverty alleviation should be the goal of *zakat*, and this objective can be best served by donating it to either the government or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). They contend that these bodies have the wherewithal to identify the real poor and initiate measures that can create jobs and provide education and skills to them in a way that they become self-reliant. Proponents of this theory are critical of the traditional ways of disbursement which they argue encourages dependency at best, and beggary at worst. These scholars are generally guided by the *shariah's* intent of elimination of poverty and promotion of self-reliance as universal goals and contend that these should take precedence in such matters rather than an insistence on means or methods adopted in the nascent Islamic society. However, the differences in opinion among the *ulema* are not likely to be settled any time soon as most *ulema* follow a dogmatic version of issues and remain unaware of current realities due to deficient training in contemporary economics and politics.

*Zakat* however does not apply merely to gold, silver, and such other valuables. The *Hadees* (Prophet's sayings) provide details of how it applies also on agricultural produce or animals. *Zakat* on agricultural produce was termed *ush'r* or *tithe*.<sup>18</sup> It is derived from the *Quran* which says, "O ye who believe, Spend of the good things which ye have earned and of that which we bring forth from the earth for you" (Chapter 2: 267).

The later jurists opined on the basis of the practices of the Prophet that *ush'r* would be collected at the rate of 10% of the total harvest if the land were watered by natural streams, springs, or rivers. In case the land was irrigated by artificial means, such as wells and buckets, or tube wells, *ush'r* would be collected at the rate of 5% only.

***Sadqah*:** A third form of almsgiving is *sadqah*. It is recommended as the voluntary almsgiving which however does not come with any terms and conditions. It can be any amount of money or food, can be given to anyone who needs it, and can be as simple as organising one-time meals for the poor, sponsoring the fee of a student, or making a large-scale donation to build a school, an inn, or a hospital or for anything that promotes welfare.

Like *zakat*, there are two different types of *sadqah*:

- *Sadqah*
- *Sadqah Jariyah*

### Sadqah

*Sadqah* is when a person makes a charitable donation or does something that may benefit someone else, an animal, or the earth. Acts of *sadqah* are a one-off and can include things like:

- Volunteering at a homeless shelter
- Helping a neighbour in need
- Helping someone who is lost
- Smiling at a stranger in the street

These are free acts, though a donation to an animal shelter or a one-off donation to a poor person would also be considered *sadqah*.

### Sadqah Jariyah

*Sadaqah Jariyah* is an act of charity that provides ongoing benefits. For as long as your charitable act continues to benefit a person, animal, or the planet, you will be bestowed with the relative rewards. Examples of *Sadaqah Jariyah* include:

- Sponsoring an orphan
- Planting a tree
- Donating to a water well appeal
- Contributing to building a school

### Benefits of zakat and sadqah

Both gestures carry great reward in this life and the next for the giver but the effects of *zakat* and *sadqah* are even greater for the receiver. The donations made in the name of *sadqah* or *zakat* to orphans in need are received by those most in need. *Sadqah* and *zakat* donations enable us to provide winter clothing to keep the receivers warm, food packs that will feed hungry people for a month, and necessary access to education and medical care.

Giving *sadqah* and *zakat* are both means to help us get closer to Allah, and by practising regular charity, one can improve their own well-being and find peace and happiness in the current life and the hereafter. By giving charity, one shows to Allah that they are grateful for the gifts He has blessed them with.

Prophet Muhammad is the best example of regular giving and would often give to those in need who had nothing of their own when he himself was hungry. By making regular *sadqah*, you are following in the footsteps of the Prophet and setting a good example for your own children. This is the general term used for giving charity in Islam. All acts of worship through financial expenditure are, by broader definition, classified as *sadqah*. Due to there being many types, they have been divided into the following two categories, both of which have separate rulings:

### Sadqahwajibah

This is charity which is binding in nature. This includes *sadqah al-fitr*, etc. This form of *sadqah* is similar to *zakat* in that it must be spent on the same categories as defined by the *Quran*, except that it is not a condition for the beneficiary to be Muslim.

This type of *sadqah* includes:

- a. *Sadqatulfitr*
- b. *Nadhr*
- c. *Fidyah*
- d. *Kaffarah*
- e. *Udhiyyah, Dam and Badanah*

## SADQATULFITR

*Sadqatulfitr* is yet another variant of almsgiving which every Muslim of average means is recommended to donate on the eve of the *Eidulfitr* that is celebrated immediately after the month of *Ramzan*. It is generally referred to as *fitra* within the Urdu-speaking community in South Asian countries. *Fitra* was suggested as a seal of validation for the fasts observed by the faithful during the month of *Ramzan* and as an instrument to ensure that those who do not have means could also be included in the celebration of the festival of *Eidulfitr*. It is given out by the head of the family to the poor and the indigent in the form of roughly 1,750 gm of wheat on behalf of each individual in the family before one proceeds to the congregational prayers of *Eid*. One could even donate the amount of money that could buy this much grain, and almost all urban homes follow the practice of donating money. The objective of *fitra* “is to be reminded that our duty of fasting – while may have been for our own self-discipline and to incur the approval of Allah – was also about our responsibility to those around us.”

This charity is mandatory for every Muslim, whose possessions are beyond *nisab*. Fathers are instructed to give *sadqatulfitr* on behalf of those children who have not come of age.

*The amount that must be given is equal to 1.6 kg of wheat or 3.2 kg of barley or its like. This does not mean that a person must distribute only wheat or barley; one may give its equivalent value. (Because this fluctuates, it is improper to specify a price, although it is usually between Rs. 100 and Rs. 300.)*

*Sadqatulfitr* is a much emphasised *summah* (which according to many is the status of *wajib*) which becomes due before *Eid Salah*, although it is preferable to give it a few days before *Eid* so that the poor recipients are able to celebrate *Eid*. If one does not give the *sadqatulfitr*, it will remain due no matter how much time passes after *Eid*.

## NADHR

This is an action which becomes necessary due to one imposing it upon oneself. This can be done if one wishes to express gratitude, and the action can take on a number of forms, including *sadqah*. If a person takes such an oath of giving charity, that then becomes *sadqahwajibah*. If they are unable to uphold the oath, they will have to give *kaffarah*,<sup>19</sup> and may be sinful.

## FIDYAH

*Fidya* is a kind of charity which has been advised to compensate for any deficiency in the performance of rituals. This is compensation for missing *salah* or *sawm* for a person who cannot perform them due to illness or being deceased (in which case it is given out of a third of the wealth) or in the event of a person making a minor mistake in *Haj*. The penalty for each missed *salah* or *sawm*, or each minor mistake in *Haj* is 1.6 kg of wheat or its value (i.e., the same amount given for *sadqatulfitr*) to the poor. While performing *Haj*, if an important ritual is missed, one could make up for the infraction by slaughtering an animal and distributing its meat among the poor and the needy. If a person is unable to keep fast during *Ramzan* due to old age or sickness, he is advised to feed an indigent person (or pay him equivalent money) for the number of fasts missed by him. If a person wilfully breaks a fast before sunset, he will have to keep 60 fasts without a break. If he is unable to do it, he is mandated to feed 60 hungry people.

*Fidyah* is generally *sadqahwajibah*. *Sadqahnafilah* may be given in addition either from the deceased's estate or on their behalf, in which case both the giver and the deceased are rewarded.

#### KAFFARAH

This is major compensation and like *fidyah*<sup>20</sup> is also *sadqahwajibah*.<sup>21</sup> It applies in various situations. If a person breaks a fast intentionally or breaks an oath, or kills someone, then *kaffarah* would be binding as a form of redemption. The *kaffarah* is of two types:

##### Greater *kaffarah*

For redemption, a person may free a slave (if feasible) or fast for 60 consecutive days (if a person breaks a fast intentionally, he would need to fast for 60 consecutive days, unless he cannot fast due to poor health or old age) (these are the only exceptions). Failing that, one may feed 60 poor people for a day (or give them an amount equivalent to *fidya* or *sadqatulfitr* or give them two meals for a day). This *kaffarah* applies to:

- \* Intentionally breaking a fast (*sawm*)
- \* Breaking *zihar* (to consider one's wife as *haram*<sup>22</sup> for oneself by comparing her to a *mahram*<sup>23</sup>)
- \* Being the direct cause of someone's death (this is coupled with the set punishments).

*Note: In the instance of not being able to feed 60 people in a single day, then he may feed one person for 60 days. But, if he were to try to give all the money in one day to one person, kaffarah would not be fulfilled, and his offering would only be equal to one day's feeding.*

##### Lesser *kaffarah*

For redemption of this, a person may free a slave (which is no longer applicable) or feed ten poor people two meals in one day, or give each one of them clothing. Failing this, he may fast for three consecutive days (the order is also different from the greater *kaffarah*). This *kaffarah* applies to:

- \* Breaking/violating *yamin* (an oath)
- \* Breaking *Ila* (to take an oath on not having conjugal relationships with one's wife)

#### UDHIYYAH

This is also known as *qurbani* or sacrifice. It is compulsory (*wajib*) for all mature Muslims who, on the day of *Eid al-azha*, possess *nisab*. Whoever qualifies for this is required to purchase a sheep or goat of more than one year in age, and slaughter that in the name of Allah after the *Eid* prayer preferably on the same day. The sacrifice can also be done two days after *Eid*. If one fails to make the sacrifice in these three days, he will have to donate the value of the animal to the needy.

He may consume the meat, feed it to his family, and also distribute it amongst the poor Muslims. One is not responsible to give *zakah* or any necessary *sadqah* on behalf of one's spouse or one's mature children – they are responsible for themselves. One is, however,

responsible for only giving *sadqahalfitr* for one's minor children. But, neither *zakah* nor *Udhiyyah* is given from one's wealth, on their behalf.

*Note: One may slaughter goats or sheep, which constitute one sacrifice each, or one may slaughter a larger animal (i.e., buffalo or camel) which will be counted as being equivalent to seven sacrifices each. In the event of living in a wealthy country, it is better that one sacrifice one part locally to fulfil the sunnah of sacrificing oneself and arrange for the remaining sacrifices to be performed in a poorer country, where the poor may also partake of it.*

### *Sadqahnafilah*

This is charity which is not binding in nature. This type includes alms given for the removal of difficulties, philanthropic (to give out of mercy to the less fortunate), giving *halal*<sup>24</sup> items to anyone, etc. This type does not need to be spent on the specified categories to be rewarding nor does it have to be spent on Muslims, although if spent on poor Muslims, it would be more rewarding. This can also be bequeathed in one's will (in which case it would be only up to a third of the deceased person's entire estate).

The following are types of *sadqahnafilah*.

- a. *Lillah*
- b. *Waqf*
- c. *Aqeeqah*
- d. *Sadqah* for removing difficulties
- e. *Sadqah* for expiation of sins
- f. Charity above the amount of *zakah* and *sadqahwajibah*

#### LILLAH

Even though *lillah* is *sadqahnafilah*, it does not have to be given to a person; it can be given to institutes such as *masjid*,<sup>25</sup> hospitals, schools, orphanages).

#### WAQF

This is to allot something as a trust for a certain cause. This can be during one's lifetime or bequeathed in one's will (up to the value of a third of one's estate). When executed, the donation becomes the property of Allah (and thus has specific rules regarding it), and its beneficiaries are to remain those named as the cause (e.g., the poor, orphans, students, the people of a certain locality). The difference between this and *lillah* is that in *waqf*, ownership is not given to people or institutes but only the benefits are ascribed. Like today's trusts, *waqf* also requires the care of trustees over it.

#### AQEEQAH

Over the centuries since the advent of Islam, several other religious ceremonies were added to the list of occasions for socialising. Of them *aqeeqah*, thanksgiving for the birth of a child, carried the religious sanction in that the Prophet asked the parents of the

newborn to sacrifice an animal for the purpose and distribute a third of the meat among the poor as well as partake of the meat. This is to be done on 7th day of the birth and the child has to be named on the same day. If not done on the 7th day, it could be done on 14th or 21st day. It is not obligatory. Now the occasion is celebrated more elaborately by throwing a feast for the near and dear ones.

#### SADQAH FOR REMOVING DIFFICULTIES

At the time of donating, one should ask Allah to make easy one's deliverance. This can be understood from the *Hadees*:

*Sadqah* soothes the Lord's anger and protects against a bad death. (*al-Tirmidhi*,<sup>26</sup> *al Bayhaqi*)

This type of *sadqah* can also be given as *lillah*.

#### SADQAH FOR EXPIATION OF SINS

At the time of donating, one should ask Allah to forgive one's shortcomings. This can be understood from the verse:

*Indeed good deeds take away bad deeds.*

(Quran, 11:114)

This type of *sadqah* can also be given as *lillah*.

#### CHARITY ABOVE THE AMOUNT OF ZAKAT AND SADQAHWAJIBAH

This type of *sadqah* is the essence of *lillah*. Although not categorised as necessary, this type of charity, if it is from pure means and with pure intentions, is always accepted by Allah. Allah has described it as a debt to himself which He will repay in the hereafter.

Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan? For (Allah) will increase it manifold to his credit, and he will have (besides) a liberal reward.

(Quran, *al Hadid*, 57:11)

### **Ritual sacrifice of animals**

Even the sacrifice of animals on the day of *Eid-ul azha*,<sup>27</sup> the second most important festival in Islam, needs to be viewed in the same socio-historical background as the perpetual drought in the Middle East. The sacrifice is called *qurbani*<sup>28</sup> in the South Asian context. *Eid-ulazha* synchronises with the annual *Haj* pilgrimage performed by an international assembly of Muslims in the region of *Makkah* in Saudi Arabia. *Haj* is a ritualistic exercise spanning over six days from the 8th till the 13th day (both days inclusive) of the 12th month of the Islamic lunar calendar. On the third day of the pilgrimage, the pilgrims who would have arrived from all across the world perform the ritual sacrifice at

*Mina*, six kilometres from *Makkah*. Muslims in other parts of the world celebrate *Eid-ulazha* on the same day with congregational prayers followed by ritual sacrifice.

It is recommended that the meat thus obtained from the sacrifice be divided into three parts. One part of it must be essentially distributed among the poor, needy, and indigent people. The second part must be distributed among relatives, neighbours, and friends. The third part must be retained by the family for their own consumption.

The ritual slaughter of animals and the distribution of sacrificial meat among the needy is yet another variant of feeding the hungry who scarcely get a protein-rich diet. The *Eid-ulazha* enables such families to gather and store the meat to be consumed over several days thereafter. While refrigerators and deep freezers have made it easy to extend the shelf life of meat, in olden times, the recipient families would marinate the meat and dry it under the sun to be used over a period of time. Secondly, the poor look forward to *Eid-ulazha*, as it is the only time in a year when they can amply compensate for the protein deficiency, albeit for a short period. The significance of a plentiful supply of sacrificial meat for a few days could also be understood in the parched land of the Arabian Peninsula where animal husbandry was the main source of livelihood for rural folk and their milk, meat, fibre, and skins (after tanning) were traded against grains from merchants who imported them from far off lands. Animals being the mainstay of food, nutrition, transportation, trade, and economy, they were also central to the dietary practices that evolved in the region. In simpler terms, grains and greens being scarce and expensive, diets, dishes, and cuisines were inevitably linked to non-vegetarian stuff.

Arabian folktales related to *Hatim Tai*, a pre-Islamic figure from Yemen whose hospitality was legendary, about how many sheep or camels (and even horses) he would slaughter to host a feast for his guests or even the wayfarers who dropped at his place without prior intimation. This socio-historical context would better explain the traditions related to the feeding of the hungry by killing the animals from the Islamic perspective. This being the backdrop, one should not be surprised by the plethora of references to meat and the slaughter of animals for the purpose of food and food as charity.

The objective of this chapter is to explore how *anna-daan* is conceptualised over time in the Islam religion, associated cultural practices, and elicit spirit/reasons for continuing *anna-daan* over time. Literature was sourced from religious texts and other mediums of Islamic guidance such as *Hadees* (the sayings of the Holy Prophet), *Fiqh* (the interpretation of the ethos and Islamic laws in the light of *Quran* and the *Hadees*), and the way *Sufis*<sup>29</sup> propagated and promoted the idea of feeding the hungry. The second part of the chapter explains how *anna-daan* or food charity came to be practised in Islamic societies and states, its variants, and institutionalised forms as they came to be adopted by the community. *Imarets*,<sup>30</sup> *langars*,<sup>31</sup> and the utilisation of the sacrificial meat during the *Haj*<sup>32</sup> are some of the institutions that have been profiled in this section.

## 7.2 Feeding the hungry (*anna-daan*) in Islam

It is held that an individual's wealth is purified by fulfilling obligatory charity. In the *Hadees*, Prophet Muhammad exhorted people to “[f]eed the hungry, visit the sick, and set free the captives”. Islam advocates feeding the hungry, regardless of race, colour, gender, religion, region, or background.

The concept of charity in Islam is to eradicate hunger in the society that comprises Muslims and non-Muslims. It encourages the concept of an egalitarian society where all are equal with no discrimination. Food is a basic necessity of life but in many parts of the

world, there are many who sleep with empty stomachs. Men, women, and children who do not have access to sufficient food, mostly due to financial constraints, are living a life below the poverty line. It is the responsibility of the well-off to help those in need and make sure they have access to, at least, the basic necessities.

Islam teaches us to take care of the needy ones, regardless of their religion or race.

In a *Quranic* verse, Allah defines the righteous ones in these words:

*(The righteous are those) who feed the poor, the orphan and the captive for the love of God, saying: "we feed you for the sake of God alone; we seek from you neither reward nor thanks".*

(Quran, 76:8–9)

It is considered a duty of every Muslim to help other human beings as well as he can with the means that he has. But he should not do so expecting a return. Charity should be done solely for Allah, and we should expect a reward only from him. One should not even expect a word of thanks from those he helped.

Allah wants every believer to feel the pain of those who do not have enough to eat. To instil empathy, he has made it compulsory for all Muslims to fast the entire month of *Ramzan*.

In another *Hadees*, Prophet said, "He is not a believer who eats his fill whilst his neighbour beside him goes hungry" (Bukhari). The *Hadees* emphasises the importance of caring for one's poor neighbours. A point to note here and in all the previous quotations is that the needy person's religion is not of any importance. Even if a person is non-Muslim, we, as Muslims, should help him and make sure he does not go to bed on an empty stomach.

Allah wants Muslims to help others, so He made some forms of charity obligatory for those who are blessed with riches. It is mandatory for wealthy Muslims to give 2.5% of their savings to indigent ones each year. This step ensures a steady regulation of wealth among all the people.

Allah mentions believers in the following words:

*They were enjoined only to worship God, sincere in their faith in Him alone – and of upright religion – and to establish the salat and the zakat. Such is the upright religion.*

(Quran 98:5)

Moreover, Islam asks believers to do charity as a means of repentance and atonement for their sins or, as compensation, in case of inability to observe certain religious obligations. For example, if a person breaks an oath, he must feed ten poor people, or if he cannot fast due to illness, he must feed indigent people as compensation.

### **Hunger around the world**

It has been two decades since humanity entered the third decade of the 21st century. The world we live in is globalising at a tremendous speed. The cell phone with internet connectivity inside our pocket enables us to communicate with an acquaintance in any corner of the world. All the acquired human knowledge is at our fingertips and can be accessed just by the click of a few keys. At least two nations of the world have been



successful in landing their probing mission on Mars, the farthest distance a man-made device has travelled and is functioning at his command. With the speed at which our scientists are working, it will not take long for a human to tread over the Martian terrain.

These amazing accomplishments of humanity often appear beguiling because the same humans are making this wonderful planet called Earth less and less habitable. Recent estimates from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) put the number of chronically undernourished persons at approximately 795 million. This means that one in nine of the over seven billion people on Earth suffer from hunger regularly. The statistics are more staggering in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia where more than one in four persons is undernourished. Those who look for a solution to fix the problem may tend to think that hunger is mainly due to scarcity of food. Scientists would not agree. The current world food output is far more than needed to feed the entire population. But conflicts and wars, natural disasters, pestilence, draughts, water scarcity, salinity of soil, locusts, and climate change impact harvests. The problem also lies with distribution, processing, storage, and making it available at prices that the poor and chronically hungry can afford. The situation is likely to be grimmer in days ahead in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Food Programme of the United Nations Organisation has assessed hunger around the world in the following words:

The World Food Programme, the branch of the United Nations responsible for delivering lifesaving food assistance, plans to serve 138 million people this year—more than ever in its 60-year history. The rise in hunger is “due to what I call ‘the three Cs’—conflict, Covid and climate,” said Steve Taravella, a WFP spokesman. “We don’t take the word ‘famine’ loosely, but with famine looming in several countries at once, we are facing a genuine crisis.”

*Anna-daan*, or feeding the hungry, has always occupied the utmost urgency and is the top listed objective and activity on the agenda of all NGOs. Various faiths emphasised the act ever since their founders set out to reform humanity. Islam termed it the most virtuous act, as it fulfils the most basic necessity to sustain life. It is this emphasis that prompts a believer to direct his or her charity to either feed the hungry in his individual capacity or donate the *zakat*, *sadqah*, *fidya*, *fitra*, etc., to those formally engaged in bringing succour to the hungry.

### **Feeding the hungry as the key act of almsgiving**

Feeding the hungry has been described as one of the noblest acts a believer is supposed to do, as well as enthrone others to engage with. *Quran* says: *And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan and the captive* (Chapter 76: Verse 8). A *Hadees* from the Prophet warns the believers against ignoring hunger in the neighbourhood while they spend nights fully satiated.

### **Quran on feeding the hungry**

Feeding the poor, the hungry, the orphans, and the captives is mentioned in the *Quran* more or less seven times. It is generally described as a social obligation towards the poor.

But it is also recommended as an act of penitence for some sins committed or skipping some religious injunctions like fasting or not keeping an oath. The general tone suggests that it is an act that contributes to social inclusiveness. One is warned of the Divine wrath, both in this world and the hereafter:

*“And (ask) of the sinners: What led you into hell fire?” They will reply: “We were not among those who prayed; Nor did we feed the indigent”.*

(Chapter 41, Verse 44)

The *Quran* recommends that believers feed the poor only to seek the pleasure of God, nothing else. Mentioning the characteristics of virtuous people, the *Quran* says,

*They are ones who feed the needy, and the orphan and the captives, saying: We feed you only for Allah’s sake; we do not seek of you any recompense or thanks.*

(Chapter 76, Verse 8, 9)

At another place, it says those who will be thrown in hellfire will be the ones who did not feed the poor or the orphan even while they themselves indulged in gluttony. It says, “And would not encourage others to feed the indigent” (Chapter 69, Verse 34). All it implies is that the believers should exhort even others to feed the poor in order that it becomes a common social practice.

Yet another way for encouraging the believers to adopt this practice was to recommend feeding the poor as a means of atonement for some mistakes or sins one may have committed. For instance, if someone takes an oath but fails to fulfil it, he should feed ten indigent persons for expiation. The level of food to be offered should be what one likes for himself or his family. The *Quran* says,

*Allah does not take you to task for the oaths you utter vainly, but He will certainly take you to task for the oaths you have sworn in earnest. The expiation (for breaking such oaths) is either to feed ten needy persons with more or less the same food as you are wont to give to your families, or to clothe them, or to set free from bondage the neck of one many; and he who does not find the means to feed the hungry, shall fast for three days. This shall be the expiation for your oaths whenever you have sworn (and broken them). But do keep your oaths. Thus does Allah make clear to you His commandments; maybe you will be grateful.*

(Chapter 5, Verse 89)

*In the 90th Chapter (Verse 16 to 19), the Quran lays down the following as virtues that raise the stature of a human individual: “And what do you know what is that difficult steep hill is? It is freeing someone’s neck from slavery; or giving food on a day of hunger to an orphan or near of kin; or to a destitute lying in dust.”*

Significantly, these verses appear after a description of certain characteristics of people who indulge in ostentation and ego-boasting exercises in their worldly life and thereby betray moral depravity and perversion. The aforementioned acts, carried out privately, may not bring fame and admiration from the society as one does by hosting a banquet for

thousands of people. It is where spirituality lies as it encourages one to shun exhibitionism and the display of wealth. It is why it has been likened to the heights of an uphill road.

### **The Prophet on feeding the hungry**

Prophet Muhammad is the founder of Islam, and his sayings and deeds constitute the second most important source of guidance for Muslims. His sayings are called *Hadees*, and his actions as reported by his numerous companions are called *sunnah*. Both these sources are replete with exhortations to his followers that talk of feeding the hungry. The oft-quoted three advices from the Prophet were: “*Feed the hungry, visit the sick and set free the captives*” (Sahih Muslim).

The Prophet is also reported to have said that a believer is not a believer if he goes to bed fully satiated while his neighbour goes to bed hungry. At yet another place, the believers are urged to feed the hungry as charity will come back to them as shade on the Day of Judgement (*Qayamat*), a day described to be oppressively hot.

### **Sufis on feeding the hungry**

Even hospices of *Sufis* and preachers became centres for feeding the hungry. *Sufis* directed their disciples to render various services at their hospices to distribute among the poor and the needy all that was received during the span of a day. This took the form of either distributing the foodstuffs or serving meals to the indigent. In this connection, the following saying from the 8th-century preacher *Hasan al-Basri*, the famous *Sufi* of Basra (Iraq) illustrates the significance: “*Whoever gives one dirham of sadqa in Jerusalem gains his ransom from hellfire, and whoever gives a loaf of bread he is like one who has given (the weight of) the earth’s mountains in gold*”. *Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti* of Ajmer is quoted as saying, “*The best way of evading the fire of hell lies in feeding the hungry, providing water to the thirsty, removing the wants of the needy and befriending the miserable*”. At the *langar* of his residence, the *dargah*, excellent food was served each day to all visitors. His compassion was reflected in the *khanqah*’s (hospice) rules, which preserved the dignity of all who ate there.

### **Food charity in Sufi dargahs<sup>33</sup>**

Sufism flourished all over India, but it was a huge success in the Punjab because of its attitudes and performances, which were closer to the basic temperament of the social affiliations in Punjabi society. Further, Sufism was adaptable in its methodology and for that reason, people could carry it out along with their social and professional lives. Among all the great and venerated *Sufis*, Chishtis were the most distinguished because of their egalitarian approach towards other religions. Their merits and principles, combined with their spiritual abilities, thrived the most in building an influential effect on the life of the people among whom they dwelled in. The distribution of *langar* has been the practice of Chishtiya Sufism for many centuries. This free public kitchen at Chishti Dargahs is open to all and meant to make food available to all the devotees and visitors. Believers fervently make donations either by contributing food or by partaking in the cooking and delivery of the food. Thus, the concept of *langar* is to maintain the norm of impartiality among all people of the globe. Moreover, the ritual of *langar* articulates the morals of

sharing, community, comprehensiveness, and unanimity of all human races (Iqbal & Ibrahim, 2017).

*Sufi* dargahs hold an immense position in the society of Muslims. The character of *Sufis* has been considered as an intercessor who directed to Allah and finally towards the attainment of happiness. The major objective of paying visits to dargahs is the fulfillment of the desires based on social, financial, political, religious, physical, mental, and mystical aspects of the visitors' lives. In addition, the majority of the devotees visit dargahs owing to their devotion and reverence for the *Sufis*.

Mental peace and pleasure are the main attractions which brings people to dargahs. The key reason for visiting a *Sufi* dargah is to pray to *Allah* (the almighty of Islam religion) for fulfilment of wishes. People visit *Sufi* dargahs for medical purposes as well. They believe that they will get rid of their diseases free of cost by praying at a *dargah* and by eating the holy *tabbarak* (blessed food), including *langar*, sugar, or salt. According to these people, even chronic and fatal diseases, such as hepatitis, tuberculosis, and typhoid, get cured completely by eating holy salt and sugar and by drinking Dam Wala Pani (sacred verses recited on water) available at dargahs (Iqbala & Farid, 2018).

### **Arbaeen walk of Shias**

“Imamate” is one of the Five Pillars of Shia faith and one of the major divisions between the two branches of Islam – Shia and Sunni (Szanto, 2018). Arbaeen walk is the world's largest annual public gathering held every year in Karbala, Iraq at the end of the 40th-day mourning period following Ashura, the religious ritual for the commemoration of the martyrdom of the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and the third Imam of Shia Muslims. Millions of Shia Muslims mostly from Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, and other countries converge in one place and cover vast swathes of land by foot. The entire journey of around 50 miles from Najaf to Karbala is marked with 1,400 poles, corresponding with the number of years that have passed since the Karbala events. Along the way from Najaf to Karbala, stalls are set up by local residents, charities, mosques, and foreign aid groups who voluntarily donate various free products and services to ensure no guest goes hungry or thirsty, as this is a perceived way to attract the Divine blessings. Cooks prepare huge quantities of stewed lamb, grilled fish, beans, fresh bread, and rice. There are small makeshift tents lined with foam mattresses and woolen blankets for people to rest or sleep. For those who are tired, there are masseurs to give them a quick and revitalising massage. In addition, there are mobile bathrooms for quick showers and mobile ambulances in case of a medical emergency (Mehdi, 2019). Nikjoo et al. (2020) discover the various social and psychological reasons for pilgrims' feeling of attachment to Imam Hussein and to the Arbaeen pilgrimage route. Four different perceived roles for Imam Hussein, including beloved, interceding, transformative, and unifier figure were found, leading pilgrims to feel an attachment to him.

### **7.3 Nuances of *anna-daan* in Islamic society**

Taking a cue from the verses of the *Quran*, traditions of the Prophet (*Hadees*), and the teachings of *Sufis*, feeding the poor and the hungry took root in Muslim societies all across the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Central Asia. While feeding the hungry at home or distributing food at mosques was practised on the individual level, communal feedings

gathered a great many dimensions within Muslim societies. Soup kitchens came to be established on wide swathes of geography. They came to be known as *langar* in Persian or *imaret* in the Ottoman Empire. While the concept of *imaret* expanded across Palestine, Syria, Jordan, and Eastern Europe, *langars* grew eastward and came to be associated with mausoleums of saints generally known as *dargah* in India and Pakistan. The concept found traction among the adherents of Sikhism rather more enthusiastically who imparted better management and greater refinement to the institutions. Now almost all the gurdwaras<sup>34</sup> have *langars* attached to them be they in Europe or America.

### Cultural offshoots

Feeding the poor and the hungry gathered more and myriad ritualistic rings over the one-and-half millennia after Islam arrived. Although without any formal or specific religious prescriptions, these came to be recognised widely as family-level festivities where special cuisines would be part of the gastronomic fare arranged for a bevy of neighbours, friends, and relatives per one's affordability. Regardless of the range of invitees, the hosts would not ignore the poor relatives or arranging some food for the poor. The community developed various cultural manifestations such as *Quran Khani* (reading of the entire *Quran* in one sitting by a group of people who divide among themselves parts of it for recitation) for invoking Allah's blessing for a departed soul, *Bismillah Khani* or *Maktab* (the ceremony to make the child start learning the first alphabets), *Mannat* (vows by individuals to feed the poor if a certain wish of theirs gets fulfilled), *Sunnat* (a ceremony associated with circumcision) and *Niyaz*, a ceremony to invoke blessings of saint Abdul Qadir Jilani (1078–1166 AD), of Baghdad, with a large following in India. *Fatiha* is organised on the occasion and special prayers are held. The occasion witnesses either distribution of sweets or observing of *Kunde ka Fatiha* when relatives and the poor are served *kheer* (milk-based sweet porridge) and *puris* (deep-fried pancake). It is also considered highly virtuous to offer fruit and snacks for breaking of fast by way of *Ramzan iftaar*<sup>35</sup> to the poor and the destitute or the ones who drop into mosques during the evenings.

In South India, there is a tradition of preparing *kanji* (porridge) at the local level and organising its distribution among poor households. It is mainly to serve poor households and is funded by the rich. A portion of it is retained for the partaking of by those who gather at the mosque for *iftaar*. Similarly, *Chehallum*, or the 40th-day ceremony in commemoration of the departed ones is also common among the Indian and Pakistani households. Prior to partaking of food in the company of the poor, the *Quran* is read in its entirety by the gathering by sharing parts of it among themselves. Those affiliated with the *Shia*<sup>36</sup> sect observe 10th *Muharram*,<sup>37</sup> the day of martyrdom of Imam Hussain, grandson of Prophet Muhammad, on the battlefield of Karbala in Iraq in 680 AD. A general norm across all these ceremonies is that the poor should be included while sharing the food on such formal occasions. However, these are cultural offshoots of the concept of charity in Islam and do not necessarily draw their sanction from Islamic theology. In fact, some of them appear contrary to the Islamic precepts. For instance, *Niyaz* and *Kunde ka Fatiha* are at variance with the Islamic concept of strict monotheism where blessings of none other than Allah could be invoked. Those affiliated with mainstream Islamic sects such as *Deobandhis*<sup>38</sup> or *Ahle-Hadith* or *Salafis* would not hesitate to dub such ceremonies heretical in character and inconsistent with Islam's monotheistic creed. Yet for those outside the pale of Islam, such ceremonies and practices appear more a part of lived Islam rather than textual Islam.

### **Institutionalised response to hunger**

Feeding the poor and the hungry being a virtuous act, institutionalised feeding began to evolve in Muslim countries. Over the centuries several institutions came up with elaborate infrastructure, menus, cuisines, management structures, personnel, and functionalities. Here we discuss two of them, i.e., *Imarets* from the Ottoman Empire and *langar* with roots in Iran and practised in the Indian subcontinent. In recent years, the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah has been organising the ritual sacrifice during *Haj* pilgrimage and sending the meat to the nations where poverty is rampant.

#### **Imarets: mass feeding**

Islamic history is replete with instances of dedicating income from certain *waqf* properties and institutions for the purpose of feeding the hungry. According to the *waqf* provisions, the *waqif*<sup>39</sup> or the person/s who is dedicating the assets for purposes of charity has to express the objective of the dedicated property and its income. Several *waqfs* were dedicated to feeding the poor and the hungry. In Ottoman Turkey (1453–1923), feeding the hungry or food charity evolved into an elaborate system with institutions being set up under *waqf* and funded by *waqf* endowments. These were set up all through the Ottoman-ruled territories in Eastern Europe, Asia, and North Africa, an area comprising 1.7 crore sq. km. These public kitchens gradually developed into institutions known as *imarets* and clubbed within their premises colleges (*kulliye* in Turkish), caravanserais, mosques, hospices, hospitals, libraries, markets, and soup kitchens. First among such kitchens was set up in the middle of 16th-century Palestine (currently in Occupied Jerusalem) by Hurrem Sultan, wife of Sultan Suleiman I, to endow a public kitchen. She planned to prepare and distribute meals to 500 people, twice a day, every day. The beneficiaries who were served bread and soup included wayfarers who sought shelter in the caravanserai, *Sufis* and *shaykhs*,<sup>40</sup> the poor and the wretched, and the weak and the needy. The Hasseki Sultan *imaret* in Jerusalem in existence even today is one example of an Ottoman public kitchen. These institutions had well-laid regulations as to what is to be cooked, how much to be served to which categories of people, hierarchy of recipients (the order of serving), sumptuous dishes to be prepared on festivals or eves of the holy nights, etc. Istanbul too came to be dotted with such kitchens. By the mid-16th century, approximately 1,500 people were fed twice a day at the *imaret* there. These included visiting dignitaries, travellers, scholars, and students from the prestigious Fatih colleges, and the employees of these colleges and students of the nearby colleges.

Such *imarets* came up in less prominent cities too, like those in the Balkans, Palestine, Hejaz (Saudi province comprising holy cities of *Makkah* and *Madinah*), Cairo, and other cities of North Africa under the Ottoman Empire. Reports mention that the city of Edirne in mainland Turkey in the 16th century had three imperial *imarets* feeding 2,600 people every day.

#### **Langars**

Institutionalised feeding took the form of *langar* in Persia and the regions eastward of it, particularly India and Pakistan. The term *langar* is derived from Persian and came to be adopted in Punjabi and Urdu and several other Indian languages. *Langar* usually denotes a community kitchen attached to the mausoleums of saints or their *khanqah* (hospices or

lodges of dervishes). They originated in Iran where hospices of saints used to have community kitchens, basically to serve meals to the pilgrims and the poor and the needy who gathered there for alms. The earliest of the *langars* dates back to Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar (1173–1265) of Multan (Pakistan).

Most *dargahs* and mausoleums operate *langars* even to this day. Meals are served at the mausoleums of *Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti* at Ajmer, the mausoleum of *Nizamuddin Auliya* in New Delhi, and the *khanqah* of *Khwaja Bandenawaz* at Kalburgi (previously Gulbarga). *Langars* follow a combination of hospitality and charity deriving their legitimacy from a saying of Prophet Muhammad. For the first three days a visitor is considered a guest and enjoys hospitality. Thereafter, the meals served to them are part of charity. The Prophet is reported to have said, “Hospitality extends for three days, and anything beyond that is charity”. Famous 14th-century traveller *Ibne Batuta* and 17th-century Turkish traveller *Evliya Effendi* documented the hospitality offered at the lodges and hospices or dervishes in their travel accounts.

These community kitchens that offered meals and accommodation to wayfarers, students, mendicants, and scholars were commonplace in Central Asia as could be learnt from historical accounts. Of more recent origins are the 250 free soup kitchens run by the *Edhi* Foundation based in Karachi, Pakistan. These serve wholesome, full meals to the poor, hungry, and the unemployed twice a day in several cities of Pakistan. These are variously known as *Edhi* Free Kitchen, or *Edhi* Free *Langar*, or *Edhi Dastarkhan* managed by the *Edhi* Foundation set up by noted social worker *Abdus Sattar Edhi* in 1951. *Edhi* Foundation is the largest welfare organisation in Pakistan running hundreds of homes for children, widows, old-age people, hospitals, morgues, etc. It receives charities that exceed \$10 million annually and has over 7,000 volunteers working for it. It is a private-sector organisation with the largest number of ambulances in the world and operates, even air and ship ambulances.

### **Globalising the sacrificial meat distribution**

In the last 40 years, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, has entered into an arrangement with the Ministry of Haj Affairs of the Government of Saudi Arabia to undertake the ritual sacrifice at Mina during the three days of *Haj*. The Utilisation of the *Haj* Meat Project was launched in 1983. Under the programme, the *Haj* pilgrims are spared of the hassles of buying livestock, slaughtering, processing, and distributing the meat among the poor during the designated days. They can now buy IsDB coupons, which ensures that the entire ritual is executed at the designated hour on behalf of each buyer of the coupon. While this greatly helped the pilgrims focus on prayers, it took a huge responsibility off the government’s back too. With pilgrim numbers growing during the last four decades due to the ease of international travel, the slaughtering of over a million animals during the span of three days used to cause environmental problems. Most pilgrims would leave the carcasses at the site designated for sacrifice, which would rot under the torrid sun for weeks, causing pollution of air, water, and soil.

The Bank, which began with the sacrifice of 63,000 livestock in 1983, the first year of operation, handled the sacrifice of about a million animals in 2019. The Bank, besides ritual sacrifice, installed giant industrial freezers at the site. It would gather a workforce of 40,000 people for a week, process and pack the meat and freeze it for shipping, which

begins 20 days later when most of the pilgrims would have left Saudi Arabia. The meat is shipped to the least-developed Muslim countries through a network of 250 charities. Animal waste is taken to the composting sites, thereby ensuring that air, soil, and water are protected from pollution. This outstanding project of the IsDB has emerged as an iconic project whereby not only the longstanding issue of environmental pollution was addressed but also the meat came in handy for organising a programme of feeding the hungry and the poor in underdeveloped nations.

The Saudi Project for the Utilisation of Meat announces the message of the project on its website thus: “Exhort all men to make pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and the backs of swift camels from every distant quarter (*Quran* 22:27); they will come to avail themselves of many benefits to pronounce on the appointed days the name of Allah over the cattle, which He has given them for food.” “Eat of their flesh, and feed the poor and the unfortunate” (Chapter 22:28, 36). “Their flesh and blood does not reach Allah; it is your piety that reaches him” (*Quran* 22:37).

## 7.4 Dargah langars

### Dargahs, the centres of devotion

*Dargahs* are mausoleums of saints. The Indian subcontinent’s firmament is dotted with several *dargahs*. While mosques are centres of worship of Allah by Muslims, *dargahs* are centres of attraction and veneration for devotees of all religions regardless of faith, caste, and even gender. Devotees could be found milling around these centres of popular devotion all through the year and at all hours of the day.

Delhi and various cities in India and Pakistan were the seats of power of sultans of several dynasties. Mausoleums of these kings could be seen in Delhi, Agra, Sikandra, Aurangabad, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Srirangapatnam, Lahore, and Jaunpur. Although these beckon tourists due to their historicity, monuments that are architectural marvels of aesthetics, these have never been centres of devotion. But saints who travelled from afar set up their hermitages and preached love and peace, fed the poor, clothed the unwashed, and cared for the sick and the disabled, continue to draw crowds in ever-increasing numbers. Prominent among these *dargahs* are the ones in Ajmer, Delhi, Kalburgi (Gulbarga till a few years ago), Aurangabad, Hyderabad, Haji Ali (off Mumbai coast), Nagoor (Tamil Nadu), and Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh). Several rites, rituals, and ceremonies are associated with these *dargahs*. Death anniversaries of the saints are known as *urs* when a huge rush of visitors could be seen at the mausoleums. A string of institutions have sprung up around them in order to manage the stay and food for the devotees who visit them for the *urs* or other days of commemoration. Most of these mausoleums were skirted by *bowlis* (stepped wells) mostly constructed during the lifetime of the saints. Now some holiness is ascribed to them, or their water is stated to carry some miraculous cures. *Serais* or inns were set up in their vicinity to accommodate the visitors. Eateries were set up by those who saw an opportunity to make a business. Some people installed *piaos* (water kiosks) to serve water to the thirsty. Philanthropists and sultans who began to visit them built *rubats* (inns) in their precincts for those who could not afford to pay. They set up endowments to generate regular income to fund cooking and serving of free food for the visitors, which came to be known as *langars*. Some even went further and



donated large *degs* (cauldrons), which prepared sweets on special occasions for distribution among guests and VIPs. Musical soirees came to be organised during evenings, and special halls were constructed for audiences. *Qawwali*, a distinct form of devotional *Sufi* lyrics sung by a band of singers in accompaniment of music, evolved in mausoleums of the subcontinent and is invariably associated with tombs of the *Sufis*. While many of these rites, rituals, ceremonies, and institutions do not bear any relevance with textual Islam – some even view them to be contrary to Islamic precepts – these have evolved as part of the Islamic culture in the subcontinent.

We will go into the history of the institution of *langar*, which has been part of the *dargah* culture for nearly a millennium. While it is not precisely known where it originated, the earliest of *langars* are traced from the *Sufi darbar* of Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakr (1279–1366) of Multan, a Punjabi Muslim mystic revered mainly by Muslims and *Sikhs* but draws devotees from all faiths in the subcontinent. Baba Farid would ask the resident devotees to utilise the day's offerings to organise food for all visitors. This tradition came to be emulated by all the mausoleums and was institutionalised and further developed by the *Sikhs* after Guru Nanak founded the new faith. Now *gurdwaras* have introduced it around the world and serve vegetarian meals three times a day to all visitors regardless of their faith.

*Dargahs* and *Sufi* hospices laid down strict norms for *langars* where the same food was to be served to all visitors without any discrimination. The *Sufis* themselves would partake of the same food with the visitors thereby exemplifying equality, humility, and simplicity. In the ongoing section, we will look at the *langars* at some of the renowned *dargahs* in India.

### **Food charity in practice: insights from case studies**

Food charity organised at *dargah* ever since its establishment. The importance and need for food charity in the form of feeding the poor and needy is the basic essence of Islamic tradition. *Sufi* saints termed feeding the poor as an act of piety and earning proximity to God. It should be exercised in the spirit of total selflessness, without accepting anything in return.

As discussed, the philanthropic work developed by early Islamic thinkers encourages and mandates the affluent members of the Islamic community to support the less fortunate ones, including providing food to the poor. This section provides empirical and quantitative data on *anna-daan* practices among Indian Muslims through the method of case studies conducted by different researchers on four different Islamic phenomena of *anna-daan*.

### **Anna-daan at places of Islamic worship: an overview of current practices**

The case studies describe the *anna-daan* practices that were conducted across four places in India – namely, Kashmir, Ajmer, Chikkaballapur, and New Delhi (Table 7.1). This section focuses on the mausoleum or organisation, spiritual aspects of food charity, human resources, administrative aspects, funding and technology, nutritional aspects of food distribution, and discusses the key issues related to *anna-daan* practices by the religious institutions or organisations.

Table 7.1 Case studies

Basic details	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4
Name and address	Athrout, Bulbul Lankar, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir	Ajmer Dargah Sharif, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India	Ammajan, Bawajan Dargah, Chinthamani, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka	Nizamuddin Auliya, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi
Year of establishment	14th century	1464 AD	1964	1972
Reasons for starting <i>anna-daan</i>	Philanthropy and to serve food to the needy and poor	Philanthropy, spiritual purpose, and to serve food to the needy and poor	Philanthropy, spiritual purpose	Vow to be fulfilled and auspicious
<i>Anna-daan</i> start-up year	2008			1135 AD
Initiator	Mr. Bashir Ahmad Wani			Hazrat Nizamuddin

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Older Islamic practices advocated feeding the hungry. It was the responsibility of the wealthier half of the society and the duty of every Muslim to help those in need and make sure they have access to, at least, the basic necessities. Moreover, it asks believers of Islam to do charity as a means of repentance or as compensation, in case of inability to abide by certain religious obligations.

The data shows the tradition of distributing food to the hungry and poor through various modes and for various reasons is followed with great zeal and consecration even today. Food distribution takes place within as well as outside the places of worship. While Islamic organisations feed needy families outside the religious place, the religious institutions feed the devotees inside the mausoleum. The Islamic organisation under study (Athrout), provides dry ration every month to needy Muslim families in their respective environments instead of making them visit the organisation. The objective for conducting *anna-daan* varies across institutions. The religious institutions and organisations under study undertake food distribution for mostly philanthropic purposes and the other reasons being spiritual, feeding the needy, and for fulfilment of certain vows. Serving food to people is considered equivalent to serving food to Allah, and the blessing received for serving food is considered good charm. Everyone at the Divine centre is treated with dignity and respect irrespective of their creed, caste, class, etc. The motive behind food distribution is to support the less fortunate people by providing food.

Islam imparts an important lesson to the society about food charity as being a necessity of life. Feeding the poor and hungry gathered myriad ritualistic rings over the one-and-half millennia after Islam arrived in India without any formal or religious prescriptions. Earlier, it was also considered highly virtuous to offer food to the poor on formal occasions.

Table 7.2 indicates the *anna-daan* practices among Muslims covered in four case studies. Serving is a daily event and in many places, food is served three times a day (breakfast, lunch and dinner). Some places serve only lunch, while some other lunch and dinner.

Table 7.2 Number of times Annadana in practice

Case studies	Frequency of <i>anna-daan</i>	Number of times food served		
		Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Case study 1	Monthly			
Case study 2	Daily	✓	✓	✓
Case study 3	On special occasions		✓	✓
Case study 4	Daily	✓	✓	✓

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Food distribution is carried out monthly by Athrout, which is a non-governmental organisation. Whereas at Ammajan Bawajan Dargah, food charity is conducted on special occasions or when donors wish to sponsor food distribution. Those who sponsor a day's food would be the ones who would be doing so by way of offering thanksgiving for some of their wishes or desires (*mannat*) having been fulfilled or some unresolved issues of life having been resolved.

### **Basic details of *anna-daan*: number of people served during normal season**

During the Ottoman rule in Turkey, mass feeding evolved through public kitchens, which were gradually developed into institutions. The first such kitchen was set up in the 16th century, which prepared and distributed food to 500 people two times a day. As discussed earlier, these institutions were well regulated on the menu, servings, the order of serving, and special food dishes during festivals, etc. Similarly in the current times, the menu, volume of food to be served, etc., are pre-planned and well regulated. The graph in Figure 7.1 depicts important information regarding the number of people served at the respective places during the normal season and the peak season.

The number of devotees served food varied across institutions and organisations. It ranged from the highest of 1,500 at *Nizamuddin Auliya*, New Delhi, to 120 families at Athrout, Kashmir. *Ammajan Bawajan Dargah* provides food only during special occasions, for which the estimated number of devotees was 10,000.

The mausoleums built dining halls for devotees to savour the food. The devotees are seated on the ground, and the capacity of the dining halls ranged from 150 to 1,500. At Ajmer, food was eaten in an open area on the premises. Food is served on plates or in areca bowls. To manage large crowds, *Ammajan Bawajan Dargah* has adopted the token system. Cleaning of the dining premises takes place after every meal, depending on the number of batches (Table 7.3)

By and large, food charity is considered a holy and benevolent act. The *Quran* recommends that believers should feed the poor only to seek the pleasure of God, nothing else, or for atonement of mistakes. It also mentions that the ones who did not feed the poor and the orphans will be the ones to be thrown into hellfire. It implies that believers should indulge in food charity and also exhort others to adopt this practice. The case studies indicate that food charity is performed as a philanthropic act along with other reasons like vows to be fulfilled, auspicious, spiritual purpose, and to serve food to the poor. People perceive *anna-daan* to instil dedication and devotion, bring good luck, and

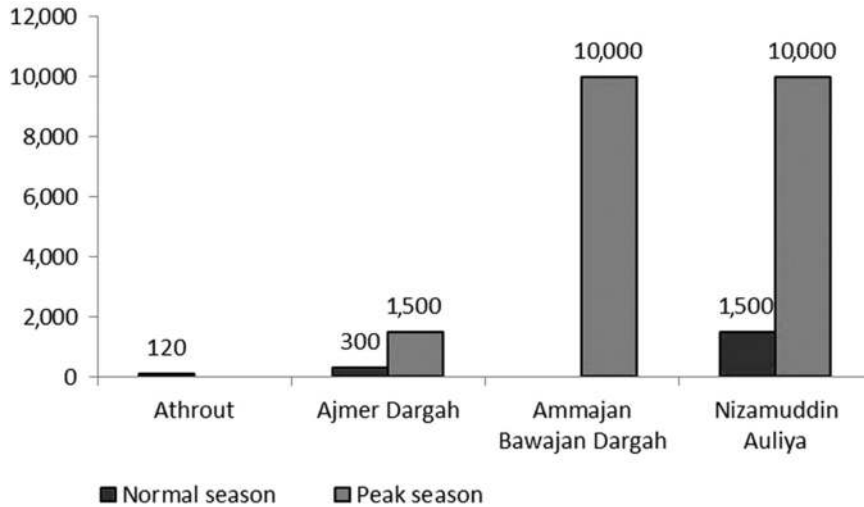


Figure 7.1 Number of people provided food.

Table 7.3 Dining premises

Dining Hall	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4
Number of dining halls	An open area in the premise	1	
Number of people it can accommodate	250–300 and 1,000–1,500 in peak season	150	
Seating – ground	✓		✓
Served in plates	Food packets, plate system and during Ramzan, one large plate ( <i>sini</i> ) shared between four and five people		✓
Served in areca bowls (locally called <i>done</i> in Karnataka)			✓
Q system			✓
Token system		✓	
Cleaning (number of times)	After every meal	After every meal	Five times a day

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

provide food to the poor. Most of them concur with the view that the beneficiaries bless the donors, and it helps develop harmony and positive feelings among people (Table 7.4 and 7.5).

Rice was the main staple food, which was prepared in vast quantities, ranging from 25 kg to 66 kg per day in normal times and from 25 kg to 500 kg during the peak season. In case study 3, we were not able to get the required information.

### Finances

Almsgiving is a prominent principle of Islamic practice. There are two types of donations made by the people of the community. One is *zakat* and the other is *sadqa*. *Zakat* is an

Table 7.4 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

Case studies	Reasons for <i>anna-daan</i>				
	Vow to be fulfilled	Philanthropy	<i>Anna-daan</i> is auspicious	Spiritual well-being	Others
Case study 1		✓			
Case study 2		✓		✓	✓ to serve food to the needy and poor
Case study 3		✓		✓	
Case study 4	✓	✓	✓		

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Table 7.5 People’s views on *anna-daan*

Case studies	People’s views on <i>anna-daan</i>					
	Good luck	Poor get food	People bless donors	Positive feeling	Develops harmony among people	Instils dedication and devotion
Case study 2	✓	✓				✓
Case study 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

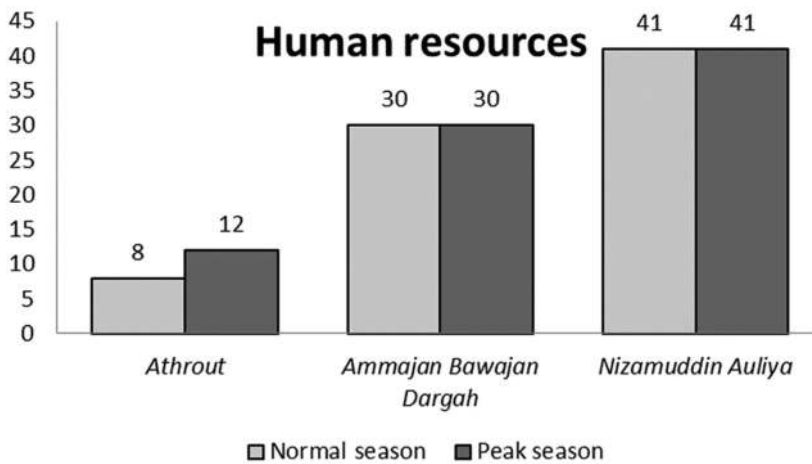


Figure 7.2 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

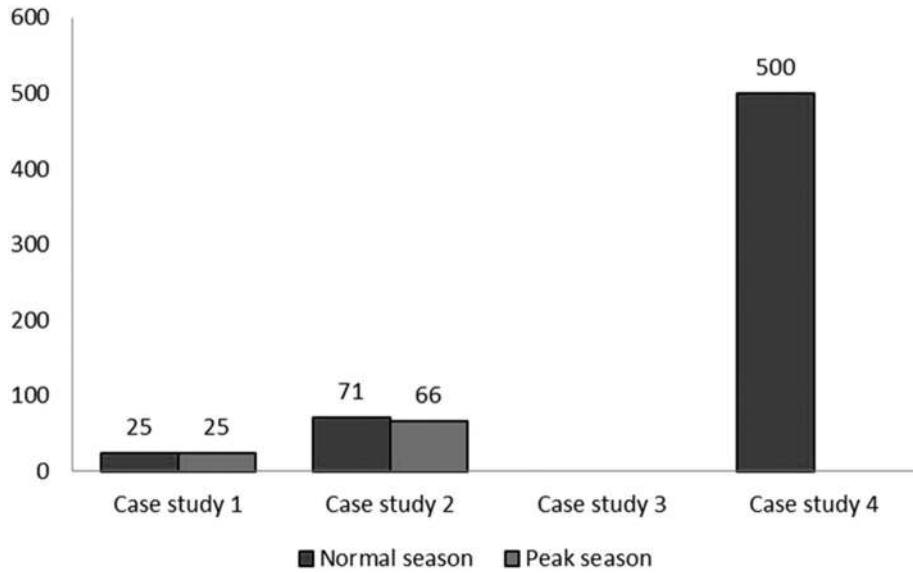


Figure 7.3 Rice prepared.

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Table 7.6 Mosque administration

Mosque administration board	Athrout	Ajmer Dargah	Nizamuddin Auliya
Year of constitution	2008	1955	
Total number of board members		27	50

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

obligation of every Muslim to donate 2.5% of his annual savings in cash or kind to religious institutions. *Sadqa* is a voluntary donation. Most of the expenditures of religious institutions are met through the donations given by the devotees (Table 7.6).

**Administration**

The ingredients and raw materials for food charity are sourced from the local market after due inspection. To ensure hygiene, vegetables are sanitised before cutting. Measures such as sterilisation of cooking vessels, regular personal hygiene and food safety training for kitchen staff, and employing quality officers are taken. Nutrition is perceived to be very important in all cases, and food is cooked accordingly (Table 7.7).

It is a tedious job to prepare meals in such large quantities and also meet the quality norms. Technology plays a pivotal role in efficiently managing the whole process of food charity by making food preparation and quality maintenance hassle-free. CCTV cameras address organisational and security concerns (Table 7.8).

Table 7.7 Procurement, Storage and Handling of cooking provisions

Quality assurance	AtROUT	Ajmer Dargah	AmmajanBawajan Dargah	Nizamuddin Auliya
<b>Quality assurance during procurement of raw materials</b>				
Selection of suppliers	✓	Purchased from local market	Purchased from local market	Purchased from local market
Quality inspection	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Storage, handling, and preservation of raw materials</b>				
Vegetables sanitised before cutting		✓	✓	✓
<b>Quality and safety during cooking</b>				
Sterilisation of cooking vessels		✓	✓	✓
Regular personal hygiene and food safety training for kitchen staff		✓	✓	✓
Employing quality officers in the kitchen to monitor quality of cooked food		✓	✓	✓

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Table 7.8 Adoption of technology

Technology absorption	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4
RO plants	✓		
CCTVs		✓	
Time taken for cooking			300–360 minutes
Serving time	90–120 minutes		10 minutes for each batch

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

Table 7.9 Temple waste Management

Waste management	Case study 4
Quantity of wet waste generated (in kg/day)	80
Quantity of dry waste generated (in kg/day)	150
Segregation of waste	Yes
Method of collection	Waste bins
Method of disposal of wet waste	Packed in big plastic bags
Method of disposal of dry waste	Packed in plastic bags

Source: Compiled from case studies data.

## Waste management

Waste generated in the kitchen is segregated into wet waste and dry waste (Table 7.9). In most cases, dry waste is handed over to local government authorities. And the wet waste is either composted or handed over to local government authorities.

## 7.5 Summary

Hunger is rampant in a vast number of regions in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Developed nations attained food stability nearly a century ago. But developing nations are still grappling with food shortages, not merely owing to underproduction but also because of flawed civil supply networks. Stunting and wasting among children is the outcome of undernutrition. Major global organisations have been striving to find answers and solutions to these issues. “Zero Hunger” is the second among the 17 goals adopted under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030.

What comes out clearly from this study is that religious motivation is a major driver behind all “feed the hungry” programmes or schemes. Emphasis on feeding the hungry as a virtue has thrown up umpteen models in a variety of religions. Islamic civilisations developed several institutions and a variety of opportunities to provide food assistance to the vulnerable sections of the society. Societal practices invented new opportunities to engage in the benevolent activity. Though the tradition of feeding still retains its robustness, institutions engaged in the activity generally seem to follow the traditional pattern of random feeding of the hungry. *Langars* at the *dargahs* remain the most popular mode to donate food or sponsor feeding of the hungry. However, most of them feed the walk-in pilgrims, visitors who may even be dropping a substantial amount of money by way of donation into the *hundi* or may be partaking of the food for the Divine blessings it is presumed to carry. It is also a belief among certain sections that every “feed the hungry” institution may not be necessarily construed as “feed the poor and the deserving” programme. *Langars* may serve casually hungry persons but are not accessible to vast sections that stay hungry due to poverty. Feed the hungry programmes carry a risk in that these people may become permanently dependent on free food, thereby deliberately avoiding taking steps to earn a livelihood and better their lot.

The study which coincided with the COVID-induced lockdown provided an opportunity to gather information about (there was less or no opportunity to look into) the working and mechanism of a vast number of Muslim institutions that engage themselves in mission-mode “reach and feed the hungry” with dry ration kits or simply through distribution of ready-to-eat food packets. Mercy Mission of Bengaluru and Rahmath Group of Malegaon (the latter operated in several towns and cities) came into prominence during the crisis and helped lakhs of migrant workers, those who were stranded away from homes and the ones travelling by Shramik Express trains organised by the Indian Railways. Such programmes or schemes were launched after due assessment of the needs of the ones who actually needed food assistance.

*Langars* remain the most popular model of feeding the hungry but are characterised by *ad hoc*, grassroots nature and low level of organisation in which the objective and intention of helping the helpless play a dominant role. They do a yeoman service in feeding the people, the weary travellers or visitors. Not much has been done to improve their management, widen their ambit of service, improve accountability and compliance with environmental protocols, and, more importantly, target the actually hungry. Their potential to serve the really needy remains vastly underutilised.



It can be easily inferred that most *anna-daan* programmes revolve around the scarcity-hit people and perspective in matters of collection of resources and their distribution. Not much thought has been given to bringing together food insecurity and food waste, which is a function of a situation where food surpluses could be channelised to mitigate hunger. Just as food scarcity and pious exhortation act as a trigger to feed the hungry, excess and thereby wastage of food, too, is an aspect of modern society which should be encouraged to make better use of surplus food. Religions, not Islam alone, emphasise avoidance of waste. Gluttony and feasting might be morally reprehensible acts in developing nations but are facts of modern urban life where culinary excesses are not uncommon. Islamic societies and institutions have not addressed this issue. “Food banks” could be an idea whose time has come to be explored in cities where marriages, conventions, and gatherings generate excess food – normally more nutritious and expensive – which unfortunately ends up as waste.

Hunger being a demoralising deficiency largely remains unexpressed. Residents of poor neighbourhoods, inmates of students hostels, *choultries*,<sup>41</sup> and *musafir khanas*<sup>42</sup> (inexpensive lodges established by philanthropists in the past) in cities could be the prime targets for all programmes aimed at feeding the hungry. It needs to be assessed through surveys that raise penetrative queries. There need to be systems and channels in place where people could approach for food without incurring any iota of indignity. Thought must be spared to look at the issue of hunger from a wide diversity of angles.

## Notes

1. In mystic traditions, death anniversaries are celebrated rather than observed, as it is taken to mean the saint’s final departure from the mortal world and joining God.
2. The flag of the *Ajmer Dargah Sharif* is in saffron colour (contrary to the green colour of flags seen on mausoleums of Muslim saints) and even the *khadims* (the ones who look after the maintenance of the *dargah*) sport saffron caps. It is a square-shaped building with one side measuring 64 feet.

## Notes

- 1 *Zakat* is a religious obligation, ordering all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria to donate a certain portion of wealth each year to charitable causes.
- 2 Holy book of Muslims.
- 3 Food charity.
- 4 Religious text of Islam, which Muslims believe to be a revelation from God.
- 5 A Muslim ascetic and mystic.
- 6 A hospice for pilgrims, travelers, etc.
- 7 A communal meal.
- 8 It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam which takes place in the last month of Islamic calendar.
- 9 Holy book of Islam.
- 10 A city in Saudi Arabia that was the birthplace of Muhammad and is the holiest city of Islam.
- 11 He is recognised as a prophet and messenger of Allah in Islam.
- 12 Al Khidr (Author), *The Original Quran: Dated 800 AD in Kufic Script of the Time of Prophet Muhammad* (Freedom From Jihad Book 0) Kindle Edition, November 2016.
- 13 <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:1956>
- 14 Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the *Quran* and the traditions of the Prophet, prescribing both religious and secular duties and sometimes retributive penalties for lawbreaking.
- 15 God.

- 16 Abu Bakr was a senior companion and the father-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- 17 It is the minimum amount that a Muslim must have before being obliged to give *zakat*.
- 18 One-tenth of annual produce or earnings, formerly taken as a tax for the support of the Church and clergy.
- 19 A religious donation of money or food made to help those in need.
- 20 Religious donations made in Islam when a fast (notably in Ramadan) is missed or broken.
- 21 Type of charity that is binding in nature.
- 22 Forbidden.
- 23 A member of one's family (like one's mother) with whom marriage is considered forbidden (*haram*).
- 24 *Halal* relating to meat prepared or animals slaughtered as prescribed by Islamic law.
- 25 Mosque.
- 26 It is one of the six books (Kutub al-Sittah – the six major *Hadees* collections).
- 27 219 It is a major Islamic festival that commemorates the story of Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismael when Allah commanded him to.
- 28 Sacrifice.
- 29 Muslim ascetic and mystic.
- 30 Hospice for pilgrims, travelers, etc.
- 31 Communal meal.
- 32 It is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and greater Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, which takes place in the last month of the year.
- 33 A shrine or tomb built over the grave of revered religious saint, often a sufi saint (Muslim Saints who entered India in the 12th century and gained popularity in the 13th century).
- 34 It is a Sikh place of assembly and worship.
- 35 A meal taken by Muslims at sundown to break the daily fast during Ramzan.
- 36 A member of the branch of Islam that regards Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib as the legitimate successor to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and rejects the first three caliphs; instead, they follows the imamate and disagree with the caliphate system in Islam.
- 37 Islamic festival.
- 38 Islamic revivalist movement within Sunni.
- 39 The person creating a *waqf*.
- 40 A man respected for his piety or religious learning.
- 41 An inn or caravansary for travelers, pilgrims, or visitors.
- 42 A building devoted to religious or charitable purposes.

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# Conclusion

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### Introduction

*Anna-daan* in India, from a historical and cultural perspective, is a research study aimed to capture food sharing culture in Indian society. India is home to several religions with their own organisations performing *anna-daan* with the sole motto of sharing food, thus contributing to a captivating dimension of commensality studies. It is fascinating that food sharing is an essential element across religions backed by philosophical assumptions. All religions emphasise equality, justice, duty, empathy, and kindness impacting societal wellness. To keep the tradition of food sharing, several motivations and purposes are delineated in various forms – verses, anecdotes, stories, and others – thus adding to the spirit of keeping this tradition alive for centuries.

### Anna-daan in Hinduism

In Hinduism, no personal or public religious activity is complete without food distribution, especially *prasad* (food offered to God). Food plays a vital role in worship, and the food offered to the deities is thought to bestow considerable religious merit, purifying body, mind, and spirit. It is described that the giver of food is the giver of life. It is believed that when a person donates or shares food with the weak and the emaciated, this act of his is tantamount to conducting a *yagn*, with all the attendant benefits.

- India's heritage prescribes *daan* (giving) as an integral part of one's *dharma*. While some equate *dharma* with religion, others use it as a synonym for duty, a duty dictated by the Almighty and inculcated through society.
- In Hinduism, *daan* was considered to be *tapas* (penance) that ought to be performed by every human being. *Daan* is also a method of purifying oneself at social, physical, and spiritual levels. *Anna-daan* is the most common and the most cardinal of all *daanas*.
- All the Hindu texts, namely *Vedas*, *Shastras*, and *Puranas*, signify the aim of doing *daan*.<sup>1</sup> *Daan* has been classified in several overlapping ways, depending on one's perspective. More than 130 specific forms have been enumerated – in all probability, there are other forms as well. *Daan* is commonly identified with food (*anna-daan*), knowledge (*vidya daan*), land (*bhoo daan*), cattle (*go daan*). Hinduism is a way of life that focuses on the essence of life. *Daan* is not an independent practice; it is part of life.

- Hindu scriptures herald that food security must not just address one social problem but lead to self-enlightenment and ultimately to the union with the Almighty. Thus, respecting food brings out the glory of life and soul.
- *Anna-daan* is made up of two words – *annam*, which means food, and *danam*, which means the act of giving or donating. *Anna-daan*, or the giving of food, happens to be the most common form of *daan*, as food is lifesaving. Hence, *anna-daan* is also known as one of the most important of *daans*.
- *Anna-daan* is a manifestation of *mahayagn*, a great sacrifice. Thus, the concept of *atithi-yagn* has evolved, treating an unknown person also with devotion. Animals are also to be respected equally on par with humans under the *balivaishvadeva yagn*.
- As such, the quality of food to be eaten or donated is scrutinised meticulously. Only food earned through *dharma* or the right ways is considered worthy of being donated or consumed. The method of food production also ought to follow *dharma*.
- The history of India reveals that kings were great donors of food. It suggests the existence of hunger-free and prosperous societies in the past. Temples were instrumental to ensure *anna-daan*, *gyan-daan* (free education), and social welfare throughout the country. King's treasuries and his administration were bound to give gifts (*daan*) and protect (*paalan*) temples apart from donating from his own wealth.
- At present, all the prominent temples in the country perform *anna-daan* every day. They ensure that the food served is hygienic and fortified with nutrition.
- Each state government has Hindu religious institutions and a Charitable Endowment Department responsible for monitoring the functions of temples. In addition, prominent temples such as Venkateshwara Temple<sup>2</sup> and Vaishno Devi<sup>3</sup> have management trusts with a government nominee.
- The minimum and maximum number of devotees served in temples ranges from 200 and 160,000 people. At the Tirupati Temple, the number increased to 200,000 devotees on special occasions.
- The number of dining halls attached to temples ranged from 1 to 5, with a seating capacity varying from 200 to 15,000 occupants.
- The number of cooks and other staff at temples varied from 5 to more than 20. Some temples had a large staff. Large temples like Tirupati and Sabarimala, for example, had more than 500 people in the food charity section, while Dharmasthala and Shirdi Sai Baba Temples had more than 350.
- Food charity is considered a holy act and has rituals associated with it. In all the temples, *prasadam* is first offered to God first and then to devotees. A large number of temples (80%) had the custom of placing flowers and performing *aarti* to the *prasadam* before serving.
- Around 40% of the temples served all three major meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) every day. At the same time, some temples (25%) served lunch and dinner, while the rest served lunch only (35%).
- A rice-based diet was the most commonly cooked food at the temples. The quantity of rice cooked ranged from 50 kg in normal times to 1,000 kg in peak seasons. The quantum of *sambar* cooked varied between 50 L and 500 L across temples, sometimes touching more than 10,000 L in exceptional cases.
- The majority of temples followed a queue system, while few had a token system in place.
- Temple authorities purchased ingredients locally or through tenders, but strict standards were maintained to ensure the quality and safety of food. Training the hygiene

staff to maintain standards and appointing quality control officers in several temples was in practice. To maintain hygiene, several temples used hot water to wash vessels. Similarly, vegetables were washed with chlorine.

- Technology was extensively used. To facilitate faster and hygienic cooking of vast quantities of food, several kitchens had steam boilers and hot insulated vessels (41.1%) and roti-making machines (12.4%). RO plants had been installed in 79% of the temples. Some temples had solar cookers to promote the use of alternative sources of energy and rainwater harvesting installations for effective resource management. Besides ease and convenience, online payments allowed transparency and made accountability easier. Announcements were made to streamline the crowd using sophisticated PA systems. CCTV cameras were in place to address safety and security concerns. Online booking made life easier for devotees.
- Most temples segregated their kitchen waste into wet and dry. Dry waste was handed over to local municipal bodies or sold to *kabadiwalas* (rag pickers) or private agencies. In several temples (35.7%), wet waste was composted and used as manure. In comparison, some temples used their kitchen waste in a biogas plant to generate fuel for the kitchen; others used it to feed cattle at *goshalas*. Cow dung and mule dung (in the case of Vaishno Devi Temple) were used in the biogas plant, while some of the temples disposed of them in rivers as food for fish and forest as manure for trees.
- Funds to organise the *anna-daan* programmes and other activities in most temples came from donations made by donors, with the majority of temples spending as much as Rs. 3.08 crores on *anna-daan*. At the other end of the spectrum, there were temples which spent no more than Rs. 20 lakhs. The donations were deposited in nationalised banks, and the interest earned on them was used to meet the expenditure on organising various services. The donations are exempt from income tax.
- Significant concerns were safety, in view of incidents of food poisoning at some temples, like the Suluvadi incident in North Karnataka and Thekkeda Madan Nada Siva Temple, Vembayam in Kerala. To prevent the recurrence of such mishaps, the endowment department made it mandatory for temples to register under the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA). Also, the project Blissful Hygienic Offering to God (BHOG) or Blissful Offering to God was conceived in 2015 and is now being implemented across the country.

### **Anna-daan in Jainism**

Jainism is one of India's oldest religions. In Jainism, the main goal of human life is to liberate the soul from its *karmic* bondage and cycle of birth and death. The doctrine of *karma*<sup>4</sup> occupies a significant place and is linked with a universal chain of cause and effect. The destruction of *karmas* can be achieved by observing rules of conduct (ethical principles) in the form of five great vows – *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *achourya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (celibacy), and *aparigraha* (non-possession). The concept of **ParasparagrahōJivānām** (*live and let live*) of *ahimsa* and the non-attachment character of the *aparigraha* vow emphasise four kinds of *daan* known as *Chathurvedhadaan*, which include giving food to the hungry, saving the lives of others, distribution of medicine, and spreading knowledge. The chapter draws extensively from the Jain sacred scriptures and existing practices within the *bastis* (Jain place of worship). The sustained practices of *anna-daan* over centuries, are summarised as follows:

- *Daan* is spiritual gifting and defined as the art of giving something to worthy and needy people without expecting anything in return. The survival of the Jain community is dependent upon *daan* because Jain ascetics must obtain all their requisites, including food from laypeople, to keep following the spiritual path.
- There are three kinds of donees: *uttam* (maximal: monks, nuns, saints, etc.), *madhyam* (medial: the laypeople practising vows), and *jaghanya* (minimal: needy persons with good faith without vows).
- Āchārya Samanthabhadra explains seven qualities of donors: do not expect any reward or return for your gifts, give calmly without anger, be happy when giving, give without deceit, and give without the feeling of jealousy, sorrow, or pride.
- The scripture, *Rathnakarandaka Shrāvakāchāra*, indicates the rich should keep aside 10% of their income for *daan*.
- At present, the followers of both *Digambar* and *Shwetambar* sects offer food at the *bhojanalayas* at places of worship in North India. In southern India, *Digambar bhojanalayas* provide free food, which is not the case with *Shwetambar bhojanalayas* which charge a minimum price for food provided by them. This is out of a belief that the concept of *daan* in Jainism is about giving, not receiving. Hence, most Jains do not like to have free food.
- There are more than 50,000 Jain temples in India. Food is served three times a day throughout the year, in some temples twice a day. All *Tirthakshetras* (holy places) provide sumptuous and unlimited servings of various *satvik* food to all irrespective of caste, creed, or religion year round. Many temples are visited by at least 50 devotees per day during the regular season; on special occasions like Mahamasthabhisheka at Shravanabelagola, as many as 5,000–100,000 persons are served per day.
- For food safety and to comply with the Food Safety Standards Act 2006, groceries are purchased at a fixed price only from APMC to ensure quality. Vegetables are sanitised before cooking and cooking is done in sterilised vessels.
- Modern kitchen equipment such as steam boilers for cooking rice and dishwashers are used in several of these Jain temples. These ensure hygiene and make it possible to quickly cook large quantities of food.
- Financing *anna-daan* varies across temples, as it depends on voluntary contributions. However, all temples have a management trust that ensures accountability of funds, making the process of fund collection and its deposit in a bank transparent. It is a well-established practice and works efficiently.
- Annual operations and maintenance cost ranges from Rs. 24 lakhs to Rs. 80 lakhs. Temple trust/board/*mutt* appoints personnel on a regular and temporary basis.
- Dining halls are set up in all these places, and a queue system is followed in serving devotees; in some places, tokens are given to manage the crowds.
- Excess food is collected, segregated, and distributed to the needy people in the vicinity of *bhojanalayas* (dining hall). Sometimes excess food is mixed with cattle fodder and fed to animals in the *mutt*-run *goshalas*. Dry waste is given to the local municipalities.

### **Anna-daan in Buddhism**

The virtue of *daan* (giving) is integral to the Buddhist doctrine of *dhamma*. *Daan* is not just an act of helping the other but a self-reflexive process that helps one overcome greed

and ego. While any desire for accumulation (of worldly things) is seen as a root cause of suffering, *daan sutta* (in elaborating seven treasures, such as faith, virtue, learning, charity, insight, fear, and shame) describes that performing *daan* to attain spiritual wisdom/intuition (*prajñā/paññā*). The chapter draws extensively from the Buddhist doctrines and current practices within the monasteries; in doing so, it aims to foreground the practices around *anna-daan* and highlight the evolving understanding of *anna-daan* in Buddhism, and motivations, beliefs, and the social structures that sustain *anna-daan*.

- *Anna-daan*, as discussed in the chapter, is not just an act of giving but encompasses a range of socio-spiritual dimensions.
- Buddhist monks survive on *anna-daan* performed by the followers, and the followers in return earn various karmic, psycho-social-spiritual merits.
- *Anna-daan* in Buddhism is a mechanism to teach sharing the surplus and overcoming any material attachment. Thus, Buddhist monasteries became an ideal mediator and distributor of surplus as well.
- Giving is a central Buddhist virtue; *anna-daan* helps one perform it.
- The various categories of *anna-daan* can be determined by the dimensions of time, space, and material kinds. These factors make it an ordinary or an extraordinary form of *daan*.
- *Anna-daan* in the modern context has been shaped in the form of various contextual realities. People perform food charity in various contexts, such as a loss of a dear one, natural calamities, and many more.
- Emphasis is on the centrality of *daan*, specifically *anna-daan*, in fundamental Buddhist teachings; the followers are encouraged to perform it to deserve merits and overcome greed for or attachment to materialist happiness.
- Unlike other religions where food is served to devotees who visit the religious places, *anna-daan* happens within the monastery, wherein the monks are taken care of for food and other needs.
- The monks have specific responsibilities and devotedly fulfil the core of Buddhism. People donate to monasteries, and *anna-daan* is one aspect of it. For instance, Namgyal Monastery, Dharmasala, is the centre of Tibetan Buddhism in India. The official monastery of His Holiness Dalai Lama houses more than 200 monks. Gaden Namgyal Lhatse, Tawang, has 65 residential buildings that house more than 300 Buddhist monks. The other famous monastery, Tergar Monastery, Gaya, houses 50 monks. Besides, the Tergar Monastery attracts thousands of monks and devotees every year who are provided *anna-daan*. Dharma Chakra Centre, Rumtek, located in the Himalayan State of Sikkim, is home to approximately 500 Buddhist monks.
- To sum up, the chapter argues that the constructs around *anna-daan* are not based on a single stem and are influenced by doctrines and multiple experiences that are constantly evolving and unfolding.

### **Anna-daan in Sikhism**

Sikhism is one of the world's youngest religions, having been founded by Guru Nanak in the Punjab region of South Asia in the early 16th century. The religion is based on Guru Nanak's teachings and those of his nine successors, enshrined in the holy book



*Guru Granth Sahib*. The *Guru Granth Sahib* envisions a society based on divine freedom, equality of all, mercy, love, and justice without oppression of any kind. Guru Nanak had an interesting perspective on charitable giving and provided the Sikhs with a new ethical framework in which people who are fit to work are required to earn a living through honest means while sharing the fruits of their earnings with sections of society that are needy and vulnerable, even including animals and plants.

The chapter draws expansively from the Sikh scriptures and current practices within the *langars*, thus providing valuable insight into the belief systems and the social structures that have created ideal conditions for *anna-daan* to take deep roots.

- In Sikhism, there is a strong tradition of *daan*. Sikhs believe in three main pillars (a) *naam japo* (recite God's name), (b) *kirat karo* (work honestly), and (c) *vand chhako* (share with others). The third pillar emphasises the spirit of giving and sharing.
- Every Sikh is expected to contribute 10% of his income, called *dasvandh*.<sup>5</sup>
- Sikhism stresses that a Sikh should balance work, worship, and charity.
- The *langar* reflects the aspect of charity in three ways. First, it welcomes the hungry. Second, it functions as a symbol for charity, which has a link to the two words often cited in early Sikh documents: *deg* (large cooking vessel), which signifies sharing and charity, and *teg* (sword) the sword being a symbol of victory over tyranny. Third, before completing their duties, the Sikhs collect the leftover food for distribution among the hungry and the poor.
- Gurdwaras attract visitors in thousands which are attached *langars*.
- At the *langar* vegetarian meals are served to all free of charge, regardless of religion, caste, gender, economic status, or ethnicity and people eat together. The kitchen is maintained and serviced by Sikh volunteers.
- The food served at the gurdwara is imbued with spirituality when eaten with *sangat* (holy congregation) and in *pangat* (row).
- The various *gurus* entrusted the management of the *langar* to a competent and service-minded Sikh who has ensured sustainability over time.
- The gurdwaras provide meals three times a day (in the case study langars). For instance, Golden Temple runs the world's biggest *langar*, feeding around 70,000 people every day.
- Kitchens at the gurdwara have been modernised to meet the continuous demand for food throughout the day every day. Most of the gurdwaras have automatic *roti*-making machines (which reportedly churn out 200,000 *rotis* on regular days and 500,000–800,000 *rotis* on special days), rice boilers, and grinders, among others.
- The number of people served food at the gurdwara increases manyfold from 2,000 on a normal day to 150,000 people per day during special occasions like *gurupurab*, martyr days, and festivals. Even though all gurdwaras have sufficient official staff, the contribution of volunteers who work 24/7 is voluminous. Most of the kitchens run throughout the day and are primarily taken care of by volunteers.
- Organic waste is either sent for composting to nearby farms or taken by farmers to feed the livestock. Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi, has a biogas plant to provide fuel to the kitchen for cooking and washing vessels. Dry waste is handed over to municipal vehicles.

### **Anna-daan in Christianity**

The practice of almsgiving in Christianity that comes close to the Hindu idea of *daan* has a long legacy in Judeo-Christian tradition. Tracing its origin to such a legacy, early Christian thinkers have evolved different theological interpretations to encourage and mandate the affluent members of the Christian community to support the less fortunate ones, including providing food to the poor, a Christian identity since its inception. The Christian mandate to feed the hungry goes back to Jesus himself, who identified himself with the hungry. The case studies on *anna-daan* among the Christians in India included in this volume focus on how the mandate has motivated them to carry forward the ancient practice of charity to this day.

- The Greek word used in the Bible for almsgiving denotes not only material assistance to the poor but more broadly “attitudes or actions of mercy, kindness, or compassion” (Downs 2016, 7) and a desire for justice, whereby an individual who possesses the economic means helps his less fortunate neighbour materially.
- The Christian scripture contains many sayings, parables, and living examples that advocate almsgiving. Scholars note that over 100 divergent passages in the Old and New Testaments (Finn 2006, 178) strongly drive home the idea of almsgiving as a virtuous act.
- While almsgiving came to be a distinctive phenomenon of Christianity and an identity marker for the Christians in the first few centuries of the first millennium in the Roman Empire, sharing their resources with the needy, especially by feeding the poor, was part and parcel of Christian identity since its inception.
- The central religious practice in Christianity is a ritual meal known as Eucharist (also variously known as Mass or Communion Service), which commemorates and enacts the last supper, the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples.
- While this practice is closely related to the significant liturgical event of Christianity, namely, the Eucharist, it grew outside of it over time. In the light of this and other historical developments and practices, there are three types of feeding the hungry (*anna-daan*) in Christianity: *agape* meal, charity meal, and the feeding programmes of Christian organisations.
- This *agape* meal (communal meal) programme is also present in the contemporary world. In some churches in India, either regularly or occasionally, such meals are cooked, served, and shared with all those who come to eat.
- Christianity has different types of theological beliefs and indigenous or local practices associated with the Christian tradition of freely feeding the hungry, *viz.*, the notion that in feeding the hungry one feeds Jesus himself. Feeding the poor helps destroy their sins, it is an effective means of intercession on behalf of the souls of the dead, it allows them to pray for the well-being of their family members, or to fulfil a vow on their behalf.
- The case studies have shown that just like the early Christians, contemporary Christians have continued the ancient tradition of feeding the hungry through various modes and for various reasons. This practice of feeding the hungry takes place both within and outside the places of worship. While devotees and believers are fed

on church premises, others, regardless of their belief system, are fed by Christian organisations outside the sacred sites. All three Christian organisations under study reach the cooked food to the needy and serve them in their respective environments instead of making them come to the church.

- Current *anna-daan* practices among Christians are a daily event with few exceptions.
- Indian Christians have adopted the Indian culinary menu (including *sambar*, drum stick, lettuce, and coriander leaves). They have maintained a balance between vegetarian and non-vegetarian items depending on the beneficiary's need and the availability of resources.
- People involve themselves in *anna-daan* meals both as paid staff and as volunteers. Religious leaders of the past and present played a pivotal role in organising these charities for the destitute.
- As mentioned in the case studies, the primary source of funds for *anna-daan* is donations in cash or in kind such as groceries and vegetables. In some cases, people directly sponsor *anna-daan*, and in other cases, they either sponsor equipment or offer their free services as in Navjeevan Trust.
- Procurement, storage, handling, and safety of food items used in *anna-daan* programmes of the Christian churches, is either through tender or local vendors. Quality control officers are in place to assure food quality. Training programmes are organised for the cooking staff on the importance of personal hygiene and food safety.
- The use of CCTVs for security, online facilities for donations/payments, RO water plants for cooking and drinking, and insulated vessels to serve food was prominent.
- Food was served in dining halls on plates. Queue or the token system was in vogue. Organisations like BREAD and Navjeevan supplied food to the hungry at different places through other organisations.
- Food waste was segregated into wet and dry waste. Organic waste is fed to farm animals and used in a biogas plant.

Some of the issues that need urgent attention are mostly shortage of funds, scarcity of water for drinking and cooking, and managing wastewater generated during cooking.

### **Anna-daan in Islam**

For a religion that arose in the parched and desiccated Arabian Peninsula in the 6th century AD amid rampant penury, building social solidarity must have been the prime urge of the time and society in which it emerged. In this context, Islamic concepts of charity, generosity, compassion, humanity, beneficence, kindness, altruism, justice, and even hospitality should be reviewed and studied. Prophet Muhammad is the founder of Islam, and his sayings and deeds constitute the second most important source of guidance for Muslims. His sayings are called *Hadees*, and his actions, as reported by his numerous companions, are called *sunnah*. Both these sources are replete with exhortations to his followers to feed the hungry. The chapter of *anna-daan* in Islam is drawn from Islamic scriptures defining its aims and objectives of almsgiving and charity, and the philosophy that motivates people to engage in charity and captures the variants of almsgiving and how they were occasioned.

Furthermore, the discussions on charity are contextualised in terms of food in the Quranic text and other media of Islamic guidance such as *Hadees*, *Fiqh* (the interpretation of the ethos and Islamic laws in the light of *Quran* and the *Hadees*), and the way *Sufis*<sup>6</sup> propagated and promoted the idea of feeding the hungry. The second part of the chapter explains how *anna-daan* or food charity came to be practised in Islamic societies and states, its variants, and institutionalised forms as they came to be adopted by the community. *Imarets*,<sup>7</sup> *langars*,<sup>8</sup> and the utilisation of sacrificial meat during *Haj*<sup>9</sup> are some of the practices that were profiled in the chapter.

- Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion. Oneness of God (*touheed*), belief in prophets (*risalat*), and the Day of Judgement (*aakhirat*) are the three fundamentals of Islam.
- The Prophet being the principal architect of this society enunciated a wide range of values and personified them so that his close companions emulated them and became the torchbearers of what the *Quran*<sup>10</sup> laid down and how he (the Prophet) internalised them.
- Charity and justice were the two fundamental cornerstones for bringing about solidarity in a society badly fragmented by the pride of lineage, tribal divisions, competition, and conflicts over scarce resources and command and control of the holy precinct in *Makkah*.<sup>11</sup> These existed even in the time of Prophet Ibrahim<sup>12</sup> (Abraham). While charity was the emotional glue applied to society racked by all kinds of divisions, justice was considered integral to any attempt to bring about social equilibrium in a society fraught with inequalities and protect it by punishing those who are out to disturb it.
- Charity is denoted mainly by the word *khair* or welfare in Arabic. It constitutes a fundamental human value in Islam, and a Muslim should be suffused with it regardless of the context, both in times of war and peace. According to the *Quran*, “Good men” are those who “feed the poor, the orphan, and the captive for the love of God”. (*Quran*, Chapter 76, v. 8). The *Quran* also asserts it and desires this to be active, collective, and universal so that it becomes a cementing factor among people. Charity covered a wide range of human actions.
- Islam enjoins its followers to part with a portion of their earnings and possessions (which in contemporary terms is referred to as income and assets) towards the welfare of the poor, the indigent, the orphans, the wayfarers, and generally those in distress.
- The Urdu term *khairat* (charity in monetary or material form), a derivative of Arabic *khair* (welfare), embraces charity in cash and kind; feeding the hungry; providing rest; food and accommodation to the wayfarers; performing the last rites of the dead; providing succour to uncared for children, the old, and the disabled; rehabilitating the sick, mentally disturbed, or former convicts; and creation of facilities for learning for all and sundry. One comes across the concept of “giving” as a repetitive feature of the guidance by the *Quran*, the principal scripture from which central Islamic tenets, teachings, guidance, and the *shariah*<sup>13</sup> laws are derived.
- Broadly, Islam desires people to engage in charity or welfare totally without any selfish motives. It ought to be for the sake of the pleasure of *Allah*,<sup>14</sup> should have no strings attached, should focus on helping the poor and the needy out of distress, rehabilitate them in the society, and should inflict no harm to the dignity of the recipients. Under no circumstance should the charity be for publicity, propaganda, and showing off.

- An average Muslim individual looks beyond the legalistic structure of *zakat* and undertakes it as a spiritual exercise in rising above material preoccupations. It is construed as a means to replace selfishness with selflessness and a departure from individualism to collectivism. He thinks of it as returning to God a fraction of what he received from Him, thereby accomplishing a pious deed.
- Feeding of the poor, the hungry, the orphans, and the captives is mentioned in the *Quran* seven times. The oft-quoted three pieces of advice from the Prophet were: “*Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and set free the captives*” (*Sahih Muslim*).
- Even hospices of *Sufis* and preachers became centres for feeding the hungry. *Sufis* directed their disciples to render various services at their hospices to distribute all that was received during a day among the poor and the needy; this took the form of either distributing the foodstuffs or serving meals to the indigent.
- Food charity has been organised at *dargahs* ever since its establishment. The importance and need for food charity to feed the poor and needy is the fundamental essence of Islamic tradition. *Sufi* saints termed feeding the poor as an act of piety and earning proximity to God. It should be exercised in the spirit of total selflessness without accepting anything in return.
- Food charity was primarily for philanthropic/spiritual purposes, to feed the needy and fulfil certain vows. Serving food to people is considered equivalent to serving food to *Allah*, and the blessing received for serving food is considered a good charm.
- For instance, the people served ranged from 120 to 1,500 at Athrout, Kashmir. *Ammajan Bawajan Dargah* provides food only during special occasions, for which the estimated number of devotees was 10,000. The capacity of dining halls ranged from a minimum of 300–1,500 persons at a time.
- Funding for *anna-daan* comes from *zakat* and *sadqa*. In *zakat*, it is mandatory for every Muslim to contribute 2.5% of his annual savings to individuals and orphanages, etc., in cash/kind as a donation. *Sadqa* is a voluntary donation.
- Raw materials were procured from the local market and were regularly inspected for quality.
- Hygiene was taken care of by sanitising vegetables, sterilising cooking vessels, organising regular personal hygiene and food safety training for kitchen staff, and employing quality officers.
- In most cases, dry waste is handed over to local government authorities. Wet waste is either composted or is handed over to local government authorities.

### **Anna-daan practices across religions of India: summing up**

In India, offering food to devotees in places of worship is considered a pure and sacred act. The culture of feeding is part of all religions and has philosophical and spiritual backing. Almost every holy place has this practice of feeding its visitors. However, the magnitude and practices across religions vary, but the intent remains the same: to help the needy and donate with a sense of duty, compassion, kindness, and in support of social justice.

### **Magnitude is striking**

The holy places have been practising *anna-daan* for decades. Feeding as many as 1.6 lakh devotees on special occasions and managing such a huge crowd is not a simple task. At

most religious places, devotees are served free meals, while at some places, there is a minimum charge. In most places, food was served twice a day, in others three times a day.

### **Nutrition for nourishment**

The menu served across the holy places included a variety of dishes that were sumptuous, as well as fortified with nutrients. At most religious<sup>15</sup> places, only vegetarian food was served; some served non-vegetarian food also. The menu primarily consisted of local food varieties and these were considered tasty by the devotees. The meals served were wholesome and balanced with carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals and vitamins, etc. As we observed, in the North Indian temples, the food served usually includes *chapatis/rotis* (flatbreads), and a variety of vegetables cooked in ghee, sweets, and fried snacks. In South Indian temples, the menu usually includes rice, *sambar* (lentil stew), vegetable curries, chutney, curd, buttermilk, and sweets. It was also observed that in a few temples of north-east states, nutritious food items such as *mug dal* and green salads are served. Due to the non-availability of data on the exact quantity of raw materials used for the preparation of food and the quantity of food served (which is unlimited in almost all temples), we have not been able to calculate the exact calories obtained from food served. However, based on secondary information available, we have assumed that breakfast provides around 300 calories and lunch around 650–750 calories (see Annex 6).

### **Good governance with institutional arrangements**

The temple trusts are not engaged in profit-making activity since they are repositories of public money to perform religious rituals. However, they are answerable for the deployment of cash donations received from the public (including devotees). There are institutional arrangements across the holy places, with rules and regulations in place, to ensure that the public money is managed efficiently, with transparency and accountability. Professional auditors periodically check the books of accounts. To manage the mammoth task of *anna-daan* efficiently, an adequate amount of personnel were engaged at religious places. They were assisted by volunteers during peak season when the crowd of devotees swelled considerably. The spirit of volunteerism backed by spiritual and philosophical fervour was impressive as hundreds of volunteers worked round the clock with devotion and sincerity.

### **Financing anna-daan**

The main source of funding for the *anna-daan* activities was donations from devotees and other individuals. The donations were of two kinds: cash and kind. The latter is usually in the form of ingredients like vegetables, wheat, rice, jaggery, ghee, etc. Although some religious places faced financial shortages at times, the tradition of *anna-daan* has been kept alive with no interruption at most of these religious places.

### **Maintaining quality standards**

The quality of ingredients was assured by procuring them from local designated shops and vendors selected based on prices quoted by them in a tender. There were personnel and system in place to check and certify the quality of ingredients upon delivery. Materials

failing to meet the quality parameters were summarily rejected, and the contracts of the errant suppliers were suspended or cancelled.

### ***Safety is paramount***

Given the large number of devotees involved in *anna-daan*, food safety was critical. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) initiated a unique project called BHOG at Hindu temples under which all those involved with cooking and distribution of food were encouraged to strictly enforce quality and hygiene standards. In support of BHOG, several temples had installed dishwashers to ensure the cleanliness of utensils, plates, spoons, etc. Vegetables were washed well prior to cooking. In one or two instances of a quality/hygiene breach, governments lost no time putting in place a system to prevent a recurrence.

### ***Tapping technology***

Holy places across religions put to use new technologies to handle more efficiently various functions from monitoring and managing crowds, streamlining donations online, to cooking vast quantities of food in time. Most kitchens have been modernised to cater to a vast number of devotees. For example, steam boilers cook rice in 15 minutes, thereby enabling the servers to serve it hot and fresh. Without having to make the devotees wait in queue unnecessarily. *Roti*-making machines are just as useful and efficient as rice boilers. These and other modern equipment in temple kitchens have made organising *anna-daan* more efficient.

### ***Effective waste management***

Wastes produced at holy places were segregated into dry and wet. The wet waste was used for composting and as feed for birds, fish, and cattle. In some places, it was used in the biogas plants. The dry waste was given away to the municipal bodies.

### ***Socio-emotional understanding***

While the religious narrative behind *anna-daan* is vital and indispensable, the socio-emotional motivations cannot be overlooked. Various factors guided by emotional and social imperatives such as an auspicious occasion or a sad one motivate one to donate to *anna-daan*, thus affirming that multiple processes within the social realm encourage one to participate in and contribute to *anna-daan*.

### ***Key concerns and policy options***

The process of feeding the indigent in *anna-daan*, as we have discussed, no doubt fulfils a basic human need and acts as a safety net. The practice of *anna-daan* has continued this long because people think it is their responsibility to feed the hungry. However, the purpose or the reason for its continuation is to be found more in the socio-cultural and religious milieu. As stated by Nadkarni (2007), “the central idea of religion has been a path to salvation or liberation – a path usually taken in an institutionalised setting, aided

by scriptures”. He also indicates that as all religions agree, such a path cannot be found unless the interested person first takes the path of moral integrity. But the path of morality has no meaning without compassion and social concern for social problems like poverty, hunger, deprivation, thus emphasising the significance of humanism, peace, dignity, and civic sense as a personal responsibility.’

While we have emphasised the institutionalisation of this important tradition, the concerns and further improvement that need to be addressed are as follows:

- Educate people on the spirit behind the tradition of *anna-daan* as described in the scriptures
- Introduce more protein-based diets, along with micronutrients using millets in food preparations
- Financial support to institutions that need help for sustainability
- Support during a pandemic or unprecedented situations
- Educate and make devotees aware of the importance of civic sense and the responsibility of not wasting food
- Promote and maintain a high standard of hygiene behaviour in religious premises through awareness creation
- Maintain the sanctity of the place by talking softly, maintaining decorum in queues, etc.
- Streamline and strengthen waste management by populating the best practices in some religious places
- Bring in more technology innovation to manage the various functions, such as cooking and serving food, and donation collection, more efficiently and economically

## Notes

- 1 It is depicted in *Purans* as the *dhaana-dharma parva*.
- 2 Venkateswara Temple is situated at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India. It is the richest temple in the world in terms of donations received and accrued wealth. The temple is visited by about 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims daily. On special occasions and festivals, like the annual *Brahmotsavam*, the number of pilgrims shoots up to 500,000 per day, making it the most-visited holy place in the world.
- 3 Vaishno Devi, is a Hindu temple, in Katra, Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- 4 *Karma*: Sum of a person’s actions in this and previous existence, viewed as deciding his fate in future existences.
- 5 *Dasvandh* or *Dasaundh*, literally means a “tenth part” and refers to the practice among Sikhs of contributing a tenth of their earnings for charity in the name of the guru.
- 6 Muslim ascetic and mystic.
- 7 Hospice or an inn for pilgrims, travellers, etc.
- 8 Communal meal.
- 9 It is one of the five pillars of Islam which takes place in the last month of Islamic calendar.
- 10 Holy book of Islam.
- 11 A city in Saudi Arabia that was the birthplace of Muhammad and is the holiest city of Islam.
- 12 He is recognised as a prophet and messenger of Allah in Islam.
- 13 Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the *Quran* and the traditions of the Prophet, prescribing both religious and secular duties and sometimes retributive penalties for lawbreaking.



14 God.

15 Our discussions with nutritionists – Ms. Mitra, Faculty in the Nutrition Department at a private college in Bangalore, and Ms. Shailvi, nutritionist from the Akshaya Patra Foundation, a well-known NGO providing free food for the schoolchildren. According to them, the food served at temple seems to be a balanced food from nutritional point of view, as it provides carbohydrate, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fibre. Dairy products, which also play an important role in Indian cuisine, are used in the form of ghee, curds, or buttermilk. The combination of grains, lentils, vegetable curries, ghee, and spices make the food nutritious and balanced, as the grains and lentils are a rich source of protein; rice, chapatis/roties, and sweets are sources of carbohydrates; curd and buttermilk provide fats; and variety of seasonal vegetables are rich in fibres, minerals, and vitamins, making the food a balanced meal. In a few places of worship, like Dargahs, non-vegetarian food items and dry fruits are served, which form a good source of protein.

Part II

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## Case studies

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# Case Studies\*

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## Case study 1 Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy Varla Devasthanam, Srisailam, Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, India

Sukanya Biswabandini\*

### 1.1 Introduction

Located in a picturesque environment of Nallamalai Hills, Srisailam, the abode of *Shiv*<sup>1</sup> and *Shakti*,<sup>2</sup> is on the right side of the river Krishna in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, South India. The presiding deity of this *kshetram*<sup>3</sup> is God Mallikarjuna Swamy who is one of the 12 *vyotirlingas*.<sup>4</sup> Goddess Bhramaramba Devi is one of the 18 *mahashaktis*,<sup>5</sup> and both are believed to be self-manifested.

In traditional Hindu mythology, this holy place is identified as the *kailasa*<sup>6</sup> on Earth. Besides its mythical antiquity, Srisailam also has a historical antiquity. Starting from the Satavahanas,<sup>7</sup> who were the earliest rulers of Andhradesa,<sup>8</sup> the region around Srisailam appears as a prominent religious centre. It continues to be so in the present time as well. The inscriptions at Srisailam date back to the 12th century AD and later time. However, the inscriptions found in various parts of the Deccan and Andhra Pradesh testify to its historical antiquity going as far back as the 1st century AD.

### 1.2 Anna-daan at Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy Varla Devasthanam

*Anna-daan* was started in the year 1980 by religious *swamijis*.<sup>9</sup> The temple believes in *Annam Parabrahma Swaroopam*, which means food is a manifestation of God. *Anna-daan* is provided throughout the year. Initially, it started with 100 pilgrims per day. Now, the temple serves 3,000 to 5,000 pilgrims per day. The peak days are Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays.

#### 1.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna-daan* is deemed to be very auspicious, and it is believed to bring good luck in attaining all spiritual aspirations. Hindus have followed the tradition of providing food

\* These case studies are part of a larger study, titled *Anna-daan, Food Charity in India – Preaching and Practices*, edited by K. V. Raju and S. Manasi, Routledge Publication, New Delhi, 2023.

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to pilgrims since the Vedic period. The essence of *anna-daan* is *Annadata Sukhibhava*, meaning “*whoever gives/shares food, let them be happy*”. This shows the importance of *anna-daan*. People who are aware of *anna-daan* believe that it leaves a positive impact on the society, as everyone, irrespective of whether he is rich or poor, is served food. This not only instills dedication and devotion in the people but also helps develop harmony among them. Receivers of *anna-daan* bless the donors.

### 1.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Since the *anna-daan* is a sacred affair, there are certain rituals performed before preparing the food. Cooks and temple authorities chant the following prayer before the process of cooking starts:

*AnnapoorneSadaPoorne, ShankaraPranavallabhe  
Gyana Vairagya Sidyartham, BhikshaamDehi Cha Parvati  
Mata Cha Parvati Devi, Pita Devo Maheswarah  
Baandava Shiva Bhaktyascha, SvadesoBhuvanatravam*

#### Meaning

*O Annapurna, Who art ever full, the beloved life-force of Lord Shankar (Shive, O’ Parvati – grant me alms that I be firmly established in Knowledge and Renunciation. Mother is Shakti, father is Shiv, and relatives are the devotees of Shiv are in all the three worlds).*<sup>10</sup>

When cooked, the *prasadam* is first served to the deity and then to the devotees. Even though, there is no practice by the temple management to make people aware of the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan*, they probably know the importance of *anna-daan*, having read about it in the Vedic literature which mentions that *food is a manifestation of God (Annam Parabrahma Swarupam)*.

### 1.2.3 Number of devotees served

The temple provides lunch and dinner every day. Around 3,000 people have lunch and 2,000 people are served tiffin at night. Lunch is served from 10 am to 3 pm four times during the normal season. However, during peak season, the number of times the food is served increases to six, covering around 4,000. For dinner, the timings are from 7 pm to 9 pm. During the normal season, food is served twice, and during peak season, it increases to three times, catering to 3,000 people (Table II.1.1).

Table II.1.1 Timing and numbers

	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	10 am to 3 pm	4	6	3,000	4,000
Dinner	7 pm to 9 pm	2	3	2,000	3,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author’s compilation (2021).

There is a total of five dining halls with dining tables, out of which two are regularly used. The dining hall can accommodate 750 people per batch. The batches run alternatively in these two halls. Devotees sit at dining tables where food is served on plantain leaves. The pilgrims are made to follow the queue system. After each batch is through with eating, the halls are cleaned meticulously.

#### 1.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The menu includes plain rice, rice item (such as rice mixed with spices/lentils), *sambar*,<sup>11</sup> *rasam*,<sup>12</sup> vegetable curry, and buttermilk. The total volume of food served per day is given in Table II.1.2.

Table II.1.2 Food items served and their quantities

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	600 kg	800 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	30 kg <i>pulihora</i> <sup>b</sup>	50 kg <i>pulihora</i>
<i>Roti/Chapati</i> <sup>c</sup>	No	No
<i>Dal</i>	100 kg	130 kg
<i>Sambar</i>	250 L	300 L
<i>Payasa</i>	No	No
Vegetable curry	100 kg	150 kg
Buttermilk	150 L	200 L
Sweet	50 kg <i>chakrapongali</i> <sup>d</sup>	75 kg
<i>Rasam</i>	250 L	300 L
Others (Specify) chutney	40 kg	60 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> *Puliyogare*, vegetable *bhaat*, ghee rice, *bisibelebhaat*, *pongali*, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Tamarindrice.

<sup>c</sup> Indian breadmade from wheat flour.

<sup>d</sup> Sweet made from *dal*, sugar and rice.

#### 1.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Lunch takes 9 hours to cook and dinner 3 hours. It takes 30 to 40 minutes to serve the food. After each batch, it takes 10 minutes for the next batch to arrive. The total time taken to clean up the place is around 1 hour and 30 minutes.

#### 1.2.6 Nutrition

Good nutritious food with ample vegetables, lentils, and ghee is served to the devotees at the temple.

#### 1.2.7 Human resources

There are eight to ten senior kitchen managers during the normal season and peak season, respectively. The kitchen staff works for 8 hours on normal days and 10 hours on

special occasions. Every Tuesday is a weekly off for the staff. The superintendent, AEOs, EO (EO), and committee members oversee the quality of raw materials and food served. The details of the staff are given in Table II.1.3.

*Table II.1.3 Human resources involved in *anna-daan**

<i>Human resources</i>	<i>Number</i>
Senior kitchen manager	8
Cooks	5
Cleaners	45
Serving staff	25
Watchmen	2

*Sources:* Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Apart from the regular temple staff mentioned earlier, individuals, especially youth groups and daily donors, participate in *anna-daan* in both the normal season and peak season. However, only Hindu volunteers are allowed to work for *anna-daan* at the temple.

### 1.2.8 Management

The temple has been under the control of the Andhra Pradesh Endowments Department since 1949. Before that, it was under the management of a committee constituted in 1929 by the British government.

At present, the joint commissioner of the Endowments Departments is the EO of the Devasthanam, and he heads the administration. The EOs, the AEOs, the assistant director (gardens), and the editor (printing and publications) of the Devasthanam are unit officers. Under them are various wings with superintendents who are section heads with supporting staff. The commissioner and the EO take all the major decisions.

### 1.2.9 Finances

The temple's annual requirement of funds is Rs. 30 million for *anna-daan*, food materials, and staff salaries. It has a corpus of Rs. 600 million which earns an interest of Rs. 1 million per month. Another major source of funds is the donation made by devotees. Donation to the trust is exempted from income tax under section 80 G.

The temple has an accountant to maintain books of accounts. The committee monitors the finances.

The temple has a kitchen with all the required infrastructure (Table II.1.4).

### 1.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Quality is an essential factor, as several devotees have the food prepared by the temple. The EO is responsible for the selection of suppliers, quality control, and quality inspection. Raw materials are procured in accordance with specifications adapted from the Food Safety Standards Act (FSSA), 2006. The raw materials are sanitised before use. The temple has five fridges for storing food to preserve its freshness. All cooking vessels are sterilised before use. The head cook trains the other kitchen staff in personal hygiene and food safety and monitors the quality of food as well.

Table II.1.4 Kitchen equipment

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Kitchen	1
Steam boilers	10
Huge vessels	10
Plates	100
Glasses	3,000
Bowls	100
RO plants	9
Gas stoves	5
Trolleys	20
Rice chutes	30
<i>Dal/sambar</i> tanks	4
Cutting boards	20
Knives	25
Tables	90
Chairs	2,000
CCTVs	5

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The staff wears caps and gloves during cooking and distribution of food to the devotees.

#### 1.2.11 Technology in the kitchen

The temple authorities use the PA system to instruct people to conduct themselves in an orderly manner. For monitoring and surveillance, CCTVs are installed in the *anna-daan* halls. Hot water is used to wash vessels, and chlorine water is used to wash the vegetables. Hot insulated vessels are used to maintain food quality. Gas and pellets are used as fuel.

#### 1.2.12 Waste management

Ten kilograms of wet waste and 100 kgs of dry waste are produced per day. These are segregated into different coloured bins for easy identification. Wet wastes are used by the temple as organic fertilisers, while the dry waste is transported to the municipal-owned dumping site.

### Website referred

- 1 [www.srisailamonline.com](http://www.srisailamonline.com) accessed on 18 October 2020

### Notes

- 1 One of the most important gods in the Hindu pantheon and, along with *Brahma* and *Vishnu*, is considered a member of the holy trinity (*trimurti*) of Hinduism.
- 2 Hindu goddess of fertility, love, beauty, harmony, marriage, children, and devotion; represents divine strength and power.
- 3 Physical holy location where a temple or a collection of temples, its tank and deities exist.
- 4 A devotional representation of the Hindu god Shiv.



- 5 A form of Goddess Shakti.
- 6 A high peak in Kailash Range, considered as sacred in Hinduism as it is the abode of Lord Shiv.
- 7 An ancient Indian dynasty based in the Deccan region.
- 8 A state of south-central India on the Bay of Bengal.
- 9 Spiritual leader.
- 10 Three worlds are Heaven, Earth, and the Patala (below earth) in Hinduism. It can also be referred as three realms of existence.
- 11 Stew to go with rice.
- 12 Soup made from tamarind and spices.

## Case study 2 Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India

Thrishala Vasudeva\*

### 2.1 Introduction

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla<sup>13</sup> temple, also known as Kanakadurgamma<sup>14</sup> Temple, is situated on the banks of the river Krishna, Indrakeeladri,<sup>15</sup> Vijayawada,<sup>16</sup> Andhra Pradesh.<sup>17</sup> This holy shrine is the second-largest temple in Andhra Pradesh. Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam is built on a hill in the *Dravidian* style of architecture. The temple occupies an important place in the scriptures, as several anecdotes on the power of the goddesses are enacted on or around it, making the region a place of unequalled spiritual significance and attracting pilgrims since time immemorial.

Various auspicious events are held throughout the year in the Kanaka Durgamma Temple, some of which are as follows. The annual Shakambari Devi<sup>18</sup> festival is held at this temple in July. During the three-day annual festival, Goddess Durga is believed to take the form of Mother Shakambari and is adorned with green leaves and vegetables. There is an anecdote associated with this festival. Goddess Shakambari Devi is an incarnation of Goddess Shakti and is worshipped in many parts of India. It is believed that she feeds vegetarian food to those who are hungry. Shakambari Devi is known as the bearer of the greens, as *Shaka* means vegetables and *Ambari* means bearer. Goddess Shakambari is mentioned in the religious scripture *Devi Mahatmya*.<sup>19</sup> The annual festival, attracting more than 150,000 devotees, is celebrated to propitiate the goddess for abundant rains, good harvest, and the plentiful yield of vegetables. Rituals like *Chandi Homam*<sup>20</sup> and *Veda Pathanam* (recitation of Vedas) are observed during the three-day festival.

### 2.2 Anna-daan at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Temple, Vijayawada

The *anna-daan* scheme was launched on 1 January 1990, with a fixed deposit of Rs. 1,500,000. At the beginning of the programme, the temple used to serve free meals to 58 people a day. In those days, there was no hotel in and around the area, and the pilgrims

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who came to visit the temple did not know where to stay. The primary objective to start the *anna-daan* in the temple was to accommodate such pilgrims. At present, according to temple officials, the temple provides free meals to 5,000–7,000 devotees every day under the *Nitya anna-daan* scheme at the hall *Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam*. Currently, more than 75,000 devotees visit the *anna-daan* complex in a year. According to a temple official, the temple spends Rs. 24 per head to provide a free meal comprising *dal*, *curry*, *chutney*, *sambar*, buttermilk, *pulihora*,<sup>21</sup> and rice.

### 2.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

The *anna-daan* is performed for several reasons, one of them being the fulfilment of vows. Others believed that the act brings fortune to the donors who donate money or food, develops harmony among the devotees, and brings blessings from the poor and aged devotees who are fed by the donors. Some others perform *anna-daan* in remembrance of their ancestors. The temple also receives publicity for its various activities (including visits of political leaders to the temple) in local papers, magazines, and announcements.

### 2.2.2 Rituals and prayers

The kitchen staff and other officials daily perform a spiritual *prardhanalu*<sup>22</sup> at 4 am, along with *arathi*<sup>23</sup> by the cooking staff and temple authorities before the meal preparations. Before cooking starts, they also follow certain rituals of placing flowers and performing *arathi*. After the food is cooked, it is first offered to the deity as *prasadam*<sup>24</sup> before sharing it with the devotees. After the *mahapooja*,<sup>25</sup> the *prasadam* is added to the cooked meals, and the mixed meal is served to the devotees. During *anna-daan*, the temple management, through a series of announcements, informs the devotees about this facility and its importance. The pilgrims and the temple staff jointly chant the *anna-daan shloka*<sup>26</sup> (*Aum sree durgayanamaha, jai bhavani annadatha sukhibhava*) in praise of the goddesses and the donor.

### 2.2.3 Number of devotees served

*Anna-daan* is arranged for 5,000 people every day; on Fridays and Sundays, 7,000 pilgrims turn up at the temple to participate in certain occasions and customs.

Table II.2.1 Number of people served food

Meal	Timing	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season/ days	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	10:30 AM to 5 PM	10	14 (Fridays and Sundays)	5,000	7,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

There are two dining halls, each can accommodate 500 pilgrims in a single batch. The hall is equipped with dining tables and chairs. The food is served on either plates or banana leaves.<sup>27</sup> The crowd for the *anna-daan* is managed through queues, along with a token system which uses a thumb biometric system. After every batch of *anna-daan*, the dining tables are cleaned before letting in the next batch of pilgrims.

#### 2.2.4 Quantity of food preparations and items served

Table II.2.2 Total volume of food served per day

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	975 kg	1,100 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	<i>Pulihara</i> 20 kg	30 kg
<i>Dal</i>	150 kg	200 kg
<i>Sambar</i>	750 L	900 L
Vegetable curry	300 kg	400 kg
Buttermilk	500 L	650 L
Curd	220 L	300 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Rice based food items include *Puliyogare*, vegetable rice, ghee rice, and *pongal* to name a few.

There are no food leftovers at the end of the day. Each serving includes 125 grams of plain rice, 20 grams of dal, 58 mL of *sambar*, 60 grams of vegetable curry, and 33 mL of buttermilk.

The accounts of *anna-daan* are collectively managed by the temple trust, EO, and the temple administration. The authorities responsible for the smooth execution of the *anna-daan* are the EO, AEO, superintendent, and clerical staff.

#### 2.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Table II.2.3 Cooking and serving time

Time taken for cooking (in hours)	
Breakfast	No
Lunch	6 hours 30 minutes (10:30 AM to 5 PM)
Dinner	No
Time taken for serving	Half an hour
Serving time per batch	30 minutes
Time taken for cleaning	Less than 10 minutes per batch
Cleaning time	10 minutes
Total time for one batch to complete, including serving, cleaning, arrival, and settling of the batch	30–35 minutes

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 2.2.6 Human resources

Food is served, keeping in mind the quality and nutrition. The temple serves nutritious food with cow ghee throughout the season. The quality of food is managed by the superintendent, EO, AEO, and a senior kitchen manager who works for 12 hours per shift and has a weekly off every Tuesday. The total number of people employed in the kitchen is 45, out of which 4 are cooks, 6 cleaners, and 35 food servers. The dining hall is guarded by a watchman. Activities such as cleaning and cutting vegetables, cleaning the dining hall and utensils, serving devotees, and handling the crowd are farmed out to a contractor. Volunteers and donors who donate money and groceries are allowed to serve the pilgrims.

### 2.2.7 Management

There are 17 board members including a chairman, 2 *anna-daan* members, and 14 regular members. The EO is in charge of *anna-daan* and reports to the board members. Monitoring of *anna-daan* and other temple activities is done by a committee which comprises two board members, two AEOs, two superintendents, one senior assistant, and one junior assistant.

### 2.2.8 Finances

The temple management spends around Rs. 0.5 every year on salaries of employees (including contract employees); Rs. 0.4 million per month goes on procurement of raw materials (vegetables); Rs. 7,000 per month is spent on electricity. Other expenditures include groceries, transportation, fuel pellets, and gas; housekeeping of the dining hall; repairs and maintenance of kitchen equipment; and dining hall premises are given on contract.

The annual audit of accounts is done by a firm of auditors while the state audits the accounts monthly. The finances are also monitored by the external members who are appointed by the committee. The cheque payment is done only after the monthly state audit bills are cleared.

### 2.2.9 Quality of raw material

The quality control process, selection of suppliers, and quality inspection are done by the EO. The temple follows the raw material specifications adapted from the Food Safety Act 2006. Vegetables and other groceries are sanitised before cooking. Hot water is used for washing utensils and chlorine water to wash vegetables. There are two refrigerators. The cooking vessels and other utensils are sterilised before cooking; the staff wears caps and gloves while preparing and serving food. Ladles are involved in serving the food to the pilgrims. Regular personal hygiene and food safety training for kitchen staff is organised by the head cook, who is also responsible for employing quality control officers in the kitchen to monitor the quality of cooked food.

### 2.2.10 Technology adopted in the kitchen

There are two independent kitchens in the temple that function during *anna-daan*. A total number of six steam boilers and nine huge vessels are used in preparing food for the

devotees. Solar cookers and *roti*-making machines are yet to be installed. For serving food, the temple uses 20,000 plates, 5,500 glasses, and 100 big bowls to serve. The temple has insulated vessels, one RO plant, 9 gas stoves, 50 gas cylinders, 12 trolleys, 40 rice chutes, and 17 *sambar* (or *dal*) tanks. The dining hall has 75 tables and 500 chairs, along with 4 CCTV cameras for surveillance. Fossil-free fuel, pellets, and gas are used for cooking the *prasadam*. Announcements are constantly made to guide the visitors during the *anna-daan* and other temple activities. Table II.2.4 mentions the tools and appliances used in the process of *anna-daan*.

Table II.2.4 Cooking equipment

Particulars	Numbers
Construction of kitchen	1 + 1
Steam boilers	6
Huge vessels	9
Plates	20,000 plates, banana leaves
Glasses	5,500
Bowls	100 big bowls
RO plant	1
Gas stoves	9
Gas cylinders	50
Cauldrons	No
Trolleys	12
Rice chutes	40
<i>Dal/sambar</i> tanks	17
Tables	75
Chairs	500
CCTVs (number and cost)	4 cameras

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 2.2.11 Waste management

Wet and dry waste generated per day is around 25 kg and 50 kg per day, respectively. These are collected in coloured buckets and taken in temple trucks for dumping. Wet waste is used in making organic compost.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://kanakadurgamma.org/> accessed on 20 November 2020

### Notes

- 13 The main deity of the temple and a holy shrine known to be Swayambhu: self-manifested image of a deity, which was not made by human hands but instead is naturally arisen or generated by nature.
- 14 Another name for the same deity of the temple.
- 15 Town in Andhra Pradesh, India.
- 16 District in Andhra Pradesh, India.
- 17 State in India.
- 18 Incarnation of Goddess of Shakti (Goddess of power).
- 19 Religious scripture on the Goddess of power.

- 20 In Hinduism, *homa*, also known as *havan*, is a fire ritual performed on special occasions by a priest. *Chandi Homa* is a prominent *homa* performed for success of all undertakings and removal of obstacles in one's life.
- 21 Tangy rice made from tamarind and spices.
- 22 Rituals.
- 23 Divine fire in ritual.
- 24 Literal meaning of *prasadam* is mercy. However, food offered to the deity and later blessed food is distributed to the devotees.
- 25 Main or final ritualistic prayer.
- 26 It is a couplet in Sanskrit verse.
- 27 In India, banana leaves are used as plates for serving food. It is considered auspicious, and easy to dispose. More importantly, it is organic and earth friendly.

### Case study 3 Srikalahastiswara Temple, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh, India

Tharun Paul\*

#### 3.1 Introduction

Srikalahasteeswara temple is in the town of Srikalahasti, Chittoor district in the state of Andhra Pradesh, South India. The temple is located on the bank of the river Swarnamukhi and considered *Dakshina Kailasam*.<sup>28</sup> The inner temple was built in the *Pallava*<sup>29</sup> period in the 5th century and the outer temple was built in the 12th century by the kings from the Chola dynasty.<sup>30</sup> Srikalahasteeswara temple is revered as one of the *Panchabhoota Sthalams*<sup>31</sup> where the presiding deity is worshipped as *Vayu Linga* representing Lord *Shiv*.<sup>32</sup> Srikalahasti is named after three staunch devotees of Lord Shiv – namely, spider (*sri*), the serpent (*kala*), and the elephant (*hasti*). The legend has it that Lord Shiva gave them a boon that their names be merged with the *Vayu Linga* and be called *Srikalahastiswara*.

#### Significance of the temple

One of the most unique features of this temple is that this is the only temple in India which remains open during Solar and Lunar eclipses, as all the other temples are closed. This temple is famous for its *Rahu-Kethu*<sup>33</sup> *pooja*.<sup>34</sup> It is believed that performing this *pooja* will save the people from the astrological effects of *Rahu* and *Ketu*, and will also help devotees with marriage, business, job, financial, or child-related issues. This *pooja* (prayer ritual) is generally performed daily during the *Rahu Kala*<sup>35</sup> time.

#### Special poojas or peak season of the temple

It is widely believed that people who have *Rahu-Kethu Doshas*<sup>36</sup> and *Sarpa Doshas*<sup>37</sup> and perform *Rahu-Kethu Sarpa Dosha Nivarana Pooja*<sup>38</sup> at Srikalahasteeswara will be relieved of all these *doshas*. Based on this belief, thousands of devotees from all over the country and abroad come to this temple to perform this puja and fulfil their vows. The most auspicious time for *Rahu-Kethu Sarpa Dosha Nivarana Pooja* is between 6:30 am and 9:00 pm, and the most auspicious day is Monday. The temple is most crowded during this time. Hence, *anna-daan* is an important ritual to ensure that devotees are served when they come for worship.

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### 3.2 Anna-daan at Srikalahasteeswara Temple, Chittoor

*Anna-daan* was started in the year 1995. It was started by one Thiru T. Shivaji, as there were not many hotels near the temple. The *anna-daan* now is active throughout the year. Initially, it started with 100 pilgrims; today, it feeds 5,000 pilgrims a day. The *anna-daan* is held under the Kalahasti Nithya Annadhana Scheme, which is administered by the Nithya Annadhana Trust.

The main reason to perform *anna-daan* is to attain *trupti*,<sup>39</sup> as there is no gift superior to *anna-daan*. The belief of *anna-daan Sukhibhava*<sup>40</sup> and the fulfillment of vows are the major driving factors behind *anna-daan* in Srikalahasteeswara Temple.

The donors for the *anna-daan* programme are acknowledged and given credit through the *Aradhana magazine* brought out by the Andhra Pradesh Endowments Department.

#### 3.2.1 Rituals and prayers

The Srikalahasteeswara Temple follows a specific set of rituals before cooking and serving the food. Spiritual prayers are offered by the cooks before the preparations for *anna-daan*. After cooking, *prasadam*<sup>41</sup> is first served to the deity and then to the devotees. People chant *Anna-daan Shlokam*<sup>42</sup> before having food.

#### 3.2.2 Number of devotees served

Food is served two times a day: lunch and dinner. The lunch is between 11:30 am and 4 pm and is attended by about 5,000 persons per day during normal days (7,000 persons in the peak season). The dinner is between 7 pm and 9 pm and is served to around 500 devotees per day in normal season (700 during peak season). On average, lunch is served up to 10 batches during normal days; it goes up to 14 batches during the peak season (Table II.3.1).

Table II.3.1 Timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
<b>Lunch</b>	11:30 am to 4 pm	10	14	5,000	7,000
<b>Dinner</b>	7 pm to 9 pm	1	2	500	700

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The Srikalahasteeswara Temple has one dining hall. The hall has a capacity of 8,000 pilgrims at a time. The dining hall is provided with tables, and the food is served on steel plates and in areca bowls. However, on some occasions, banana leaves are also used to serve the food. The dining hall is cleaned after every batch to maintain hygiene. Both the queue system and the token system are followed to serve food. The devotees are given a token at the start, and a queue is formed based on the tokens. This is very effective in controlling the crowd during the *anna-daan*.

### 3.2.3 Quantity of food and items served

The kitchen staff prepares food based on their experience and estimate with regard to the number of devotees who may turn up on a day. This minimises food wastage. The menu for lunch usually consists of rice, *sambar*,<sup>43</sup> *dal*,<sup>44</sup> *rasam*,<sup>45</sup> a vegetable curry, a sweet, and buttermilk. On a normal day, about one quintal of rice is used which increases to 1.5 quintals during the peak days and weekends. About 250 L of *sambar*, 200 L of *rasam*, 50 kg of *dal*, and 100 kg of vegetable curry are prepared on a regular day together with 50 kg of *chakrapongali*<sup>46</sup> (Table II.3.2). There are no food leftovers, as the cooked food continues to be served until it is finished, irrespective of the timings.

Table II.3.2 Quantity of food prepared per day

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	100 kg	150 kg
Dal	50 kg	70 kg
<i>Sambar</i>	250 L	300 L
Vegetable curry	100 kg	150 kg
Buttermilk	150 L	200 L
Sweet	50 kg <i>chakrapongali</i>	75 kg
<i>Rasam</i>	250 L	300 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 3.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The time required for preparing lunch in a day is 4.5 hours. The preparations usually start around 6:30 am each day. Lunch takes 30 min to be served to a batch, and 10 minutes are required to clean the dining hall after each batch. Dinner takes about 2 hours to prepare. The cleaning time is the same.

### 3.2.5 Nutrition

When making the menu, it is ensured that the food served in the temple adheres to the highest nutritional standards. The quality of food and nutrition standards are also evaluated by external agencies like International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and are certified accordingly.

### 3.2.6 Human resources

The total number of people involved in *anna-daan* is 55 (Table II.3.3). The staff works for 8 hours a day during normal days whereas on special occasions it is 10 hours a day. In addition to the regular staff, volunteers are also enlisted during peak seasons to cope with the increased workload. They are involved in managing the crowd, cutting the vegetables, serving, cleaning the dining hall and the utensils, etc.



Table II.3.3 Human resources involved in the *anna-daan*

<i>Temple staff</i>	<i>Number</i>
Senior kitchen manager	5
Quality control manager	3
Cooks	5
Cleaners	20
Servers	20
Watchman	5
<b>Volunteers for specific purpose</b>	
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	45
Cleaning utensils	20
Cleaning dining hall	5
Serving people	20
Managing the crowd	5

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 3.2.7 Management

Temple comes under the administration of the religious and endowment department of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The temple administration board for the Srikalahasteeswara Temple was set up in the year 1995 and has been handling the administration of the temple since then.

### 3.2.8 Finances

The temple spends close to Rs. 20 million per annum on effecting *anna-daan*, including Rs. 5 million toward the salaries of staff involved in the programme. The whole *anna-daan* is funded by the interest from the corpus fund of Rs. 400 million. This fund is also supplemented by donations from local leaders and devotees who are visiting the temple to show their gratitude for the fulfilment of their wishes or have a *darshan*. As the amounts involved are large, the temple has employed chartered accountants to audit the accounts annually, and the accounts are also looked into by the temple administration board from time to time.

### 3.2.9 Investments

Temple authorities have spent around Rs. 2 million on the construction of the kitchen. The number of other facilities in the dining hall and the kitchen is listed in Table II.3.4.

### 3.2.10 Quality of raw materials

The raw materials that are procured for the *anna-daan* are monitored and inspected for quality through careful selection of the suppliers. Care is taken to ensure that all raw materials procured comply with the raw material specifications adapted from the FSSA 2006.

### 3.2.11 Food safety

To ensure food safety, the vegetables are washed in chlorinated water. The vessels used in cooking are also sterilised using hot water before using them for cooking. The kitchen

Table II.3.4 Investments for starting the *anna-daan*

Particulars	Numbers
Construction of kitchen	1 Concrete slab 100 × 150 sq ft area
Steam boilers	5
Huge vessels	150
Hot insulated vessels	30
Glasses	10,000
Bowls	30 big
RO plants	3 (2,000 L capacity each)
Gas stoves	25
Gas cylinders	30
Trolleys	50
Rice chutes	30
<i>Dal/sambar</i> tanks	25
Cutting boards	30
Knives	25
Steel tables	75
Chairs	355
CCTVs	4 cameras

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

staff is trained regularly in personal and food safety hygiene by the head cook to maintain the highest standards. Gloves and caps are used by the staff both while preparing and serving to maintain hygiene standards. The quality of the cooked food is tested by the head cook every day before it is served to the devotees.

### 3.2.12 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The temple makes wide use of technology in the preparation of the food and the administration and maintenance of the entire process of *anna-daan*. PA systems with microphones are used to make announcements and for crowd control during the *anna-daan*. The dining hall is equipped with five CCTV cameras for monitoring and surveillance. The kitchen is equipped with five steam boilers used in the preparation of rice, *dal*, *sambar*, and sweet. These boilers have reduced the amount of time required to prepare food for large crowds. The kitchen is also equipped with RO water purification plants to provide safe drinking water to the devotees. The kitchen makes use of large, insulated vessels to store the cooked food to keep it hot and fresh.

### 3.2.13 Waste management

The waste generated in the temple is segregated at the source using different coloured buckets. Wet waste to the tune of 50 kg is generated every day and is used for composting.

## Website referred

- 1 <https://tms.ap.gov.in/SRIKHT/cnt/about-temple> accessed on 19 October 2020

## Notes

- 28 Southern abode of Lord Shiv.
- 29 The Pallava dynasty existed from 275 CE to 897 CE, ruling a portion of southern India.
- 30 The Chola dynasty was a Tamil thalassocratic empire of southern India, one of the longest-ruling dynasties in the world's history.
- 31 Refers to the five temples, dedicated to Lord Shiva, each representing the five prime elements of nature – land, water, air, sky, fire. 'Pancha' indicates 'Five', 'Bhoota' means 'elements', and 'Sthala' means 'place'.
- 32 Shiva, the most powerful of the Hindu trinity worshipped in his *Linga* form representing the element air.
- 33 *Rahu* and *Ketu* have been considered as *grahas* (planets) in *Vedic* astrology. They have no physical identity but only mathematically calculated sensitive points having immense influence on the natives of Earth.
- 34 It is a worship ritual performed by Hindus to offer devotional homage and prayer to the deities.
- 35 Refers to the inauspicious time on every day, which is not considered favourable to start any new activity.
- 36 *Rahu* and *Ketudosha* are the most famous *Kundali dosha* known in astrology, which is believed to cause wreak havoc in anyone's life.
- 37 *Dosha* happens due to rage and extreme anger by the God of Serpent.
- 38 Worship conducted to get rid of errors, unfavorable and bad conditions in any one's birth chart.
- 39 State of being satisfied.
- 40 Those who are providing me with this food, let them be happy.
- 41 A devotional offering made to god, typically consisting of food that is later shared among devotees.
- 42 A poetic form used in Sanskrit, the classical language of India indicating the importance of the *anna-daan*.
- 43 It is a lentil-based vegetable curry.
- 44 Dal is an Indian dish made from pulses such as chickpeas or lentils.
- 45 A thin, very spicy southern Indian soup served with other dishes, typically as a drink.
- 46 A sweet dish made of milk, rice, jaggery, and dry fruits.

## Case study 4 Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt, Mantralayam, Andhra Pradesh, India

Saumya Thukral\*

### 4.1 Introduction

Sri Raghavendra Swamy Temple is in Mantralayam,<sup>47</sup> which is in the Kurnool district Andhra Pradesh, India. Sri Guru Swamy was a *Madhwa* saint, a follower of Sri Madhwacharya.<sup>48</sup> The lord is credited with several miracles, and he selected this temple area as his *samadhi*.<sup>49</sup> The *guru* propagated the *Madhvaprokta Dvaita*<sup>50</sup> doctrine and took charge of the *mutt*.<sup>51</sup> This place was visited by Raghavendra Swamy, who came to preach at the *mutt*. The *swamy* has become a living tomb in *Mantralaya* and believed that *Manchalamma* ordered *swamy* to stay in the area. Devotees come from far-flung areas to visit the temple.

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## 4.2 Anna-daan at Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt

*Anna-daan* is a tradition of serving food to the pilgrims. Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt at Mantralayam has followed this tradition, as it is an ancestral practice initiated by *muttadhikari* (religious head) of the temple. The *anna-daan* scheme is active throughout the year, serving thousands of devotees.

### 4.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna-daan* is a tradition performed by the Hindus since the *Vedic* period. The devotees believe in *Annadata*<sup>52</sup> *Sukhibhava*,<sup>53</sup> which means blessed are those who give food. It is believed to bring good luck to all those who participate in this auspicious tradition. Devotees participate in this for the attainment of all spiritual aspirations and as a tradition. The devotees believe that performing *anna-daan* will bring good luck and a positive impact on society. *Anna* is served to all irrespective of caste, class, gender, rich, or poor. Donors are blessed for providing succour to people. *Anna-daan* creates harmony among people and instils dedication and devotion.

### 4.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Cooks and temple authorities offer prayer before the preparation of the food begins. They pray and perform *Arti*<sup>54</sup> and place flowers in front of the deity before cooking. After cooking, the *prasadam*<sup>55</sup> is served to God before serving it to the devotees. Cooks are not allowed to eat or sample the food before serving it to the deity. The temple authorities, cooks, workers, and devotees chant the following prayer in praise of *Sri Raghavendraya*

*DoshaasteNaashamaayaantiRaaghvendraprasaadataha*  
*Aum Sri RaagavendraayaNamaha*  
*ItyaShtaaksharamantrataha*  
*JapitaadbhaavitaanityamishtaarthaahasyurnaSamshayaha*

Which translates into:

Salutations to the great *Guru Sri Raghavendra*  
 Who rules the hearts and minds of devotees,  
 Who destroys all sins and fulfils all wishes

Announcements regarding the significance and spirit behind the tradition of *anna-daan* are made through the temple's PA system. The *Vedic* literature stated that those who donate and receive food will be blessed by the Gods. "*Annam*<sup>56</sup> *Parabrahma*<sup>57</sup> *Swarupam*" is believed to have been followed and performed since the *Vedic* period. Offering food to the devotees is an auspicious tradition and charity. Therefore, the devotees are requested by the temple authorities not to leave food. At this temple, the authorities prepare and provide *Free Teertha*<sup>58</sup> *Prasada*<sup>59</sup> for over 5,000 devotees irrespective of their caste, creed, or gender. *Mantralaya Vahini*<sup>60</sup> describes the process of *anna-daan* through visuals and audio clippings.

### 4.2.3 Number of devotees served

There are 4 dining halls which can accommodate 2,000 devotees at a time. There are arrangements for devotees to squat on the ground, as well as at the dining tables. Food is served on steel plates and plantain leaves. Temple volunteers manage the crowd visiting the premises. The dining halls are cleaned after every batch.

The temple serves lunch and dinner to around 15,000 devotees every day during the normal season, details of which are presented in Tables II.4.1 and II.4.2.

Table II.4.1 People, frequency, and volume of food served per day

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	11 am to 2 pm	5	8	9,000	15,000
Dinner	7 pm to 9 pm	4	6	6,000	12,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.4.2 Food items served and their quantities

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	1,875 kg	3,375 kg
Rice item	200 kg <i>Puliyogare</i> <sup>a</sup>	350 kg <i>Puliyogare</i>
<i>Dal</i>	800 kg	1,100 kg
<i>Sambar</i> <sup>b</sup>	1,000 L	1,200 L
Vegetable curry	700 kg	1,000 kg
Buttermilk <sup>c</sup>	700 L	1,000 L
Sweet	200 kg <i>Chakrapongali</i> <sup>d</sup>	350 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Tamarindrice.

<sup>b</sup> Vegetable curry with lentils, pigeon pea, and tamarind.

<sup>c</sup> Fermented drink made from butter and cream.

<sup>d</sup> A sweet dish made with lentil, rice, sugar, ghee, and nuts.

### 4.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Huge quantities of food are prepared to cater to a large number of devotees. For instance, on average, during normal days, around 1,875 kg of rice is cooked, which increases to 3,375 kg during the peak season. Table II.4.2 gives the details of quantities of food prepared both in normal and peak seasons.

Considering *Annam Parabrahma Swarupam*, the devotees are advised through regular announcements not to waste food. Sometimes, regular food timings are extended to serve the surplus food. The *muthadhipathi*,<sup>61</sup> managers, and clerks monitor the distribution of *prasadam*.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Lunch takes 3 hours to prepare while dinner takes 2 hours. Forty minutes are required to serve food to each batch. Cleaning of the dining hall after each batch takes about 10 minutes. The total time taken for serving, cleaning, and letting the next batch in is about an hour.

#### 4.2.6 Nutrition

The nutrition and quality of the *prasadam* are assured by the temple authorities. Since the *prasadam* is blessed by God, the temple takes utmost care in preparing nutritious food using good quality ingredients. People found the food served to them to be good and tasty.

#### 4.2.7 Human resources

The temple has a total staff of 73. For *anna-daan* during regular seasons, 10 senior kitchen managers work from 5 am to 10 am. In addition, there are 10 cooks, 45 cleaners, and 15 servers. Three security guards are employed for monitoring and managing the crowd. During peak seasons, there are 15 senior kitchen managers (working for 5 hours), 15 cooks, 55 cleaners, and 15 servers.

Table II.4.3 Human resources involved at Mantralayam Temple

Human resources	Number
Senior kitchen managers	10
Cooks	10
Servers	15
Cleaners	45
Watchmen	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

*Yuvasevakulu*<sup>63</sup> contributes by volunteering in this tradition. For cleaning and cutting vegetables, 25 cooking assistants are hired during regular seasons. During the peak season, workers are employed on a contract basis. Besides, the temple hires 45 workers for cleaning utensils, 5 for cleaning dining halls, 15 for serving people, and volunteers for managing the crowd. The quality is looked after by the *Muttadhipathi* (religious head) and managers.

During the normal as well as peak season, along with the devotees, individuals who wish to donate and volunteer to work for *anna-daan* are encouraged.

#### 4.2.8 Management

The temple administration board is divided into 11 functions – namely, Accounts, Accommodation, Temple, *anna-daan*, Engineering, Revenue, Stationery, Printing and Publication, *Dharma*<sup>64</sup> *Pracharam*, Audit, and Computer.

The decisions of the temple administration are made by the *Muttadhipathi*, which are then passed to the managers, senior and junior assistants for implementation.

#### 4.2.9 Finances

The total fund required per year for *anna-daan* comes from interest earned on bank deposits. With the income thus earned (estimated to be about Rs. 6 million per month), the temple has made huge investments in cooking and serving equipment (Table II.4.4). The temple has two kitchens.

Table II.4.4 Equipment in the kitchen

Equipment	Number
Steam boilers	10
Huge vessels	45
Hot insulated vessels	65
Big bowls	300
RO plants	3
Gas stoves	70
Trolleys	20
Rice chutes	50
Sambar tanks	15
Vegetable chopping boards	50
Knives	75
Plates	10,000
Glasses	12,000
Tables	200
Chairs	5,000
CCTV cameras	50

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The salary of temple employees, both regular and contractual, is around Rs. 7.5 million a year. Money required for the procurement of vegetables and groceries comes from the corpus interest. In addition, the cost of transportation, fuel, power, housekeeping, repairs, and maintenance of the kitchen and dining hall is met from the same income. Financial activities are looked into by the temple's chartered accountant. He takes care of the annual audit of accounts, including the internal and external audits.

#### 4.2.10 Quality of raw materials

The temple food quality is monitored by the vigilance officer. Raw materials are procured from suppliers selected by the manager, thus following the quality control process. *Muttadhipathi* carries out the quality inspection regularly and ensures that it meets the requirements of the raw material specifications adapted from the FSSA 2006.

The vegetables are sanitised before cutting and cooking. Cooking vessels are sterilised before use. The temple has five fridges for perishables. The head cook monitors the

personal hygiene of the kitchen staff and undergoes Food Safety training to constantly update him on the latest hygiene practises. The head cook employs quality officers in the kitchen to monitor the quality of the cooked food before serving it to the devotees. Servers and kitchen workers wear caps and gloves during the preparation and serving of the food.

#### 4.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Monitoring and surveillance are done using CCTVs installed in the *anna-daan* halls. Volunteers are also employed for monitoring purposes. Announcements are made to inform devotees about the gravity and tradition of *anna-daan* and to request that they do not waste food.

In the kitchen, steam boilers are used. RO plants are also available. For washing the vessels, hot water is used, while chlorine water is used for cleaning the vegetables. This is to maintain the hygiene of food and ingredients. The quality of the food is maintained in hot insulated vessels. The kitchen makes use of fossil-free gas fuel and pellets for cooking food.

#### 4.2.12 Waste management

Around 500 kg of wet waste is generated per day and is disposed of in pits for composting. In addition, 500 kg of dry waste is generated per day, and these are treated to become fertiliser. Different coloured storage bins are used for storing wet and dry waste.

### Website referred

- 1 [srsmutt.org](http://srsmutt.org) accessed on 15 October 2020

### Notes

- 47 Pilgrim village in Andhra Pradesh.
- 48 An India philosopher.
- 49 State of highest mental concentration while bound to the body.
- 50 Where two principles exist together and independently on any premise.
- 51 A *mutt* is a term used for a Hindu monastic and/or religious establishment with a lineage, which has rules and is hierarchical.
- 52 One who provides food.
- 53 Blessing.
- 54 *Arathi* is a ritual of worship in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to the deity.
- 55 Food blessed by the Gods.
- 56 Blessing.
- 57 Hindu God, the Supreme Brahman.
- 58 Holy.
- 59 Food and water given to a deity during prayers.
- 60 Respectful person.
- 61 Spiritual head.
- 62 Holy food blessed by Gods.
- 63 Andhra Pradesh service management.
- 64 Truth and reality.



## Case study 5 Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Temple, Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India

Anagha Sastry\*

### 5.1 Introduction

Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha temple is situated on the Simhachalam Hill Range, which is 300 m above sea level at Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, South India. It is dedicated to Vishnu,<sup>65</sup> who is worshipped as *Varaha Narasimha*.<sup>66</sup> According to the temple's legend, Vishnu manifested in this form (lion's head with a human body) after saving his devotee *Prahlad*<sup>67</sup> from slaying by the latter's father *Hiranyakashipu*.<sup>68</sup> Except on *Akshaya-Trutiya*,<sup>69</sup> the idol of *Varaha Narasimha* is covered with sandalwood paste throughout the year, which makes it resemble a *linga*.<sup>70</sup>

*Simhachalam* is one of the 32 *Narasimha* temples in Andhra Pradesh which are important pilgrimage centres. It was regarded as an important centre of *Vaishnavism*<sup>71</sup> in the medieval period along with *Srikurman*<sup>72</sup> and others. The earliest inscription at the temple belongs to the 11th century CE recording of a gift by a private individual in the era of *Chalukya*<sup>73</sup> *Chola*<sup>74</sup> king KulottungaI. In the latter half of the 13th century, the temple complex underwent radical physical changes during the reign of the Eastern Ganga king Narasimhadeva I. Narahari Tirtha,<sup>75</sup> a *Dvaita*<sup>76</sup> philosopher and an Eastern Ganga minister converted the *Simhachalam* temple into an educational establishment of renown and a religious centre for *Vaishnavism*.<sup>77</sup> It later received patronage from many royal families, of which *Tuluva*<sup>78</sup> dynasty of the *Vijayanagara* Empire is a notable one. References to the temple are found in many literary and lyrical works (dedicated by anonymous writers), which are preserved in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai, India. In 1949, the temple came under the purview of the state government and is currently administered by the Simhachalam Devasthanam Board.

In terms of income earned, Simhachalam is the second-largest temple, after Tirumala in Andhra Pradesh. Devotees believe that the deity can bless progeny to women and fulfil the wishes of devotees. *Kalyanotsava*<sup>79</sup> and *Chandanotsava*<sup>80</sup> are the two major festivals celebrated at the temple, followed by other important festivals such as *Narasimha-Jayanti*,<sup>81</sup> *Navaratrotsava*,<sup>82</sup> and *Kamadahana*,<sup>83</sup> which attract devotees in large numbers.

### 5.2 Anna-daan at Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Temple, Vishakhapatnam

*Anna-daan* was started in the year 1989 under the leadership of Dr. P.V.G. Raju Garu. Although the reason for starting *anna-daan* was the lack of sufficient board and lodging facilities, the *anna-daan* programme is an auspicious feat that was started with the sole intention of impacting society positively and is a way of vowing to fulfil certain promises, besides keeping the tradition alive. The programme continues throughout the year with a reach of over 5,000 pilgrims per day versus 1,500 at the time of its initiation.

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People often perceive this act as a way of inviting good luck, blessings, and positive feelings into their lives by providing meals to people regardless of their socio-economic status. It is also looked upon as an opportunity to develop a harmonious relationship with each other and instil a feeling of devotion and dedication among people.

The *anna-daan* programme in the Simhachalam Temple has gained sizeable media coverage and public fame through local newspapers, magazines, announcements, well-known leaders' visit and their participation in important events, etc.

### 5.2.1 Rituals and prayers

Since *anna-daan* is a sacred affair, spiritual *prardhanalu*<sup>84</sup> are practised by the cooks and the temple authorities before preparing the food. The process of placing flowers and *arti*<sup>85</sup> is carried out before cooking and after the food is prepared. The very first serving is offered to the deity as *prasadam*<sup>86</sup> before being served to anyone else. As a norm, cooks do not eat food in the process of preparing it.

Before eating, the following *sloka*<sup>87</sup> is chanted:

*SundarayasubhangayamangalayamahojasesimbhachalanivasayaSrinrusimbhaya  
Mangala*

This practice of chanting the *sloka* is carried out at the very first *anna-daan* of the day. The temple management aims to spread the significance and spirit behind carrying out the act of *anna-daan* to the devotees and people who visit the temple. The pilgrims are made aware of the fact that *anna-daan* is the most powerful of the *daans*. Unlike some temples, there is no meditation before the food distribution begins.

### 5.2.2 Number of devotees served

The temple has 2 big dining halls that can accommodate up to 5,000 pilgrims at a time. Food is served on the dining table either on plates or plantain leaves, which are thoroughly cleaned. The queue system and the token system help the temple authorities manage the crowd.

*Anna-daan* is conducted every day at the temple. As per the data collected, on average, around 3,000 pilgrims are served, and on Saturdays and Sundays, the number goes up to 5,000. To further break it down, during the normal season, the temple sees an average of around 3,000 pilgrims a day and around 3,500 pilgrims during the peak season. The *prasadam* is prepared keeping in mind the nutritional requirement. The food served is healthy and nutritional.

Table II.5.1 Number of times and people served per day

Meal	Time	Number of times	Peak season/ days	Number of people served	
				Normal season	Peak season
<b>Lunch</b>	11 am to 2 pm	6	10 (Saturday, Sunday)	3,000	3,500

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The temple serves lunch to the devotees daily. In the peak season, the number of times the food is served reaches ten.

*Table II.5.2* Total volume of food served per day

<i>Food items</i>	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
Plain rice	375 kg	600 kg
<i>Dal</i>	180 kg	330 kg
<i>Sambar</i>	175 L	210 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The total volume of ingredients used per day on a normal day is around 570 kg, which increases to 810 kg on peak days.

*Table II.5.3* Food served in grams (approx.)

<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
Plain rice	125 g	125 g
<i>Dal</i>	20 g	20 g
<i>Sambar</i>	58 mL	58 mL
<i>Rasam</i>	33 mL	33 mL
Vegetable curry	60 g	60 g
Buttermilk	33 mL	33 mL

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 5.2.3 Time taken for preparing food

Food preparation usually takes 3 hours. Each serving time per batch averages 30 minutes, and winding up takes up to one hour. However, clean-up of the place before every new batch takes roughly 10 minutes. In total, the time taken to serve one batch, clean up the place, let in the pilgrims, and settle down to eat their meal is about 30 minutes.

### 5.2.4 Human resources

The kitchen has 60 paid staff consisting of a senior kitchen manager, a quality control manager, a superintendent, an AEO, an EO, 6 cooks, 30 cleaners, 18 servers, and 4 security guards.

On a normal day, there are regular staff working under the senior kitchen manager. In the peak season, more hands are hired. The number of hours clocked by each person is 8 hours on normal days and 10 hours in the peak season. Weekly offs are adjusted internally according to the schedule and occasions in both seasons.

During the peak season, the temple hires the services of as many as 50 cooking assistants for cleaning and cutting vegetables. Similarly, for cleaning the utensils and the dining hall and serving people, a total of 75 people are recruited – 30 for utensils, 20 for the dining hall, and 25 for serving. For crowd management, security guards work in

Table II.5.4 Human resources

Details	Numbers
Superintendent	1
Assistant Executive Officer	1
Executive Officer	1
Senior Kitchen Manager	1
Quality Control Manager	1
Cooks	6
Serving Staff	18
Cleaning/Helper	30
Watchmen	4
Total	60

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

coordination with the volunteers. Other people involved in *anna-daan* are individuals who donate either in the normal season or peak season. There are daily donors also.

### 5.2.5 Management

The management team consists of 14 persons with an EO at the top. The team plays a major role in the day-to-day operation of the temple, including the *anna-daan* programme. All the board members report to the EO, who presides over AEO, who in turn presides over the superintendent.

### 5.2.6 Finances

The total fund required per year to organise lunch for the devotees is Rs. 17.5 million and Rs. 13 million in the peak season and the normal season, respectively. The management has a corpus of Rs. 270 million and interest earned on it (Rs. 0.8 million per month) is a major source of income.

According to Table II.5.5, Rs. 1.8 million has been invested in kitchen construction, hot insulated vessels, steam boilers, and other necessities like dining tables, chairs, CCTVs, etc.

The cost allotted for the operations and maintenance (O&M) is Rs. 4.5 million. This includes the salary of employees, cost of raw materials, transportation, housekeeping, and maintenance of the kitchen. The use of funds allocated to both investments and operations is closely monitored by external board members.

### 5.2.7 Food safety

This process is handled by the EO who is in charge of selecting the suppliers, quality control, and inspection and makes sure that the raw materials meet the specifications laid down in the Food Safety Standard Act of 2006. Vegetables are stored in cold storage, which consists of 4 big fridges and the vegetables are sanitised before cutting as are the vessels. The personal hygiene of the cooks is monitored by the head cook, who is also solely responsible for monitoring the quality of the cooked food. The cooks and the serving staff are required to wear gloves and caps during cooking and serving.

Table II.5.5 Investments

Particulars	Numbers	Cost
Construction of kitchen	1	1.8 million
Steam boilers	6	
Huge vessels	20	
Hot insulated vessels	35	
Plates	Banana leaves 350 per day	
Glasses	2,000	
Bowls	300 big	
RO plants	2 (each of 2,000 L capacity)	
Gas stoves	25	
Gas cylinders	40	
Trolleys	10	
Rice chutes	25	
Dal/sambar tanks	20	
Cutting boards	40	
Knives	45	
Construction of dining hall	Concrete slab 120 × 160 sq ft area	
Tables	100	
Chairs	500	
CCTVs	5 cameras	

### 5.2.8 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Pilgrims are made aware of necessary information through announcements on the PA system. The *anna-daan* halls are under surveillance with CCTVs and volunteers stationed at strategic places.

The kitchen has acquired Reverse Osmosis (RO) water treatment plants and steam boilers. The vessels are thoroughly washed with hot water while the vegetables are washed in chlorine water. To ensure the quality of food, hot insulated vessels are used. The food is cooked on gas, and no water is reused in the preparation process.

### 5.2.9 Waste management

On average, some 40 kg of wet waste and 45 kg of dry waste are generated daily. The wastes are segregated in coloured buckets which are stored in separate storage tanks before transporting them to a site for composting.

## References

- 1 Books: Kshetramahatyam (Telugu), Kshetramahatyam (English), Kshetramahatyam (Oriya), Bhagavannama Satakam, Sri Lakshmi Nrusimha Sthotra Ratnavali, Sri Lakshmi Nrusimha Sahasranama Sthotram, Sri Chandanam, Simhadri Narasimha Satakamulu, Suprabhaatam, Simhagiri Vachanamulu, Om Namoh Narasimhaya 1st and 2nd part, Devalaya Charitra, Simhachalam Temple
- 2 CD: Simhachalam, Simhagiri Narahari Vachanamulu, Sri Varaha Lakshmi Nrusimha Swamy Vari Suprabhatam

## Notes

- 65 *Vishnu* is the Hindu Deity considered to be the preserver and protector of the universe.
- 66 Incarnation of *Vishnu* known as *Narsimha* (man-lion).
- 67 A saint known for his piety and bhakti to Lord *Narsimha*.
- 68 Father of *Prahalad*, a demon king in mythology anecdote.
- 69 Annual springtime festival of Hindus and Jain.
- 70 Abstract or aniconic representation of Hindu deity Shiva.
- 71 *Vaishnavism* is centered on the devotion of Lord *Vishnu* and his avatars.
- 72 A village in Andhra Pradesh.
- 73 It was a Classical Indian royal dynasty that ruled large parts of southern and central India between the 6th and the 12th centuries.
- 74 Tamil thalassocrat empire of southern India, one of the longest-ruling dynasties in the world's history.
- 75 A philosopher, scholar considered to be the progenitor of the Haridasa movement.
- 76 Sanskrit word that means “duality, dualism”. The term refers to any premise, particularly in theology on the material and the divine, where two principles (truths) or realities are posited to exist simultaneously and independently.
- 77 One of the major forms of modern Hinduism, characterised by devotion to the god Vishnu and his incarnations.
- 78 The third ruling dynasty of the *Vijayanagara* Empire.
- 79 Sanskrit for celebration of union.
- 80 A ritual performed.
- 81 The 14th day in the Hindu month of the waxing phase of the moon as *Narsimha Jayanti*, the fourth incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*.
- 82 Auspicious day.
- 83 A particular festival on the day of a full moon in the month.
- 84 Prayer.
- 85 Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of puja, in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to one or more deities.
- 86 Sacred food.
- 87 Poetic form used in Sanskrit, the classical language of India.

## Case study 6 Lord Venkateshwara Temple, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India

Saumya Thukral\*

### 6.1 Introduction

Lord Venkateswara Temple is situated in the hill town of Tirumala at Tirupati in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, South India. The Venkateswara Swamy Temple is built on Seshachalam hills at Tirumala, which is 22 km from Tirupati. Tirupati is one of the most important, busiest, richest Hindu pilgrimage centres in the world. It is the second-richest temple, with massive stocks of golden ornaments for decorating the deity. It is one of the most visited religious centres globally. Tirupati Temple is dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, a form of Vishnu,<sup>88</sup> who is believed to have manifested himself in this temple during this *Kali* age<sup>89</sup> to guide and to direct his devotees towards salvation. This holy place is also known by other names including Tirumala Temple, Tirupati Temple, and

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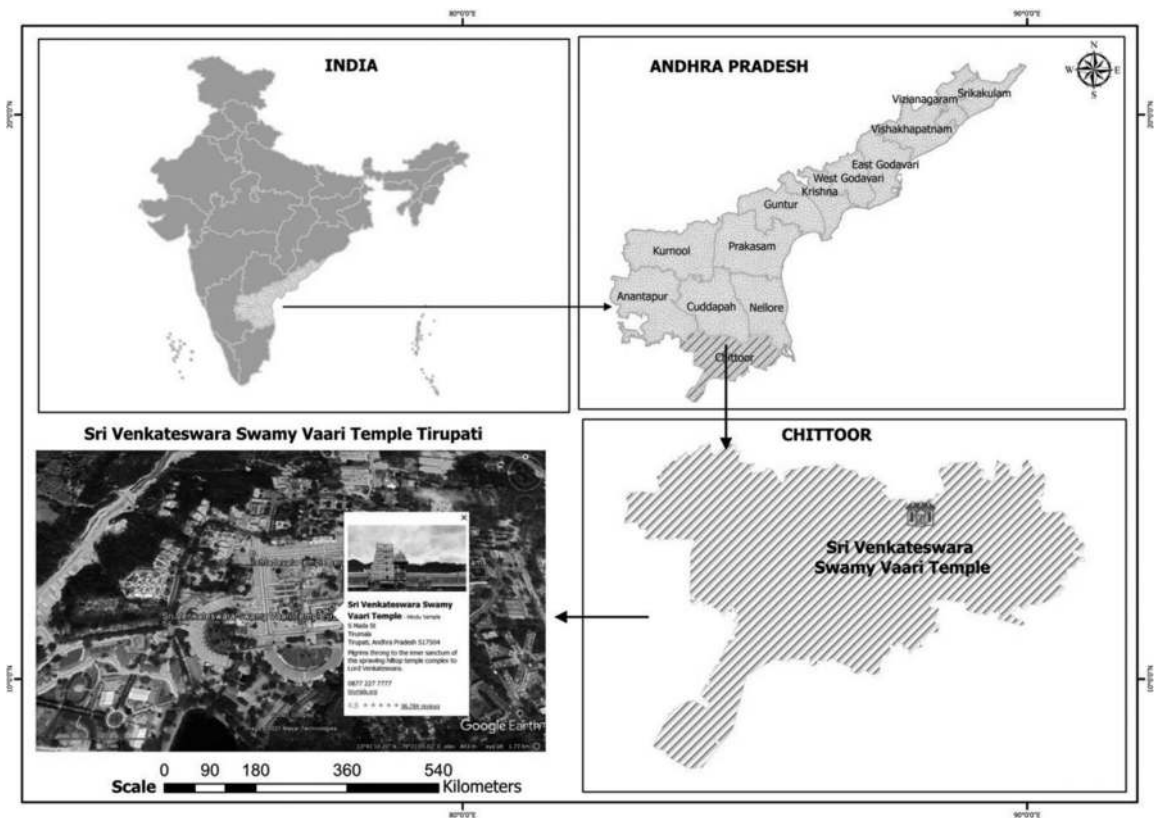
Tirupati Balaji. The Tirupati Balaji Temple is also called the *BhulokaVaikuntam* – the abode of Vishnu on Earth.

The construction of the Tirupati Balaji Temple began in 300 AD with contributions from emperors and kings. During the middle of the 18th century, the Maratha General Raghaji Bhonsal conceptualised a permanent body to administer the temple, which led to the birth of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). The temple falls under the jurisdiction of TTD, which is a conglomeration of temples, brought together under the First Schedule 2 of Act 30 of 1987. The administration takes care of 12 temples, as well as their sub-shrines, and employs about 14,000 people.

It primarily manages the administration of the Lord Venkateswara Temple and many other temples in Tirupati and around the world. The other temples run by the TTD administration are Sri Prasanna Venkateshwara Swamy Temple,<sup>90</sup> Appalayagunta, Sri Kalyana Venkateswara Swamy Temple,<sup>91</sup> Srinivasa Mangapuram, Sri Govindarajaswamy Temple,<sup>92</sup> Tirupati, Sri Kodandaramaswamy Temple,<sup>93</sup> Tirupati, Sri Kapileswaraswamy Temple,<sup>94</sup> Tirupati, and Sri Kodandaramaswamy Temple,<sup>95</sup> and Vontimitta.

6.2.1 Significance of the temple

The Lord Venkateshwara is also called Temple of Seven Hills. Venkateshwara is also known as Srinivasa, Govinda, and Balaji. As per the Vaikhanasa traditions, the deity is worshipped six times<sup>96</sup> a day. It is the world’s richest temple, as the amount of donations it receives from the pilgrims is as much as Rs. 22.5 million in a day. The devotees offer donations in cash, jewellery, gold, silver, and property deeds. The temple is known for its



Map II.6.1 Location of Sri Venkateshwara temple, Tirupati, AP.

age-old practice of donating devotees' hair at the temple. Over a ton of hair is collected daily, and the temple sells it to international buyers a few times a year through public auction. The sale of hair adds more than Rs. 6 million to the treasury of the temple. The *prasad* offered here is a registered Geographical Indicator (GI) to ensure accountability during the preparation and distribution of these sweets. Around 50,000 to 10,000 devotees visit the temple daily, and during festivals or special days, the number of devotees increases to 500,000.

Some of the special occasions celebrated by the temple include *Rathasapthami*,<sup>97</sup> *VaikuntaEkadasi*,<sup>98</sup> *Garuda Seva*,<sup>99</sup> and *Brahmotsavam*. *Brahmotsavam* is an annual festival celebrated for nine days in the month of September. These occasions attract tourists and devotees from all over the country.

## 6.2 Anna-daan

*Anna-daan* was started in 1985 by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Shri Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao Garu.<sup>100</sup> TTD started the practice of distributing food, as they believed in *Annam Parabrahma Swaroopam*, which means that food is equivalent to God, and believed that those who participate in *anna-daan* will be blessed. This tradition is active throughout the year. *Venkateswara Nithya Annadaanam* Endowment Scheme was started on 6 April 1985, by TTD, to serve free food to the pilgrims at Tirumala.



Figure II.6.1 Tirumala Temple.

Sources: Author's compilation.



Figure II.6.2 Devotees at one of the TTD Anna Prasadam canteen.

Sources: Author's compilation.



This scheme was transformed into an independent trust named *Sri Venkateshwara Nithya Anna-daan* Trust established on 1 April 1994. The EO of TTD became the trust chairman. On 1 April 2014, the name of the trust was changed to *Sri Venkateshwara Anna Prasadam* Trust. The *anna-daan* scheme was covered by media and has become famous through plenty of digital books, audio, video, virtual, physical, direct, and indirect means of publicity around the world. TTD also runs the SVBC channel, which is available in multiple languages for people around the globe to watch.

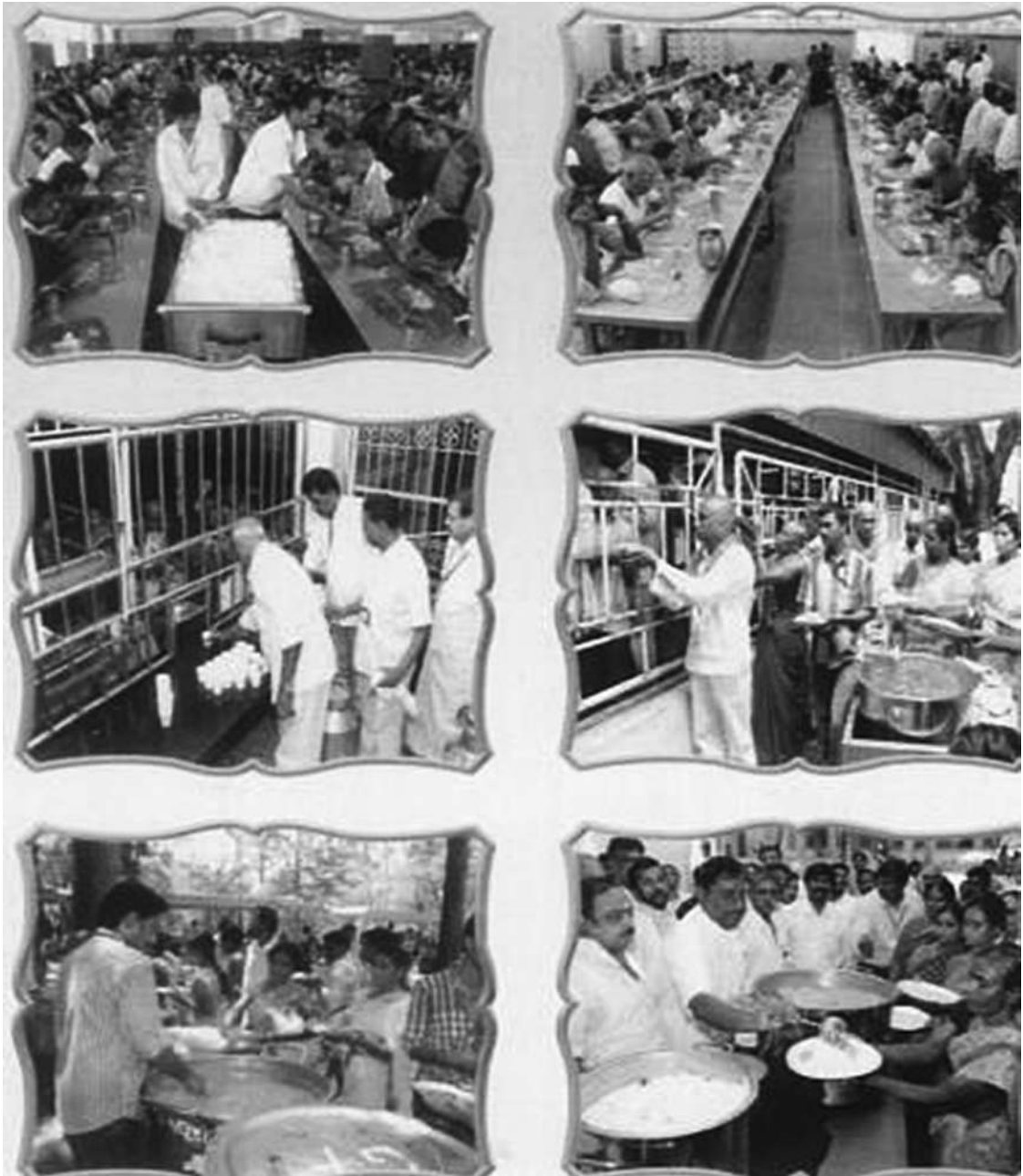


Figure 11.6.3 TTD Authorities, donors, and servers providing *anna* to the devotees at various canteens.

Sources: Author's compilation.

### 6.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

*Anna-daan* was initiated by TTD to fulfil the age-old tradition. TTD *Annadaanam* Trust has philanthropical activities such as donating to a worthy cause or volunteering. The temple authorities and many devotees believe that participating in the auspicious *anna-daan* will bring good luck. They perform this tradition upon fulfilment of vows and for spiritual reasons. This tradition has been followed by the Hindus since the *Vedic* time, under the principle of *Annadata Sukhibhava*.<sup>101</sup>

TTD makes sure that all devotees receive food, irrespective of caste, creed, or gender. The daily donors of the temples are blessed for serving food to thousands of devotees. This develops a feeling of harmony and instils devotion and dedication among the people.

### 6.2.2 Rituals and prayers

The cooks and temple authorities perform a spiritual *prardhana*,<sup>102</sup> a ritual of placing flowers and performing *arti*<sup>103</sup> for the deity before the cooking starts. When the food is cooked, *prasadam*<sup>104</sup> is served to God before distributing it among the devotees. All devotees, cooks, cleaners, workers, and temples authorities chant the following prayer:

Govinda Govinda  
 Govinda Govinda  
 Sri Srinivasa Govinda  
 Sri Venkatesa Govinda  
 Bhaktavatsala Govinda  
 Bhagavatapriya Govinda

The temples use the PA system to make announcements on the significance and spirit of the *anna-daan*. They also use an electronic display board for important information. Through the temple's website, the spirituality and the importance of *anna-daan* are popularised. The devotees and workers need not meditate before serving.

### 6.2.3 Number of people served

The number of people served *anna prasadam* in Tirupati, Tirumala, and Tiruchanoor for the number of people is mentioned in Table II.6.1. On a normal day, about 160,000 devotees are served. The number goes beyond 200,000 during peak seasons.<sup>105</sup> During 2017–18, Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba Annaprasadam Complex (MTVAC), Tirumala, served around 1.8 crore devotees. Before June 2008, tokens were issued to the devotees who had *darshan*<sup>106</sup> at Sri Tirumala Temple for taking *anna prasadam*.

The trust offers breakfast for the devotees between 9 am and 10:30 am, lunch between 10:30 am and 4 pm, and dinner between 5 pm and 10:30 pm.

The temple has 15 *anna prasadam* places and complexes, which can accommodate between 2,000 to 65,000 devotees, as mentioned in Table II.6.1. Devotees are served food in *aroca*<sup>107</sup> or plantain<sup>108</sup> leaves at the dining tables. The crowd is managed by security guards and volunteers. Food is served to all those waiting in the compartments (waiting compartments are places where devotees wait to get their turn to have a glimpse of the lord).

Table II.6.1 Place and number of devotees served during weekdays and weekends

Place	Canteen	Weekdays	Weekends
<b>Tirumala</b>	MTVAC	55,000	65,000
	Vaikuntam Q complex – I & II Compartments	40,000	45,000
	Outside “Q” lines (mainly during weekends or peak season)	—	20,000
	PAC– II <i>Anna prasadam</i>	8,000	10,000
	Food counters:	8,000	10,000
	Rambagicha bus stand	8,000	10,000
	Central reception office	8,000	10,000
	Pilgrim amenities complex-I	6,000	8,000
	HVC	6,000	8,000
	ANC		
<b>Tirupati</b>	Galigopuram (footpath)	6,000	6,000
	Srinivasam Complex	4,000	5,000
	Vishnu Nivasam Complex	4,000	5,000
	Govt. and TTD hospitals	6,000	6,000
	II NC and III NC	2,000	2,000
<b>Tiruchanoor</b>	S. V. Annaprasadam	3,500	5,000
<b>Total</b>		164,500	215,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author’s compilation.

#### 6.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Daily, a total of 10,000 L of milk is served to pilgrims in Vaikuntam Q Complex – I & II, Divya Darshan Complex, KalyanaKatha Complex at Tirumala, and Special Entry Complex. At Vaikuntam Q Complex – I & II, food and beverages are served every 3 hours to the devotees. Around 10–12 tons of rice is used for the preparation of food at Tirumala and 1.75 tons at Tirupati. Some 6.5–7.5 tons of vegetables come from donations. All such vegetables are used at all Annaprasadam Canteens in Tirumala. Table II.6.2 provides details of the times and food items served.

Table II.6.2 Tiffin and food items served

Meals	Time	Food items
Breakfast tiffin	9 am to 10:30 am	<i>Upma</i> <sup>a</sup> / <i>pongol</i> <sup>b</sup> / <i>vermicelli</i> <i>upma</i> , along with chutney <sup>c</sup>
Lunch	10:30 am to 4 pm	<i>Chakkarapongal</i> , <sup>d</sup> curry, chutney, rice, <i>sambar</i> , <sup>e</sup> <i>rasam</i> , <sup>f</sup> and buttermilk <sup>g</sup>
Dinner	5 pm to 10:30 pm	<i>Chakkarapongal</i> , curry, chutney, rice, <i>sambar</i> , <i>rasam</i> , and buttermilk

Sources: Primary Survey and author’s compilation.

#### Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Cooked from roasted coarse rice flour or semolina as a thick porridge.
- <sup>b</sup> Rice mixed with sugar and boiled milk.
- <sup>c</sup> Liquid sauce.
- <sup>d</sup> Sweet dish made with ghee, lentils, rice, and sugar.
- <sup>e</sup> Stew made with vegetables, spices, lentils.
- <sup>f</sup> Spicy, sweet, and sour soup.
- <sup>g</sup> Fermented drink made by churning butter.

### 6.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The chairman and the EO of the temples and TTD handle the *prasadam*.

### 6.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

Lunch takes about 8 hours to prepare, while dinner takes 3 hours. Serving one batch takes 30–40 minutes. Cleaning after a batch is through takes approximately 10 minutes. The total time taken for cleaning, serving, and letting in the next batch is 40 minutes.

### 6.2.7 Nutrition

The nutrition of the *prasadam* is given prime importance. Food is prepared with cow ghee, fresh vegetables, and lentils to ensure that the *prasad* has adequate nutrition.

### 6.2.8 Number of people involved in anna-daan

There are around 200 permanent employees and 500 contract employees, such as administrative staff and technical staff working at Tirupati, Tirumala, and Tiruchanoor Temples. The administrative staff is responsible for *anna-daan* events, including the special officer, AEO, superintendent, senior assistant, junior assistant, assistant/shroff, *duffedar*,<sup>109</sup> and office subordinates. The special officer, head of the department for canteens under TTD, is assisted by several ministerial and technical staff.

The technical staff includes a catering officer, deputy catering officer, assistant catering officer, catering supervisor, head cook, cook, server, cleaner, and boiler attendant. Besides these people, society and *sulabh*<sup>110</sup> workers are also available in the *anna prasadam* department.

Apart from the devotees and workers in the temples, individuals who wish to donate and volunteer are encouraged to participate during both normal and peak seasons.

### 6.2.9 Management

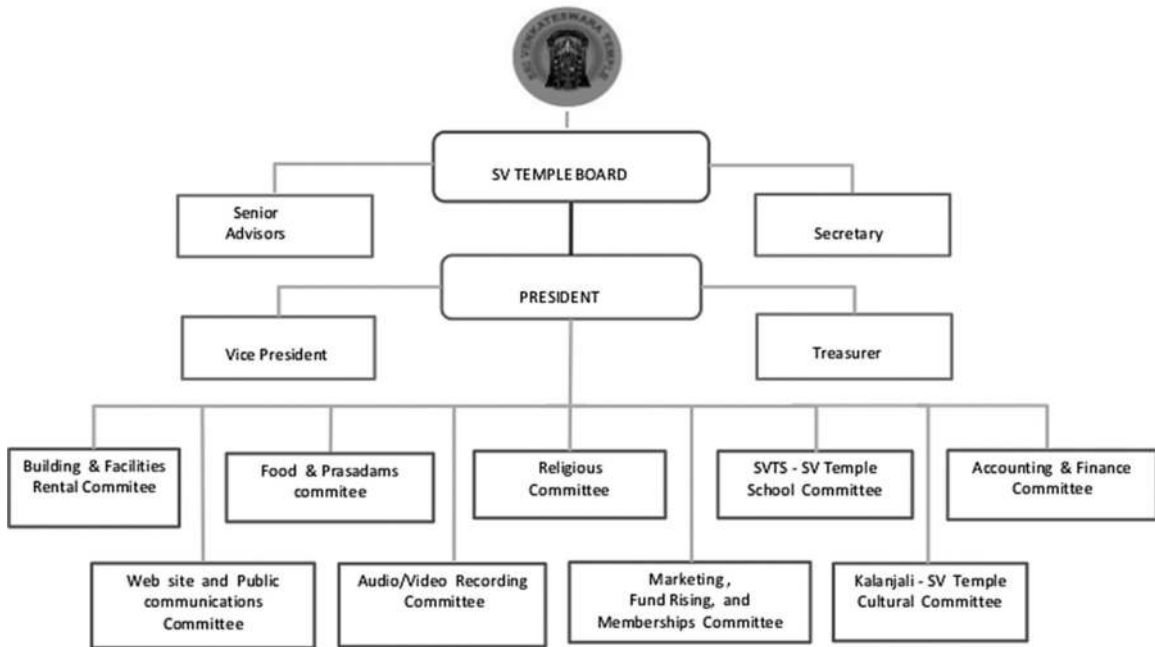
TTD is a group of temples brought under the First Schedule 2 of Act 30 of 1987 and has government-appointed members of the Board of Trustees. The TTD has a chief executive officer (CEO) who is assisted by two joint EOs, a conservator of forests, a chief vigilance and security officer, a chief engineer, a financial advisor, and a chief accounts officer. The various branches of the administration are overseen by other officials.

TTD has 12 temples and sub-shrines, employing over 14,000 people.

TTD board authorities consist of an EO, additional EO, Tirumala, JEO Tirupati chief vigilance and security, chief engineer, financial advisor, public relations officer, chief account officer, Dy. EO reception, chief editor, chief medical officer, conservator of forests, Devasthanam law officer, developmental educational officer, *Sharma Prachara Parishad*, director S. V. Dairy Farm, garden superintendent, and marketing officer.

Decision-making process – The CEO of the trust first goes through the planning process before handing it to the joint EOs and superintendents. In the temple, the president and vice president make decisions which are later discussed with members of all committees.

## SV Temple Organization



Flowchart II.6.1 Organisation chart of Sri Venkateshwara Temple.

Sources: Author's compilation.

### 6.2.10 Finance

The main source of funds for *anna-daan* is donations offered by the devotees both in cash and kind. The trust collects donations to the tune of Rs. 3 million per day. The amount is partly used to meet the expenditure of Rs. 0.7 million on breakfast, Rs. 1.15 million on lunch, and Rs. 1.15 million on dinner.

As already mentioned, the Sri Venkateshwara Nithya Annadaanam Trust runs on donations received from donors and devotees from around the world. Donors are issued a donor passbook with acknowledgements and an Income Tax Exemption Certificate under 80(G). The donations are deposited to nationalised banks, and interest earned on deposits is around Rs. 780 million per annum. The trust has a corpus fund of Rs. 9.380 billion in banks. The trust incurs a total expenditure of about Rs. 100 million a year.

### 6.2.11 Operations and maintenance cost

The O&M costs (including procurement of vegetables and groceries, power, fuel, transportation, housekeeping, repairs, and maintenance) are paid for from the interest income on deposits.

### 6.2.12 Financial accountability

The accounts are audited by a chartered accountant.

### 6.2.13 Quality of raw materials

There are well-established norms to ensure quality. The selection of suppliers is done by the vigilance officer. Quality control processes and inspections are done regularly by the catering officer and catering supervisor in consonance with the requirements of the raw material specifications as mentioned in the FSSA 2006.

The food ingredients received and bought by the temple are sanitised, and the cooked food is stored in cold storage to ensure utmost hygiene and freshness. The kitchen area and cooking vessels are sterilised. The kitchen staff is trained in regular personal hygiene and food safety by the head cook. The supervisor employs quality officers in the kitchen to monitor the quality of the cooked food. Servers and cooks use caps, gloves, and ladles to serve food to the devotees.

### References

- 1 [www.tirumala.org](http://www.tirumala.org) accessed on 10 December 2020
- 2 [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/68206101.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/68206101.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst) accessed on 20 December 2020

### Notes

- 88 Hindu God who preserves the universe.
- 89 Fourth and worst cycles of all the four *yugas*.
- 90 Hindu temple built for Lord Venkateshwara, Goddess Lakshmi, and Goda Devi.
- 91 Temple dedicated to a form of Vishnu, Lord Venkateswara.
- 92 Built in the 12th century, the Hindhu-Vaishnavite temple is dedicated to Govindaraja.
- 93 Dedicated to Lord Rama.
- 94 Famous temple dedicated to Lord Shiva as Kapileswara.
- 95 Dedicated to Ram and Sita.
- 96 Ushakala, Prathakala, Madhyanika, Aparahaa, Sandhyakala, and Ardharatri Aradhana are the six *aradhanas* performed for the deity.
- 97 Celebrated to mark the change of season to spring for harvesting.
- 98 Hindu auspicious day dedicated to Lord Vishnu.
- 99 A practice for performing prayer during full moon day for Lord Balaji.
- 100 Founded and Represented the Telugu Desam Party, served as CM of AP for three terms.
- 101 Blessing prosperity and happiness to those who give food.
- 102 Prayer to God.
- 103 Way of praying with a flame and prayer.
- 104 Holy food blessed by God.
- 105 On 1 January, Rathasapthami, Vaikunta Ekadasi, and Sri T. T. Garuda Seva.
- 106 To see or an occasion of seeing a holy person or the image of a deity.
- 107 A plant.
- 108 National tree of India.
- 109 Those who attend to officers.
- 110 Volunteers.

## Case study 7 Sri Veera Venkata Satyanarayana Swamy Temple, Annavaram, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, India

Sukanya Biswabandini\*

### 7.1 Introduction

Sri Veera Venkata Satyanarayana Swamy Temple is a *Vaishnavite*<sup>111</sup> temple situated in Annavaram, East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, India. The temple is on a hillock named *Ratnagiri* and is dedicated to Veera Venkata Satyanarayana, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. *Annavaram* is one of the most famous holy shrines in India and the second in Andhra Pradesh after Lord Venkateswara Temple, Tirupathi. The temple is built in the Dravidian style of architecture. The temple celebrates *Sri Swamy Vari Varshika Kalyana Mahotsavam* and *Sri Swami Vari Jayanti* with great fanfare.

The temple trust is engaged in various community development activities, such as *Vidyadanam* (education), and is managing two schools and two colleges with 1,500 students. The temple has established Satya Deva Free Dispensary for the distribution of medicines. It also runs a 40-bed naturopathy hospital Sahaja Yoga Nature Cure Hospital, with facilities for massage, spinal bath, mud bath, and gym.

### 7.2 Anna-daan at Sri Veera Venkata Satyanarayana Swamy Temple

Sri Satyadeva Annaprasada Distribution Trust has been implementing the *anna-daan* scheme for the devotees of Sri Satyanarayana Swamy coming from all parts of the country. It was started in the year 1986 by EO G. Krishnamurthy intending to provide basic board and lodging to pilgrims who visit the temple. *Anna-daan* is practised throughout the year. Initially, it started with just around 500 pilgrims per day. Currently, the temple serves food to around 3,000 pilgrims per day during normal times and around 4,500 pilgrims per day during peak times.

#### 7.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

People donate funds to the temple to implement *anna-daan* as it is believed that providing food is the most generous gift and that there is no gift more superior to this. *Anna-daan* is practised with the belief that by providing food to others, one will receive God's blessings. Others seem to think that *anna-daan* is extremely auspicious and is considered to bring good luck.

People from all economic backgrounds visit the temple and have the blessed food. This not only instils dedication and devotion into people but also helps develop harmony among people. The recipients of the blessed food commend the donor for their contribution. *Anna-daan* not only provides food to people but also by doing so it becomes a talking point in the print and social media – thereby bringing a good name to the temple and making it popular.

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### 7.2.2 Rituals and prayers

*Anna-daan* is a sacred practice, and certain rituals are performed before the food is cooked and served to the devotees. *Prardhanalu*<sup>112</sup> is performed by cooks and the temple authorities before cooking starts. Prayers with *haratha*<sup>113</sup> are performed, followed by the placing of flowers and *arti*<sup>114</sup> before cooking gets underway. After the food is prepared, it is first served to the deity and then to the devotees. Cooks who prepare the food are not allowed to eat or taste the food before it is offered to the temple deity. Before eating, the devotees chant the following mantras in praise of the lord.

*Shaanta-AakaaramBhujaga-Shayanam Padma-NaabhamSura-Iisham*  
*Vishva-AadhaaramGagana-SadrshamMegha-VarnnaShubha-Anggam*  
*Lakssmii-Kaantam Kamala-NayanamYogibhir-Dhyaana-Gamyam*  
*VandeVissnumBhava-Bhaya-Haram Sarva-Loka-Eka-Naatham*

Salutations to *Sri Vishnu*, who has a serene appearance, who rests on a serpent (*Adishesha*), Who has a lotus on his navel and who is the lord of the *Devas*, Who sustains the universe, who is boundless and infinite like the sky, whose colour is like the Cloud (Bluish) and who has a beautiful and auspicious body, Who is the husband of *devi lakshmi*, whose eyes are like lotus and who is attainable to the *Yogis* by meditation, Salutations to that *vishnu* who removes the fear of worldly existence and who is the lord of all the *lokas*. The temple management tries to make people understand the significance and spirit of *anna-daan* through books and PA announcements before the food is served. To avoid food wastage prints of a popular quote *Annam Parabrahma Swaroopam* (Food is a form of god) are pasted.

### 7.2.3 Number of devotees served

Only lunch is served daily to around 3,000 devotees in 8 batches (4,000 in 12 batches in peak times) at the temple. Care is taken to provide good nutritious food cooked in ghee to the devotees.

Table II.7.1 Timings and number of devotees served

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	10:30 am to 2:30 pm	8	12	3,000	4,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

For security purposes and better management of the crowd, a biometric system has been adopted. The dining hall is cleaned thoroughly after each batch is through with eating. At this rate, the dining hall gets cleaned roughly 10 times during the day.

There is one dining hall in the temple for serving the *anna-daan* to the devotees. Every batch has about 450 devotees. They sit at the dining table, and the food is served on banana leaves or *vistarakalu*.<sup>115</sup>



### 7.2.4 Quantity of food cooked and served

The total quantity of food cooked per day for 3,000 pilgrims in normal times and 4,000 in peak times is given in Table II.7.2.

Table II.7.2 Food items served and their quantities

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	600 kg	700 kg
Dal <sup>a</sup>	120 kg	150 kg
Sambar <sup>b</sup>	250 L	300 L
Vegetable curry/chutney	480 kg	600 kg
Buttermilk	200 L	250 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Spiced lentils.

<sup>b</sup> Stew to go with rice, made from vegetables, lentils, and spices.

### 7.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The preparation of lunch takes 4 hours. Serving per batch takes 10 minutes and cleaning thereafter takes less than 10 minutes. Time taken to be through with one batch (which includes serving, eating, and cleaning) is 30 minutes.

### 7.2.6 Human resources

The total staff strength at the temple during normal times is 37, comprising a senior kitchen manager, assistants, cooks, cleaners, servers, and security guards. The superintendent, AEO, EO, and the committee members oversee the quality of food and hygiene for *anna-daan*. There are 20 people to serve food to the devotees. Four people assist in cleaning and cutting vegetables. For cleaning utensils and for cleaning the dining hall, there are five people.

Table II.7.3 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*

Details	Numbers
Senior kitchen manager	1
Cooks	5
Cleaners	5
Serving staff	20
Helpers	4
Watchmen	2
Total	37

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

In addition, there are social leaders, volunteers, and individual donors to render their services for *anaa-daan* during normal and peak times. Daily donors always participate in *anna-daan*.

### 7.2.7 Management

The Temple Administration Board came into being in 2005. It remained dormant for a while before becoming active in February 2020. The board has 17 members. The EO and the board members handle all activities related to *anna-daan*. The EO is consulted first over any decision or activity relating to *anna-daan*. From there, it passes on to AEO and then to the superintendent.

### 7.2.8 Finances

To carry out its various activities, the temple requires Rs. 25 million during normal times (Rs. 30 million during peak times). The interest income on the corpus of Rs. 470 million is Rs. 0.3 million per month. Another source of income is donations, which are exempt from income tax under section 80 G of the income tax law.

Table II.7.4 Kitchen equipment

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Kitchen	1
Steam boilers	6
Huge vessels	10
Glasses	1,000
Bowls	20
RO plants	4
Gas stoves	10
Gas cylinders	40
Trolleys	6
Rice chutes	10
<i>Dal/sambar</i> tanks	10
Cutting boards	30
Knives	25
Tables	120
Chairs	700
CCTVs (number and cost)	5

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Expenses on vegetables, raw materials, transportation, fuel, power, housekeeping, and repairs and maintenance of kitchen, dining hall, and kitchen equipment are to the tune of Rs. 17.5 million per annum (out of which Rs. 2.5 million is spent on vegetables). Staff salary is around Rs. 5 million.

The temple has an accountant to maintain a record of income and expenditures. The finances are monitored by the board members every quarter. Along with the board members, external members also monitor the finances of the temple.

### 7.2.9 Quality of raw materials

Quality assurance is taken seriously by the committee. The selection of suppliers is done by the EO. The EO and the committee take care of the quality control processes and quality inspection as well. The temple authorities ensure that the raw materials are of

good quality and follow the parameters of the FSSA 2006. The raw materials are sanitised before use. The temple has three fridges to ensure that the perishable items remain fresh. All the cooking vessels are sterilised before the cooking starts. The head cook organises training programmes for the kitchen staff to underscore the importance of personal hygiene and food safety. The staff is required to wear caps and gloves not only while preparing food but also during serving. Ladles are engaged for serving.

#### 7.2.10 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The temple authorities make announcements on the PA system to organise people during the peak hours of the day and to advise devotees not to waste food. CCTVs are installed in the dining halls to monitor various activities going on there. The volunteers are aided by the CCTVs in the kitchen halls in monitoring and surveillance of the crowd. The temple kitchen is equipped with RO plants and steam boilers to speed up the cooking process. As hygiene is of utmost importance, hot water is used for washing vessels, and chlorine water is used for washing vegetables. To maintain the food quality, hot insulated vessels are used. Gas and pellets are used for cooking.

#### 7.2.11 Waste management

Twenty kilograms of wet waste and 150 kg of dry waste are generated per day. The temple authorities segregate the wastes in colour-coded bins before carting them away in a truck to the dump yard.

### Notes

111 People who believe in the worship of *Vishnu* in any of his forms or incarnations.

112 Prayer.

113 The divine fire in spiritual rituals.

114 A worship or hymn sang in praise of God.

115 Plates made from dried leaves.

## Case study 8 Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vari Devasthanam, Dwaraka Thirumala, Andhra Pradesh, India

Thrishala Vasudeva\*

### 8.1 Introduction

Dwaraka Tirumala is an ancient holy place and a popular pilgrim centre in Andhra Pradesh, South India. The temple is called Dwaraka Tirumala after the great saint,

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Dwaraka who discovered the self-manifested idol of Lord *Sri Venkateswara* after intense penance in a *valmikam* (anthill). People in this region visit the temple periodically to offer prayers to the principal deity of the temple, Sri Venkateshwara. Since most of the rituals and traditions of this temple are identical to the renowned Sri Venkateshwara Shrine of Tirumala, this place is also called Chinna Tirupati (small Tirupati).

There are two main idols in the temple under one *vimana sikharam*.<sup>116</sup> One idol is a complete statue while the other is a half statue of the Lord. The saints of the yore felt that the prayers to the Lord are not complete without worshipping his holy feet. Thus, the saints joined together and installed a full statue behind the self-manifested idol, to worship the feet of the Lord according to *vaikhanas aAgamam*.<sup>117</sup> It is believed that the prayers to the smaller statue of the Lord will lead to *moksh* (liberation), while the big statue stands for *dharm* (righteousness), *arth* (prosperity) and *kaam* (pleasure). The four are the object of human pursuit. The *Tirukalyanotsavam* is a major festival that is observed in Sri Venkateswara Swami Vari Devasthanam and is celebrated twice a year. The festival for the self-manifested idol (small idol) is celebrated in the month of *Vaisakha* (May to June), while for the installed idol it is celebrated in the month of *Aswayuja* which is usually in April to May and September –October every year. Other major festivals celebrated in the temple are: *Giripradakshina* (January), *Swamy Vari Vysakha Kalyanam* and *Radhotsavam* (April to May), *Pavithrotsavams* (September), *Swamy Vari Aswayuja Kalyanam* and *Radhotsavam* (September to October), *Teppotsavam/Boat Festival* in *Nrusimha Sagar Tank* (November). All these special events attract devotees who in turn also avail of *anna-daan* organised in the temple.

## 8.2 Anna-daan at Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vari Devasthanam

The *anna-daan* scheme was launched on December 8th 1994, by the then Executive Officer, Somasekhar. The scheme initially served food to 300 pilgrims per day. Subsequently, this scheme was converted into a Trust in the name of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vari Saswatha Nitya Annadaana Trust.



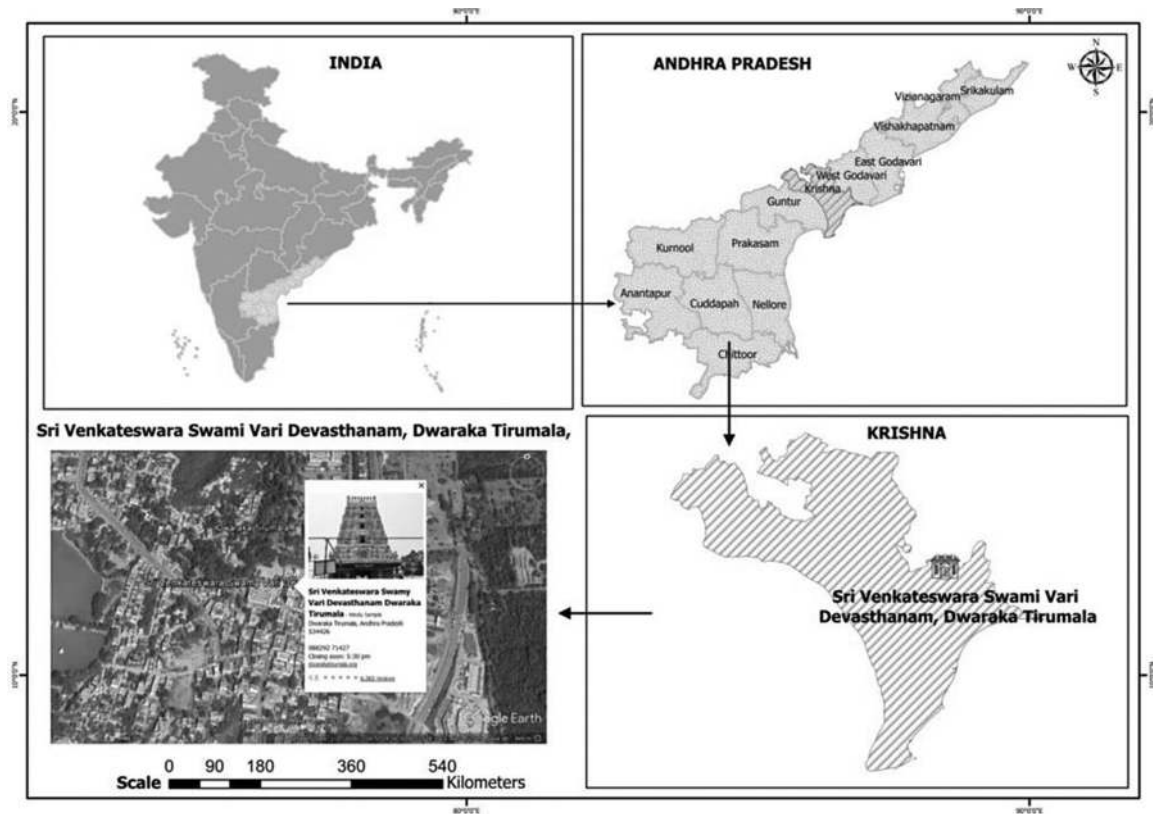
Figure II.8.1 Overview of the temple.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.8.2 Front view of the temple.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Map II.8.1 Location of Sri Venkateswara Swami Sri Vaari temple, Dwaraka Tirumala.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 8.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna-daan* is performed for various reasons. Devotees participate in *anna-daan* to fulfil vows. It is believed to be auspicious and brings good fortune to the donors who donate money or food. Other reasons are to uplift the traditional heritage of the temple, attain

spiritual aspirations, develop harmony among the devotees and receive blessings from the poor and aged devotees for the meals sponsored by donors. Through *anna-daan*, the temple receives publicity in the local print media which also results in popular persons visiting the temple and participating in its activities on important occasions.

### 8.2.2 Rituals and prayers

The kitchen staff and other officials chant the spiritual prayer (*prarthana*) by invoking the name of the Lord *Govinda Govinda Govinda*, before preparing the *prasadam* every day. They also follow certain rituals before cooking. Flowers are placed and *arti*<sup>118</sup> is performed before cooking. After the food is ready, it is first offered to the deity as *prasadam*<sup>119</sup> before serving it to the devotees. During *anna-daan*, the temple management, through announcements, informs the pilgrims about this facility and its importance. An electronic display board has been put up to guide the devotees throughout the process. The pilgrims and the temple staff jointly chant *Govinda Govinda Govinda* and the *anna-daan slokam*, *Annam Parabrahma* Food is the embodiment of God.

### 8.2.3 Number of people served

*Anna-daan* is arranged for 4,000 individuals every day except on Fridays and Saturdays when the temple receives 6,000 pilgrims per day.

The temple serves free meals between 11 am to 3 pm on normal days, whereas on weekends and other auspicious days, the time is changed to 9.30 am to 4 pm. On Fridays, it is between 8 pm and 11 pm.

There are four dining halls, two of which can accommodate approximately 400 pilgrims each. These halls are used regularly for *anna-daan*. Both have dining tables and chairs. Food is served in plates, on areca or banyan leaves. The crowd is managed with a queue system along with a ticket system. After a batch leaves the dining hall, the dining tables and the floors are cleaned before allowing in the next batch of pilgrims. The temple trust is constructing a new *anna prasada* building at a cost of Rs. 140 million. This facility will have 4 spacious halls with a total seating capacity of 1,440.

Table II.8.1 Number of times, people and volume of food served per day

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season /days	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	11 am to 3 pm	8	10	3,000	4,000
Dinner	7 pm to 10 pm	3	4	1,000	1,500

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 8.2.4 Quantity of food preparations and items served

During normal time, around 600 kg of rice and 120 kg of *dal* is cooked every day (vs 800 kg and 150 kg, respectively, on special occasions). The details of other food items are given in Table II.8.2.



Figure 11.8.3 Anna-daan building.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

Table 11.8.2 Total volume of food served per day

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	600 kg	800 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup> - <i>pulihora</i>	30 kg	50 kg
<i>Dal</i> <sup>b</sup>	120 kg	150 kg
<i>Sambar</i> <sup>c</sup>	250 litres	300 litres
Vegetable curry	600 kg	800 kg
Buttermilk	150 litres	200 litres
Sweet – <i>chakrapongali</i> <sup>d</sup>	50 kg	75 kg
Chutney <sup>e</sup>	40 kg	60 kg

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Rice items (varieties of rice preparations with spices and lentils) served include *Puliyogare*, Vegetable bhat, Ghee Rice, *Pongal*, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Thick purée, stew or soup made from these legumes.

<sup>c</sup> Southern Indian dish consisting of lentils and vegetables cooked with tamarind and other spices.

<sup>d</sup> Sweet made from dhal, ghee, and rice.

<sup>e</sup> Chutney is a spicy dish.

### 8.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The accountability of *anna-daan* is collectively managed by the temple trust, Executive Officer and the temple administration through audits. The authorities responsible for smooth execution of *anna-daana* are the Executive Officer and the Chairman.

### 8.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The temple provides lunch and dinner. The time taken to prepare lunch and dinner is 8 and 3 hours, respectively. The servers take 40 minutes to serve food to one batch of devotees. After this batch is through, the hall is cleaned and kept ready for the new batch pilgrims to partake of the Lord's *prasadam*. The cleaners take 10 minutes to clean the



Figure II.8.4 Anna-daan in progress.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

halls and tables after a batch is through. Serving, cleaning and letting people in the hall takes about 40 minutes.

Table II.8.3 Cooking and serving time

<i>Time taken for cooking (in hours)</i>	
Lunch	8 hours
Dinner	3 hours
Time taken for serving	30 minutes
Cleaning time	10 minutes
Total time on serving, cleaning and letting in a batch to have food	40 minutes

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 8.2.7 Nutrition

At all times, plenty of seasonal vegetables, lentils, other ingredients and cow ghee are used to make the food tasty and nutritious.

### 8.2.8 Human resources

Quality control is the responsibility of the Superintendents, Executive Officer and Assistant Executive Officers. As mentioned in the following table, the infrastructure has a total of 115 paid employees, volunteers and contract workers, consisting of senior kitchen managers, cooks, cooking assistants, cleaners, servers, and security guards. The dining hall is watched by the security guards, while the contract workers are responsible for activities such as cleaning and cutting vegetables, cleaning the dining hall and utensils, serving the devotees and managing the crowd. The staff works for 8 hours per shift during the normal season and 10 hours per shift during the peak season. Tuesdays are weekly off. Hindu volunteers are supplied by an organisation called Yuvasevakulu. Volunteers and daily donors who donate money and groceries are allowed to serve the pilgrims.



Table II.8.4 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid staff (temple staff)	Number of people
Senior kitchen managers	4
Quality control managers	Superintendent (10), Executive Officer (1) and Assistant Executive Officer (4)
Cooks	5
Cleaners	29
Serving staff	29
Watchmen	2
<b>Volunteers for specific purpose</b>	
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	28
Cleaning utensils	15
Cleaning dining hall	5
Serving people	10
Managing the crowd	2

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).



Figure II.8.5 *Anna-daan* food serving by staff.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 8.2.9 Management

The temple is administered by a governing board, made up of 15 members, and headed by a Chairman. The board is reconstituted every four years. Besides, the Temple Administration Board comprises an Executive Officer, 4 Assistant Executive Officers, 10 Superintendents, 8 Senior Assistants, and 10 Junior Assistants.

The overall role of the Temple Administration Board, including the management of *anna-daan* is decided by the Executive Officer and the Chairman who keep the board members informed from time to time. There is a committee to monitor the temple activities, The committee reports to the board and made up of the Chairman, Executive Officer, Assistant Executive Officer and Superintendents.

Table II.8.5 Equipment in the kitchen

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Kitchen	1
Steam boilers	10
Huge vessels	10
Roti making machines	Yes, but not in use
Hot insulated vessels	30
Plates	500
Glasses	3,000
Bowls	100 big
RO plants	9
Gas stoves	10
Gas cylinders	50
Trolleys	10
Rice chutes	30
Dal/sambar tanks	10
Cutting boards	20
Knives	25
Tables	90
Chairs	2,000
CCTVs (number and cost)	15 cameras

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 8.2.10 Finances

The corpus of Rs. 531 million earns an interest of Rs. 1 million per month which is used on *anna-daan*. Donations (exempted from income tax under section 80(G) of the Income Tax Act) are a major source of finance for the temple. Donations are deposited in national banks. Interest earned on the deposit is utilised on distribution of *anna prasadam*. Interest earned on the corpus and deposit also meets the expenses on salaries (regular and contract employees), procurement of raw materials and groceries, power, transportation, fuel cost (pellets and cooking gas), housekeeping, repairs and maintenance of kitchen, kitchen equipment and dining hall.

The accounts are annually audited by the firm Rao and Rao Sons; monthly auditing is done by the temple trust. The finances are also monitored by external members who are appointed by the temple committee. Cheque payment is done only after the monthly state audit bills are cleared.

### 8.2.11 Quality of raw materials

The quality control process, selection of suppliers and quality inspection are under the domain of the Executive Officer. Raw material specifications adapted from the Food Safety Act, 2006 are followed. The vegetables and other groceries are sanitised before cooking. There are 5 refrigerators in the kitchen to keep fruit and vegetables and other food items fresh. The cooking vessels and other utensils are sterilised before cooking. Cooking and serving staff wear caps and gloves during cooking and serving. Regular training on the importance of personal hygiene and food safety for the kitchen staff is organised by the head cook, who is also responsible for employing quality officers in the kitchen to monitor quality of cooked food.

### 8.2.12 Technology adoption at kitchen

Announcements are constantly made to guide the visitors during the *anna-daan* and other temple activities. 15 CCTV cameras have been set up around the dining hall premises. Volunteers are appointed to ensure safety and smooth functioning of *anna-daan*. The temple is equipped with hot insulated vessels, steam boilers, RO plants, hot water for washing utensils and chlorine water to wash vegetables. The quality of food maintenance is ensured by the constant use of hot insulated vessels for storing and serving food. Fossil-free fuel (pellets and gas) are used for cooking the *prasadam*.

There is one independent kitchen in the temple and is well equipped with steam boilers, huge vessels, and hot insulated vessels. For serving food, the temple has plates, glasses, and big bowls. The dining hall has tables and chairs along with CCTV cameras for surveillance. The following table provides details on kitchen equipment.

### 8.2.13 Waste management

50 kg of wet and 150 kg of dry waste are produced every day. Wastes segregated in different coloured buckets are transported in temple trucks to dumping sites for composting. Wet waste is converted into organic fertiliser.

### Contact details

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Executive Officer  
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Email: eo\_dwarakatirumala@yahoo.co.in

### Notes

- 116 *Vimana* is the structure over the inner sanctum in the Hindu temples. *Shikhara* means a dome-shaped crowning cap above the *Vimana*.
- 117 *Vaikhanasa Agama* is a specific type of secondary scripture in Hinduism, and it is a sub-category of spiritual and scriptural texts known as the *Agamas*.
- 118 Worship, Hymns sang in praise of God.
- 119 A religious offering to the God in Hinduism.

## Case study 9 Kamrup Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati, Assam, India

Sejuti Bhattacharjee\*, Soumesh Ghosh† and M S Umesh Babu‡

### 9.1 Introduction

Among the 51 *shakti peeths*<sup>120</sup> in the world Kamrup Kamakhya is one of them. This place is famous for its *tantra sadhana*.<sup>121</sup> The goddess Kamakhya is famously worshipped as the goddess of fertility.

#### Significance of the temple

This temple, established sometime during the 8th or the 9th century during Mlechchha<sup>122</sup> dynasty, has historical, archaeological and spiritual significance and is an important place for *tantra sadhana*.<sup>123</sup> From the archaeological viewpoint, this temple reflects the significance of the socio-economic condition of that dynasty. The temple was destroyed by Kalapahar,<sup>124</sup> who was a general in Salaiman Karrani's<sup>125</sup> army. The restoration of the temple was done in the year 1565 by Vishwasingha, the King of Koch dynasty.

### 9.2 Anna-daan at Kamakhya Temple

Devi Kamakhya is also considered as the goddess of creation and the centre of worshipping *dasamahavidya*.<sup>126</sup> *Anna-daan* is an important ritual that is performed every day at this temple. Non-vegetarian items are offered to the goddess but only vegetarian food is served to the devotees. Only lunch is served.

*Anna-daan* was conducted as a ritual since the inception of the temple. According to the historians, during the 10th century Tibetans were the main devotees of this temple (as they also worship the power). They sacrificed an animal every day and the raw meat as well as cooked meat was offered to the goddess.

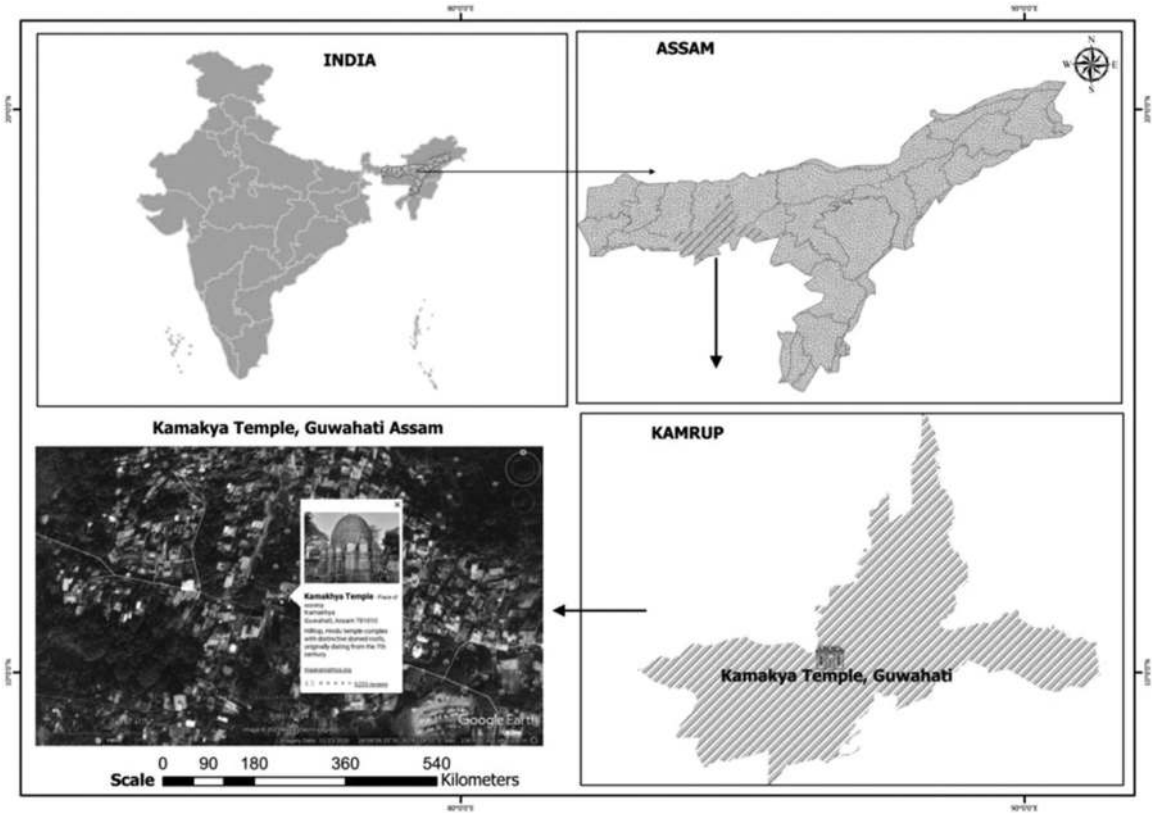
#### 9.2.1 Rituals and prayers

There are no special rituals or prayers performed before or after *anna-daan*. The cooks of the temple are all *brahmins*<sup>127</sup> (called *supakars*) who cook food for the goddess.

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Map II.9.1 Location of Kamrup Kamakhya temple, Guwahati, Assam.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.9.1 Kamrup Kamakhya temple, Guwahati, Assam.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.9.2 A view of Kamakhya temple.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.9.3 The yoni of Maa Kamakhya.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 9.2.2 Number of devotees served

On an average, 500-600 people are served daily during normal time; during the peak season more than 1,500 people are fed. Only vegetarian meal is given to the devotees within the premises of the temple. However, non-vegetarian meal is served to the goddess and provided to the devotees outside the temple premises. The lunch is served between 12 am and 4 pm at the *Nuttmandir*.<sup>128</sup> If anyone wants the non-vegetarian meal they have to carry a container into which to take it. The vegetarian food is served in steel plates. Seating arrangement is made only for people opting for the vegetarian food. They must collect free coupons, wait in a hall before proceeding to the dining hall for food.



Figure II.9.4 Diety Maa Kamakhya.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.9.5 Sacrificial site at the temple.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

The coupon system makes food distribution more efficient as well as helps in better management of the crowd. There are separate dining halls for women and men at this temple. The non-vegetarian meals are distributed at 1 pm soon after an offering has been made to the goddess.

Table II.9.1 Number of devotees served food and timings

Food time	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	12am to 4.30 pm	6 times	10 times	500–600	1,300–1,500

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 9.2.3 Quantity of food preparations and items served

For lunch a variety of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food is served. The vegetarian food includes *khichuri*,<sup>129</sup> rice, mixed vegetable curry, fried vegetables, chutney<sup>130</sup> and, *kheer*.<sup>131</sup> Non-vegetarian food includes fish and mutton. During *ambubachi*,<sup>132</sup> special food is prepared for the goddess consisting of mango, milk and sweets. This mixture is not served to the devotees because it is believed that a woman's body goes through many hormonal changes during menstruation but is ideal for the goddess.

Table II.9.2 Food item served during *anna-daan*

Meal	Food items
Lunch	Mixture of mango-milk- sweets <sup>a</sup> , <i>khichuri</i> , rice, mixed vegetables curry, fried vegetables, chutney, <i>kheer</i> , fish and mutton

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Served only during *ambubachi*

With respect to the quantity of foods cooked, 100-200 kg of *khichuri* is made during normal season; in the peak season 900 kg to 1,000 kg of food is cooked. The entire menu takes almost six hours to cook.

Table II.9.3 Quantity of food items cooked and served across seasons

Food items	Quantity of foods prepared per day	
	Normal season	Peak season
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	200–300 kg	800–900 kg
5 types of vegetable fry	50–60 kg	100 Kg
Veg curry	100 litres	900–2,000 litres
<i>Payasa</i> (sweet)	300 litres	500–600 litres
Sweet (additional sweet)	As per requirement	As per requirement
Fried fish <sup>b</sup>	60–70 big fish	100–150 big fish
Others (mutton)	As many goats are sacrificed	As many goats are sacrificed.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Rice item represents *khichuri*

<sup>b</sup> Non-Veg items are not served to people opting for seating arrangement within temple premises

### 9.2.4 Nutrition

While preparing the food, importance is given to its nutritional aspect. To provide good amount of nutrition, all types of seasonal vegetables and fruits are used in preparing food. In addition, the non-vegetarian food is protein rich. The goats and fish are tested for quality and freshness beforehand.





Figure 11.9.6 Gathering of devotees during *ambubachi*.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 9.2.5 Human resources

The head of the temple management is from the Bardeuri community<sup>133</sup> who performs all spiritual and administrative functions. In 1997 the Debuttar community took over the power from the Bardeuri community. But in 2011 High court ordered the Debuttar community to handover the power to the Bardeuri community. The management units are known as the *shebaitis*. Its members are both Brahmin and non-Brahmin.<sup>134</sup> A list of these *shebaitis* is given.

There are 10 non-Brahmin in the temple staff. People who are associated with *anna-daan* preparation are called *supakar*. The head of *supakar* is a member of the executive committee and executes all the processes relating to temple management. In normal times, there are 8 *supakars*. In the peak season due to increased workload volunteers are hired as per requirement.

### 9.2.6 Finances

The temple runs on donations made by the devotees. The treasurer maintains all the records which are audited by the state government officials annually. There is a provision to release special fund to meet an unforeseen situation.

### 9.2.7 Quality of raw materials

The raw materials are procured every morning from the designated grocery shop selected by the executive committee and the *Dolois*. The raw materials purchased carry ISI marks. Food is cooked under the supervision of the executive committee members.

Table II.9.4 A list of shebaitis

<i>Bardeuris</i> <sup>a</sup>	<p>The <i>Bardeuries</i> are the traditional five families that find mention in a number of literature, court orders, etc. They were also called as Five <i>Pandas</i> of <i>Kamakhya</i> temple. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Burha Bardeuries</i></li> <li>• <i>Deka Bardeuries</i></li> <li>• <i>Hotas</i></li> <li>• <i>Brahmas</i> (population decreasing)</li> <li>• <i>Bidhipathaks</i></li> </ul> <p>The <i>Bardeuries</i> are the main priests responsible for performing <i>puja</i> in the temple of Mother Goddess <i>Kamakhya</i> as well as in some of the subsidiary temples as per tradition. The <i>Burha</i> &amp; the <i>Deka Bardeuries</i> were collectively referred to as the <i>Pujaris</i><sup>b</sup> and originated from the same family. The <i>Hotas</i> have the right of offering <i>Homa</i>.<sup>c</sup> The <i>Brahmas</i> kept the count of <i>ahutis</i><sup>d</sup> offered during <i>Homa</i>,<sup>e</sup> but the family is said to be decreasing over a period. The <i>Bidhipathaks</i><sup>f</sup> are the ones responsible for reciting the sacred <i>Bidhis</i><sup>g</sup> at the time of performing of the <i>puja</i>.</p>
<i>Chandipathak</i>	They are the ones having the right of reciting the <i>Chandi</i> <sup>h</sup> during <i>Durga Puja</i> and some other <i>pujas</i> .
<i>Supakar</i>	The <i>Sevaitis</i> in charge of cooking <i>anna</i> (cooked rice) in the temples.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> As historical evidence they are originated basically from Nadia district of West Bengal

<sup>b</sup> Priests.

<sup>c</sup> Consecrated fire.

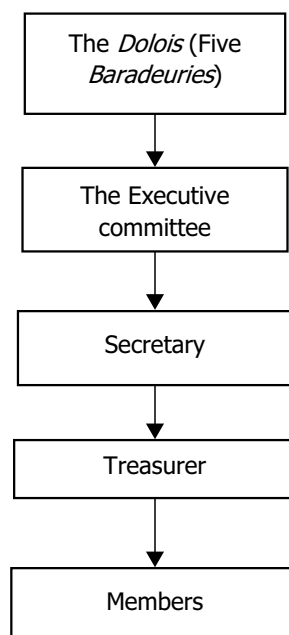
<sup>d</sup> Offering made during *Homa*.

<sup>e</sup> Sacred fire ritual.

<sup>f</sup> Who reads the spiritual books at the temple.

<sup>g</sup> Text containing *mantra*.

<sup>h</sup> Text concerning Goddess.



Flowchart II.9.1 Organisation structure.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 9.2.8 Food safety

For maintaining the quality of food, only items with ISI mark are procured from local vendors and grocery shops. They have been supplying the materials to the temple for a long time and with devotion, hence, a gurantee for good quality.

### 9.2.9 Technology adoption at kitchen

The cooks are efficient and can cook huge amount of food in a short time without the aid of modern technology. They use the traditional methods of cooking and cooking equipment and utensils. They are very skilled and ensure safety, hygiene and quality.

### 9.2.10 Waste management

With the help of the state government officials, the temple authority has built a solid waste management unit that was inaugurated in 2016. The wastes produced at the temple are collected every morning and put through a composting machine. Waste like flowers, fragrance sticks, etc. are used in making bio-friendly dry colours.

## Contact details

Sri Rana Sharma  
Member of Bardeuli Samaj  
Kamakhya Temple Trust  
Mobile: 9864094311

## Websites referred

- 1 <https://www.maakamakhya.org/thesh.php> accessed on 10th June 2021
- 2 <https://yatradham.org/blog/kamakhya-temple-mystery> accessed on 12th June 2021

## Notes

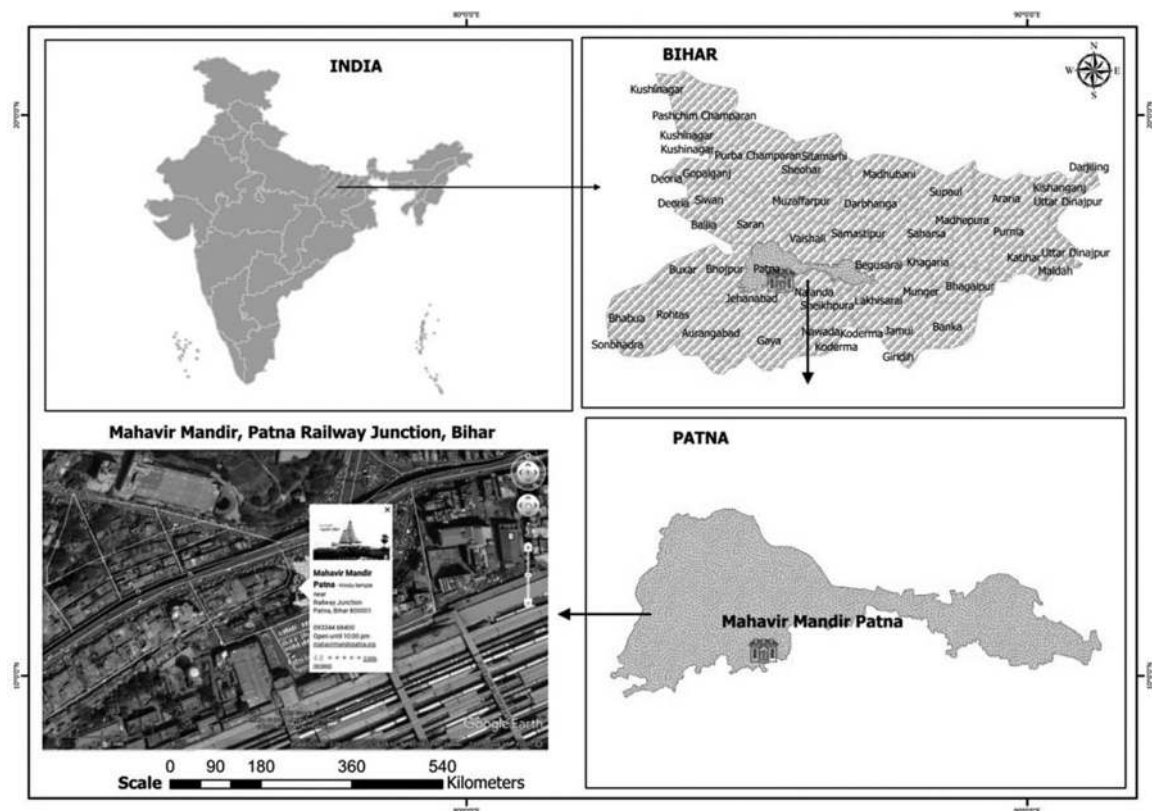
- 120 According to Hindu mythology Lord *Vishnu* divided the body of Sati into 51 pieces and the places where it fell is known to be *shakti peeths*.
- 121 All sorts of spiritual activities with the help of supernatural power.
- 122 Dynasty who rules Assam during 650 CE to 900 CE.
- 123 Tantra sadhana is a process of creating energy and transferring the energy to higher consciousness by activating all chakras in the path.
- 124 Original name is Rajib Lochan Roy.
- 125 An Afghan who ruled Bengal for very short time under the Mughal period.
- 126 Dasa Mahavidya is one of 10 wisdom goddesses in Hinduism. Each Mahavidya is a form of the Divine Mother.
- 127 A class in Hinduism.
- 128 Outer part of main temple.
- 129 A dish which is prepared by mixing rice and pulses along with vegetables.
- 130 A sweet dish prepared with dates, tomato dried fruits etc.
- 131 A sweet dish of milk prepared with rice.
- 132 Annual menstrual cycle of goddess.
- 133 They are historically responsible to look after the *Kamakhya* temple.
- 134 The main management member of temple.

## Case study 10 Mahavir Mandir, Patna, Bihar, India

Harshita Bhat\*

### 10.1 Introduction

Sri Mahavir Mandir is one of the oldest and prominent Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Hanuman located in Bihar, the northeastern state of India. According to the scriptures of the temple, Mahavir Mandir was established around the 1720 or 1730 by Sri Balananda Swami of the Ramanandi sect. They later began to establish temples at other locations (Sita Mani and Ayodhya). Until about 1983, the temple was small. On public demand, a new temple was built on 4th March 1985. In June 1993, Phalahari Suryavanshi Das, was appointed as the priest of this temple by Acharya Kishore Kunal (the current Secretary and Chief Executive of Mahavir Mandir Trust) in the presence of Ramchandra Paramahans (then Chairman of the temple) and Swami Avaidyanath of Gorakpur.



Map 11.10.1 Location of Sri Mahavir Mandir Patna.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

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Figure 11.10.1 Mahavir Mandir front view.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

One of the main features of the temple is that there are two idols of Hanuman of the same size, one signifying the protector of the good and the other signifying the destructor of the evil. The temple is visited by 15,000 to 20,000 visitors on a normal day. On Sundays, the number of visitors goes up to 25,000; it further increases to 50,000 on Tuesdays. *Rama Navami* and *Hanuman Jayanti* are the festivals that are celebrated with great fanfare at Mahavir Mandir. The number of visitors on such days is close to 3 lakhs.

## 10.2 Anna-daan at Mahavir Mandir, Patna

The auspicious tradition of *anna-daan* was started at the temple on 1st December 2011. This initiative was taken by Acharya Kishore Kunal, a social service visionary.

*Anna-daan* in the temple is currently looked after by the Mahavir Mandir Trust. Apart from Mahavir Mandir, the Trust also performs *anna-daan* at other two temples namely Sita Mani, which is located at 90 kilometers from Patna, near the Nepal border, and Amawa Ram Mandir at Ayodhya. The Trust also runs three charity hospitals: Mahavir Cancer Sansthaan, Mahavir Vatsalya Aspataal, and Mahavir Aarogya Sansthaan located at Patna, Bihar, to make healthcare easily accessible to the public. In these hospitals, food is distributed to the patients free of cost. *Anna-daan* is performed both at the religious places and hospitals throughout the year.

### 10.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

The sole reason or motive behind performing *anna-daan* at Mahavir Mandir is philanthropy and to feed the poor. It is one of the many kinds of social services done by the temple administration.

Although there are no rituals and prayers to be performed before cooking the meals, the cooks ought to take bath and be in the state of *madi*<sup>135</sup> before they start their routine



Figure II.10.2 Acharya Kishore Kunal.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

of cooking meals for devotees. The food is served to the deity as *Naivedyam*,<sup>136</sup> followed by *arti*<sup>137</sup> which takes around 15 minutes during which a bell is rung and all the devotees are required to stand up, after which the food distribution starts.

As of now, there is no such practice by the temple management to make people understand the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan*.

### 10.2.2 Number of devotees served

At Mahavir Mandir there is one dining hall which can accommodate around 800 people at a time. Across the temples, the food is served between 11 am and around 9.30 pm, except at Amawa Ram Mandir Ayodhya, where only lunch is provided between 11 & 3.30 pm. The number of devotees served varies across the temples and across seasons. During the normal season, around 750 partake of the food per day; the number of devotees increases to around 1,000 on special occasions.

Table II.10.1 Anna-daan timing and number of people served

Sr. No.	Temple	Number of times (per day)	Approximate number of people served (per day)		Time
			Normal season	Peak season	
1.	Sita Mani	Lunch and dinner	400	500–600	11:30 am to 9:30 pm
2.	Amawa Ram Mandir Ayodhya	Lunch	1,200–1,500	???	11:30 am to 3:30 pm
3.	Mahavir Mandir	Lunch and dinner	700–740	1,000	11:00 am to 9:00 pm

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

Only lunch and dinner are provided at the temples managed by Mahavir Mandir Trust whereas at the hospitals managed by the Trust breakfast, lunch and dinner are also provided to 800 patients.

To organise and manage the crowd, the temple follows the token system. Tokens are given to the devotees in the morning between 8 am and 9 am. There will be *arti* and *Naivedyam* of food to the deity at 11 am after which *anna-daan* begins. Jute mats are spread on the ground for people to sit. Food is served on plates to all without any discrimination of caste, race or gender. During the normal season, lunch and dinner are given around 5 or 6 times depending on the number of devotees. This increases to 9 or 10 times during the peak seasons at the Mandir.

Special attention is paid to nutrition of the food that is served to the devotees. The menu at Mahavir Mandir includes rice, *dal*, and *sambar*,<sup>138</sup> two varieties of vegetable curries (*dum aloo*, cauliflower curry, carrot curry or peas), *papad* which is part of the main course and *badusha* (sweet) for dessert. The dinner is freshly cooked though the menu is the same except change in one of the vegetable curries. This menu remains the same during the peak season as well.

Table II.10.2 Quantity of food prepared per day (inclusive of lunch and dinner)

Sr. No.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day (in kg)	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	550–600	1,200
2	Dal	200–220	350

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.10.3 Dining hall at Mahavir Mandir.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

There is no limit on the quantity of food devotees can eat. They are given as much food as they want and as many times as they want. The receivers of *anna-daan* on a normal day are mostly *sadhuis* and the poor. The cooking staff at the temple determines the quantity of food to be prepared based their experience. There are times when there is a shortage as well as excess of food. In case of shortage, the kitchen staff quickly cooks the extra food to meet the shortfall. They can do this without taking too much time as the kitchen is equipped with time-saving modern gadgets. If the food cooked is surplus it is shared among the attendants, temple staff and the poor outside the temple. No one goes hungry from Mahavir Mandir.

### 10.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The quantity of food cooked per day includes 500 kg of rice, 145 kg of *tur dal* and 150 kg jaggery. The details of other ingredients and vegetables are given mentioned in Table II.18.4. Raw materials and other ingredients are procured at Mundeshwari, a town 200 km from the temple.

The volume of ingredients used per day remains more proportionately during peak season.

Table II.10.3 Total volume of ingredients used per day

Ingredients	Quantity in kg
	Normal season
Rice	480
<i>Tur dal</i>	145
<i>Chana dal</i>	60
Black gram	20
Chickpeas	60
<i>Rajma</i>	30
Bengal gram	40
Salt	23
Jaggery	150
Sugar	10
Coconut	40
<b>Vegetables</b>	
Tomato	85
Brinjal	270
Ladies finger	300
Potato	450
Cauliflower	170
Beans	80
Carrot	40
Coriander leaves	20
Spices	3.5
Chilli powder	3
Milk	260
Ghee	15

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



#### 10.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is well equipped with steam boilers, dishwashers and utensils which make cooking fast and hassle-free even if the number of people is high. With the use of steam boilers, food can be prepared for 1,000 people in less than an hour. Hygiene of the food is crucial and is always kept in mind. All cooks wear masks, caps, gloves and aprons while cooking. Food thus prepared is carried in trolleys and served to people.

The total time taken to cook the entire menu is around 4 to 5 hours. The cooks begin cooking lunch at 6:00 am to be ready before 10:30 am for *Naivedyam*. The dinner takes approximately 3 hours to cook which begins at 5:00 pm. Time taken by the staff to serve each batch is approximately 20 to 25 minutes. After people finish eating, the area is cleaned for a new batch to come and eat. The whole process of serving and cleaning takes around 35 to 45 minutes per batch.

To ensure that the food served has adequate nutrition, green vegetables and spinach of various kinds are used. Two kinds of vegetable curries are prepared for lunch and dinner.

#### 10.2.5 Storage

The storage area is spacious and all dry items like rice, *dal* and other items are stored there. Vegetables are purchased twice every day from the market which are used up by the end of the day. The temple does not have cold storage.

#### 10.2.6 Human resources

The number of temple staff involved in *anna-daan* in slack and peak season is 141. This includes 11 kitchen managers, 38 cooks and quality control managers. Around 76 persons are involved in serving and cleaning. The number of hours they work varies between 8 and 12 hours per day. The staff gets one day as weekly off either on Sundays or Wednesdays on a rotational basis.



Figure 11.10.4 Puris ready to be served.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.10.5 Storage of raw materials.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

Table II.10.4 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Temple staff	Number of people	Hours of work
Senior kitchen manager	11	10
Quality control manager	6	8
Cooks	38	9
Cleaners	30	8
Serving	46	9
Watchman	10	12

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 10.2.7 Management

The temple administration vests with Mahavir Sthan Nyas Samiti which was constituted in 1987. The *Samiti* consists of 11 members constituting including a Secretary, Chief Executive, and other members. Acharya Kishore Kunal is the present Secretary and Chief Executive of the *Samiti*. Other members of the *Samiti* are retired Supreme Court and High Court judges. They are responsible for monitoring and planning the temple routines and functions. They also manage and monitor the activities of the hospitals affiliated with the temple. Any decision concerning the temple is done unanimously and is approved by the Secretary and all the members of the *Samiti*. The members of the *Samiti* have played

an important role in starting *anna-daan* at Sita Mani and *Ram* Mandir. The members are also responsible for preparing the budget and getting it approved.

#### 10.2.8 Finances

The annual income of the Mahavir Mandir is around Rs. 1,000 million. The temple has three major sources of income -- *Hundi*<sup>139</sup> donations, *Naivedyam*<sup>140</sup> and rituals. The temple committee of Mahavir Mandir prepares an annual budget covering the period January to March and allocates funds to various heads of expenditure. Likewise, fund is also allocated to meet expenditures on *anna-daan*. The amount allocated to *anna-daan* was Rs. 30 million in 2020 but due to countrywide lockdown during Covid-19 pandemic the funds could not be fully used. Monthly audit of the temple is done by a chartered accountant and temple's accountant.

#### 10.2.9 Quality of raw materials

Procurement of raw materials is done through tenders. People are appointed by the temple to select the raw materials to be procured. The temple follows the specifications mentioned in Food Safety Standards Act, 2006.

The vegetables are procured two times a day and are used up by the end of the day leaving no scope for wastage. Vegetables bought are washed with warm water before cooking. The cooks are required to take bath before cooking to ensure hygiene during preparation of food. All staff makes use of caps, gloves and aprons in the kitchen. Clean vessels are used for cooking. There are quality control officers appointed in the kitchen to supervise the cooking activities and ensure the maintenance of hygiene. The food is taken to the dining hall in trolleys. Servers wear gloves and use spoons and ladles are involved in serving.

#### 10.2.10 Technology adoption at kitchen

The kitchen is equipped with the latest equipment (such as steam boilers) to make the process of cooking and serving the food easier and less time-consuming. There are seven RO plants. LPG cylinders along with biogas are used for cooking. CCTV cameras are installed throughout the temple for surveillance and monitoring. The token system is used in the organising and managing the crowd.

#### 10.2.11 Waste management

The waste produced at the temple mainly comprises food leftovers and vegetable peels. On average 350 to 400 kg of wet waste is produced per day at the temple. This is fed into the biogas chamber. Some 20 to 30 kg of dry waste is produced per day which are picked up the municipal vehicle every morning.



Figure II.10.6 Kitchen equipment.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### Contact details

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### Website Referred

- 1 Mahavir Mandir. (n.d.). Retrieved from Mahavir Mandir Patna: [www.mahavirmandir.org](http://www.mahavirmandir.org) accessed on 10th December 2020

### Notes

- 135 *Madi* means physically clean. The word *madi* is used by Brahmin community to indicate that a person is bodily pure. To practice *Madi*, the Brahmins must wear clothes which are washed and remain untouched by anybody.
- 136 *Naivedyam* is the food offered to a Hindu deity as part of worship ritual.
- 137 *Arti* is a Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of prayer ritual, in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to deities.
- 138 Indian stew prepared with lentils, vegetables and spices.
- 139 Hundi is a **cash collection box** which is kept in most of the temples, to put the cash offerings by the devotees. Hundis would be locked, and Hundi income contributes a major source of income for the temples.
- 140 *Naivedyam* means food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual, before eating it. As such, tasting during preparation or eating the food before offering it to God is strictly forbidden.

## Case study 11 Ramnath Temple, Goa, India

Shivakumara Nayka\*, Urja Vinod Shet Shirsat†, S. G. Shreya‡  
and G. P. Vijaya§

### 11.1 Introduction

Sri Ramnath temple is in Ramnathim, Bandivade in Goa, India. *Ramnath* is a divine symbol of the unity of *Hari*<sup>141</sup> and *Hara*<sup>142</sup> and a compound word formed by the union of two words *Rama* and *Natha*, meaning Lord of Rama. Devotees believe that *Ramnath* is a symbol of the unity of *Hari* and *Hara* and that should be pleased with being *Kullavis* (associated families) of such divine. This temple belongs to the *Saraswat Brahmins*<sup>143</sup> (belonging to *Kavale Mutt* and *Kashi Mutt*) and *Daivadnya Brahmins*.<sup>144</sup> Almost like other temples, *Ramnath* too incorporates the system of *Panchayasthan*,<sup>145</sup> having 5 main deities namely - Sri Ramanath (chief deity), Shanteri, Kamakshi, Laxmi Narayan, Ganapati, Betal and Kalbhairav. The original temple of *Ramnath* in Goa was located in Loutolim, Goa. The idol of *Ramnathi* was shifted to the present site in the 16th century to prevent its destruction by the then Portuguese authorities. *Sri Ramanath* deity was originally installed 3,000 years ago but was reconstructed and refurbished in the year 1905.

#### Special occasions

The temple's most famous festival is the annual *Jatra*,<sup>146</sup> which is celebrated with great enthusiasm. The idol is taken around the temple in a procession. Around 2000 people visit the temple during the festival. Many local people and outsiders come to the temple to perform *pooja* during the celebration of *Navratri*,<sup>147</sup> *Dusherra*<sup>148</sup> and *Mahashivratri*.<sup>149</sup>

### 11.2 Anna-daan at Sri Ramnath Temple, Goa

*Anna-daan* was started 10 years ago to feed all the devotees who visit the temple. The programme is organised throughout the year. Free food coupons are issued to the pilgrims at around 12:30 pm every day.

#### 11.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

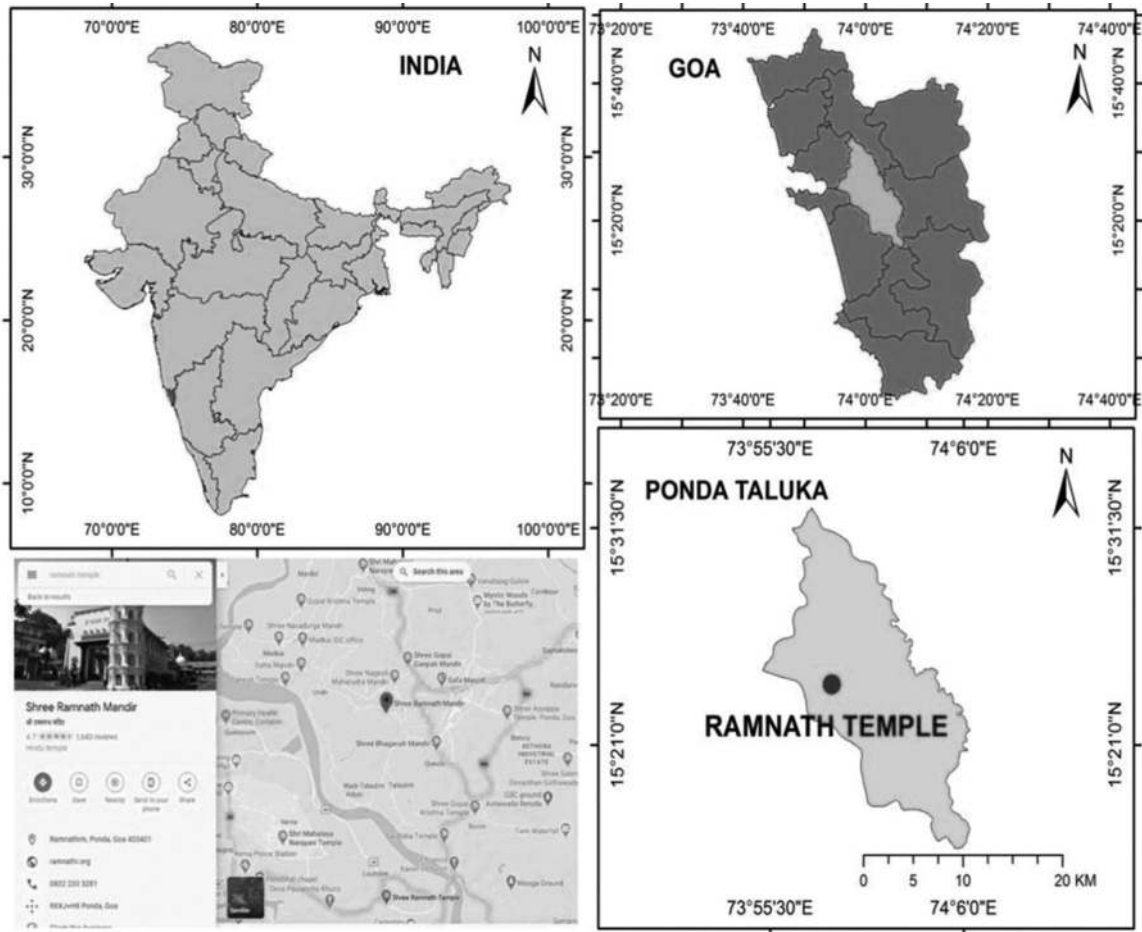
The main aim to perform *anna-daan* is to ensure that no one who visits the temple should go hungry irrespective of his caste and religion. *Anna prasadam* or *mahaprasadam* may

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Map II.11.1 Location of Sri Ramnath temple in Bandivade Ponda, Goa.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

be taken by any devotee visiting the temple in the afternoon. Although there are no specific rituals and prayers to be performed before cooking the meal. However, when ready the food is served to the deity first as *Naivedya*<sup>150</sup> and then to the devotees.

### 11.2.2 Number of devotees served

During normal days only lunch is served and at the time of peak season along with lunch, breakfast and dinner are also provided. The number of devotees served on a normal day is about 80–100 per day which increases to 2000 during the peak season. Lunch is served from 1 pm to 3 pm. The queue system is followed to manage the crowd.

The temple has one dining hall (*Anakshetra*) with a capacity of 80 to 100 devotees. The *anna-daan* hall is used regularly. In addition, the temple has two more halls that are used for *anna-daan* during the peak season.

Table II.11.1 Number of dining halls at Sri Ramnath temple

S. No.	Name of hall	Number of people served
1	Anashetra	Normal days (80–100)
2	Two other halls	Peak days (2000)

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 11.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The foods item served are rice, *dal*,<sup>151</sup> *bhaji*,<sup>152</sup> pickle,<sup>153</sup> *papad*<sup>154</sup> and one sweet. Special food is prepared during festival time. Around 8–10 kg of rice is cooked per day on normal days for 80–100 devotees; the number of devotees goes up to 2000 during peak season. Accordingly, the quantity of food increases. The devotees may have as much as *anna prasadam* as they want so long as they observe the stipulated temple time and do not waste the *prasadam* or the food.



Figure II.11.1 Overview of Sri Ramnath temple, Ramnathi, Goa.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Table II.11.2 Food item served as per meal at Sri Ramnath temple

<i>Breakfast peak season</i>	<i>Lunch normal season</i>	<i>Lunch peak-season</i>	<i>Dinner peak-season</i>
Tea/coffee	Plain rice	Plain rice	Plain rice
<i>Upma</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>Dal</i>	<i>Dal</i>	<i>Dal</i>
<i>Poha</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>Bhaji</i>	Two types of <i>Bhaji</i> 's	Two types of <i>Bhaji</i> 's
	Sweet dish	Sweet	Sweet

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Dish prepared from broken wheat.

<sup>b</sup> Dish prepared from flattened rice.

#### 11.2.4 Accountability of prasadam

The temple has a committee of eight members to look after *prasadam* management. Care is taken for accountability and transparency.

#### 11.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Since the kitchen is not modernised, food preparation takes longer. It does not even have some basic equipment like grinder, water filter, etc. So, the cooks start the preparation early in the morning. Rice cooking takes 40 minutes. To ensure hygiene, filtered water is used in cooking food.

#### 11.2.6 Nutrition

Nutrition is a very important aspect of *anna-daan*. It is the responsibility of the committee to use ingredients which make *prasadam* nutritious. The committee recommends the use of various ingredients, varieties of fresh vegetables and spices to enhance nutrition. The food menu/items remain the same except vegetables which differ daily and some ingredients may change on special days.

#### 11.2.7 Human resource

There are around 12 people involved in managing *anna-daan* at the temple. An elderly couple manages the cooking. Vegetables are cut and cleaned by three helpers who may be assigned other work also. Cleaning of the temple premises is undertaken by two cleaners; five volunteers serve the food. More volunteers are inducted during peak season to serve, manage the crowd and other work.

Table II.11.3 Human resource involved in *anna-daan*

<i>Work description</i>	<i>Number of people involved</i>
Cooks	2
Servant	3
Volunteers	5
Cleaners	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure 11.11.2 Pictures of dining hall and kitchen.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 11.2.8 Management

The temple is administered by a Managing Committee, which is elected by the *mahajans* (also called *kullavis*<sup>155</sup>) of the temple. The committee is elected for a period of three years. The present committee's duration is from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2022. Elected members are responsible for the overall management of the temple such as appointment of staff, procurement of raw material, purchase of kitchen and dining equipment, repairs, etc.

### 11.2.9 Finances

Two major sources of funds for the temple are donations from *kulavis* and devotees and interest earned on bank deposits. The donation from devotees or rent from the guest house is used to meet other expenditure of the temple besides *anna-daan*.

### 11.2.10 Quality of raw materials

All the raw materials – groceries and vegetables required for *anna-daan* are sourced from a nearby market. During festival time *kulavis* purchase vegetables and other products from the whole sale market.

### 11.2.11 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene is a high priority at the temple. Raw materials are stored in clean containers and the safety of some raw materials and vegetables is ensured by washing them twice. The management committee is responsible for the quality of food. Food is cooked in clean utensils and after cooking, utensils are washed and dried.

### 11.2.12 Technology adoption at kitchen

The kitchen of the temple is equipped with basic items. LPG cylinder is used for cooking the food. Huge vessels are used for the preparation of *dal*, rice, *bhaji*'s, sweet dish, etc. The kitchen also has basic things like steel plates, steel glasses, steel spoons and two gas stoves. At present, food is served in steel plates.

### 11.2.13 Waste Management

Food leftovers, if any, are distributed to helpers, cleaners, etc. of the temple or the indigent local people. The kitchen waste is dumped into a pit for composting.

## Contact details

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## Website referred

- 1 [https://epuja.co.in/product-details.php?puja\\_id=1301&page=Goa-Ramnathi-Shiva-Temple-Ramnathim-Ponda-Goa](https://epuja.co.in/product-details.php?puja_id=1301&page=Goa-Ramnathi-Shiva-Temple-Ramnathim-Ponda-Goa) accessed on 10th May 2021
- 2 <https://bhalavalikarsaraswat.org/Temple%20Ramnathi.html> accessed on 10th May 2021

## Notes

- 141 A Hindu deity *Vishnu*.
- 142 A Hindu deity *Shiva*.
- 143 A Hindu *Brahmin* (higher class) subcaste, who are spread from Kashmir in the North India to Konkan in the West India to coastal region of Karnataka and Kerala in South India.
- 144 A subgroup of the Hindu *Brahmin* (higher class) castes native to the *Konkan*.
- 145 A system of worship of 5 Gods in a temple.
- 146 Annual event that includes some rituals and held for some specific period and location.
- 147 A major Hindu festival celebrated usually in the month of November and dedicated to Goddess *Durga*.
- 148 Also called *Dussera* or *Vijayadashami*, in Hinduism, celebrated to mark the triumph of *Rama*, an avatar of *Vishnu*, over the 10-headed demon king *Ravana*.
- 149 A Hindu festival celebrated annually in honour of the god *Shiva*.
- 150 Food offered to the deity and later distributed to the devotees.
- 151 Spiced stew made from simmering the split lentils.
- 152 A spicy hot deep-fried snack.
- 153 Vegetables preserved and flavored in a solution of brine.
- 154 It is a thin, crisp, fried cracker.
- 155 Founding families of the temple.

## Case study 12 Sri Vijayadurga Temple, Goa, India

Shivakumara Nayka\*, G. P. Vijaya†, S. G. Shreya‡ and  
Urja Vinod Shet Shirsat§

### 12.1 Introduction

Sri Vijayadurga Temple is in Kerim Ponda, Goa State, India. Sri Vijayadurga temple is dedicated to Goddess Durga. The Vijayadurga temple was once located at Sankhwal with deities of Sri Shankleshwari Shantadurga and Sri Lakshmi Narasimha. The temple had to be shifted to Kerim Ponda, Goa, due to its possible destruction by the Portuguese. It is believed that the Goddess *Durga* cares for every devotee and loves them just like a mother



Figure 11.12.1 Overview of Sri Vijaya Durga Temple, Kerim Ponda, Goa.

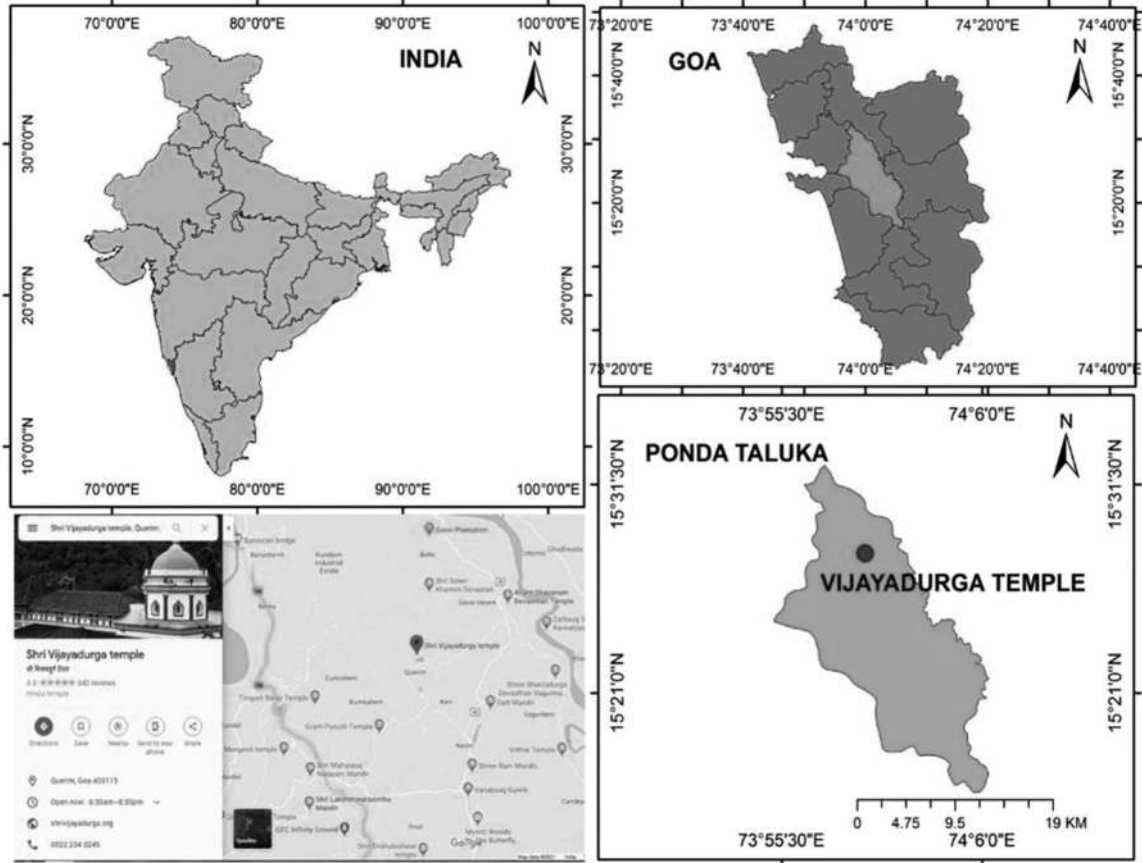
Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

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Map II.12.1 Location of Sri Vijaya Durga temple in Kerim Ponda, Goa.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

loves her child. It is also a popular belief that if a devotee worships the Goddess with sincerity and devotion and does good for the society then the deity showers her blessings on him and protects him.

*Puja* (ritualistic prayer) is performed every day at the temple with *Abhishek*<sup>156</sup> and *Naivedyam*<sup>157</sup> to the Goddess. *Navratri* is one of the festivals celebrated with great enthusiasm here. During this time the temple, the *palki*<sup>158</sup> and the chariot are decorated with garlands, flowers, lights and lamps.

## 12.2 Anna-daan at Sri Vijaya Durga Temple Goa

The temple started the *anna-daan yojana* in the year 2001 whereby *prasadam*<sup>159</sup> was made available to all the devotees who visited the temple. The *anna-daan* consists of free breakfast, lunch and dinner. Before 2001, some priests served food to devotees who came from far off places. During the normal days, usually there are 50 to 60 devotees visiting the temple every day. During the peak season or on special occasions such as *Utsav*<sup>160</sup> as many as 500 devotees turn up at the temple every day.

### 12.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

The temple management had started *anna-daan* tradition as a way of giving *prasadam* to devotees and to ensure that nobody leaves the temple hungry. Few devotees perform *anna-daan* to obtain the gracious blessings of the deity.

Although there are no specific rituals performed before preparing the *Naiyedyam*, once the meal is cooked it is first served as *Mahaprasadam* to the deity and then to devotees as *prasadam*.

### 12.2.2 Number of devotees served

The temple has two dining halls namely *Kalyan Mandapa* and *Agrashala Sabhagruha* for serving *anna-daan* to the devotees. It is also used by people as a place for organising weddings or engagement ceremonies to obtain the Goddess' blessings. Food is served in steel plates to the devotees.

Up to 100 devotees are provided meals every day at this temple. During festivals like *Navratri* around 400 to 500 devotees are given the meals. Majority of the devotees visiting the temple are from Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Table II.12.1 Number of dining halls at Sri Vijaya Durga temple

Sr. No.	Name of hall	Number of people served
1	<i>Kalyan Mandapa</i>	Normal days (80–100)
2	<i>Agrashala Sabhagruha</i>	Peak days (500)

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 12.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

As the number of devotees visiting the temple the quantity of food prepared is not much. Around 4-5 kg of rice is cooked per day. In the peak season 25 to 30 kg of rice and around 10 kg of the vegetable curry (locally called *bhaji*) are prepared. Leftover food is usually distributed among villagers and school children.

Table II.12.2 Food items served as per meal at Sri Vijaya Durga temple

Breakfast peak season	Lunch normal season	Lunch peak season	Dinner peak season
Tea/coffee	Plain rice	Plain rice	Plain rice
<i>Upma</i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>Dal</i>	<i>Dal</i>	<i>Dal</i>
<i>Poha</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>Bhaji</i> <sup>c</sup>	Two types of <i>bhajis</i>	Two types of <i>bhajis</i>
<i>Idli</i> , <sup>d</sup> <i>Chutney</i> <sup>e</sup> <i>Sambar</i> <sup>f</sup>	Pickles	Pickles	Pickles
	Sweet	Sweet	Sweet

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Dish made from processed wheat.

<sup>b</sup> Dish made from beaten rice.

<sup>c</sup> Fried crispy dish.

<sup>d</sup> Rice dumplings.

<sup>e</sup> Spicy side dish made from coconut and spices.

<sup>f</sup> Made from lentils, vegetables and spices.

#### 12.2.4 Accountability of prasadam

The temple has an 8-member committee to look after the management and accountability of *prasadam* (including its quantity). Only the best quality and nutritious food is served to the devotees. The devotees can eat as much of *Mahaprasadam* as they want provided they do not waste. Wastage is believed to be a disrespect to the *prasadam*.

#### 12.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

*Anna Mahaprasadam* is prepared before 12:30 pm as it must be served as *Naivedyam* to the goddess. Kitchen staff gets the breakfast ready between 7:00 am and 8:30 am. At 10:00 am they start preparing the lunch which is ready by 12:30 pm. The preparation for dinner starts at 6:00 pm. Compared to lunch, dinner takes much less time to cook as there are fewer people to be fed.

#### 12.2.6 Nutrition

It is the responsibility of the temple committee to ensure that the *anna-daan* is adequately nutritional. Cooks use a variety of ingredients, fresh vegetables, fruits and groceries. These items are changed seasonally. Ingredients in food prepared on special occasions are different from those prepared for *anna-daan* daily.

#### 12.2.7 Human resources

The total number of people who are involved in the preparation of *prasadam* is 15 comprising one main chef, one assistant chef, four helpers to cut vegetables and the remaining seven serve the food and out of them two assist in cleaning the halls. During festivals, when a large number of devotees visit the temple, the committee seeks the help of villagers for cutting vegetables and for serving food. Interestingly, many young boys volunteer to control the crowd during the festive times. The kitchen staff gets breaks in between to take rest.

Table II.12.3 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

<i>Work description</i>	<i>Number of people</i>
Cooks	2
Helpers	4
Volunteer	5
Cleaners	2

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

#### 12.2.8 Management

The temple committee is a decision-making body. It determines budget for all major activities such as manpower, kitchen modernisation, etc. All such decisions are finally approved by the chairperson after discussing them with committee members. Monthly expenditure on *anna-daan* is also decided by the committee.

### 12.2.9 Finances

Donations from the devotees, are used for various purposes such as maintenance of the temple, halls, *Utsav* as well as for *anna-daan*. Surplus funds are deposited in bank as fixed deposit. Interest on the deposit is used by the committee on various heads. Some devotees donate ingredients for the *anna-daan* or *mahaprasadam*.

### 12.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Concerning the quality of raw material used, the temple authority follows the standard procedures of procuring all raw materials and vegetables from the *Bagayatdar*<sup>161</sup> situated at Ponda Taluka. The ordered materials are delivered at the temple. Sometimes vegetables are ordered from the horticulture department of Goa government.

### 12.2.11 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are properly monitored by the temple committee and abides by the rules framed in Food Safety Standards Act of 2006. Safety of food is ensured by washing the vegetables properly, removing the husk and stones from rice, *dal*, etc. Utensils, food chopper, and other items used in cooking are washed and dried properly before using them again. The kitchen is cleaned before and after the preparation of food.

### 12.2.12 Technology adoption at kitchen

The kitchen has basic facilities like mixer grinders. While the solar panels have reduced the electricity cost, they prolong the cooking process as the panels take time to heat. As a result the solar panels have been discarded and the temple authority has opted for LPG. Sometimes biogas is also used. There are storerooms for raw materials, utensils of daily use and big vessels which are used during *Utsav*.<sup>162</sup>

### 12.2.13 Waste Management

Every care is taken to prepare food in adequate quantity to avoid waste. Leftover food, if any, is given to the villagers or sometimes to school children. Waste generated is deposited in the bio pits for making biogas. Dry waste is put in dump yards or dustbins which are emptied by the municipal staff on alternate days.

## Contact details

Sampada Sandip Jaan  
Sri Vijaya Durga Sansthan  
Kerim Ponda  
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Phone: 08322340498





Figure II.12.2 Overview of dining hall and kitchen.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### Website referred

- 1 <http://www.shrivijayadurga.org/> accessed on 15th May 2021
- 2 <https://blog.parrikar.com/2017/11/24/vijayadurga/> accessed on 15th May 2021

### Notes

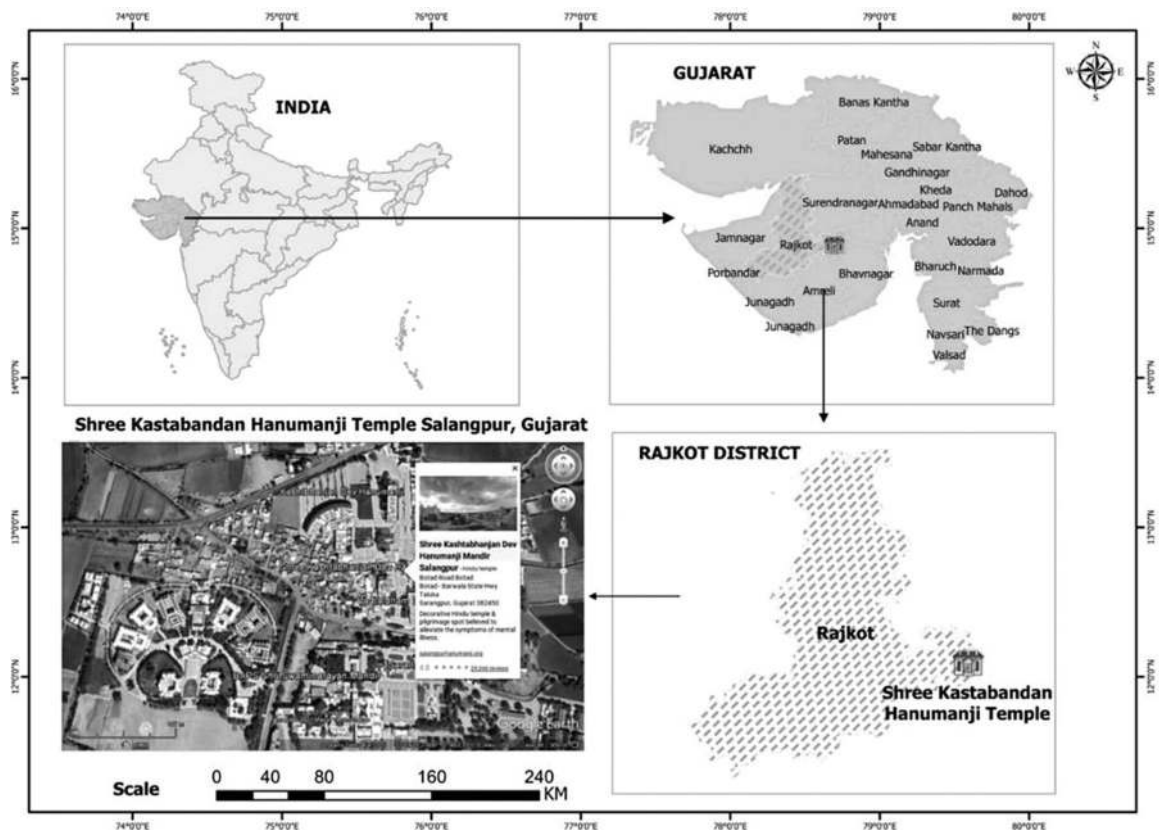
- 156 A ritual of purifying and cleansing the deity during worship.
- 157 Food offered to the deity.
- 158 Sedan chair.
- 159 A devotional offering made to a god, typically consisting of food that is later shared among devotees.
- 160 Festival.
- 161 One of the largest yards in Goa that enables users to buy and sell agricultural products.
- 162 Celebrations.

## Case study 13 Sri Kashtbhanjan Hanuman Dev Mandir, Salangpur, Gujarat, India

M. V. Lavanya\*

### 13.1 Introduction

Sri Kashtbhanjan (crusher of sorrows) Hanuman Dev Mandir<sup>163</sup> is dedicated to the Lord Hanuman,<sup>164</sup> an incarnation of Lord *Shiv*<sup>165</sup> and an exemplification of strength, devotion, and perseverance. The temple is located at Salangpur, Gujarat, India. The main deity Hanuman is a divine companion of the God Ram<sup>166</sup> and is one of the central characters of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*.<sup>167</sup> The temple is big and spacious with an impressive and unique statue of Lord Hanuman and it stands in a very pious atmosphere which transmits positive vibes to all.



Map II.13.1 Location of Sri Kashtbhanjan Hanuman Dev Mandir Salangpur, Gujarat.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

\* Project Scientist, Karnataka State Remote Sensing Application Centre, Bangalore. Email: lavanyasvyas@gmail.com

### Significance of the temple

The image of Hanuman was installed by Sadguru<sup>168</sup> Gopalanand Swami on *Ashwini vadipancham -savant* in 1905 and is believed to be powerful that a mere look at it by people affected by evil spirits renders them cured. The temple is blessed and proclaimed as a place which produces peace in people. Besides, the temple also has a holy well whose holy and sacred water people collect for various reasons.

### Special Poojas<sup>169</sup> or peak season of the temple

The temple is known for its special role of getting rid of evil spirits and treating mental illnesses and other disorders. Tuesdays and Saturdays are the designated days for such special rituals (as people believe that those days are dedicated to Lord Hanuman).



Figure II.13.1 Diety Sri Kashtbhanjan Hanuman Dev.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure II.13.2 Main temple.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

There are rituals associated to be performed alongside.<sup>170</sup> Given the popularity of the temple which produced deep devotion and strong faith, devotees through the temple and *anna-daan* served to these devotees is massive. Specific to *anna-daan*, during *rajbhog arti* performed from 10:30 am to 11:00 am, royal offerings of the mid-day meal are made to the deity and served to devotees later.

### 13.2 Anna-daan at Sri Kashtbhanjan Hanuman Dev Mandir, Salangpur, Gujarat

*Anna-daan*<sup>171</sup> has been practised since the time the temple came into existence. As we know, food is the major component at many pilgrimage centres across India, including Salangpur Hanuman Mandir, the temple trust has taken the responsibility of performing *anna-daan* and providing good quality food to all devotees visiting the temple.

#### 13.2.1 Spiritual Components of Anna-daan

*Anna-daan* is carried out for auspicious and philanthropic reasons. People belonging to all social classes are served free food in the form of *prasad*<sup>172</sup> with utmost devotion.

#### 13.2.2 Rituals and practices

Before preparing the food, the temple's head cook conducts a ritual and offers prayers to the idol placed inside the kitchen. When the food is prepared, it is offered to the main deity.

#### 13.2.3 Number of devotees served

Food is served three times a day. Breakfast is served between 9.00 am & 10.30 am, lunch between 12.30 pm & 3.30 pm and dinner between 7.00 pm & 8.30 pm (Table II.13.1). On normal days temple receives around 2,000 devotees and on peak days it goes up to 60,000.

Table II.13.1 Time of *anna-daan*

Time		Food served
Breakfast	9.00 am–10.30 am	Tea, <i>poha</i> , <i>upma</i>
Lunch	12.30 pm–3.30 pm	<i>Kshera</i> , <i>dal</i> , rice, potato curry, beans curry, <i>roti</i>
Dinner	7.00 pm–8.30 pm	<i>Roti</i> , <i>kadi</i> , rice

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

There are two dining halls in the temple premises; one is devoted to the general public and the other is for the VIP and temple trustees. The VIP dining hall is located on the first floor with a seating capacity of 60 members, whereas the capacity of the dining hall for the public is for around 5,000. Food, served as buffet system, is the same for all. Devotees can sit at the dining tables or on the ground to receive the food.

### 13.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

*Upma*<sup>173</sup> and *poha*<sup>174</sup> are served for breakfast, whereas *kshera*,<sup>175</sup> *dal*, rice, Potato curry, beans curry, *rotis*<sup>176</sup> are served for lunch and for dinner it is *roti*, *kadi*<sup>177</sup> and rice. Also, a Gujarati sweet called *sukadi* is available as *prasad* at temple counters for a nominal price.

The details of the quantity of food cooked per day are given in Table II.13.2. The type of food items and the volume prepared varies depending on the season and availability of required ingredients.

Table II.13.2 Total volume of food served per day

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	Around 50 – 60 kg	Around 20 quintals
Sweet	50 kg	150 kg
Roti/chapati	50 kg	200 kg
Dal/kadi	500 litres	1300 litres
Vegetable curry	200 litres	1000 litres

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

The temple runs a *goshala*. Milk yielded by the high breed of cows is used for preparing *prasad*.

### 13.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The management of the temple has issued strict protocols to all the *swamijis*<sup>178</sup> regarding the accountability of *prasadam*, and these are to be followed in all sincerity. Currently, Kothari Sri Hari Prasad Swami takes care of the kitchen, dining hall, and the decorum of the temple.

### 13.2.6 Time is taken for preparing food

Daily the preparation of *anna-daan* begins at 6.30 am and in about three hours the food is prepared. Serving starts at sharp 9.00 am. Simultaneously, the preparation of lunch begins while the breakfast is being served. The temple staff in the kitchen is meticulous and fast in their duties. The dinner preparation is well planned and around 4 hours are required to get ready for serving. The process of cooking is simple and fast as the kitchen is equipped with the latest machines like boilers and *roti*<sup>179</sup> making machines.

### 13.2.7 Human resources

There are 3 supervisors -- one each for cooking, serving, and cleaning. In the VIP hall, there is one supervisor. The food served is the same for all. In the serving section, there are 20 paid staff and some volunteers from the village. Volunteers are not involved in cooking or cleaning. There are about 7-8 ladies who prep the vegetables and fruits. They also do the cleaning of the groceries like cereals and rice. The quality of the food prepared is checked by the *swamijis* and then served to all upon their approval.

The kitchen staff works on shift basis i.e. from 6.00 am to 1.00 pm and from 1.30 pm to 9.00 pm. Another batch of staff handles the kitchen and the dining hall. There are about 10 watchmen for the entire temple complex.

Table II.13.3 Human resources

Staff	Dining hall for public	Dining hall for VIP's
Managers	3	1
Cooks	13	—
Serving staff	15	3
Cleaning	19	1
Watchmen	10	—

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

### 13.2.8 Management

The temple Kashtbhanjan Hanuman Mandir is the sub-branch of Vadtal Dham Trust, Gujarat. The trust has 6 members who are responsible for various activities of the temple and work under the guidance of the main *swamiji*.

Among the several social causes Rakesh Prasad, Mahant Purani Vishwaprasad Das and Hari Prakash Das have espoused, food distribution during the pandemic deserves a special mention as it has entered into Golden Book of World Records as the largest food campaign of its kind. During Mar 22 - Jun 24, 2020 a consortium of 77 non-profit organisations distributed and served food to 18,45,796 indigent Corona affected people. Sri Kashtbhanjan Dev Hanuman ji Mandir, Sarangpur participated in the campaign.

### 13.2.9 Quality of raw materials

The raw material is procured by the quality manager himself and no tenders are called to source it. The temple board has farmland where different types of vegetables and fruits are grown. 300 tins of ghee (each weighing 10 kg) are sourced directly from Amul factory every six months. Quality checks are conducted on regular basis at the warehouse of the



Figure II.13.3 Award.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure 11.13.4 Deity.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.



Figure 11.13.5 Performing puja.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

suppliers. The temple staff does not procure all the ingredients from one source; instead it is diversified as monopoly creates low quality in the supply chain. All materials are FSSAI certified.

#### 13.2.10 Food safety

The vegetables and fruits grown on the temple land are organic. If there is shortage in supply, the village vendors supply the vegetables. All kitchen staff wear caps and gloves while preparing and serving food. The vessels used are manually cleaned with hot water before cooking. Vessels, chopping boards, machines and even the dishwashing soaps are of superior quality. The devotees clean the plates after eating which are sterilised by the cleaning staff before reusing. Food Safety is ensured by abiding with the provisions of the Food Safety Standards Act, 2006.

#### 13.2.11 Waste management

In the morning the helpers peel and cut the vegetables required for the entire day. Thus, most of the waste is produced in the morning and discarded frequently. The organic waste from the kitchen and animal dung are used in the biogas plant. The leftover food at the kitchen is fed to the cows of temple's *goshala*. Inedible portions are used to make compost

for the temple farmland. The cow dung cakes are used as fuel. The dry waste is purchased by the garbage collector. Thus, zero-waste method is followed to keep the complex clean. The maintenance of the yard is exceptionally clean and monitored meticulously.

### Contact details

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 Email: shreesalangpur@gmail.com, deeprsoni131113@gmail.com  
 Website: www.salangpurhanumanji.org

### Website referred

- 1 www.youtube.com accessed on 13th August 2021
- 2 www.salangpurhanumanji.org accessed on 15th August 2021
- 3 www.tripadvisor.com accessed on 16th August 2021
- 4 www.patrika.com accessed on 10th August 2021
- 5 https://www.vadtalmandir.org accessed on 16th August 2021

### Notes

- 163 Temple.
- 164 A semi-divine being of monkey-like form, the faithful follower of *Ram*.
- 165 Great God as per Hindu belief.
- 166 One of the most widely worshipped Hindu deities.
- 167 One of the largest ancient epics in world literature.
- 168 The 'true guru' in Sanskrit.
- 169 Worship.
- 170 *Mangala arti* takes place at 5:30 am by waving lighted camphor in circles around the deity. The deities offer the first darshan of the day, signifying the auspicious beginning of the day for devotees. *Shangaraarti* is at 7:00 am is performed every Tuesday and Thursday mornings. *Shangar* means adornments. During this *arti*, the deity is dressed and adorned with ornaments. *Sandhya arti* is performed during the evening. Devotees gather to seek the darshan of the deity and offer their prayers during the *Sandhya arti*. Later, *Shayan arti* is performed, after which the *darshan* is closed for the devotees. It signifies that the deity has retired for the night.
- 171 Giving of food, supporting, maintaining.
- 172 A devotional offering made to a god, typically consisting of food that is later shared among devotees.
- 173 Dish prepared with coarse wheat granules.
- 174 Dish prepared with beaten rice.
- 175 Sweet made from processed wheat.
- 176 Indian bread made from wheat flour.
- 177 Indian dish made from gram flour.
- 178 A Hindu religious leader.
- 179 Bread, especially a flat round bread cooked on a griddle.



## Case study 14 Baps Swaminarayan Temple, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

Lakshmi Sumana\*

### 14.1 Introduction

Sri Swaminarayan Temple (also known as Akshardham Temple) is a shrine dedicated to Narayan Dev located in the Kalupur area of Ahmedabad, India. The temple was built in 1822 under the guidance of Swaminarayan, who was the founder of the Swaminarayan sect of Hinduism.

The temple is known for its architectural splendor with extraordinary beauty entrenched with vibrant colours and carvings. The Swaminarayan Temple depicts the spectacular illustration of the architecture from the nineteenth century. Within the sanctum, the deities are festooned with grandiose ornamentations and stunning fabrics. The sculptures of the Lord were installed in the sanctum on February 24, 1822 in the presence of about 50,000 pilgrims from across the country. More than a million people visit the temple on the day after *Diwali*<sup>180</sup> for *darshan*,<sup>181</sup> indicating the popularity of this great temple. The temple is also a well-known tourist place as it is a heritage temple in Gujarat. As a result, it is visited by people other than the devotees. Since this is a religious place, dress code is given importance wherein, the traditional dress must be worn by devotees. Besides, use of tobacco/liquour is prohibited.

The personal belongings of *Swaminarayan* are also conserved in the temple premises. The temple is popular for its morning *arti*<sup>182</sup> or prayer service. The temple complex is well equipped; it has a multi-storey guesthouse and a medical clinic within its premises to meet medical emergencies of the pilgrims. Besides, this temple is also the headquarters of the *Nar Narayan Gadi*. Hence, it is a more valued temple among the devotees. The temple is adorned with the Nar Narayan Dev, Radhakrishna Dev, Dharmadev, Bhakti Mata and Harikrishna deities. The temple is skillfully engraved out of Burma teak wood, while the multifarious elements in the carvings of this temple make it beguilingly a work of art.

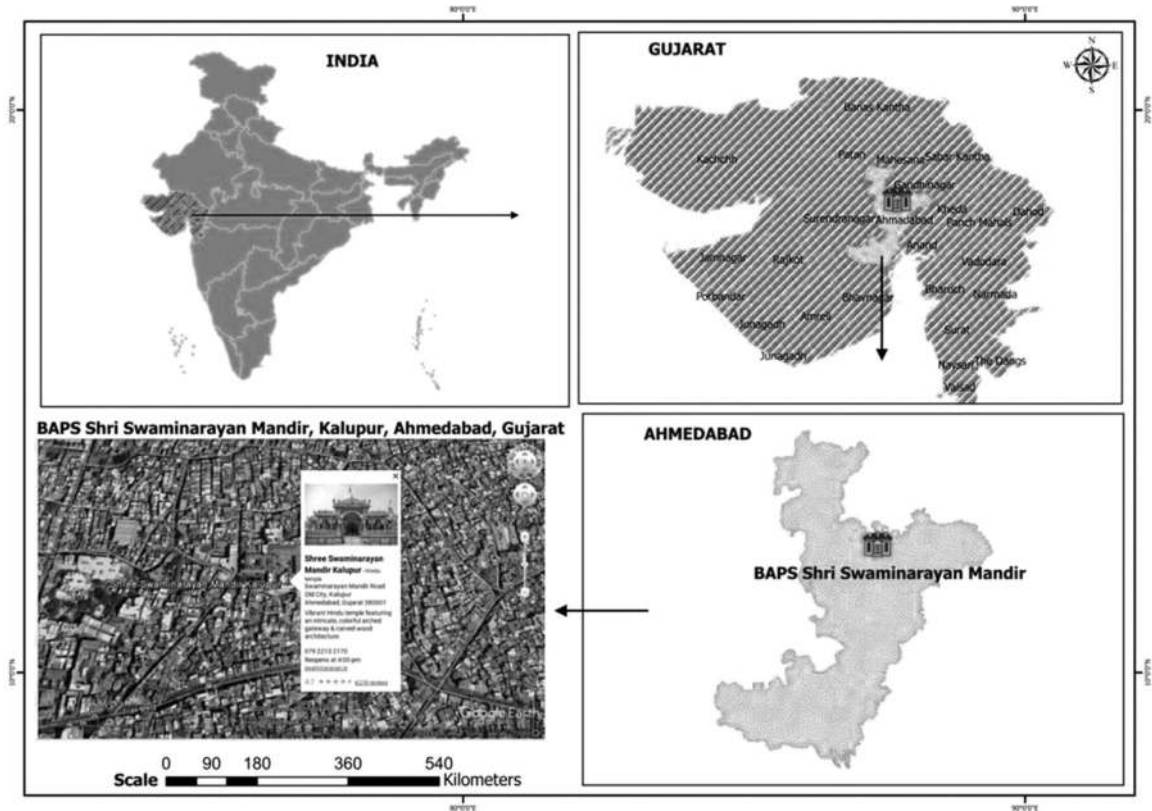
### 14.2 Anna-daan at BAPS Swaminarayan Temple, Ahmedabad

All devotees visiting the temple are served food or *prasad*. There is no discrimination of caste, creed or religion.

#### 14.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

It is a philanthropic act for devotees and considered auspicious. Besides, it is also believed that donating to food charity brings good luck. Hence, devotees donate generously. Food, when consumed by the devotees, brings a sense of satisfaction and results in

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Map II.14.1 Location of BAPS Swaminarayan Temple, Ahmedabad.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

positive thoughts and outcome. Few devotees also believe that they will get *punya*.<sup>183</sup> Besides, few of them feel that serving the hungry is an indication that god is merciful.

#### 14.2.2 Rituals and prayers

The *prasad* is called the *rajbhog* while the kitchen is called the *santrasoi*. Food is offered to the Lord before serving. Prayers are offered before cooking food and before serving the food to the devotees. Besides, food is served 4 times to the Lord every day. They use only Lord *thaal*<sup>184</sup> and a special hymn is sung as prayer (*prarthana*) requesting the Lord to accept the food. This special hymn is put on the loudspeaker so that it is heard by everyone in the temple complex. The devotees across locations can pray as soon as they hear the hymn. Every evening discourses (*pravachana*) or story telling sessions (*katha*) about the Lord are held during which, among other things, the significance, meaning and value of *prasad* and *anna-daan* are explained to the devotees.

#### 14.2.3 Number of devotees served

The dining halls are allocated for a specific section of people and the number of people served is mentioned in Table II.14.1. Food is served three times a day: breakfast (at 8.00 am), lunch (between 12 noon & 1.00 pm) and dinner (between 7 pm & 9 pm). Tea is



Figure II.14.1 BAPS Swaminarayan Temple and the deity, Ahmedabad.

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

served at 4.00 pm. There is one common temple for both men and women while there is an exclusive temple for women where *sabha*,<sup>185</sup> *satsang*,<sup>186</sup> *bhajan*<sup>187</sup> are held. In 2018 an orphanage *Aangan* was also started. Food is distributed in all these places as well.

Table II.14.1 Dining halls and food served

Sr. No.	Name	People reserved	Approximate number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	General dining hall	General public	6,000	10,000, people are served 5000–6000 (During Purnima <sup>a</sup> ) 3000–4000 during fasting (varieties of food are served during fasting)

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Purnima is full moon.

#### 14.2.4 Quantity of food cooked and items served

Food served includes *laddoo*,<sup>188</sup> *dhokla*,<sup>189</sup> *mohantal*,<sup>190</sup> *boondi laddoo*,<sup>191</sup> *subji*,<sup>192</sup> *roti*,<sup>193</sup> and *puri*,<sup>194</sup> *Swaminarayan roti* (layered with ghee), rice, *dal*,<sup>195</sup> and *chhaas*.<sup>196</sup> The festival recipe is different with 2 additional sweets, *puri*, *roti*, *gota*,<sup>197</sup> *pathra*,<sup>198</sup> two kinds of *prasad*, *dal bhaati*<sup>199</sup> and *payasam*.<sup>200</sup> Fasting *prasadam* is sweet (*siro*) and includes *pharari roti*, *pharari subji*, *khichdi*<sup>201</sup>, and *pharari khadi* on *Ekadashi*.<sup>202</sup> The quantity of ingredients is as per the crowd and requirements.

Table II.14.2 Total volume of ingredients used per day

Ingredients	Quantities (kg)
Rice	300
Tur dal	150
Spices	5 (chilies), 2 ( <i>garam masala</i> )
Oil	100 litres
Ghee	4 Litres
Sweet ghee	30
Milk	250
Curd	200
Kathor	15

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

#### 14.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

It is well managed and monitored by the temple administration. People are provided with sufficient quantity of *prasadam* on the temple premises. However, they cannot carry the food or *prasadam* home.

#### 14.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

Breakfast takes 2 hours to cook. Preparation of lunch and dinner takes 4 hours each. The time taken to serve the food around 20 minutes. Queue system is followed to manage the crowd. Cleaning is carried out frequently to maintain hygiene. Sometimes, during huge crowd, buffet system is followed where devotees eat either standing or sitting.

Table II.14.3 Time taken for preparing food

<i>Time taken for cooking</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Breakfast	2 hours
Lunch	4 hours
Dinner	4 hours
<b>Time taken for serving</b>	20 minutes
Serving time per batch	15 minutes
<b>Time taken for cleaning</b>	1 hour
Cleaning time (in minutes)	1 hour totally, they clean in 5 minutes for every batch

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

Ingredients for cooking are taken out daily as per the requirement and order of the management.

#### 14.2.7 Human resources

Around 145 people are working in the *anna-daan* section of the temple. During peak season, volunteers are involved for maintaining the large number of devotees. There are seven kitchen managers called *vannari-sant*, around 40 cooks who work in shifts. Cleaning staff are 39 in number (18 for kitchen, 11 in supply, 10 in cleaning department). Apart from this, there are 9 people working on various activities relating to *anna-daan*, 6 working for issuing receipts for the donations received towards *anna-daan* and 15 are in the maintenance section. In addition to the regular staff, there are volunteers involved in cleaning and cutting vegetables, cleaning utensils and dining hall, serving food and managing the crowd. It is amazing to know the temple is celebrating completion of 200 years and it is expected to involve around 6000 volunteers to serve at the temple.

Table II.14.4 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

<i>Regular paid staff (temple staff)</i>	<i>Number of staff</i>
Senior kitchen manager	7
Quality control manager	2
Cooks	40
Cleaners	39
Servers	11 people as per the batch
Watchmen	7
Others/Administrative employees	36

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation, 2021.

The working hours are between 5 am and 8 pm. All the staff of the temple work based on the requirements of the day.

#### 14.2.8 Management

Total number of board members are 7 (one *Dharma Guru* and 6 trustees) and are called as temple *Mahanth*, temple *Kotari*, and *Bandari*. Mostly, the decisions (including *prasadam* distribution) are taken by *Dharma Guru*, in consultation with the members. The expenditure incurred is paid by the Trustee Board.

#### 14.2.9 Waste management

Since food is cooked based on a guesstimate of the number of visitors likely to visit on a day, it is unlikely to result in excess food. However, leftover food, if any, is distributed to the people living in the slums near the temple.

#### 14.2.10 Key issues/requests

During festival days, it is difficult to manage the crowd. Extra security personnel are required to manage and guide the public through queues, in and out of the temple premises.

### Contact details

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### Temple address

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Mobile: 079 2213 2170  
Telephone: +91-79-2562-5151  
Fax: +91-79-2562-4405  
E-mail: info@swaminarayan.org  
Open hours: 5• am–12 pm, 4 pm–8 pm

### Website referred

- 1 <https://swaminarayan.in/temples/asia/117-shree-swaminarayan-temple-kalupur-ahmedabad> accessed on 18th September 2021

## Notes

- 180 Hindu festival celebrated by lighting the lamps, generally symbolizing the victory of light over darkness.
- 181 An opportunity to see the deity.
- 182 Light offering to god.
- 183 It is referred to as a virtue that contributes benefits in this and the next birth of the human.
- 184 A way to express devotion to *god* and thanksgiving for the food he has blessed us with.
- 185 Public meeting of the group.
- 186 *Satsang*-Sanskrit word that means “gathering together for the truth”.
- 187 Devotional song.
- 188 Sphere-shaped sweet originating from the Indian subcontinent prepared from flour, sugar and ghee.
- 189 Vegetarian dish found mainly in the Indian state of Gujarat. It is prepared with a fermented batter of rice, *urad dal*, and gram flour.
- 190 Traditional Gujarati sweet dish made of *besan*, ghee, sugar and nuts.
- 191 Sphere shaped sweet dish made up from *besan*, ghee, sugar and nuts.
- 192 Vegetable curry.
- 193 Indian bread.
- 194 Small, round piece of bread made of unleavened wheat flour, deep-fried.
- 195 Sauce made from lentils and spices.
- 196 Yogurt based drink popular across the Indian subcontinent.
- 197 Traditional Gujarati snack recipe made with finely chopped fenugreek leaves and chickpea flour.
- 198 Savoury snack from the state of Gujarat, India.
- 199 An Indian dish of lentils and hard wheat rolls.
- 200 A rice pudding prepared from rice, vermicelli, sugar and ghee.
- 201 Dish in South Asian cuisine made of rice and lentils.
- 202 The 11th day after the full moon and the 11th day after the new moon.

## Case study 15 Mata Mansa Devi Temple, Panchkula, Haryana, India

B. R. Hemalatha\*

### 15.1 Introduction

Mata Mansa Devi is a temple dedicated to goddess *Mansa Devi*, a form of *shakti*,<sup>203</sup> located in the Panchkula district of Haryana state in India. The temple is spread over about 100 acres of the Shivalik foothills, Chandigarhand Panchkula, India. The temple was built by Maharaja Gopal Singh, the king of Mani Majra<sup>204</sup> during the period of 1811–15. It is one of the prominent *shakti* temples<sup>205</sup> of North India comprising seven goddesses – namely, Mata Mansa Devi, Naina Devi, Jawalamukhi, Chintpurni, Brajeshwari, Chamunda Devi, and Jayanti Devi. Thousands of devotees visit the shrine from various parts of the country and during *Navratri*,<sup>206</sup> this number rises to lakhs every day during the nine auspicious nights.<sup>207</sup> The temple is under the jurisdiction of the Government of Haryana and is run by Sri Mata Mansa Devi Shrine Board Panchkula Trust (SMMDSB).

\* Project Manager, Borderless Access Pvt Ltd, Bangalore. Email: hemalathamesh85@gmail.com

The temple is one of the most popular temples of North India, with huge donations received from devotees. During the financial year 2018–19, the donation collected was Rs. 20.55 crore. *Navratri Mela*<sup>208</sup> is a special occasion celebrated in the temple for nine nights in November every year during which lakhs of devotees visit the temple.

## 15.2 Anna-daan at Mata Mansa Devi Temple

*Anna-daan* was started in the 1980s. Initially, it was started by local Panchkula's social workers who diligently prepared the food at home and distributed it at the temple premises to the devotees as *prasad*.<sup>209</sup> With the increase in the number of devotees, cooking was shifted to the temple. Currently, *anna-daan* is performed daily throughout the year. *Anna-daan* at Mansa Devi is undertaken by a trust consisting of 12 members. There are three communities – (1) Mata Manasvi Sevak Dal (belonging to the Wadala community), (2) Mata Mansa Devi Charitable Trust, and (3) Mahamayi Mata Mansa Devi. These three trusts work in separate areas. Mata Manasvi Sevak Dal works in the Mata Mansa Devi temple, while the Mahamayi Mata Mansa Devi works for the Patiala mandir. The temple has three dining halls, locally called *Bhandara*, and 5,000 people can be accommodated at a time. These dining halls are kept open from 8 am to 10 pm on regular days, and from 8 am to 12 am on special occasions.

*Anna-daan* was started as a replication of the *langar*<sup>210</sup> system, which is practised in *gurdwaras*<sup>211</sup> to provide free food to devotees coming from Punjab and other parts of cities. Food is also provided to the poor people, *sadhus*,<sup>212</sup> *sants*,<sup>213</sup> and *mahatma*<sup>214</sup> who cannot afford to have food on their own.

### 15.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

The main spiritual component for *anna-daan* is to fulfil the wishes of the people called *mannat*. People strongly believe that *anna-daan* is very auspicious and when performed, Goddess will bless them with good luck, health, and wealth. The food served is treated as *prasad* and when the poor are fed, they bless the donors. For instance, people have a belief that if they feed the poor on their children's birthdays, it will bless the children with a happy life.

### 15.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Before serving the public, *mantra jaap*<sup>215</sup> and *arti*<sup>216</sup> are performed for the goddess, followed by the offering of the food (*bhog*) to the goddess at around 11:00–11:30 am. Later, *bhog* is served to *Kanyas*,<sup>217</sup> whom they believe the embodiment of goddesses or Devi Swaroop.<sup>218</sup> This has been a daily ritual for the last 40 years. However, there is a need to highlight the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* to create awareness among the devotees.

### 15.2.3 Number of devotees served

The number of devotees served varies. On average, 2,000 devotees visit the temple on weekdays, whereas on weekends, the number of devotees doubles (Table II.15.1). Annually, the temple authority serves approximately 480,000 to 528,000 people on weekdays. Over the years, there has been a gradual increase in the number of devotees served.



Table II.15.1 Number of devotees served

Sr. no	Details	Actual numbers served
1	Daily	2,000
2	Weekly	4,000
3	On special occasions	10,000–12,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

There are three kitchens in the temple complex, run by three registered bodies. During special occasions, more temporary halls are arranged by private parties after seeking permission from the board.<sup>219</sup> Each can accommodate 2,000 people. *Anna-daan* is held from 11 am to 8 pm. There is a break for 1–2 hours, during which dining halls are cleaned. On special occasions, food serving is extended up to 11 pm.

#### 15.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The menu is healthy and nutritious and usually does not vary. The common menu served includes *kadhi chawal*, a popular rice-based dish of North India with thick gravy; *roti*;<sup>220</sup> *sabzi*;<sup>221</sup> and *halwa*, a sweet served as dessert. The menu is served for the whole day, starting from 11:30 am to till 8:00 pm. However, no breakfast is served.

The queue system is observed to serve food; hence, orderliness is maintained, even with such a huge number of devotees. The dining hall is cleaned thrice a day to ensure hygiene. The initial cleaning is carried out before starting *anna-daan*, the second during the rest period, and finally after the feeding is closed.

Table II.15.2 Quantity of food prepared and served per day

Food items	Normal season in kg	Peak season
Plain rice	50	100
Roti/chapati	1,000 numbers	2,500 numbers
Dal	50	100
Besan	50	100
Suji	40	80
Desi ghee	1 tin	2 to 3 tins
Halwa	60 kgs	
Sugar	30 kgs	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

On average, 1,000 *rotis* are prepared every day, which reaches around 2,500 during the peak season. Around 50 kg of rice, *dal*, and *besan* and 40 kg of *suji* are used for preparing the food. *Desi ghee* is used in large quantities to prepare the *halwa*. The temple staff keeps track of the number of devotees visiting the temple to ensure that an adequate amount of food is prepared to keep food wastage to a minimum. However, leftover food, if any, is fed to the dairy animals in the temple's *Goshala*<sup>222</sup> and other *goshalas*. The temple staff is allowed to take surplus food home.

In addition to food distribution among the devotees at the temple, lunch and dinner are also supplied to some 300–400 government hospitals, as well as private hospitals for the patients and their caretakers. This has been done for several years.

During the recent nationwide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, food was distributed to the poor residing in colonies and slums around the temple. The cooked food is never wasted; instead, it is served meaningfully.

Table II.15.3 Quantity of food served per meal

All meals	Quantity
Plain rice	250 g
Chapati	One per person
Dal	150 g
Sweet/halva	One piece per person

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 15.2.5 Accountability of *prasad*

To ensure the accountability of the *prasad*, the temple has established a strict monitoring mechanism by installing CCTVs in kitchens and dining halls. It is routine for the trustees to check the CCTV footage to ensure there is monitoring and accountability. Also, there is a strong belief among the staff that the misuse of *prasad* leads to a curse from Goddess Devi.

### 15.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen of the temple is well equipped with automatic machines to cook rice and make *rotis* in a short time. During regular days, approximately 4–5 hours are required for preparing the food, whereas on special occasions like *Navratri*,<sup>223</sup> an additional 2 hours are required. The prepared food is served at *bhandaras* or dining halls, which are in the temple complex. There are three *bhandaras*, of which two are centrally air-conditioned and have three floors – underground, ground, and first floor. The process of serving takes approximately 20–25 minutes per batch. The buffet system is followed for food distribution. Hence, a maximum of 30 minutes is required for serving and consuming food.

Table II.15.4 Cooking and serving time

Activities	Time taken (in hr)
Preparing food	4–5
Serving per batch	Approx. 20–25 minutes
Cleaning	30 minutes (one time/per hall)
Total time for one batch to complete	30 minutes (where is the note for the star

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 15.2.7 Nutrition

As the food is distributed to government hospitals, the doctors are consulted to suggest the kind of food to be prepared. Usually, such food is less spicy and easy to digest. However, there are no nutrition experts to advise on this. With respect to quality, as the food is distributed to patients also, absolute hygiene and extra care are taken in preparing and serving food. The cooks have good experience of over 20 years, and they ensure that only quality food is available.

### 15.2.8 Human resources

There are 75 temple staff associated with the process of *anna-daan* in the normal season whereas during peak season, the number goes up to 95 (Table II.15.5). Also, volunteers are involved in serving the food. As per the directive of management, volunteers cannot enter the kitchen. Helpers are assigned the job of cleaning and cutting the vegetables, cleaning the dining hall, and washing the utensils. Although there is sufficient manpower in all the dining halls, sometimes devotees also come forward voluntarily to serve the food. Another arrangement made by the management in the peak season is to outsource the cooking to the local vendors selected through tenders. This is carried out to provide quick and good services, as the number of devotees will double in the peak season.

Table II.15.5 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid temple staff	Number of people	
	Normal season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	6	6
Cooks	30	36
Cleaners	6	8
Servers	18	24
Watchman	3	3
Helpers	12	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>95</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 15.2.9 Management

With the growing popularity of the temple for its mythological and historical significance and with an increased number of devotees visiting the temple, the Haryana Government by an act of Shri Mata Mansa Devi Shrine Act 1991 formed a board called Shri Mata Mansa Devi Shrine Board (SMMDSB) for temple administration under section 4 of the act in 1995. The board has 24 members consisting of both official and unofficial members. The board includes the chief minister of the state, deputy commissioner, CEO, secretary, and nine members nominated by the government (Table II.15.7). The board is responsible for infrastructure development, management, administration, and governance of Shri Mata Mansa Devi Shrine and its endowments, including lands and buildings belonging to the temple.<sup>224</sup>

Table II.15.6 Details of the temple administration board

Particulars	Details
Year of constitution	1995
Total number of board members	24–25
Composition of the board	Official and unofficial members
Role in temple administration	Official members
Role in handling <i>anna-daan</i>	Unofficial members/ <i>bhandaras</i>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.15.7 Organisation details of temple administration board (official members)

	Board members	Position	Role
(a)	Chief minister	Chairman	Temple management and preserving the heritage of the region
(aa)	Minister in charge Local government Department	Vice-chairman	
B	Secretary, local government, Government of Haryana	Financial commissioner or commissioner of local government as the case may be shall be the ex-officio member	All the decisions are taken by the board in the meeting Planning cultural activities like Navratri
C	Deputy commissioner	ex-officio member-secretary	Development and maintenance of Dharamsala
D	Nine persons to be nominated by the government as members in the following manner	Two persons who, in the opinion of the government have distinguished themselves in the service of Hindu religion or culture. Two women, who in the opinion of the government have distinguished themselves in the service of Hindu religion, culture, or social work, especially in regard to the advancement of women. Three persons who have distinguished themselves in administration, legal affairs, or financial matters. Two eminent Hindus of the State of Haryana.	Planning to construct hospitals Godowns and temples cleaning and maintenance In charge of lighting repair and services Paying salary staff working in the temple CCVTV monitoring: security and maintenance

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The administration of the shrine complex is being looked after by the chief administrator assisted by the CEO and secretary. Within a short span of time since its establishment, the board has made tremendous progress as can be seen from the magnificent access provided to the complex, restoration, and renovation of shrines and its adjoining area, landscaping of the complex, providing amenities to the pilgrims and the construction of buildings such as Lajwanti Guesthouse, Satsang Bhawan, Shed at Red stone platform, Dancing Musical Fountain, *Yajnashala*,<sup>225</sup> *Dhayan Kendra*,<sup>226</sup> and *PravachanSthal*.<sup>227</sup>

### 15.2.10 Finances

Donations are a major source of revenue for the temple. During the financial year 2018–19, Rs. 20.55 crore was received as donations. The money donated to the temple is managed by the board, whereas the donations made for *anna-daan seva* are maintained by the trust. The salary for trust employees is paid from the trust fund, whereas the salary of the priest and other administrative employees, is paid through the official board/government. The main role of the trust is to manage *anna-daan* on a daily basis and to take care of the entire kitchen activities like cooking, serving, maintenance of stock in storerooms, serving food to hospitals, etc. The fund required for *anna-daan* is approximately Rs. 4–5 lakh per month in the normal season (annually around Rs. 55–60 lakhs), whereas in the peak season, it is approximately Rs. 8 lakh per month (annually Rs. 95 lakhs to Rs. 1:00 crore). On special occasions, spending would increase from Rs. 1:00 to Rs. 1.25 crore for cultural activities, construction, and social work, such as providing ambulances and medicines to doctors free of cost, and this is met by provisions under the *anna-daan* budget account.

Table II.15.8 Expenditure on *anna-daan*

Kitchen	Expenditure per day	
	Normal season	Peak season
Mata Mansa Temple	Rs. 0.4–0.5 (lunch and dinner) Rs. 5–6 million	Rs. 0.8.00 lakhs Rs. 9.5 million to Rs. 10 million

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### Regular flow of funds

As the main source of funds is through devotees and trustees, there are regular and permanent contributions to the temple fund. Some devotees sponsor one-day/one-time food, whereas some donate for *anna-daan* in quantities according to their ability. There is a joint effort from family, friends, and relations to contribute to *anna-daan*. The funds collected can be utilised either for maintenance or *anna-daan* or for both depending upon the circumstances.

#### Investment cost

The temple has invested a huge amount of money to carry out *anna-daan*. According to the temple authority, the total investment cost would be approximately Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 million (the details of each of the items are given in Table II.15.9).

Table II.15.9 Investment costs (in million rupees)

Particulars	Numbers	Cost
Construction of kitchen	3	Rs. 40 to 50 million
Steam boilers	3 boilers 1 bhatti (oil bhatti is the one which uses diesel for cooking)	1 boiler: 0.5 million, for 2 boilers: 1.5 million Oil bhatti: Approx. 0.3–0.4 million

(Continued)

Table II.15.9 (Continued)

Particulars	Numbers	Cost
Huge vessels	60 (20 for each kitchen)	Rs. 0.9 million
Roti-making machines	3	Approx. Rs. 3.0
Insulated vessels/ <i>Halwa</i> -making machine	3	Rs. 0.5 million
Plates	15,000 (5000 for each hall)	Rs. 0.5 million
Glasses	1500 (500 each hall)	Rs. 0.1 to Rs. 0.15 million
RO plants	3	Rs. 0.4 million
Gas stoves	3	—
Gas cylinders	40	Rs. 0.04 million
Trolleys	10–12	Rs. 0.05 million
<i>Dal/sambar</i> tanks	3	Rs. 0.05 million
Cutting boards	30	Rs. 0.010 million
Knives	20	Rs. 0.005 million
Tables	Nil	
Chairs	Nil	
CCTVs (number and cost)	30	Rs. 0.15 million
Any others (PI specify)	Generators	Not specified

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The operation and maintenance costs are approximately Rs. 0.4.85 million per month (Table II.15.10). The salaries of the employees (kitchen staff) form a major expenditure (approximately Rs. 0.15 million), followed by ingredients – vegetables and groceries.

Table II.15.10 O &amp; M costs (per month) in million rupees

Particulars	O & M costs (per month)
Salary of employees	Rs. 0.04 per hall. Approx. Rs. 0.15 million for 3 halls, Peak hours, it would go up Rs. 0.3 (includes outsourcing)
Procurement of raw materials: Vegetables	Rs. 0.08 million per month
Procurement of raw materials: Groceries	Rs. 0.06 per month
Transportation cost	Own vehicles, use ambulance Rs. 0.015 (inclusive of fuel cost)
Fuel cost – gas cylinders, pellets, etc.	Gas cylinder – Rs. 0.03 per month
Power cost	Rs. 0.05 per month
Housekeeping cost of dining hall	Rs. 0.03 per month
Repairs and maintenance of kitchen equipment	Rs. 0.03 per month (due taps, generator, lightings)
Repairs and maintenance of kitchen and dining hall premises	Approx. Rs. 0.01 per month

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 15.2.11 Financial accountability

An accountant keeps track of funds collected for *anna-daan* and expenses incurred on activities related to *anna-daan*. Senior officials check the accounts regularly on a weekly or monthly basis. The trust files income tax (IT) returns annually. Before filing IT returns, accounts are verified by a chartered accountant to keep financial records transparent.

#### 15.2.12 *Quality of raw materials*

The private trust purchases raw materials and does self-inspection of quality. Payment of such purchases is made later. Sometimes people from the government/official board members also check the quality by personally having food prepared for *anna-daan*. Although there are refrigerators in all three kitchens, usually vegetables and other perishable items are used on the same day. In case of any leftover ingredients, such as coriander and green leafy vegetables, they are stored in the refrigerator. Usually, other non-perishable vegetables, such as potatoes and onions, are purchased once a week.

#### 15.2.13 *Food safety*

The head cook has been working for the past 30 years and monitors every helper working in the kitchen to make sure that personal hygiene and safety are maintained while cooking and washing the vegetables. The other aspects of maintaining personal hygiene includes serving with long-handled spoons, *kadhi* (scoop spoons).

#### 15.2.14 *Technology adoption in the kitchen*

*Rotis* are prepared using machines, but earlier, they were prepared by hand. *Halva* is also prepared using machines. The kitchen is equipped with the latest machines to make the work easy and with minimum time to ensure devotees do not wait for long. The vessels installed in the kitchen are of Indian Standards Institution (ISI) standards.

The trustee or trust manager is in charge of monitoring *anna-daan*. The board members are also authorised to inspect the process of *anna-daan*. In certain cases, if the members feel that something is not as planned, they intervene immediately to correct the situation.

The vessels are cleaned using normal water with cleaning powder, whereas the vegetables are washed with hot water. However, this water is not reused for any other purpose.

#### 15.2.15 *Waste management*

All three kitchens generate 10 to 15 kg of wet waste per month, whereas the quantity of dry waste is around 20 kg per month. The *goshala* personnel collect the wet waste, so there is no transportation involved in the disposal of this waste.

#### 15.2.16 *Key issues and suggestions*

##### Social/behavioural issues

Sometimes there is queue jumping, which leads to arguments among the devotees. In such a situation, the temple staff sorts out the issue immediately.

Management issue

During the peak season when there are huge crowds, some people complain about cleanliness. In such cases, the trustees conduct a meeting with the staff and give them strict instructions on how to ensure good hygiene so that such complaints are not repeated in the future.

**Temple website**

[www.mansadevi.org.in](http://www.mansadevi.org.in)

**Website referred**

- 1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mata\\_Mansa\\_Devi\\_Mandir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mata_Mansa_Devi_Mandir) accessed on 16 April 2021

**Notes**

- 203 Goddesses of Strength and Power.
- 204 A small historical town in Chandigarh, India.
- 205 Temples dedicated to Hindu Goddesses *Shakthi*, *Durga Parvathi*, *Kali*, *Lakshmi*, and *Saraswathi*, etc.
- 206 Navaratri is a Hindu festival that spans nine nights and is celebrated every year in autumn.
- 207 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/ban-on-prasad-shopkeepers-near-mansa-devi-temple-praying-for-better-days/story-Y2xGTVQIG6BgKuSkCfNr3K.html>.
- 208 Navratri is a hindu festival celebrated in the month of *Asvayuja* for nine (nava) nights (ratri) and followed by the tenth day known as *Dushera*. According to the Gregorian calendar, the festival will be in the month of either September or October.
- 209 *Prasad* is food that is offered to the divine to attain blessings.
- 210 *Langar* is a communal kitchen where food is served to all devotees regardless of caste or religion as a gesture of equality.
- 211 Gurdwara is a Sikh place of worship.
- 212 Local name for Sagem holy man, ascetic.
- 213 Local name for Saint.
- 214 Spiritual person.
- 215 It is the meditative repetition of divine name in low voice.
- 216 It is a Hindu ritual of worship where light is offered to the deity.
- 217 Unmarried girls of the age between one month to 16 years.
- 218 Goddess persona.
- 219 Source: <https://mansadevi.org.in/community-kitchen.php>.
- 220 A round and soft flat unleavened bread.
- 221 A vegetable dish.
- 222 Gohalas are the protective shelters for cows.
- 223 Hindu festival that spans nine nights (and ten days) and is celebrated every year.
- 224 Source: <https://mansadevi.org.in/administration.php>.
- 225 Place for keeping the sacrificial fire or an enclosure where the rituals are performed.
- 226 Meditation centre/hall.
- 227 Discourse centre/hall.



## Case study 16 Sri Mata Vaishno Devi, Reasi District, Jammu and Kashmir, India

M. V. Lavanya\*

### 16.1 Introduction

Sri Mata Vaishno Devi temple is a Hindu temple located in Katra at the Trikuta Mountains (also referred to as Trikoot Parvat) at an altitude of 5,200 ft. in the Indian State of Jammu. A pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Sri Mata Vaishno Devi is one of the holiest pilgrimages in India. She is popular to the world as *Moon maangi muradein poori karne wali mata*, which means, *the Mother who fulfils whatever her children wish for*. The devotion of pilgrims and local residents is such that the conversation begins and ends with the phrase *Jai Mata Di*.<sup>228</sup> Simultaneously, it is also believed that unless there is a call (*bulawa*),<sup>229</sup> no one can visit the shrine or have the goddess's blessings, no matter high or mighty one may be.

#### Significance of the temple

At the culmination of their pilgrimage, the *yatris* (pilgrims) are blessed with the *darshan*<sup>230</sup> of the goddess inside the sanctum sanctorum – the holy cave. The *darshan* is in the shape of three natural rock formations called the *pindies*.<sup>231</sup> There are no statues or idols inside the cave. The temple is a trek of 12 km from the base camp of Katrato Bhavan, and various modes, such as pony, helicopter, and ropeway, are available for the devotees. However, trekking by foot is still recommended.

#### Special occasions

Peak seasons are the summer months of May, June, and July. Festival periods of *Chaitra* (spring), *Sharad-Ashwin* (autumn), *Navratri*,<sup>232</sup> and New Year witness the peak rush. As a result of this rush, devotees may have to wait as long as 12–20 hours for *darshan*.

### 16.2 Anna-daan at Sri Mata Vaishno Devi Temple, Jammu

*Anna-daan* in the Hindu temples of north India is termed *bhandara* or *langar*. *Bhandara* or *langars* are the community kitchens that provide free food to the devotees. There are two *langars* available in the temple.

Gulshan Kumar Langar: This is the famous *langar* of the late Sri Gulshan Kumar<sup>233</sup> and was started in 1979, as he was a great devotee of *Mata Vaishno Devi*. This *langar* is managed by the Gulshan Kumar family. It can accommodate as many as 200 persons at a time. People sit on the ground in rows. Devotees are served on steel plates. Food items served are *pakoda kadi*, *rajma*, *puri*,<sup>234</sup> and rice. In addition, refreshments like tea are available.

Langar by Shrine Board: Upon public demand, the Sri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) started *langar* on 5 May 2019. The *langar* is located at Tarakote on

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the new route from Katra to Bhawan, involving a walk of about 3 km from Katra and about 5 km from Adhkuwari. SMVDSB manages and runs this *langar*.

In addition to *langars*, they have *bhojanalayas*, a place where one can buy a meal at a reasonable price. The Shrine Board runs full-fledged *bhojanalayas* to provide wholesome and hygienic food to the pilgrims on a no-profit basis. The Shrine Board runs five *bhojanalayas*. The *bhojanalayas* at Bhawan run around the clock and serve a varied but traditional menu, such as curd, *dal*,<sup>235</sup> mixed vegetables, *sambar vada*,<sup>236</sup> rice, *kadi pakora*,<sup>237</sup> *dahivada*,<sup>238</sup> *tandoori chapati*,<sup>239</sup> *malai kofta*,<sup>240</sup> *channa*,<sup>241</sup> milk, cheese tomato, *rajma*,<sup>242</sup> and plain rice.

### 16.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Bhandara* or *langar* is believed to be one of the sacred means to providing food to devotees and needy persons. Free food for all at any time is the concept behind *bhandara*.

### 16.2.2 Rituals and prayers

In the *langar* kitchen, an idol of the goddess is placed, and before starting the food preparation, the head cook chants a prayer and conducts *pooja*<sup>243</sup> before the goddess. After the food is ready, it is first offered to the deity as *Naivedyam*<sup>244</sup> and then served to the staff and devotees.

### 16.2.3 Number of devotees served

The *langar* serves nearly 8,500 pilgrims daily in the normal season. During the peak season, the crowd swells to 30,000–35,000 devotees per day. The food served is a traditional food of Jammu. The *langar* runs throughout the year.

Timings of *anna-daan* are followed meticulously. Breakfast is served between 8:30 am and 11:30 am. Lunch and dinner are served between 12:30 pm and 4:30 pm and 5:15 pm and 11:00 pm, respectively. Varieties of food are served throughout the day, such as *puri*,<sup>245</sup> *channa*, *halva*,<sup>246</sup> and tea for breakfast; *dal*, *sambal*,<sup>247</sup> rice for lunch; and *dal*, rice, vegetable curry, *roti*, and sweets for dinner. Tea is served for the whole night from 11 pm to 8:00 am (see Table II.16.1).

Table II.16.1 Timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Time	Items served
Breakfast	8:30 am–11:30 am	Tea, <i>puri</i> , <i>channa</i> , <i>halva</i>
Lunch	12:30 pm–4:30 pm	<i>Dal</i> , <i>ambal (sambar)</i> , rice
Dinner	5:15 pm–11:00 pm	<i>Dal</i> , rice, vegetable curry, <i>roti</i> , sweet
Tea	11:00 pm–8:00 am	Tea

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The *langar* follows the counter system, and food is served based on first-come, first-served. The management has placed an excellent queue system to manage the crowd during normal days, but on crowded days, the board follows the token system.

#### 16.2.4 Dining hall

The dining hall was constructed recently at a scenic place with a capacity of 280 people and has steel tables and chairs. Hoardings and placards are placed on the Katra and Tarakote Route. Management announces the free *langar* on intercoms.

The cleaning of the dining halls is carried out between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm and again between 4:30 pm and 5:15 pm. The kitchen is regularly cleaned. The tables are cleaned as soon as the devotees finish eating the food.

#### 16.2.5 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The temple authorities prepare enough food based on the registration details of the *yatris* and devotees. The board procures all vegetables and groceries through tenders. The board manages the system transparently. All the protocols are followed very strictly.

#### 16.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is open 24/7 for food preparation and serving. The time taken for cooking 20 kg of rice is just 10 minutes as there are modern steam boilers in the kitchen. *Dal* and *ambal* take about 30 minutes each to cook. In total, it takes around 2 hours to cook the required quantity of food. All the groceries and vegetables are procured and maintained by the shrine's committee. The head cook gives an indent for materials required by him to the manager, and the manager ensures that these items are available to the cook. The devotees are required to take the plates and move to *langar* hall where the food is served. After devotees finish the food, they are supposed to wash the plates and spoons. The kitchen vessels are washed and sanitised in a systematic way. The total time taken to complete one batch is around 30 minutes.

#### 16.2.7 Nutrition

Nutrition is taken care of by the *langar* staff. Only fresh vegetables are used, and the food served is authentic *Dogra* food,<sup>248</sup> which is a wholesome diet and helpful in giving stamina to devotees for trekking.

#### 16.2.8 Human resources

The entire *langar* staff comprises about 40–50 people (Table II.16.2), and they work in 8-hour shifts. The attrition rate is very low, as the staff is taken care of very well. Their positions are defined by a set of rules and responsibilities. No volunteers are engaged.

Table II.16.2 Human resources

<i>Temple staff</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Supervisors	5
Cooks	4
Serving staff	4
Cleaning	35
Watchmen	2
Total	50

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 16.2.9 Management

The management of the shrine and regulation of the *yatra* vests with the SMVDSB (commonly called Shrine Board), which was formed in 1986. The board consists of a chairman and nine members. The governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is the ex-officio chairman of the board. He nominates nine members to the board at the policymaking level. The board discharges its duty through a CEO who is assisted by additional CEOs and various heads. The organisation chart of the board is on the next page.

The board has undertaken several developmental activities aimed at making the *yatra* a comfortable and satisfying experience for the *yatris* (pilgrims). The board invests the donations to carry out improvements in the temple. Ever since the inception of the Shrine Board, the Holy Shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi has witnessed an ever-increasing number of devotees. The number of devotees was 13.96 lakhs in 1986; it increased to 85.87 lakhs in 2018.

### 16.2.10 Finances

This *langar* runs on donations received from the pilgrims. Several requests are received from the pilgrims regarding their wish to donate to *langar* for a day or for a month, especially on auspicious days or on important occasions in their families. The statutory audit of the Shrine Board's accounts is carried out by S. R. Batliboi and Associates.

Table II.16.3 Expenses for *langar*'

<i>Langar's expenses per day</i>	<i>Meals expense for one time (morning/afternoon/evening)</i>	<i>One month's expenses of langar</i>
Rs. 0.031 million	Rs. 0.011 million	Rs. 1.5 million

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 16.2.11 Quality of raw materials

The *langar* ensures the usage of good quality raw materials for the preparation of food. The Shrine Board follows the provisions of the FSSA 2006 in defining the raw material specifications. The selection of suppliers is done through tenders.

The donors are advised by the temple management to give materials of particular brands only, thereby ensuring the quality of materials received as donations.

Storage of raw materials, groceries, and vegetables is done in *Bhandara Ghar* (storage room), and as the climate is always cool, the quality of raw materials is preserved. Refrigerators are used to preserve perishable items.

Training is imparted to all employees in their respective fields. The kitchen staff attends periodical training sessions conducted by members of the board. They are also trained to properly handle modern equipment installed in the kitchen.

Table II.16.4 Recommended brands of raw materials

S.No.	Items	Recommended brands
1.	Species	Catch/MDH/BMC
2.	Tea leaves	Red Label/Taaza/Tajmahal
3.	Sugar	Quality Grade M-31
4.	Rice basmati	Any basmati brand/1121 steamed basmati rice
5.	Suji	Life Gold/Shakti Bhog
6.	Dairy whitener milk powder	Amulaya/Nestle
7.	Desi ghee	Nestle Everyday/Britannia/Amul/Milk Food/Verka/Mother Dairy
	Mustard oil	Fortune/Nature Fresh/P. Mark
	Refined oil	Fortune/Nature Fresh/P. Mark
	Salt	Aashirwad/Tata

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 16.2.12 Food safety

Sri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine won the prestigious **Cleanest Religious Place 2018** award instituted by the India Today Group. This confirms the degree of cleanliness maintained at the temple.

Staff maintains personal hygiene and, food safety measures are taken care of at every level. Quality control managers are appointed to inspect the process of food preparation and disposal of waste generated while cooking. The serving staff uses spoons and spatulas and also wears caps and gloves while serving.

### 16.2.13 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Mobile apps, besides *e-darshan*, enable the devotees to book their *darshan* tickets and accommodation over mobile phones. The idea behind the launching of the mobile app is to maintain social distancing and other preventive measures to control the spread of the killer coronavirus pandemic. A multipurpose audio-video system by BOSE on the SMVDSB track is used.

The temple authority has installed the CCTV Surveillance Project for the kitchen and other locations. Intercoms and speakers in all major locations and the kitchen and dining hall are available. In the kitchen, steam boilers have been installed for cooking rice and *dal*. Insulated utensils are used to keep food clean and hot. RO water purification plants are in all locations and *langar*. *Chapaties* are prepared from air-compressed machines. Also, a unique method of dishwashing has been installed in the kitchen and *langar* (details of equipment used are given in Table II.16.5). Biogas fuel is used for cooking in *bhojanalayas* and *langar*.

Table II.16.5 List of equipment used in langar

S. No.	Name of the equipment	Quantity
1	Dough kneading machines (heavy-duty)	3
2	Banie Marie (6 to 8 containers)	2
3	Potato peeling machine	3
4	Microwave ovens	2
5	Peethi grinders (heavy-duty)	3
6	Pressure cookers 22 L capacity	10
7	Cooking range with grillers	4
8	Display fridge 3 ft	6
9	Working table (steel)	6
10	Mixer/grinder	6
11	Cutlery (table spoons, tea spoons)	1,000 each
12	Cutlery (serving spoons, fork, side knife, soup spoons)	200 each
13	Kitchen knives (chef knives)	50 nos
14	Tea urns (5/10/20/25 L capacity)	30 each
15	Dosa plates/bhattis	3
16	Three-unit wash sink	2
17	Chopping boards	24
18	Shredding machine	1
19	Deep fat fryer	1
20	Frying pan (medium size)	50
21	Sauce pan (medium size)	50
22	Patila 150 L/100 L/70 L	50 each
23	Chanani big size	50
24	Aluminium racks	12
25	Boilers	6
26	Tea cup with saucers (bone china)	50 dozen
27	Full plates (bone china)	500
28	Quarter plates	500
29	Kadahi iron medium	12
30	Kadahi iron 75 L	10
31	Parat big size	12
32	Domestic refrigerator 165 L	1
33	Tea stainer big size	10 dozen
34	Karsi steel	10 dozen
35	Katori steel	24 dozen
36	Iron tawa (medium size)	10
37	Casseroles (medium size)	10 dozen
38	Flask (medium/Big size)	10 dozen
39	High ball glass	50 dozen

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 16.2.14 Waste management

Excellent waste management method has been introduced in the temple. The Shrine Board provides support to the Municipal Committee from time to time for initiating various development projects aimed at improving sanitation and other civic amenities. Shrine Board extracts the recyclables from waste and dumps the remaining waste in Banganga *nallah* on Katra.

The Board has established a biogas plant of 4 tons/day capacity at Banganga for scientific disposal of mule dung generated on the track en route Bhawan. The biogas produced at this plant is supplied to the Gulshan *langar* at Banganga. Also, the temple has installed a full-fledged waste segregation machine: Dung Management Centre at Natali project and a composting unit at a solid waste management site at Tarakote. The compost is used for growing seedlings and plants. An eco-friendly kitchen garden has also been established at Natali where different local varieties of vegetables are grown.

#### 16.2.15 Key issues/requests

The public does not maintain the sanctity of the religious place and litters, spits, and breaches the protocols of the shrine board even after educating them often.

#### Contact details

The *langar* details were provided by one of the *sevadars* of the Shrine Board, and their contact information is provided on the official website of *Mata Vaishno Devi*.

#### Websites referred

- 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIvi58Dajas> accessed on January 2021
- 2 <https://www.maavaishnodevi.org> accessed on January 2021
- 3 <https://www.maavaishnodevi.org/freelangar.aspx> accessed on January 2021
- 4 <http://www.ijmr.net.in/> accessed on January 2021

#### Notes

- 228 Hail to the Mother Goddess *Vaishnavi Devi*.
- 229 Call from the goddess.
- 230 An opportunity to see or an occasion of seeing the idol of a deity.
- 231 These are decked stones or tree stumps viewed in Hinduism as abstract manifestation of the mother goddess *Shakti*.
- 232 *Navaratri* is a Hindu festival that spans nine nights and is celebrated every year in autumn.
- 233 He was an Indian businessman who was the founder of the T-Series music label and a Bollywood movie producer.
- 234 A small, round piece of bread made of wheat flour, deep-fried, and served with vegetables.
- 235 A sauce made from lentils and spices, usually served with rice.
- 236 It is a fried, doughnut shaped south Indian delicacy made from *Urad Dal*.
- 237 *Kadi* or *kari* is a dish originating from the Rajasthan, India.
- 238 It is a fried, doughnut shaped south Indian delicacy made from *urad dal* and rinsed in yogurt.
- 239 It is a bread prepared from wheat flour and cooked in a cylindrical clay oven.
- 240 Deep fried balls (*koftas*) made of potato and paneer, dunked in a creamy spiced velvety smooth curry.
- 241 A snack prepared using roasted *chickpeas*.
- 242 It is a vegetarian dish, consisting of red kidney beans in a thick gravy.
- 243 The act of worship.
- 244 Food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before eating it.
- 245 A small, round piece of bread made of unleavened wheat flour, deep-fried, and served with vegetables.
- 246 A sweet Indian dish of carrots/semolina boiled with milk, almonds, sugar, butter, and cardamom.
- 247 Sweet and sour yellow pumpkin curry.
- 248 It is the food culture of the famous *Dogra* community, who ruled Jammu and Kashmir in around 19th century.

## Case study 17 Kukke Sri Subramanya Temple, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, India

N. Latha\*

### 17.1 Introduction

Kukke Sri Subramanya temple is dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya, the lord of serpents,<sup>249</sup> and is located at Subramanya, Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka, India. According to history, a description of the Kukke Subramanya temple is mentioned in the chapter Sahyadrikhanda<sup>250</sup> in Skanda Puranam.<sup>251</sup> The scriptures of *Shankara Vijaya*<sup>252</sup> mentions that Sri Adi Shankaracharya visited the place and referred to the place as BhajeKukke Lingam in his work Subrahmanya Bhujangaprayata Stotram.<sup>253</sup>

#### Significance of the temple

The temple is Karnataka's richest temple, with an annual income of around Rs. 900 million. The temple is famous for Sevas<sup>254</sup> – Sarpasamskara,<sup>255</sup> Naga Prathiste,<sup>256</sup> and Ashlesha Bali.<sup>257</sup> Sarpasamskara *pooja* or ritualistic prayer is performed to get rid of *Kala Sarpa Dosha*<sup>258</sup> and is the most powerful way of pleasing the *Nagas*.<sup>259</sup> The devotees believe that the holy bath in the *Kumaradhara Thirtha* eradicates dreaded diseases like leprosy and other skin diseases. Given the strong belief systems, thousands of people throng the temple and the practice of *anna-daan* is humongous. God Subrahmanya has earned the title *anna-daan Subbappa*<sup>260</sup> as thousands of devotees receive *anna-daan* every day.

#### Special occasions

*Sarpasamskara* is a popular *pooja* conducted in the temple throughout the year. Generally, 230 to 240 *sarpasamskara poojas* are performed per day during the peak season, whereas during the normal season, it is around 150 to 160 per day. *Subramanya Shashti* is another event celebrated during November and December when a large number of devotees visit the temple. Even during summer (April and May), one can witness a huge number of devotees. In addition, during January when *Ayyappa Maale*<sup>261</sup> is taken by the devotees, and during *Tala Cauvery Jaatre*,<sup>262</sup> a huge number of devotees visit the temple.

### 17.2 Anna-daan at Kukke Sri Subramanya Temple

*Anna-daan* has been practised since the establishment of the temple. The importance and need for *anna-daan* are documented in *Sampura Subramanya Kshetra Mahathme*, according to which one can achieve *mukti*<sup>263</sup> only after taking a bath in the river *Kumaradhara* and having food at the temple. Hence, *anna-daan* is of great significance and is performed throughout the year except on the day of *Ekadashi* when only snacks are served.

At present, *anna-daan* is held at four locations within the temple premises: *Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale*, *Shringeri Mutt*, *Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara* dining hall,

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and *Mrustanna Aduge*. Initially, *anna-daan* was started at the *Shringeri Mutt*, as the number of devotees visiting the temple was less comparatively.

### 17.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

Philanthropy is the main reason behind performing *anna-daan*, as people believe that they get rid of the difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. There is a belief that every devotee visiting the temple should take *prasada*,<sup>264</sup> and there are incidents that devotees who missed taking *prasada* have returned to the temple only to have *prasada*.

### 17.2.2 Rituals and prayers

As of now, there are no rituals and prayers to be performed before cooking the meal. After the meal is cooked, it is served to the deity as *Naivedyam*,<sup>265</sup> and after *maha arti*,<sup>266</sup> it is served to devotees. Only on some special occasions are the prayers performed before cooking begins.

There are no separate means by the temple management to make people understand the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan*, as it is so much a part of the culture and tradition to have the blessed food served at the temple premises. Announcements requesting people to have food are made every hour and to request volunteers to streamline the huge numbers of devotees to have food in an orderly fashion.

### 17.2.3 Number of devotees served

The dining halls are allocated for specific sections of people and the number of people served is as shown in Table II.17.1.

Table II.17.1 Dining halls

Sr. No	Name	People reserved	Approximate number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	<i>Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale</i> (two floors)	General public	12,000	15,000
2	<i>ShringeriMutt</i>	Only for Brahmin community	600	1,000
3	<i>Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara</i> dining hall	For devotees who have booked for <i>Sarpa Samskara Pooja</i> and few who have visited the temple based on temple quota	1,200 (150–160 families)	1,600 (230–240 families)

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Across these dining halls, food is served at specific times, and for devotees who have conducted special prayers,<sup>267</sup> food is served separately. In brief, it is to organise and streamline the huge number of devotees who come to the temple.<sup>268</sup>

Facilities vary. In some dining halls, a dining table is provided, while in others, people must sit on the floor and have their food. Sitting on the floor and eating is a common practice in Indian homes too. Food is served on plantain leaves, which is again a common practice. They are eco-friendly and disposable, and do not harm the environment. Food serving is organised with a queue system. As a result, orderliness is maintained even when there are huge numbers of people eating together. Lunch is served 12 to 16 times during the peak season and 7 to 8 times on regular days. There is a continuous flow of devotees, which increases on weekends. Across the halls, the frequency of food served varies, depending on the number of devotees. For instance, in some halls like the *ShringeriMutt* and *Adi Subramanya* dining hall, food is served two to three times only. This indicates that the devotees are streamlined across the halls to receive food without any delay or confusion. It is no easy task to serve thousands of devotees every day for decades.

The menu is nutritious and balanced, inclusive of rice, *sambar* (stew to go with rice), sweet (*payasa*), chutney (spicy mix like a pickle), vegetable curry, and buttermilk. Also, a special menu is prepared during festivals and special occasions.

Table II.17.2 Timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Timings			Number of times		
	Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale	Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara dining hall	Shringeri Mutt	Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale	Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara dining hall	Shringeri Mutt
8:00 am 9:30 Lunch	Noon to 3 pm	Noon to 3 pm	1:00 pm to 2:30 pm	Normal season – 7 to 8 times Peak season – 12–16 times	2–3 times	2–3 times
Dinner	8:00 pm to 9:30 pm	<i>Upma</i> <sup>a</sup> and <i>Poha</i> <sup>b</sup> only	Not served	7–8 times	NA	NA

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Dish prepared from broken wheat.

<sup>b</sup> Dish prepared from beaten rice.

#### 17.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The quantity of rice cooked per day is about 8–10 quintals during the normal season, which increases to 12 quintals during festivals and special occasions; 8,000 to 10,000 L of *sambar*<sup>269</sup> and *dal* is prepared on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. During peak season, it increases to 12,000 to 15,000 L. Around 200 L of curd are used to prepare buttermilk. The food items are prepared based on an estimated number of devotees. We were told that on Mondays, Tuesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays the number of people visiting the temple is relatively more comparatively.

Table II.17.3 Quantity of food served per meals during breakfast (in g)

Breakfast	Normal season	Peak season
Poha	250–300	
Upma	300–500	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Table II.17.4 Quantity of food prepared per day (inclusive of lunch and dinner)

Sr. No	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	8–10 quintals	10–12 quintals
2	Dal	8,000–10,000 L	12,000–15,000 L
3	Sambar	8,000–10,000 L	12,000–15,000 L
5	Buttermilk	Around 200 L of curd	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The kitchen staff prepares the food and tries to ensure that there is no excess food. Leftovers, if any, are fed to cattle.

Efforts are made to serve all the devotees who come to the dining hall. But sometimes food gets finished before the designated time, and the food distribution is stopped. But during afternoons, the time is extended till 3:00 pm to ensure that all the devotees are served. Given that the number of devotees who have lunch is more comparatively, food is prepared in excess quantity to ensure there is no shortage. Ingredients used ensure nutrition.

Table II.17.5 Total volume of ingredients used per day

Ingredients	Quantity in kg	
	Normal season	Peak season
Rice	8,000	10,000–12,000
Tur dal	140	210
Chana dal	200	250
Urad dal	15	
Jaggery	200	250
Coconut	1,000	1,500
<b>Vegetables</b>		
Onion	25	50
Cauliflower	20	
Mustard seeds	20	
Fenugreek	7	
Jeera	7	
Hing	2	
Turmeric powder	1	
Cardamom	1	
Coconut oil	50 L	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 17.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

It is to be noted that they have strict rules to ensure accountability. No temple staff is allowed to take *prasadam* home.

### 17.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is fully equipped. The preparation of breakfast takes nearly 1 hour, and if the food prepared is insufficient, additional food can be cooked in just 20 minutes. For instance, rice cooking takes only 20 minutes (down from 30 to 45 minutes) in modern steam boilers; the cooking staff are ready to serve hot and fresh food to a continuous flowing stream of devotees. To cook the complete lunch takes around 5 hours. The cooking starts at 5:00 am and is completed by 10:00 am. For dinner, the preparation starts at 4:00 pm and gets over by 8:00 pm – lesser time as compared to lunch, as the quantity is smaller. The whole process of serving takes around 15 minutes per batch and another 15 minutes are taken for cleaning the hall after each serving.

### 17.2.7 Human resources

Totally there are 145 people involved in the process of serving food (Table II.17.6).

Table II.17.6 Human resource

Temple staff	Dining halls		
	Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale	ShringeriMutt	Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara dining hall
Supervisors	2	2	2
Cooks	10 (6 morning and 4 evening)	4	4
Serving staff	50	12	25
Cleaning	21	3	4
Watchmen	2	2	2
Total	85	23	37

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

However, during peak season, volunteers are involved in serving, managing the crowd, collecting donated items, and other related works. Around 200 people work as volunteers from non-governmental organisations like Dharmastala Gramabhivruddi Yojane, etc. Volunteers are not allowed to handle cooking, cleaning, and vegetable cutting, for which the regular cleaning staff is involved.

The working hours are from 7:30 am to 10:30 pm. Short breaks for coffee, tea, and rest are taken with mutual understanding. One weekly off day is allowed on a rotation basis which was initiated recently.

### 17.2.8 Management

Temple comes under the responsibility of the Religious and Endowment Department, Government of Karnataka. The Temple Administration Board consists of nine members

(chairman and eight members). The term of the board is three years. The first Administration Board was set up in 1920. Appointment of staff, procurement of raw materials (groceries and vegetables), purchase of kitchen equipment, dining hall equipment, repairs, etc. are decided by the Board.

### 17.2.9 Finances

The *Hundi*<sup>270</sup> and other donations made towards specific *sevas* are collected once in 15 days and deposited in the bank. Interest earned on deposits is used to meet expenditure on various activities, including *anna-daan*. The temple is not provided a grant from the state government.

Table II.17.7 Expenditure

Kitchen	Expenditure per day	
	Normal season	Peak season
Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale	Rs. 0.25 million (lunch and dinner)	Rs. 0.8 to Rs. 1.0 million
Shringeri Mutt	Not Available	Not Available
Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara dining hall	Not Available	Not Available

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Table II.17.8 Investment cost

Dining halls	Kitchen equipment								
	Steam boilers	Huge vessels	Steel plates	Steel glass	RO plants	Gas stove	Gas cylinder		Trolley for serving rice
							Normal	Peak	
Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale	4	10 (1 for sambar, 1 for payasa, and 7 for rice and 1 for playa)	5,000 (Presently not used)	500–600	2	3	8–10	20–25	2
Shringeri Mutt	1	4	Nil	100	Nil	4			2
Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara dining hall	2	4	Nil	400	Nil	4			2

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

As mentioned earlier, investments are made to equip the kitchen adequately. To make the seating in the dining place more comfortable, dining tables are arranged in one of the dining halls named *Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale*.

### 17.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Raw materials with the ISI mark are used for food preparation. Raw materials are procured through tenders. Based on their quote, suppliers are appointed. The duration is for one year. After the completion of one year, a new tender is called. The supplier must deposit Rs. 50,000, which is refundable after the completion of one year. If the material supplied by the supplier is of unacceptable quality, the temple authorities reject the products, and the deposit is forfeited.

*Jama ugrana* (storage space) is a place for keeping all the ingredients required for cooking. The storage facilities are good to ensure that the quality is retained. The kitchen staff submits intent for procurement of raw materials from *Jama ugrana* to ensure accountability. The menu items remain the same throughout the year except on special occasions.

### 17.2.11 Food safety

Food safety is ensured by complying with the provisions of FSSA 2006. Food inspectors visit the temple for quality and safety checks and provide a certificate if these parameters are satisfactory. The safety of raw materials is ensured by washing them twice (once in cold water and later with warm water). The cold storage facility is not available in the kitchen. Vessels used for cooking and serving are sterilised before and after cooking and serving. EO visits the kitchen to check the quality of food supplied once in two months. To ensure hygiene, the staff wears caps during serving. However, they do not wear gloves, as they feel the gloves are uncomfortable while serving.

### 17.2.12 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen at *Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale* is equipped with the latest machines at a cost of Rs. 6.16 million. As a result, the preparation of food has become much easier and less time-consuming. Earlier, steam boilers were used to prepare food, and wood was used as fuel. With this arrangement, there was a delay in the food preparation leading to long waiting times. Around Rs. 2.98 million has been invested in four LPG boilers and three steam boilers of 1,000 L capacity each. There are eight vessels with a capacity of 50 kg each to prepare a total of 400 kg of rice at a time. The flooring and other areas of the kitchen were renovated with granite tiles at an expenditure of Rs. 1.83 million. The boiler room is constructed at an expenditure of Rs. 1.35 million, and security has been tightened with grills.

Food is served on plantain leaves. But there is a plan to replace them with steel plates (as plantain leaves are sometimes in short supply) and install dishwashers.

Electronic placards are displayed on the temple premises to provide information about the *anna-daan* and its timings to the devotees.

### 17.2.13 Waste management

The quantity of wet waste produced is 60 to 80 kg per day. It is used to make manure, which is used in temple gardens.

### 17.2.14 Key issues

One of the major concerns is the wastage of food by the devotees. Efforts are continuously made to make them aware that they should take food in quantity they can eat. The temple authorities ensure that men must remove their shirts before entering the temple, a practice that has been followed for decades. Women are supposed to wear *sarees* or *salwar kurtas*, but this is not being followed strictly. The purpose of the dress code is mainly to give sanctity to the place and not make it a place for displaying fashion.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://myoksha.com/kukke-subramanya-temple/> accessed on 7 July 2020

### Notes

- 249 In Hinduism, the snakes are worshipped as they are associated with Lord Shiva.
- 250 Refers to the text written in Sanskrit.
- 251 Refers to a text in Sanskrit literature.
- 252 Biographical poetic works by many authors, depicting the life and achievements of the great philosopher, *Adi Shankaracharya*.
- 253 It is a hymn sung under inspiration by *Sri Aadi Sankara* – spiritual exaltation and ecstasy of praise, prayer, and meditation on *Subrahmanya*.
- 254 *Seva* is a Sanskrit word that describes the act of service, but in this context, it is a prayer ritual of varied forms offered to the lord.
- 255 It is a kind of ceremonial worship performed to get rid of *Sarpa Dosha* from one's horoscope.
- 256 It is the puja done to neutralize all the issues related to fertility, child birth, and marriage in one's life.
- 257 It is a special worship performed seeking protection and relief from *Sarpa Dosha*, *Naga Dosha*, *Kuja Dosha*, and *Kala Sarpa Dosha*.
- 258 *Sarpa Dosha* happens due to rage and extreme anger by the God of Serpent and is believed to cause barrenness, infertility, skin disease, blindness, etc.
- 259 *Nagas* in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, refers to the members of a class of mythical semi-divine beings, half human, and half cobra.
- 260 Refers to the Lord who loves serving food to the needy.
- 261 Hindu religious observance for 41 days by the devotees of *Lord Ayyappa* before visiting the temple on *Shabarimalai*, Kerala.
- 262 Temple festival celebrated by rural folks.
- 263 The term refers to various forms of emancipation, enlightenment, liberation, and release.
- 264 Food that is a religious offering in Hinduism and is normally consumed by worshippers after performing rituals.
- 265 *Naivedyam* is the food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before eating.
- 266 It is a Hindu religious ritual of worship in which light in the form of flame is offered to the deity.
- 267 *Sarpasamskara*, *Ashlesha Bali* and *Nagapratheste*.
- 268 At *Adi Subramanya sarpasamskara* dining hall, people who have performed *Sarpasamskaraseva* are served totalling 1,200 people. Only lunch is provided here between noon and 2:00 pm. Instead of dinner, snacks are provided two times – morning (after 8:00 am) and evening (6:00 pm to 7:00 pm). At *Sri Shanmukha Prasada Bhojana Shaale*, lunch is served between noon and 3 pm and dinner between 8:00 pm and 9:30 pm. At *Adi Subramanya Sarpa Samskara* dining hall, At *Shringeri Mutt*, the lunch is served between 1:00 pm and 2:30 pm.
- 269 Stew prepared with lentils, vegetables, and spices to be eaten with rice.
- 270 It is a collection box used in Indian temples to collect cash offerings from devotees.

## Case study 18 Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana Mutt, Mandya District, Karnataka, India

M. V. Lavanya\*

### 18.1 Introduction

Sri Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana Mutt is situated on a hilltop at an altitude of about 3,300 ft in Nagamangala Taluk, Mandya, around 110 km west of Bengaluru, the capital of Karnataka, India. From time immemorial, the *mutt* has been a place of vivid scenic beauty with lush green woods and the serenity of the lakes providing a sanctified atmosphere for spiritual aspirants to meditate. Amidst this serenity stands the Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana with Lord Gangadhareshwara as the presiding deity along with four other incarnations of Lord Shiv in their ferocious forms for demolishing the demons and the unrighteous.

This temple complex also has other deities like Sri Ganapathi (the prototype for all religious rites), Sthambhambika Devi (counterpart and source of energy to Lord Shiv), Sri Subramaneshwara (divine army chief), Mallamma Devi, and many others. These vast premises, including the temple complex and the surrounding area, are as famous as Sri Kalabyraveshwara Kshetra and attract thousands of devotees and tourists from all parts of India and abroad.

#### History

This holy place finds mention in the ancient *Shiva Purana*<sup>271</sup> and other scriptures. Though this ancient religious place with a history of 1,500 years has been preserved and succeeded by many great seers and sages in the past who have contributed widely to the *mutt's* rich heritage, it gained momentum and became popular among the masses only after 1974 when its 71st pontiff His Holiness Jagadguru Padma Bhooshana Bhairavaikya Sri Dr. Balagangadharanatha Mahaswamiji took his vow of *sanyasa* (renunciation) and succeeded in 1974. In 2008, a magnificent temple dedicated to Lord Kalabhairaveshwara was constructed at a cost of Rs. 850 million by Sri Balagangadharanatha Swamiji. As many as 1,200 people, including sculptors, toiled around the clock over nine years to make the *swamiji's* dream temple a reality. From then on, the Adichunchanagiri Mutt has initiated numerous activities in the sphere of education, socio-culture, economic, health, reskilling, and so on for the benefit of the community.

Through Adichunchanagiri Shikshana Trust, the *mutt* aids more than 450 educational institutions. Free and general hostels in almost all districts of headquarters provide board and lodging facilities for poor students. The *mutt* also runs schools for visually disabled children in the Ramanagar district as an endeavour to bring light to the lives of these children.

#### Significance of the temple

A huge number of devotees visit the temple on the auspicious days of *Makara Sankranti*<sup>272</sup> *Mahashivratri*,<sup>273</sup> *Amavasya*<sup>274</sup> (where special *Abhisheka*<sup>275</sup> *poojas* are

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conducted), and *Guru Poornima*.<sup>276</sup> On the days of *Makarsankranti* and *Mahashivratri*, special *poojas* and *utsav*<sup>277</sup> are carried out in the evening. All these religious rites and customs are performed with awe and revered by the devotees of the *mutt*. They participate in these activities wholeheartedly and with enthusiasm to show their gratitude to their deity and Guru for blessing them with health, wealth, and knowledge.

## 18.2 Anna-daan at Sri Adichunchanagiri Mahasamsthana Mutt, Mandya

The *mutt's* efforts are directed toward organising activities in the field of food (*anna*), education (*akshar*), and health (*arogya*) for thousands of children and devotees. *Sri Mutt* is also called *anna-daan mutt* as it is feeding more than 20,000 people every day. Here in local terms, *anna-daan* is referred to as *anna dasoha*. The tradition of serving food in Kalabhairaveshwara Temple to devotees has been hailed from the time the temple came into being. But the prominence of the *anna dasoha* became more prevalent after Sri Balagangadharanath Swamiji took charge of the *mutt*. He developed the trust and took it to great heights. *Anna dasoha* is active throughout the year. It did not suspend its activities even during the nationwide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Serving the poor and needy is the main motto of the *mutt*. On Sundays, devotees and tourists visit the *mutt* in huge numbers.

### 18.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna dasoha* is treated auspiciously by the temple. In Kannada the word *dasoha* means charity, which is given with a sense of servitude. One who practises *dasoha* must, in the first place, regard himself as a servant of the society. Moreover, an effective *dasoha* must fulfil one more condition: the food or money or other materials offered in *dasoha* must have been earned in an honest manner. If they are earned in a corrupt way or by questionable means, including violence, cheating, stealing, etc., they are not fit for *dasoha*.

There are two types of *dasohas* at Adichunchanagiri Mutt. One is in the form of common kitchen (free food) and though this is done by the *swamijis* of the *mutt*, the *swamijis* themselves are dependent on the devotees financially and materially. The *swamijis* are engaged in promoting knowledge (*gyan dasoha*) also. It is a purely philanthropic activity.

The main spirit of the *anna-daan* is that it brings good luck and sanctity to the donor. It creates respect and positive feelings in the mind of devotees towards the *mutt*. Also, the poor and the needy get rid of their hunger.

### 18.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Before the food is served to the devotees, it is offered to the deities of the *mutt* as *Naivedyam*.<sup>278</sup> It is cooked separately at 5:30 am by the head cook, and after the prayers are offered, *Naivedyam* is distributed to the *swamijis* and kitchen and other staff. Usually, curd rice, *payasa*,<sup>279</sup> and vegetable curry are offered as *Naivedyam*. The temple management places hoardings and placards to make people understand the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* and avoid wasting food.

### 18.2.3 Number of devotees served

There are three dining halls which can accommodate approximately 1,200 people at a time. On the ground floor, all devotees and the public are served. On the first floor, VIPs

are served, and the second floor is for the temple management staff, kitchen staff, and hostel staff. Seating arrangements include fixed granite tables with plastic chairs. Food is served on banana leaves or areca plates. To manage the huge crowd, a queue system has been introduced for the devotees to enter the dining hall. Cleaning of the dining hall is carried out as each batch completes the meal.

*Table II.18.1 Dining hall details*

<i>Details</i>	
Number of dining halls	3
Capacity	1,200
<b>Seating</b>	
Dining table	Fixed granite tables and plastic chairs
Served on	Banana leaves/areca plates
Management of crowd	Queue system
Cleaning: Number of times	As soon as one batch finishes the food, the cleaning staff cleans the area

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Food is served three times daily. Breakfast is served between 8:30 am and 10:30 am, lunch between 12:30 pm and 3:30 pm, and dinner between 7:30 pm and 10:00 pm (Table II.18.2). The number of times and number of people served varies depending on the crowd. It is amazing to know that every day during the normal season, approximately 500–600 people are served breakfast, 2,000 to 3,000 people lunch, and around 500 are served dinner. During peak season and special occasions, the number of devotees increases to 3,000–4,000 for breakfast, 5,000–6,000 for lunch, and 1,000–2,000 for dinner. The number of times food is served also varies; it is 7 to 8 times during the normal season and 15–20 times during the peak season.

To make the process of serving easier to such a huge crowd during peak times like on Sundays, the buffet system has been introduced. Food served to VIPs and staff may vary from that served to the devotees.

*Table II.18.2 Number of people food served per day*

<i>Meals</i>	<i>Timings</i>	<i>Number of times served</i>		<i>Number of people served</i>	
		<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
<b>Breakfast</b>	8:30 am–10:30 am	7–8	15–20 or more	500–600	3,000–4,000
<b>Lunch</b>	12:30 pm–3:30 pm	7–8	15–20 or more	2,000–3,000	5,000–6,000
<b>Dinner</b>	7:30 pm–10:00 pm	7–8	15–20 or more	400–500	1,000–2,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### *18.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served*

During normal season, around 350 kg of rice is cooked daily, which increases to 800 kg during peak season.

Table II.18.3 Total volume of food served per day

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	150 kg	300–350 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	200 kg	400–500 kg
Sambar <sup>b</sup>	100 L	400 L
Payasa <sup>c</sup>	200 L	800 L
Vegetable curry	100 kg	700–800 kg
Rasam <sup>d</sup>	50 L	200 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Varieties of rice dishes like *Puliyogre*, vegetable bath, ghee rice, *pongol*, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Stew made from vegetables, lentils, and spices.

<sup>c</sup> Sweet dish.

<sup>d</sup> Indian soup made from tamarind and other spices.

Table II.18.4 Cooking and serving time

Time taken for cooking (in hours)	
Breakfast	1 hour 30 minutes
Lunch	2 hours
Dinner	2 hours
<b>Time taken for serving</b>	
Serving time per batch (in minutes)	12 minutes
<b>Time taken for cleaning</b>	
Cleaning time (in minutes)	8 minutes
<b>Total time for one batch to complete – serving, cleaning and people let in to have food</b>	30 minutes

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 18.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The time taken for preparing the food is less, as the kitchen is well equipped with the necessary facilities required for speedy preparation. The time taken for the preparation of breakfast is approximately 1.30 hours, whereas lunch and dinner take 2 hours each. Each batch takes around 30 minutes to complete, this includes 12 minutes for serving, 10 minutes for eating, and 8 minutes of cleaning.

### 18.2.6 Nutrition

Food cooked includes whole grains and cereals, sprouts, and vegetables. The finger millet balls which are highly fibrous and nutritious are also served. Food items served would change according to the season. Surplus food is first given to hostel students and then to the poor.

### 18.2.7 Human resources

In total, there are 25 people involved in cooking, serving, and cleaning during the normal season; in the peak season, the staff strength is 75. There are seven regular cooks, ten

serving staff, three cleaners, and three watchmen. The kitchen operations are taken care of by a senior kitchen manager. The quality control manager ensures the quality of prepared food before it is served to the public. During peak season, the temple authority deposes more staff for cooking, serving, and cleaning purposes to ensure quick serving of food to the devotees. The temple staff works for 8 hours during the normal season and, 12 hours during the peak season. They have one day as their weekly off day on a rotation basis.

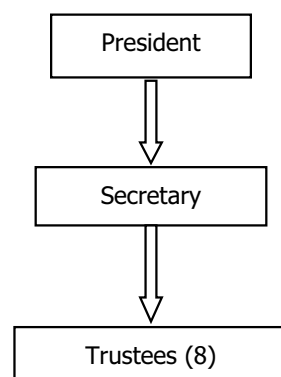
Table II.18.5 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Staff	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
<i>Regular paid staff (temple staff)</i>						
Senior kitchen manager	1	2	8	12	1	1
Quality control manager	1	1	8	12	1	1
Cooks	7	17–20	8	12	1	1
Cleaners	3	10	8	12	1	1
Servers	10	40	8	12	1	1
Watchman	3	5	8	12	1	1
	25	75				
<b>Volunteers for specific purpose</b>						
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	2	10	8	12	1	1
Serving people	10	20	8	12	1	1
Managing the crowd	—	10	—	12	—	1
OthOthers (specify)	Hostel teachers and staff also help during the time peak season					

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 18.2.8 Management

The temple is administered by a trust which was formed in 1973. It has eight members: one president, one secretary, and six trustees. The presiding *swamiji* (*Sri Nirmalanandanatha Mahaswamiji*) is the president of the trust. *Sri Prakashanatha Swamiji*. Trustee oversees the temple and the kitchen.



### 18.2.9 Finances

All the activities of the *mutt* are financed by donations received from the public, members of the community, devotees, philanthropists, and others. The *mutt* has created a separate endowment to cater to the specific needs of *anna-daan* called *Adichunchangiri Dasoha Nidhi*. Financial auditing is carried out twice a year by a chartered accountant who is also a trustee.

As Table II.18.6 indicates, approximately Rs. 3.1 million have been invested by the *mutt* to perform *anna-daan*. The kitchen is equipped with three steam boilers with an investment cost of Rs. 0.4 million, ten huge vessels (costing Rs. 0.5 million), one *roti*-making machine (Rs. 0.29 million), etc. Many items in the kitchen are donated by the devotees, and one of the RO plants for water purification was donated by the Government of Karnataka. There is a proposal approved by the state government to set up a solar kitchen.

Table II.18.6 Investment cost

Particulars	Numbers	Cost (Rs. In million)
Steam boilers	3	0.4
Huge vessels	10	0.5
Roti-making machines	1	0.29
Glasses	1,500	0.082
RO plants	2+1	0.77
Gas stoves	6–7	0.48
Trolleys	10	0.05
Chairs	1,000	0.5
CCTVs (number and cost)	6	0.03
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.10</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 18.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Selection of the raw materials supplier is carried out personally by the present in charge of the temple to ensure good quality of ingredients. Groceries are purchased from Shivamogga,<sup>280</sup> and vegetables are procured from Bengaluru markets<sup>281</sup> and sometimes from the village located nearby. Once the food is prepared, quality and taste are inspected by the in-charge personnel. Provisions of the Food Safety Act are followed to ensure quality. Staff use gloves and masks while serving food to the devotees. Vegetables and rice are washed thoroughly in warm water before cooking. There is no cold storage at present though a proposal to build one is on hold. Personal hygiene is strictly maintained at all levels.

### 18.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen is equipped with modern machines like an air-compressed water heater, RO plants, steam boilers, etc., for easy and quick preparation of food. Initiatives are underway to install solar energy-based equipment. CCTV is installed in the dining hall and storeroom for better monitoring and surveillance. Technology is used to organise people through WhatsApp messenger and websites, while YouTube videos cover temple occasions.

### 18.2.12 Waste management

Wet waste and vegetable peels are dumped on the land owned by the *mutt*. Leftover food is distributed to the needy. Dry waste is collected every day by the local corporation.

### 18.2.13 Key issues/requests

One of the major issues that the management is facing is the shortage of funds for the *anna-daan* programme as it is mainly run by the contributions of the devotees and others. The other social issue is devotees jumping the queue and wasting food.

## Temple

[www.acmbgs.org](http://www.acmbgs.org)

## Website referred

- 1 [www.acmbgs.org](http://www.acmbgs.org) accessed on 25 September 2020
- 2 [Wikipedia.org](https://www.wikipedia.org) accessed on 25 September 2020
- 3 [www.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) accessed on 25 September 2020
- 4 [www.google.com/maps](https://www.google.com/maps) accessed on 26 September 2020

## Notes

- 271 One of the 18 major *puranas* (a class of Sanskrit sacred writings on Hindu mythology).
- 272 *Makara Sankranti* is a festival in Hinduism dedicated to the deity Surya and is observed each year in the lunar month of *Magha*, i.e., in the month of January.
- 273 *Maha Shivratri* is a Hindu festival celebrated annually in honour of Lord *Shiva*.
- 274 New moon day.
- 275 It is a religious rite or method of prayer which involves “bathing of the divinity to whom worship is offered”. It is common in Indian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.
- 276 An Indian festival celebrated to express reverence towards one’s guru, teacher, or mentors.
- 277 Generally, refers to a festival or celebration
- 278 Food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before eating it.
- 279 A sweet dish.
- 280 A district in the state of Karnataka.
- 281 City in Karnataka, India.

## Case study 19 Sri Annapoorna Temple, Chikkamangaluru District, Karnataka, India

Shivakumara Nayka\*

### 19.1 Introduction

Sri Annapoorna temple is located on the banks of river Bhadra in Hornaadu taluk, Chikkamangaluru District, Karnataka, South India. The deity Sri Annapoorneshwari was

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installed by his holiness *Agasthya Maharishi*.<sup>282</sup> The temple was constructed around 400 years ago by the *Dharmakarharu* family and, the 5th *Dharmakarharu* late Sri D.B. Venkatasubba Jois improved the temple.

### Significance of the temple

The idol of the deity, Sri Annapoorneshwari is made of gold. There is a strong belief associated with the temple that a person who visits and seeks the blessings of the goddess would never face food scarcity in their lifetime. There are several special *poojas*<sup>283</sup> or specific rituals on special festivals/occasions that are practised in the temple. On these occasions, devotees visit the temples in huge numbers. This also adds to the flow of devotees to the *anna-daan* premises.

## **19.2 Anna-daan at Sri Kshetra Annapoorna Temple, Horanadu**

*Anna-daan* started more than 60 years ago with the objective of providing free food to every pilgrim. Every devotee irrespective of his religion, language, caste, or creed, is provided with a three-course vegetarian meal. At present, there are four dining halls with a total capacity of serving 1,200 people at a time. The kitchen is well equipped and is well maintained.

### *19.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan*

Philanthropy is the main reason behind performing *anna-daan*. Besides, people also believe that they get rid of the difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. Although there are no specific rituals. After the meal is cooked, it is served to the deity as '*Naivedyam*<sup>284</sup>' which is later served to the devotees following the *pooja*<sup>285</sup> rituals. However, during special occasions and festivals, certain special rituals and prayers are performed before cooking starts.

### *19.2.2 Number of devotees served*

Food is served three times a day. On normal days, breakfast is served to around 500–1,000 people; the number goes up to 3,000 during peak seasons. Lunch is served from noon to 5 pm and dinner between 7:00 pm and 10 pm. On average, on normal days around 6,500 people are served three times a day (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), whereas during peak season, approximately 14,000 are fed. During peak season, there are no restrictions on timings and food continues to be served till 11 pm. The temple authority goes in for a buffet system to manage the crowd. Between noon and 5 pm, around 15–25 batches are served in the peak season and almost 10–12 batches are in normal seasons.

*Table II.19.1* Number of devotees served *anna-daan* and timings

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	7:30 am to 11 am	—	—	500–1,000	2,000–3,000
Lunch	Noon 5 pm	10–12 batches	15–25 batches	3,000	7,000
Dinner	7 pm to 11 pm	7 batches	10–15 batches	2,000	5,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The temple has four dining halls, the details of which are given in Table II.19.2. The total number of people served varies between 6,500 during normal days to 14,000 during peak season. Steel plates and banana leaves are used to serve the food. Delicious, nutritious food is prepared and served under the most hygienic conditions.

Table II.19.2 Number of dining halls at Sri Kshetra Annapoorna Temple, Horanadu

Sr. no	Number of the dining hall	Type of people reserved	Number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	Four	Common for everyone	Approx. 6,500	Approx. 14,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 19.2.3 Quantity of food preparations and items served

The kitchen is equipped with modern machines to prepare food. Around 6 to 7 quintals of rice are prepared per day in the normal season; during peak season, it is around 12 to 15 quintals per day. The quantity of food cooked is based on the estimated number of devotees who are likely to turn up. This estimate of the kitchen staff can be further refined by observing the flow of the devotees. Table II.19.3 gives an overview of the details of the quantity of food prepared per day.

Table II.19.3 Quantity of food prepared per day

Sr. No.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	600–700 kg	1,500–2,000 kg
2	Sambar <sup>a</sup>	3,000–4,000 L	8,000–10,000 L
3	Rasam <sup>b</sup>	2,000–3,000 L	5,000–10,000 L
4	Vegetable curry	2,000–3,000 L	5,000–8,000 L
5	Chutney <sup>c</sup>	1,000–2,000 L	3,000–5,000 L
6	Payasa <sup>d</sup> (Godi, Akki, dal)	3,000–5,000 L	8,000–15,000 L
7	Buttermilk	Around 75–100 L of curd is used	Around 200–250 L of curd is used

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Southern Indian dish consisting of lentils and vegetables cooked with tamarind and other spices.

<sup>b</sup> Soup prepared with sweet-sour stock made from tamarind, lentils, added spices and garnish.

<sup>c</sup> Chutney is a spicy dish.

<sup>d</sup> Sweet dish.

Food served has a variety and is nutritious. Special food is prepared during festivals (Table II.19.4).



Table II.19.4 Food items served per meal at Sri Kshetra Annapoorna Temple, Horanadu

Breakfast normal season	Breakfast peak season	Lunch normal season	Lunch peak season	Dinner normal season	Dinner peak season
Poha/Avalakki	Avalakki <sup>a</sup>	Plain rice	Plain rice	Plain rice	Plain rice
Upma/ Variety rice	Upma <sup>b</sup> /Rice	Sambar	Rice item <sup>c</sup>	Rasam/Sambar	Rice Item <sup>c</sup>
Coffee/tea	Coffee/tea	Rasam	Sambar	Buttermilk	Sambar
		Chutney	Rasam	Vegetable curry	Sambar/rasam
		Different types of sweets/payasa (rava, akki, dal with boondi)	Different types of sweets/ payasam (rava, akki, dal with boondi)	Chutney	Different types of sweets/payasam (rava, akki, dal with boondi)
		Buttermilk	Vegetable curry	Buttermilk	Vegetable curry
		Kadhi <sup>d</sup>	Buttermilk	Kadhi	Buttermilk

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Notes: The quantity served is difficult to say since the *anna-daan* is unlimited; devotees can have full meals without any restriction.

<sup>a</sup> Dish prepared from flattened rice.

<sup>b</sup> Dish prepared from broken wheat.

<sup>c</sup> All are items made from either rice or wheat with various spices.

<sup>d</sup> A thick gravy based on gram flour, and contains vegetable fritters called *pakor*as.

Based on the instruction of the manager, the kitchen staff prepares food for the expected number of devotees to avoid leftovers. If the prepared food runs out before all the devotees are fed, the kitchen staff is geared to prepare additional food within a short span of 10–15 minutes (heating the water takes 8 minutes, rice takes 10 minutes to cook, and *sambar* takes another 15 minutes). Leftover rice, if any, after dinner is used the next day to prepare mixed rice with spices for breakfast for the staff. No one goes hungry in the temple. Even after dinner time, food is kept in the dining hall for anybody to eat late at night.

#### 19.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

Normally, preparing rice takes 8–10 minutes. The first cooking of rice takes 15 to 30 minutes. The second cooking takes lesser time, as the hot water is kept ready. The total time taken for the preparation of lunch takes around 3–4 hours (Table II.19.5). The cooking starts at 4:00 am, and they serve breakfast by 7 am. Lunch is ready by 9:30 am. Dinner cooking starts at 4:00 pm and is over by 6:00 pm. Compared to lunch, dinner takes lesser time, as the quantity of food to be prepared is less due to the lesser turnout of the devotees.

Table II.19.5 Time taken for preparing food at Sri Kshetra Annapoorna Temple, Horanadu

Sr. no.	Food items	Time taken for preparing food
1	Preparation of lunch	Around 3–4 hours
2	Preparation of dinner	2 hours
3	Preparation of rice	8–10 minutes (at the beginning 15 to 30)
4	Rasam	15–20 minutes
5	Sambar	25–30 minutes
6	Payasa (Godi, Akki, Hesarubele)	30 minutes

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Once two to three rows are filled up, serving starts and takes around 10–15 minutes. One batch takes about 25–30 minutes to have the meal.

### 19.2.5 Nutrition

Nutrition is given due attention. Every day they try to introduce different types of vegetables, pulses, and grains to ensure that a good amount of nutrition is provided with meals and *prasadam*.<sup>286</sup> The food items remain the same throughout the year except on special days.

### 19.2.6 Human resources

Around 150 people are working in the temple. Around 30 of them are involved with *anna-daan*. Category-wise details are given in Table II.19.6. During peak season, the services of volunteers (including college students, devotees, and known persons) are sought in serving the food, managing the crowd, collecting donated items, and other work. Around 100–200 people work as volunteers. During peak season, they are also involved in cooking, cleaning, and vegetable cutting along with regular staff.

Table II.19.6 Human resource

Staff	Total
Manager	2
Supervisors	2
Cooks	4
Helper	10
Serving staff	8
Cleaning/helper	2
Watchmen	2
Total	30

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The temple staff works in shifts. The working hours for the first batch are from 4 am to 4 pm and another batch from 3 pm to 11 pm every day. The staffs adjust the time with mutual understanding for short breaks in between and for refreshments. One weekly off day is allowed on a rotation basis.

### 19.2.7 Management

Sri Kshetra Annapoorneshwari Temple is running under the leadership of Sri. G. Bheemeshwara Joshy, who was sworn in as the seventh *Dharmakartha*<sup>287</sup> in 1991. Appointment of staff, procurement of raw materials, (groceries and vegetables), kitchen equipment, dining hall furniture, repairs, etc., are decided by the management committee under the leadership of Sri G. Bheemeshwara Joshy ([www.srikshehtrahoranadu.com](http://www.srikshehtrahoranadu.com)).

### 19.2.8 Finances

The temple receives various forms of donations in the form of cash and kind for *anna-daan*. At present, the expenditure for *anna-daan* is met from *Hundi*<sup>288</sup> collections and

donations made towards different types of *seva*.<sup>289</sup> Interest earned on corpus deposit is used for other expenditures of the temple, including *anna-daan*.

### 19.2.9 Quality of raw materials

For procuring raw materials, the temple follows the standard procurement procedures with the ISI mark. All the raw materials are purchased from the local markets located in nearby cities and towns Mangaluru, Hassan, Kalasa, Udupi, Davanagere, and Shivamogga. The procurement of vegetables is made directly from the farmers. Tenders are invited. Based on the price quoted, the suppliers are appointed without compromising the quality of raw materials.

### 19.2.10 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are paramount and are ensured by complying with the provisions of the food safety standards. Food inspectors visit the temple for random check of quality and safety. They also issue food safety and standard certificate to the temple from time to time. Before cooking, raw materials are washed in cold water followed by warm/hot water. Proper storage facility is available in the temple kitchen. Vessels used for cooking and serving are sterilised before and after cooking and serving. The manager is responsible for the quality of food and he checks the quality of food before it is served to the devotees under the *anna-daan* programme.

### 19.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen has adopted the latest equipment besides using manual *chulas*<sup>290</sup> to prepare food during the peak season. The kitchen is equipped with 8 steam boilers (1 each for rice, *payasa*, vegetable curry, and buttermilk and 2 each for *sambar/rasam* and other purposes). As a result, the cooking time has reduced considerably. The boilers, for example, allow some 60 kg of rice to be cooked at a time to feed 600 people. Before the modernisation of the kitchen, cooking took a lot more time – resulting in long wait times for the devotees.

In addition, the kitchen has 2,000 steel plates, 2,000 steel glass, three RO plants, around 16 trolleys for entire dining halls, and 2 gas stoves. Using advanced technology, delicious, wholesome food is prepared and served under the most hygienic of conditions (Table II.19.7).

Table II.19.7 Details of kitchen equipment

Dining halls	Kitchen equipment						
	Steam boilers	Huge vessels	Steel plates	Steel glass	RO plants	Gas stove	Tables and trolley for serving rice
2 dining halls	8 steam boilers, 2 huge vessels		2,000	2,000	3	2	16 trolleys for entire dining halls

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

In normal times, food is served on steel plates. During peak seasons, food is also on plantain leaves and paper plates. Placards are displayed in the temple premises to provide information and convey importance of *anna-daan*.

### 19.2.12 Waste management

Waste is segregated. Wet waste is used to make compost. Dry waste is disposed to the municipality in intervals.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://chikkamagaluru.nic.in/en/tourist-place/sri-ksetra-horanadu/> accessed on 28 September 2020
- 2 [www.srikshetrahoranadu.com](http://www.srikshetrahoranadu.com). accessed on 28 September 2020

### Notes

- 282 A revered Indian sage of Hinduism. In the Indian tradition, he is a noted recluse and an influential scholar in diverse languages of the Indian subcontinent.
- 283 Prayers held on special occasions – *Akshaya Thadige, Samuhika Upanayana, Navarathri Mahotsava, Sriman Maha Chandika Homa, Pattabhishekothsava, Deepotsava, Rathotsava, Havi, Samuhika* Marriage, and *Sriman Maha Rathotsava*.
- 284 Offering (usually food) made to God prior to serving or eating
- 285 It is a worship ritual performed by Hindus to offer devotional homage and prayer to the deities.
- 286 It is the consecrated food offered to the deity in a Hindu temple which is then distributed to the devotees.
- 287 Spiritual head.
- 288 A *hundi* is a collection box used in Indian temples to collect cash offerings from devotees.
- 289 Donations offered to conduct special prayers (puja). For instance, the idol of the Lord will be decorated with fruits, butter, and several others which the people vow to do when their wish is fulfilled.
- 290 Furnace.

## Case study 20 Sri Shakti Peetha Kateel Durgaparameshwari Temple, Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka, India

M. L. Rakshitha\*

### 20.1 Introduction

Kateel Sri Durgaparameshwari temple is well-known for its great legendary status and considered one of the greatest *Shakti Peethas*<sup>291</sup> (powerful sacred place) in the state of Karnataka, South India. Durgaparameshwari is the form of the mother divine, *Adishakti*<sup>292</sup> who brings together all the supreme powers. Thousands of devotees worship her with

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immense devotion. *Kateel Durgaparameshwari* temple is in the temple town of Kateel located 26 km from Mangalore city of Dakshina Kannada district. The temple is situated amidst all-encompassing captivating greenery. Devotees from across the state visit the temple every day in large numbers to seek the blessings of goddesses *Sri Durgaparameshwari*. It is also the fourth richest temple in the state. The temple is also contributing to the society in various forms, like *anna-daan* (food offerings) and promoting education as well.

### Significance of the temple

Sri Durgaparameshwari Temple has an interesting mythological story associated with it. It is believed that Jaganmathe Sri Adishakti had appeared in many forms to destroy evil and restore peace several times in the past, and *Kateel Sri Durgaparameshwari* is also one of her forms. The legend of *Durgaparameshwari* has it that when goddess Durga defeated the demons, *Shumba* and *Nishumbha*, their minister Arunasura became the king of demons and started troubling the sages by disturbing the *yagns* (holy sacrifice), and *Arunasura* had obtained a boon from Lord Brahma<sup>293</sup> that he will not be killed by any god, demon, reptile, Yaksha,<sup>294</sup> Gandharva,<sup>295</sup> humans, or by any weapon or animal. Upon getting the wish, Arunasura defeated Lord Indra and conquered *Devaloka* (planet of gods). Lord *Indra* approached – Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiv for help, and they in turn requested the help of Mother Sri Adishakti. Adishakti, disguised as a beautiful and seductive *Mohini*,<sup>296</sup> appeared in the gardens of Arunasura's kingdom. Arunasura was captivated by her beauty. He proposed to her, but she refused and entered a rock. Arunasura broke the rock. The goddess took the form of a big bee by the name of *Bramara* and repeatedly attacked him until he died. Since Goddess Adishakti took the form of a bee, she is also called *Bramarambike*. Later, sages offered the furious form of the goddess with tender coconut from the kalparuksha in heaven and calmed her down. Sri Adishakti appeared as a *Linga* in the middle of the River Nandini. Sri Adi Parashakti thus relieved Nandini from *Japali Muni's* curse. In Sanskrit, *Kati* stands for middle and “*Ila*” stands for Earth. So, Kateel means the place in the centre of Earth. The rock in which Devi appeared is worshipped thrice a day with tender coconut.

Since flowers are bees' favourite, the goddess is decorated with flowers. *Navarathri*<sup>297</sup> is celebrated vibrantly. Once a year for a duration of one week, *jatre*<sup>298</sup> is celebrated. Temple should be noted for its *Yakshaganaharakesevas*.<sup>299</sup> There are six troupes of *Yakshagana*<sup>300</sup> artists who perform *Yakshagana* for the devotees. The golden chariot housed at the temple complex is the biggest golden chariot in Karnataka.

## **20.2 Anna-daan at Kateel Sri Durgaparameshwari Temple**

At the Kateel Durgaparameshwari Temple, *anna-daan* is offered three times a day. On Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays around 10,000 to 15,000 people visit the temple and on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays about 5,000 to 7,000 people visit per day. *Anna-daan* is offered daily to all the devotees. The temple serves *Ganji*<sup>301</sup> coconut juice with chutney, a popular dish in Kateel Temple in the morning. On *Ekadashi*<sup>302</sup> day, when rice is usually not consumed as a religious practice, the temple serves *palahara*,<sup>303</sup> which includes *poha*,<sup>304</sup> *sambar*,<sup>305</sup> and *payasa*.<sup>306</sup>

### 20.2.1 Rituals and prayers

Cooks should enter the kitchen only after having a bath. There are no other rituals like performing *pooja* and prayers before cooking. Every morning, *Naivedya*<sup>307</sup> is prepared for the goddess. *Naivedya* is mixed with *dasoha* rice<sup>308</sup> and then served to the devotees. Similarly, during festivals like *Navaratri* and *Utsavas*,<sup>309</sup> after the *pooja*, *prasad*<sup>310</sup> from the temple is mixed with the rice of *anna-daan*, and only then is food served for the devotees.

### 20.2.2 Number of devotees served

Management strictly monitors food serving in the dining halls to avoid food wastage. There are quotations written on the walls of the dining hall to draw the attention of people to the importance of food. The walls have pictures of children starving for food, intending to educate people not to waste food. Besides, *prasad* should be respected and if wasted, it amounts to dishonouring god. During COVID-19, the self-service system was followed, and devotees could serve themselves as per their requirements. There are three dining halls in the temple.

Table II.20.1 Dining halls in the temple

Name of dining hall	People served	Number of times served	Approximate number of people served
1	General public	3	900
2	Brahmins and VIP	3	1,500
3	Students	1	800

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

There is a proposal for the construction of a new dining hall which will have a capacity of accommodating 3,000 people at a time. It will have chairs and tables. Currently, dining halls have chairs and tables only for people who cannot squat on the ground. Food is served on areca leaves. In the future, the temple is planning to shift to steel plates.

Durgaparameshwari Temple runs a college of its own which has 800 students. The students are provided mid-day meals in the temple's dining hall.

Table II.20.2 Number of people served per day

Meals	Time	Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season ( <i>jaatre</i> )
<b>Breakfast</b>	7 am–10 am	300–400	
<b>Lunch</b>	11 am–3 pm	5,000–7,000	20,000
<b>Dinner</b>	7 pm–10 pm	5,000–7,000	20,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 20.2.3 Quantity of food preparations and items served

On normal days, around 4,000 devotees visit the temple. The quantity of food prepared depends on the day of the week, which influences the crowd. Kateel Durgaparameshwari Temple food menu includes *ganji* (porridge) and chutney<sup>311</sup> for breakfast, and lunch includes curry, rice with *sambhar*,<sup>312</sup> *payasa* (sweet), and buttermilk. The total volume of food served can be gauged by the quantity of ingredients used for cooking.

Table II.20.3 Total volume of ingredients used per day

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day
1	Rice	500–700 kg
2	Sambar	5,000–6,000 L
3	Payasa	3,000–3,500 L
4	Buttermilk	250 L of curd

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 20.2.4 Accountability of prasadam

Kateel Durgaparameshwari Temple has two grocery stores from where the ingredients are purchased. The manager is in charge of monitoring/verifying the purchases, quantities, and bills. It is also verified by the office later. At the final stage, auditors verify the expenditures. Auditors visit the temple twice a year to audit all expenditures related to *anna dasoha*<sup>313</sup>/*anna-daan*.

### 20.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is fully equipped with modern gadgets which take far less time to cook. The preparation of breakfast starts at 6 am, and it takes about one and a half hours to complete the process. If the food prepared seems insufficient, the cooks prepare the extra meal within 20 minutes. For instance, preparing rice now takes only 20 minutes. Earlier, it took 30–45 minutes. The kitchen has seven to eight steamers, which saves time. Lunch cooking starts at 11 am and ends around 12:30 pm. Rice is cooked as and when needed and not in bulk quantity. From 11 am till 4 pm, rice is cooked to meet the demand of the devotees. All meals are served hot and fresh.

Table II.20.4 Time taken for preparing food

Time taken for cooking (in hours)	
Breakfast	5–7 am
Lunch	7–11
<b>Time taken for serving</b>	
Serving time per batch (in minutes)	20
<b>Time taken for cleaning</b>	
Cleaning time (in minutes)	15
Total time for one batch to complete – serving, cleaning, and people let in to have food (in minutes)	40 m

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 20.2.6 Nutrition

It should be noted that the temple provides nutritionally balanced food. It includes rice with *sambar*, which has a variety of vegetables in it. The vegetables provide the nutrients for good health. Sweets and buttermilk are also provided. Thus, overall, it is a nutritionally balanced meal.

### 20.2.7 Human resources

Sixty permanent workers are involved in *anna-daan* in the temple. It includes cooks, helpers, cleaners, serving staff, and managers. Also, there are about 50 workers on a contract basis. The details are listed in Table II.20.5:

Table II.20.5 Number of staff at temple

Regular paid staff (temple staff)	Normal season
Senior kitchen manager	4
Cooks	7
Helpers for serving	45
Cleaners	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 20.2.8 Waste management

The leftover food is used to feed the cattle at the temple-managed *goshala*,<sup>314</sup> which has about 150–200 cattle. Dry waste is given to the local corporation.

There is no dress code to visit the temple. The temple authorities request devotees not to waste food, as it is *prasad* and offered to the goddesses.

## Notes

291 *Shakthi Peethas* are the significant shrines and pilgrimage destinations in *Shaktism*, the goddess-focused Hindu tradition.

292 It means supreme energy.

293 God of creation.

294 Broad class of nature-spirits, usually benevolent, but sometimes capricious, connected with water, fertility, trees, the forest, treasure, and wilderness.

295 A *Gandharva* is a celestial being, specifically a divine musician.

296 The female appearance of Lord *Vishnu*.

297 An annual Hindu festival celebrated over nine days in September–October.

298 Referred to an event that held for specific period to a specific place and includes some rituals.

299 Means to express people's gratitude.

300 It is a theatrical form of presenting mythological and historical stories.

301 Porridge prepared using coconut milk.

302 The 11th day after the full moon and the 11th day after the new moon.

303 Breakfast.

304 *Poha* is a popular breakfast recipe prepared from flattened rice.

305 Lentil-based vegetable curry.

306 A type of pudding from the Indian subcontinent, made by boiling milk, sugar, and rice.



- 307 Food offering made first to the god.
- 308 Food that is served for *anna-daan*.
- 309 Celebrations.
- 310 Food offered to the deity in a Hindu temple and is later shared among devotees.
- 311 A spicy dish of Indian origin made from coconut and other spices.
- 312 Stew prepared with lentils, vegetables, and spices.
- 313 Charity of food.
- 314 Shelter for cattle.

## **Case study 21 Sri Kalika Durga Parameshwari Temple, Bengaluru, Karnataka, South India**

M. V. Lavanya\*

### **21.1 Introduction**

Sri Kalika Durga Parameshwari Temple, dedicated to the supreme goddess worshipped as the incarnation of Sri Durga Parameshwari, is located in Vidyaranyapura, Bengaluru, South India. The late Mr. V Ramu Shastry was the founder of the temple, which was inaugurated on 21 February 1988. The temple is famous among the Bangaloreans, as a mere visit of the supreme goddess in the form of Sri Durga Parameshwari gives a sublime experience and is believed to remove all problems.

With the 108-foot-high main *Gopuram*,<sup>315</sup> the temple looks magnificent and includes the sanctum sanctorum for nine physically manifested incarnations of Goddess Durga,<sup>316</sup> including Shailaputri, Chandraghanta, Brahmacharini, Kushmanda, Kartiyaayini, Skandamata, Kaalratri, Siddhidhatri, and Mahagauri. Along with the unique combination of nine *avatars*<sup>317</sup> of Durga, one can also worship Lord Mahaganapathy,<sup>318</sup> Lord Subramanya Swamy,<sup>319</sup> Lord Nartaka Krishna,<sup>320</sup> and Lord Narasimha Swamy,<sup>321</sup> and Navagrahas<sup>322</sup> placed in a different sanctum sanctorum. The temple is known for different types of *poojas*<sup>323</sup> offered to the Goddess. Many devotees from various regions of Bengaluru and other parts of the state gather in the temple to immerse in the *Maha Abishekam*<sup>324</sup> on Sunday. The strong vision of the founder of the temple to spread the power of the divine mother is getting established. Since its inception, the temple has witnessed incredible progress with respect to infrastructure, *poojas*, and services.

#### Significance of the temple

Sri Kalika Durga Parameshwari temple includes Goddess Yakshini,<sup>325</sup> who is known to fulfil the wishes of the devotees. There is a strong belief that if your wish is written on a piece of paper and if that paper is attached to the goddess, she will fulfil the wish. Once the wish is fulfilled, that person must visit the temple again to show their gratitude. The other speciality of this temple is the worship of golden and silver lizards. It is a belief in Hinduism, that if the lizard falls on anybody, they must touch the golden lizard. Such deep-rooted beliefs draw people in large numbers and thereby to have *anna-daan* in the temple.

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Some of the special occasions celebrated at the temple are

- *Bramhostava* – held annually in March. Around 5,000 to 6,000 gather for this occasion.
- *Elaneeru Abhishekha*<sup>326</sup> – held every 31 December. Starts in the evening and lasts till 3 am on 1 January. Around 5,000 tender coconuts are used to carry out *Abhishekha*. This *seva* is performed by 15,000–20,000 people every year.
- *Haalu Bindige Abhishekha* – annually held in August just before the Sunday of *Varamahalakshmi Vratha*. The number of devotees who come to the temple for this occasion is 5,000 to 8,000.
- *Navaratri* celebrations – held annually for nine nights during the month of November. A heap of rice is poured in front of the goddess, and then this rice is served to devotees.
- Four Fridays during *Aashada Maasa*<sup>327</sup> – celebrated in June and July with the pouring of a heap of rice in front of the goddess, followed by its distribution among the devotees attracting a large number of devotees.

## 21.2 Anna-daan at Kalika Durga Parameshwari Temple

*Anna-daan* was started at the temple in January 2000 by Mr. V Ramoshastry. The main reason behind starting *anna-daan* is that since it is a temple where the goddess is worshipped and since the divine mother Durga Parameshwari is an incarnation of Lord Annapoorna, no devotee who comes to this temple should leave hungry.

In the initial period, the number of devotees used to be 25 on normal days and 50 on Tuesdays and Fridays. Earlier, a token system was introduced for free food. People who come from far places were given first preference. This practice continued for six months up to June 2000. Later, it was extended to all the devotees who come to the temple, thereby removing the token system.

### 21.2.1 Rituals and prayers

Although there are no rituals and prayers before cooking the meals, the food prepared is served to the deity as *Naivedyam*,<sup>328</sup> followed by *arati*<sup>329</sup> after which the food is served to the devotees.

### 21.2.2 Number of devotees served

Since its inception, the temple has conducted *anna-daan* daily. Devotees are served a hot and very delicious lunch after completing the *Maha Mangalarathi*.<sup>330</sup> Also, every day in the evening, *prasadam*<sup>331</sup> is distributed in small quantities. Variations across the week-days can be seen as people believe that certain days of the week are special to worship the goddesses. Hence, a large number of devotees throng the temple on those days, as can be seen in Table II.21.1.

Table II.21.1 Number of people served

Sr. no.	Days	Approximate number of people served food
<b>On weekdays</b>		
1	Sunday and Tuesday	>1,500
2	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday	200–300
3	Friday	5,000
4	Saturday	800–1,000
<b>On Special occasions</b>		
1	Bramhostava	5,000–6,000
2	Elaneeru Abhishekha	15,000–20,000
3	Haalu Bindige Abhishekha	7,000–8,000
4	Navaratri	7,000–8,000
5	Four Fridays during AashadaMaasa	7,000–8,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

There is one dining hall which can accommodate around 180 people at a time. Food is served between 11 am to around 2:30 pm. The number of devotees served varies across weekdays and across seasons. Around 300 devotees are served per day on weekdays, and on special occasions, the number swells to 5,000. To organise and manage the crowd, the temple authority follows the queue system.

The dining hall has tables and chairs. Food is served on steel plates without any discrimination of caste, race, or gender. Everyone eats together and is treated equally. The number of times lunch is served is around two to three times on weekdays. This increases during the peak season. When this happens, lunch is provided with a buffet system in order to manage the crowd.

### 21.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and served

The menu at the temple includes a variety of rice items such as *puliyogare*,<sup>332</sup> vegetable *bhath*,<sup>333</sup> or rice *bhath*,<sup>334</sup> etc.; plain rice, *sambar*,<sup>335</sup> or *rasam*;<sup>336</sup> and one variety of vegetable curry, buttermilk, and *payasa*<sup>337</sup> for dessert. The menu remains the same during the peak season as well.

Devotees are served sumptuous meals, and there is no restriction on the quantity of food they can consume. The kitchen staff prepares food based on their experience. In the case of a shortfall, they immediately prepare the required amount of food in a short time. They can do this because the temple kitchen is well equipped with modern machines.

Approximately 100 kg of rice are cooked for rice items and 120 kg of plain rice are cooked on normal days, whereas on special occasions, it increases accordingly, as mentioned in Table II.21.2.

### 21.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is equipped with steam boilers and other latest gadgets which make cooking fast and hassle-free. The time taken to prepare food is around 3 to 4 hours, and the time taken to serve each batch is approximately 20 minutes. The dining area is cleaned after every batch is done, and the cleaning takes around 15 minutes. The entire process of serving and cleaning takes around 30 to 35 minutes per batch.

Table II.21.2 Quantity of food prepared per day (lunch and dinner)

Sr. no	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day (in kg)	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Mixed rice (usually seasoned with spices)	80–100	400–500
2	Plain rice	100–120	700–800
3	Sambar	1,000 L	3,500 L
4	Rasam	800 L	2,000 L
5	Payasa	500 L	1,500 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 21.2.5 Nutrition

Care is taken to ensure nutrition in food by including varieties of vegetables, spinach, *dals*, etc. Food quality in terms of nutrition is carefully monitored by the temple management.

### 21.2.6 Human resources

The number of people involved in *anna-daan* is 20 on regular days. In the peak season, more hands are hired to manage the whole process of *anna-daan* efficiently. The temple staff works for 8 to 12 hours per day (from 9 am to 7 pm), which may vary. During *Amavasya*,<sup>338</sup> for example, *anna-daan* goes on till midnight. During these days, the cleaning staff works as late as 2 am. There are regular weekly off days for cleaners. Women employees are allowed 3 days off during menstruation.

Table II.21.3 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Paid staff	Number
Cooks	5
Cleaners	7
Servers	6
Watchman	2
Total	20

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 21.2.7 Management

The temple was maintained by a family trust till 2006. Currently, the temple falls under the Department of Religious and Endowment, the government of Karnataka.

### 21.2.8 Finances

Donations are the main source of revenue for *anna-daan*. The temple's annual income is estimated to be around Rs. 20–30 million. For devotees who contribute Rs. 10,000,

*anna-daan* is held on a fixed day every year in their name to acknowledge their support of the cause. Around Rs. 0.4 million is spent on *anna-daan* per month. The expenditure on vegetables is around Rs. 0.15 million per month. Rice and jaggery are not purchased, as the temple receives them in huge quantities as donations. The rest of the ingredients are purchased from the local market. As the temple is under the control of the endowment department, all the ingredients are purchased and supplied to the temple. The maintenance cost is around Rs. 0.1 million per annum.

Table II.21.4 Financial aspects (annual, in million)

Annual income	300
Expenditure for <i>anna-daan</i>	48
Expenditure on vegetables	18
Maintenance cost	1

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 21.2.9 Quality of raw materials

Raw materials are procured through tenders. Suppliers are selected by a government representative, as the temple is under the Department of Religious and Endowment of the Karnataka government. The temple abides by the requirements of raw material specifications adapted from the FSSA 2006.

Fresh vegetables are procured daily and are washed well with warm water before cooking. The members of the cooking and serving staff are required to wear caps, gloves, and aprons in the kitchen. Cooking vessels are sterilised before cooking. The government representative appointed by the religious department supervises the cooking activities to ensure the quality of food preparation and maintenance of hygiene. After the food is offered as *Naivedyam*<sup>339</sup> to the goddess, it is tasted by one of the temple staff before being distributed to devotees.

### 21.2.10 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen at the temple is equipped with steam boilers, huge vessels of different capacities to cook rice, and six vessels of 75 kg capacity for *sambar* and *bhaat*. There are 300 steel plates and an RO plant to supply drinking water which is stored in 1,500 L capacity water tank.

### 21.2.11 Waste management

The waste generated at the temple mainly comprises food leftovers and vegetable peels, which are used as cattle feed. The dry waste is handed over to the municipal body every morning.

## References

- 1 [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/66290044.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/66290044.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst) accessed on 12 July 2021

## Notes

- 315 A large pyramidal tower over the entrance gate to a temple.
- 316 The invincible one.
- 317 A manifestation of a deity or released soul in bodily form on Earth, an incarnate divine teacher.
- 318 An aspect of the Hindu god Ganesha.
- 319 Another name of Lord Murugan.
- 320 A major deity in Hinduism.
- 321 A fierce avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu, one who incarnates in the form of part lion and part man to destroy evil.
- 322 Navagraha are nine heavenly bodies and deities that influence human life on Earth in Hinduism.
- 323 The act of worship in Hinduism.
- 324 It is a religious rite that involves bathing of the idols to whom worship is offered.
- 325 Mythical beings of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain mythology.
- 326 Sanskrit for bathing of the divinity to whom worship is offered.
- 327 According to the Hindu astrology, this month is regarded as an inauspicious month, and no holy occasions like marriages, house warming, etc., are performed during this period. Another significance of the *ashadamaasa* is that it is an auspicious period for popular prayer rituals.
- 328 *Naivedyam* is the food offered to a Hindu deity as a part of worship ritual.
- 329 *Aarti* is a Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of puja, in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to deities.
- 330 The first Aarti which is performed in the morning.
- 331 Is a religious offering to God in Hinduism.
- 332 Rice dish prepared using tamarind, chilly, and jaggery.
- 333 A spicy and slightly tangy dish made with rice and mixed vegetables and spice powder.
- 334 A rice dish.
- 335 Indian stew prepared with lentils, vegetables, and spices.
- 336 Thin, very spicy southern Indian soup served with other dishes, typically as a drink.
- 337 A sweet dish.
- 338 Phase of no moon in Sanskrit.
- 339 *Naivedyam* is food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before consuming it.

## Case study 22 Sri Krishna Mutt Temple, Udupi District, Karnataka, India

Shivakumara Nayaka\*

### 22.1 Introduction

The Udupi Sri Krishna Mutt<sup>340</sup> Temple, devoted to Lord Krishna, is in the city of Udupi, Karnataka. Udupi is one of the holiest places for pilgrimage in southern India. Thousands of devotees throng the temple throughout the year to get a glimpse of Lord Krishna.<sup>341</sup> As pointed out by the manager, the unique aspect of the Sri Krishna temple is that the Lord Sri Krishna is worshipped only through a window with nine small openings (*Navagraha Kitiki*). The window is precisely carved and silver-plated. The surrounding walls of the

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*mutt* are made of wood and stone carvings which are as old as 1,500 years (www.udupisrikrishnamatha.org).

### Significance of the Temple

According to temple sources, Sri Krishna temple is the birthplace of Sri Madhwacharya,<sup>342</sup> who was the founder of *Dwaita*<sup>343</sup> philosophy. The sight of the Lord Krishna is available to thousands of devotees through the *Kanakana Kindi*.<sup>344</sup> There are two anecdotes regarding the temple's origin. According to Sri Raghuvaryathirtha, due to a storm, a ship crashed on a rock and sank. There was a statue which also sank, along with other cargo. After a few days when Sri Madhwacharya came to Udupi to spread his philosophy among the masses, one day, he woke up suddenly from his meditation and travelled to Malpe<sup>345</sup> with his followers. He found the statue and is believed to have installed the statue of Sri Krishna in the later part of the 13th century. According to another anecdote, during Sri Vaadiraja's rule in the 16th century, Kanakadasa (an ardent believer of God), came to Udupi to worship Lord Krishna. Since he was from a lower caste, he was not allowed inside the temple. So, Sri Krishna, pleased by the devotion of Kanakadasa,<sup>346</sup> created a small opening in the back wall of the temple and turned to face the opening so that Kanakadasa could see him. From then onwards, this opening came to be known as *Kanakana Kindi* (www.udupisrikrishnamatha.org, March 2021).

## **22.2 Anna-daan at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple, Udupi**

The *anna-daan* tradition is 40 years old and was initiated with the motivation of providing food for every pilgrim visiting the temple. Thousands of devotees are served *prasada*, and it is all-inclusive with no discrimination over caste, creed, culture, or status. The kitchen in the temple is well equipped and well maintained and self-sufficient in every form. Delicious, nutritious food is prepared and served under the most hygienic conditions.<sup>347</sup>

### **22.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan**

During the initial days, the majority of the devotees came from afar, and providing food to these devotees was an act of philanthropy. Besides that, people strongly believe that they will overcome their difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. Devotees are served a two-course meal, making it one of the best-served meals in any temple. During normal days, the average number of devotees visiting the temple is 8,000, which increases to 25,000 devotees during peak season. There is a belief that every devotee visiting the temple will take *anna prasada*<sup>348</sup> at Sri Krishna Mutt.

### **22.2.2 Rituals and prayers**

There are no rituals and prayers before cooking the meal. After the meal is cooked, it is served to the Lord Sri Krishna Swamy as *Naivedyam*,<sup>349</sup> and after offering the pooja (prayers), it is served to the devotees. Only during special occasions like *Sri Krishna Navami*,<sup>350</sup> *Shivarathri*,<sup>351</sup> and other special occasions is the pooja performed before cooking starts. There is no tradition as such by the temple authority to spread awareness

about the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* among the devotees. However, the majority of the devotees donate voluntarily. Boards are displayed on the temple premises to provide information and importance about the *anna-daan* to the devotees.

### 22.2.3 Number of devotees served

The Sri Krishna Mutt Temple has two dining halls: one for the temple staff, and the other is common for all. Breakfast on normal days is served only to staff. During peak seasons, around 1,000 to 2,000 people are given breakfast. During peak season, no time restriction and *anna-daan* is served continuously till 11 pm. During peak season, they make some special arrangements (buffet system) to manage the crowd with a queue system. In the peak season, around 15 to 30 batches of devotees (vs 12 to 17 in normal seasons) are served between 12 am and 4 pm.

Table II.22.1 Number of devotees served *anna-daan* and time

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
<b>Breakfast</b>	7:30 am	Only for staff	Only for staff	Only for staff 200–300	1,000–2,000
<b>Lunch</b>	12 am to 4 pm	12 batches	15–20 batches	5,000	15,000
<b>Dinner</b>	7 pm to 10 pm	7 batch	10 batches	3,000	5,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.22.2 Number of dining halls at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple, Udupi

Sr. no.	Dining hall	Type of people reserved	Number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	Dining hall-1	Only for staff	Approximately 300	Around 500
2	Dining hall-2	Common for everyone	8,000	20,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 22.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The well-equipped kitchen makes it easy to prepare food quickly. Around 6 to 8 quintals of rice are cooked per day in the normal season, and during the peak season, the amount of rice cooked is around 15 to 20 quintals per day.

Initially, the food items are prepared based on the number of devotees estimated by the kitchen management and staff. On Saturdays and Sundays, during the festival days, the number of devotees visiting the temple is more comparatively. Tables II.22.3 and II.22.4 give an overview of the details of the quantity of food prepared per day at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple, Udupi.



Table II.22.3 Quantity of food prepared per day at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple, Udupi

Sr. No.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	600–800 kg	1,500–2,000 kg
2	Sambar	3,000–5,000 L	8,000–10,000 L
3	Rasam	2,000–5,000 L	8,000–15,000 L
4	Vegetable curry	2,000–5,000 L	5,000–10,000 L
5	Chutney <sup>a</sup>	1,000–2,000 L	3,000–5,000 L
6	Payasa <sup>b</sup> (Godi, Akki, Dal)	3,000–5,000 L	8,000–15,000 L
7	Buttermilk	Around 100–150 L	Around 200–350 L
8	Kadi <sup>b</sup>	2,000–4,000 L	5,000–10,000 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Chutney is a spicy dish.

<sup>b</sup> Sweet dish.

Table II.22.4 Food items served per meal at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple Udupi

Breakfast normal season	Breakfast peak season	Lunch normal season	Lunch peak season	Dinner normal season	Dinner peak season
Only staff	Avalakki <sup>a</sup> Upma <sup>b</sup> /spice rice (varieties like puliyogare, lemon rice) Coffee/tea	Plain rice Sambar	Plain rice Rice item <sup>c</sup>	Plain rice Rasam/saar	Plain rice Rice item <sup>c</sup>
		Rasam Chutney	Sambar/saar Rasam	Buttermilk Vegetable curry/koot Chutney	Saar Sambar/rasam
		Different types of sweets/ payasa (godi, akki, dal)	Different types of Sweets/payasam (godi, akki, dal)		Different types of sweets/ Payasam (godi, akki, dal)
		Buttermilk Kadi	Vegetable curry  Buttermilk Chutney	Buttermilk Kadi	Vegetable curry Buttermilk Chutney

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes: The quantity served is difficult to say since *anna-daan* is served in unlimited amounts to a devotee.

<sup>a</sup> Dish prepared from flattened rice.

<sup>b</sup> Dish prepared from broken wheat.

<sup>c</sup> All are items made from either rice or wheat with various spices

Based on instructions from the manager, the kitchen staff prepares food for the estimated number of devotees to avoid leftovers. If cooked food runs out, the kitchen staff can prepare additional food within 15–20 minutes and start serving *anna-daan* again within the scheduled time. Leftover food after serving the dinner is used to prepare a rice-based breakfast for the staff.

#### 22.2.5 Accountability of *prasadam*<sup>352</sup>

Once every two years, the temple management members change, and most of the staff are rotated through transfer from one department to another.

At present, Sri Vidyadheesha Teertharu is the main religious head and performs his religious duties of propagating the tradition of Dharma in the temple. Under his leadership, the management looks after the accountability of *prasadam* and *anna-daan*. When it comes to *prasadam*, no one is allowed to take *prasadam* home, but they can eat as much of it as they want during lunch and dinner.

#### 22.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The cooking starts at 5 am and gets over by 11 am. Dinner is cooked between 4:00 pm and 7 pm. Dinner cooking takes less time compared to lunch, as there are fewer numbers of people to feed. Preparing rice takes 15–20 minutes, as hot water is kept ready. The time it takes to serve the food is around 10–15 minutes. One batch of two to three rows takes about 25–30 minutes to get through with eating. As soon as the next two to three rows are filled up, their serving starts. This process continues till all are fed within the fixed time.

#### 22.2.7 Nutrition

When it comes to nutrition, it is the responsibility of the manager (*anna-daan*) to ensure that *prasadam* provides adequate nutrition. An indent is submitted every day for different types of vegetables such as sweet pumpkin, carrot, fresh beans, chow chow, bottle gourd, lady's finger, cabbage, cauliflower and peas, and different types of pulses like *tur*, *chana*, *urad*, green gram, black gram and horse gram, *godhi kadi*,<sup>353</sup> and *akki kadi*.<sup>354</sup> This ensures that a good amount of nutrition is provided through *prasadam*. The menu of food items remains the same throughout the year except on special days. However, ingredients are changed seasonally.

#### 22.2.8 Human resources

Out of 250 people who work in the temple, 40 people are assigned to *anna-daan* (Table II.22.5). During peak season, some 100–200 college students, selected public and known devotees volunteer for crowd management, serving, donation collection, and other work. Volunteers are not involved in cooking, cleaning, and vegetable cutting.

Table II.22.5 Human resources involved at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple Udupi

Details	Numbers
Manager	2
Supervisors	2
Cooks	4
Helper	10
Serving staff	10
Cleaning/helper	8
Watchmen	4
Total	40

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### Working hours

The staff works in two batches. The working hours are from 4 am to 4 pm for the first batch and 3 pm to 10 or 11:00 pm for the second batch. The staff adjusts the time with mutual understanding for short breaks in between for coffee, tea, and rest. One weekly off day on a rotation basis is allowed.

### 22.2.9 Management

Sri Krishna Mutt Temple is managed under the leadership of Sri Vidyadheesha Teertharu who is assisted by a management committee in matters such as appointment of staff, procurement of raw materials (groceries and vegetables), purchase of kitchen and dining hall equipment, repairs, etc.

### 22.2.10 Finances

The temple receives and accepts various forms of cash and in-kind donations for *anna-daan*. At present, the expenditure for *anna-daan* is met from *hundi*,<sup>355</sup> *seva*, donations,<sup>356</sup> and devotees' *kanike*<sup>357</sup> fund of the temple. Sometimes the interest earned on a fixed deposit of the corpus fund is used to meet other expenses of the temple, including *anna-daan*. Around 1.3 million is for staff salaries, 1 million for transportation of vegetables and groceries. Expenditure on *anna-daan* is around 1 million per month. The electricity bill is another 0.15 million per month.

Table II.22.6 Expenditure towards *anna-daan* at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple Udupi

Kitchen		Expenditure per month	
		Normal season	Peak season
2 dining halls	Breakfast	NA	0.02–0.05 million per day
	Lunch	1.0 million per month	0.015–2.0 million per month
	Dinner		

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes: A meal costs approximately Rs. 30–50.

### 22.2.11 Quality of raw materials

The temple management ensures that standard procurement procedures are followed while purchasing ingredients. These should have an ISI mark. All the raw materials are purchased from markets in Karnataka) and groceries and vegetables from Maharashtra. Procurements are also made directly from the farmers. Tenders are invited and based on the price quoted by the suppliers; low-cost suppliers are appointed for two years to supply quality raw materials.

### 22.2.12 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are top priorities, and these are assured by making it mandatory to follow food safety standards. Food inspectors visit the temple for random checks of quality and safety. Based on their findings, they issue food safety and standard certificate from time to time. The safety of raw materials is ensured by washing them twice – first in cold water and then in warm/hot water. During *Ekadashi*,<sup>358</sup> the entire dining hall is cleaned, as on *Ekadashi* no food is served. The storage facility is available in the temple kitchen, and vessels used for cooking and serving are sterilised before and after cooking and serving. The manager is responsible for ensuring the quality of food served and he visits the kitchen every day to check the quality of food before it is served to the devotees.

### 22.2.13 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple adopts both the latest equipment and the manual *chula*<sup>359</sup> to prepare food during peak season. With this, the preparation of food takes lesser time even if the quantity is large. Earlier, only manual *chulas* fed on wood were used to prepare food. Now, along with the manual *chulas*, steam boilers are also used to prepare food. Before modernisation, cooking used to take much longer time, resulting in long queues of people waiting to be served. Currently, the kitchen infrastructure includes seven boilers and two huge vessels (named *Rama* and *Lakshmana*) for the preparation of rice and *sambar*. *Rama* vessels are used to cook rice 800 kg (sufficient to feed 10,000 people at a time). The *Lakshmana* vessel is used for cooking 8,000 L of *sambar* to feed around 10,000 people at a time.

The food is cooked on LPG gas. All efforts are made to retain the taste and wholesomeness of the food.

At present, food is served on banana and plantain leaves. During peak seasons paper plates are also used for serving food.

### 22.2.14 Waste management

The quantity of wet waste generated varies from 100 to 200 kg per day. Even though food is prepared according to an estimated number of devotees turning up at the temple, there may be instances of surplus food. Such food leftovers are fed to cows in the temple *goshala*.<sup>360</sup> Raw vegetable waste is collected every day by the municipal corporation.

Table II.22.7 Details of kitchen equipment at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple, Udupi

Dining halls	Kitchen equipment							
	Steam boilers	Huge vessels	Steel plates	Steel glass	RO plants	Gas stove	Gas cylinder	Tables and trolley for serving rice
						Normal	Peak	
2 dining halls	6 (1 for sambar, 1 for rasam, 1 for sambar, 1 for payasa, and 1 for rice and 1 for kootu) 2 other big vessels for making rice and sambar	2,000	2,000	5	3 + 2 manual choolas	10 to 15	15 to 25	10 trolley for entire dining halls

Sources: Primary Survey and author compilations (2021).

### 22.2.15 Key issues/requests

- Additional land is required for the *goshala* to properly maintain 87 cows.
- Some facilities from the government will make the queue system more effective and aid in better management of crowds during the peak season.

### Websites referred

- 1 [www.udupisrikrishnamatha.org](http://www.udupisrikrishnamatha.org) accessed 8 March 2021

### Notes

340 Refers to monastery in Hinduism and sometimes associated with temples.

341 Major deity in Hinduism.

342 Indian philosopher, theologian, and the chief proponent of the Dvaita (dualism) school of Vedanta.

343 Dvaita Vedanta is a dualistic interpretation of the Vedas, which espouses dualism by theorizing the existence of two separate realities.

344 *Kanakana Kindi* or Kanaka's Window is a small peephole in the Udupi Sri Krishna temple through which the great Indian saint Kanaka Dasa was given *darshan*.

345 Small town in Udupi.

346 A renowned composer of Carnatic music, poet, philosopher, and musician.

347 Special Poojas (prayer rituals) – there are several poojas held at the temple which attracts huge crowd. The gates of Sri Krishna swamy open every morning at 4:50 am with Nirmalyavisarjana Pooja, later Ushakala Pooja by 5:30, and Maha Pooja at 9:45 am. Similarly, in the evening, Chamara Seva starts by 7:00 pm and ends with Ekanta Seva by 8:50 pm. Overall, almost 18 type of poojas are offered every day to the Lord. Strict routines are followed to enable every devotee to have a darshan of Lord Sri Krishna while following the mandatory rituals in the temple ([www.udupisrikrishnamatha.org](http://www.udupisrikrishnamatha.org)).

348 Vegetarian food – a religious offering normally consumed by worshippers after worship.

- 349 A Sanskrit word *meaning* “offering to God” in the stricter sense of the word. It could be any offering, tangible, or intangible. *Naivedyam* means food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before eating it.
- 350 Hindu festival celebrated in the name of Lord Krishna.
- 351 Annual festival celebrated in the name of Lord Shiva.
- 352 Food that is offered to the deity or idol in the holy place which is then shared with the masses.
- 353 Broken wheat (usually used to prepare sweet).
- 354 Broken rice (usually used to prepare sweet).
- 355 A large pot/iron case which is placed in most of the Hindu temples in India. Many devotees offer money to God, and Hundi is the place where they drop their monetary offerings.
- 356 Donations offered to conduct special prayers (pooja). For instance, the idol of the Lord is decorated with fruits, butter, and several other items by the person whose wish is fulfilled.
- 357 Donations offered to the temple.
- 358 Vedic lunar month. Usually on this day, people practise fasting.
- 359 Furnace.
- 360 Protective shelters for cows in India.

## Case study 23 Sri Kshethra Manjunatheshwara Temple, Dharmasthala, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka, India

Shivakumara Nayaka\*

### 23.1 Introduction

Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara Temple is one of South India’s most renowned religious landmarks with a history of more than 800 years. Dharmasthala, the abode of *dharma*,<sup>361</sup> is the real meaning of humanity and faith. As the name suggests, the word *dharma* in its truest sense means righteousness and is the embodiment of the world’s most divine emotions despite one’s caste, creed, or religion ([www.shridharmasthala.org](http://www.shridharmasthala.org)). The temple is known for its uniqueness, and people believe that the land of Sri Kshetra is one of promoting morality and goodness. The temple is implored by *Vaishnava*<sup>362</sup> priests and managed by Jain<sup>363</sup> descendants.

#### 23.1.1 Origin of the temple

The story goes that a Jain chieftain Birmanna Pergade and his wife Ammu Ballalthi lived in a house called NelyadiBeedu. The Pergade family was known for its kindness and hospitality. The Dharma *Daivas*<sup>364</sup> appeared in the dreams of Sri Birmanna Pergade and instructed him to vacate his house for the worship of the *Daivas* and dedicate his life to the propagation of *dharma*. Hence, Pergade built himself another house and began worshipping the *Daivas* at NelyadiBeedu. Later, Sri Pergade built the shrines and also installed a *Shivlinga*<sup>365</sup> beside the native *Daivas* ([www.shridharmasthala.org](http://www.shridharmasthala.org)).

Around the 16th century, Sri Devaraja Heggade<sup>366</sup> invited Sri Vadiraja Swami<sup>367</sup> of Udipi to visit the shrine. The *swamiji* gladly came but refused to accept *bhiksha* (food offering) because the idol of Lord Manjunatha had not been consecrated according to the

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Vedic rites. Sri Heggade then requested the *swamiji* to re-consecrate the *shivalinga*. The *swamiji* named the place *Dharmasthala*. Thus, the roots of charity and religious tolerance established by the Pergades 800 years ago have been nurtured and strengthened by 21 generations of the Heggade family (Heggade being a derivative from Pergade) ([www.shridharmasthala.org](http://www.shridharmasthala.org)).

#### Significance of the temple

Sri Veerendra Heggade, the religious head of Sri Manjunatha Swamy Temple, ensures that the traditional rituals are observed regularly in the temple. He performs the religious duties to propagate *Dharma* and executes his social responsibilities by extending the four traditional *daans* – *anna-daan* (feeding), *aushadha daan* (healthcare), *vidya daan* (Education), and *abhaya daan* (protection from fear).

The major festival is *Laksha Deepostava*,<sup>368</sup> which is celebrated annually for four days during winter. On this occasion, an average of 1 lakh people visit the temple.

### **23.2 Anna-daan at Sri Kshetra Manjunatheshwara Temple, Dharmasthala**

*UootakkeBanni, UootakkeBanni, Uootakke...!* (*Come and have food, Come and have food...!*) are the common words heard in the temple meaning come and have lunch. The tradition of *anna-daan* started around 600 years back with the motivation of providing free food for every pilgrim. With the number of pilgrims growing every year, the temple authority constructed a new dining hall *Annapurna* in 1986. The dining hall is very huge and can accommodate 3,600 persons at a time. The kitchen is equipped with modern, automated machines and can cook food for 30,000 to 70,000 pilgrims a day. The kitchen runs on alternate forms of energy, which makes it truly eco-friendly.

#### 23.2.1 *Spiritual components of anna-daan*

Philanthropy is the main reason behind performing *anna-daan*, as people believe that they get rid of the difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. It has been a tradition not to leave *Dharmasthala* without a meal as doing so leaves a devotee's pilgrimage incomplete.

#### 23.2.2 *Rituals and prayers*

There are no rituals and prayers before cooking the meal. After the meal is cooked, it is served to the deity as *Naivedyam*,<sup>369</sup> and after offering *pooja*,<sup>370</sup> it is served to the devotees. Only during special occasions do they perform *pooja* before the cooking starts. However, there is no institutional arrangement by the temple authority to spread awareness about the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan*.

#### 23.2.3 *Number of devotees served*

On a normal day, around 15,000 devotees are served every day. During special occasions, the number of devotees visiting the temple and partaking of food at *Annapurna* hall swells to one lakh. Devotees are served a three-course meal. There are no discriminations based on caste or religion. Tables II.23.1 and II.23.2 provide the details on the number of devotees served and the timings.

Table II.23.1 Number of devotees served and timings

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	8 am	Only for temple staff	Only for temple staff	Only for temple staff 200 to 300	500–1,000
Lunch – Sunday and Monday	10:30 am to 4:30 pm	10–15 times	20–25 times		
Lunch – Tuesday to Saturday	11 am to 2:45 pm	10–12 times	15–20 times	10,000	25,000
Dinner	7 pm to 10 pm	6–7 times	8–10 times	5,000	15,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.23.2 Dining hall at Sri Kshetra Manjunatha Temple

Sr. no.	Name of the dining hall	Type of people reserved for	Number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	Annapurna	Public	Approximately 12,000	Around 40,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Delicious and nutritious food is served under the most hygienic conditions. Breakfast is served during peak seasons only for temple staff of around 500–1,000. Lunch is served between 10:30 am and 4:30 pm and dinner between 7:00 pm and 10 pm. During peak season, the buffet system is followed to manage the crowd, and the food is served till 11 pm. Between 10:30 am and 4:30 pm, around 20–25 batches are served in the peak season and 10–15 batches during normal days.

*Annapurna anna prasadam* dining hall and kitchen<sup>371</sup> are self-sufficient in every form; from the raw materials to the biogas. Plantain leaf plates are used to serve the food. The architecture of the disposal system is of a kind that helps foster the implementation of sustainable energy forms.

#### 23.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

It is amazing to see that the temple kitchen has adopted modern technologies to prepare food. The latest equipment has made the preparation of huge quantities of food much easier and less time-consuming. For instance, on normal days, around 5–8 quintals of rice are cooked per day and this quantity increases to 12–15 quintals during the peak season. Based on their experience, the kitchen management staff estimates the number of devotees likely to eat on a particular day and gives instructions to cooks accordingly. They keep a close watch on the actual number of devotees turning up for food, and, accordingly, increase or decrease the volume of food to be cooked. On Sundays and Mondays, the number of devotees is more compared to the rest of the days. The items served include rice, *sambar*,<sup>372</sup> *rasam*,<sup>373</sup> *payasa*,<sup>374</sup> vegetable curry, buttermilk, and chutney.<sup>375</sup>



Every day, around 5,000–7,000 L of *sambar* and 3,000–5,000 L of *rasam* are prepared during the normal season. During the peak season, the volume of *sambar* and *rasam* goes up three times. Table II.23.3 provides details on the quantity of food prepared.

Table II.23.3 Quantity of food prepared per day at temple

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	500–800 kg	1,200–1,500 kg
2	<i>Sambar</i>	5,000–7,000 L	15,000–20,000 L
3	<i>Rasam</i>	3,000–5,000 L	10,000–15,000 L
4	Vegetable curry	3,000–5,000 L	5,000–10,000 L
5	<i>Chutney</i>	2,000–4,000 L	5,000–7,000 L
6	<i>Payasa</i>	5,000–8,000 L	10,000–15,000 L
7	Buttermilk	Around 200–250 L of curd is used	Around 200–350 L of curd is used
8	<i>Kadi</i> <sup>a</sup>	5,000–10,000 L	10,000–r15,000 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Thick gravy based from gram flour.

Generally, the staff prepares food in limited quantity so that there is no wastage. If the prepared food gets over, they prepare additional food as per requirement within 10–15 minutes. For lunch (which is served till 4:30 pm), an extra quantity of food is prepared to avoid shortage. Leftover rice is used to prepare some varieties of rice items for the next day meal.

### 23.2.5 Accountability of *prasadam*

There is a rule that no one shall take *prasadam* home. It can be had as much as one wants during lunch and dinner.

### 23.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The total time taken for preparation of lunch is around 3–4 hours. The cooking starts at 5:00 am and ends by 10 am. For dinner, the preparation starts at 4:00 pm and ends by 7:00 pm. It takes lesser time as the quantity of food prepared is less as compared to that in the afternoon due to the lower turnout of devotees. Normally, the preparation of rice takes 10–15 minutes.

The time taken to serve the food is around 10–15 minutes. Serving starts after two to three rows are filled up.

### 23.2.7 Nutrition

*Anna-daan* is meant to provide *prasada* with nutrition. Every day, different types of ingredients (with varieties of fresh vegetables, grains, and pulses) are used to make sure that good nutrition is provided.

### 23.2.8 Human resources

The total number of people involved in *Annapurna* is 165. The temple staff includes a manager, supervisor, 10 cooks, 20 helpers, 75 serving staff, 50 cleaning staff, and 8 watchmen (Table II.23.5). During peak season, around 300–500 volunteers (including college students, some selected members of the public, and known devotees) are involved in serving, managing the crowd, collecting donated items, etc. But the volunteers are not involved in cooking, cleaning, and chopping vegetables, for which the regular staff is used.

Table II.23.4 Human resources involved

Designation	Number of Staff
Manager	1
Supervisors	1
Cooks	10
Helper	20
Serving staff	75
Cleaning/helper	50
Watchmen	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>165</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.23.5 Expenditure towards *anna-daan*

Kitchen		Expenditure per day (in millions)	
		Normal season	Peak season
<i>Annapurna</i> dining hall	Breakfast	NA	0.1 to 0.2
	Lunch	0.3	0.6
	Dinner	0.2	0.4

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 23.2.9 Working hours

The staff works in two shifts: between 5:30 am and 4:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 10:00 pm or 11:00 pm. The staff adjusts the time with mutual understanding for short breaks in between for coffee, tea, and rest. One weekly off day is allowed on a rotation basis.

### 23.2.10 Management

The appointment of staff, procurement of raw materials like groceries and vegetables, purchase of kitchen equipment, dining hall equipment, repairs, etc., are decided by the management committee under the leadership of Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade.

### 23.2.11 Finances

Funds for *anna-daan* come from various sources, such as *Kanike*<sup>376</sup> (*Hundi*,<sup>377</sup> *Seva*,<sup>378</sup> and in-kind donations) and rent from guesthouses. Sometimes, the temple authority

makes use of the interest earned on corpus deposits for *anna-daan* and to meet other expenditures. In the normal season, the expenditure on *anna-daan* is around Rs. 0.5 million per day; during peak season, it is around 1.2 million per day.

### 23.2.12 Quality of raw materials

Raw materials are procured through e-tenders from Mangaluru, Hassan, Bengaluru, Udupi, and Shivamogga (refer to Table II.23.6 for details of expenditure on groceries and vegetables per month). Based on the price quoted in the tenders, the suppliers are appointed with low quotes without compromising the quality of raw materials. The tender remains valid for one year, after which, a new tender is invited. The selected supplier must deposit Rs. 0.1 million, which is refundable after the completion of one year. If the material supplied by the supplier is of low quality, the temple authorities reject the goods, and the deposit is forfeited.

Table II.23.6 Expenditure on groceries and vegetables (*anna-daan*)

Sr. no.	Details	kg	Rs. per kg	Total amount (Rs. in lakhs)
1	Belthige rice	19,687	40	0.78
2	Tomato	5,845	30	0.17
3	CheeniKai	8,970	12	0.10
4	Pumkin	44,500	14	0.62
5	Peas	3,895	28	0.11
6	Cabbage	4,825	15	0.072
7	Brinjal	1,180	24	0.028
8	Cucumber	1,257	20	0.22
9	Carrot	2,695	45	1.21
10	Califlower	1130	30	0.033
11	Radish	440	20	0.088
12	French beans	785	45	0.035
13	Chow chow	2,550	30	0.76
14	Bottle gourd	2,950	20	0.59
15	Ridge gourd	435	35	0.015
16	Pointed gourd	165	30	0.049
17	Lady's finger	35	35	0.012
18	Beetroot	1,150	20	0.23
19	Pepper	135	40	0.054
20	Salt	915	10	0.091
21	Onion	1,010	26	0.26
22	Tamarind	62	140	0.086
23	Coconut	296	23	0.068
24	Jaggery	175	50	0.087
25	Coriander leaves	90	60	0.054
26	Neem leaves	100	80	0.08
27	Ginger	210	60	0.12
28	Raw plantain	85	30	0.025
29	Turdal	161	104	0.16
30	Sunflower	73	110	0.08
31	Cow peas	105	45	0.04
32	Snake gourd	350	24	0.08
33	Red chick peas	50	80	0.04

(Continued)

Table II.23.6 (Continued)

Sr. no.	Details	kg	Rs. per kg	Total amount (Rs. in lakhs)
34	Cucumber (mullusotho)	100	30	0.03
35	Nelagadale	100	120	0.12
36	Capcicum	265	60	0.16
	<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>2.5</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 23.2.13 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are ensured by abiding with the FSSA 2006. Food inspectors visit the temple for random checks of quality and safety, and the temple is also awarded a food safety and standard certificate by the food inspectors from time to time. The safety of raw materials is ensured by washing them twice: once in cold water and later with warm/hot water. The cold storage facility is available in the temple kitchen. Cooking vessels used for cooking and serving are sterilised before and after cooking and serving. The manager is responsible for maintaining the quality of food by checking it daily before serving.

### 23.2.14 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen has installed the latest equipment with the result that food preparation has become easy and less time-consuming. Earlier, steam boilers were used to prepare food with wood as fuel. With this arrangement, there was a delay in the preparation of food leading to long queues of devotees. Around 15 to 20 cylinders are used during normal days and 25 during peak seasons (Table II.23.7).

Table II.23.7 Details of kitchen equipment at temple

Dining halls	Kitchen equipment								
	Steam boilers	Huge vessels	Steel plates	Steel glass	RO plants	Gas stove	Gas cylinder		Tables and trolley for serving rice
							Normal	Peak	
Annapurna dining hall	15	15	2,000	3,000	3	3	15–20	20–25	10

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Generally, food is served on banana leaves, whereas during peak season, paper plates are used. Placards are displayed on the premises to provide information on the timings of food served.

### 23.2.15 Waste management

The quantity of wet waste generated is around 300 kg per day. The leftover food is used as cattle feed at the temple-managed *goshala*.<sup>379</sup> The vegetable waste is used for preparing manure.

### 23.2.16 Key issues/requests

Some special financial provisions may be made for kitchen modernisation and the upgradation of solar plants, RO plants, and biogas plants.

### Website referred

- 1 www.shridharmasthala.org accessed on 18 March 2021

### Notes

- 361 In Hinduism, *dharma* means “right way of living”.
- 362 A main branch of modern Hinduism, devoted to the worship of the god Vishnu as the supreme being.
- 363 A follower of Jainism religion.
- 364 It means the divine, one who resembles God.
- 365 *Shiva linga*, is an abstract or aniconic representation of the Hindu god.
- 366 The administrator of the temple.
- 367 He was a philosopher, poet and mystic.
- 368 Annual festival of lights performed by illuminating a 100,000 lamps.
- 369 Food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before eating it.
- 370 A ritual in honour of the gods.
- 371 The kitchen has also been featured in the Programme on Mega-Kitchens of India of National Geographic channel, lauding its size, cleanliness, sophistication, architecture, and as one of the most efficient and resourceful mass kitchens of India.
- 372 A lentil-based dish common in India.
- 373 South Indian spiced soup made with tamarind, tomatoes, spices and herbs.
- 374 A type of pudding from the Indian subcontinent, made by boiling milk, sugar and rice.
- 375 A family of condiments or sauces in the cuisines of the Indian subcontinent.
- 376 Donations of various forms.
- 377 Drop boxes where worshippers put money as a token of material sacrifice for gods and goddesses.
- 378 Money offered for specific type of rituals.
- 379 Shelter for cattle.

## Case study 24 Kolluru Mookambika Temple, Udupi, Karnataka, India

Shivakumara Nayaka\*

### 24.1 Introduction

Sri Mookambika temple is dedicated to Goddess Mookambika Devi and worshipped as the Adi Shakthi.<sup>380</sup> An ancient inscription dated 1481 AD reveals that the temple has been an abode of Devi Shakthi and has been worshipped for centuries. The supremacy of the temple is found in the *Skanda Puranam*.<sup>381</sup>

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### Significance of the temple

The legend is that Adi Shankaracharya<sup>382</sup> had meditated in this holy place. By worshipping and meditating at the Shankaracharya Peetha, it is believed that one can attain the peak of knowledge.<sup>383</sup>

### Special occasions

There are several special *poojas* held in the temple which attract devotees. For instance, to name a few of them, during *Navratri*,<sup>384</sup> *Shatha Rudrabhisheka*,<sup>385</sup> and similar others, *ChandikaHoma*<sup>386</sup> and *Navadurgalankara*<sup>387</sup> are performed along with the special *poojas*. On the ninth day, a car festival (*Rathotsava*) is held. On the *Vijayadashami*<sup>388</sup> day, thousands of devotees perform the *Aksharabhyasa Seva*.<sup>389</sup> Apart from *Navratri* festivities, there are some important *poojas* like, *Shivarathri*,<sup>390</sup> Annual Festival (during March/April for nine days), *Ashtabhandha Brahma kalashotsava*,<sup>391</sup> and *Ugadi*.<sup>392</sup>

## **24.2 Anna-daan at Sri Mookambika Devi Temple**

As can be seen from the history of the temple., during the initial days, many devotees would visit the temple from far-off places and there was no accommodation available to cater to them. At such times, the priest of the temple would serve the devotees and offer one meal a day. Later, with more devotees visiting the temple, *anna-daan* was initiated and is being practised to this day. Food is served every day, and this *anna-daan* activity is active throughout the year. Currently, 25,000 devotees are provided food daily on normal days; during peak seasons or on special occasions, the number of devotees visiting the temple increases to 35,000 devotees per day.

### *24.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan*

Philanthropy is the main reason behind performing *anna-daan*, as people believe that they can get rid of their difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. There is no discrimination based on caste or religion. There is a belief that every devotee visiting the temple must take *anna prasadam*.

### *24.2.2 Rituals and prayers*

There are no rituals and prayers before cooking the meal. After the meal is cooked, it is first served to the deity as *Naivedyam*<sup>393</sup> and then to the devotees. Only on special occasions do they perform *pooja* before the cooking starts. However, there is no tradition or institutional arrangement by the temple authority to spread awareness about the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* among the devotees.

### *24.2.3 Number of devotees served*

The temple has two dining halls – namely, *Thapaswini* and *Yashawini* –allocated for specific sections of people. In *Thapaswini* dining hall, the public is served whereas, in *Yashaswini*, VIPs and VVIPs are served. *Thapaswini* dining hall can accommodate 750 people, and *Yashaswini* can accommodate around 550 devotees at a time.

The extent of *anna-daan* is massive, as the number of devotees served per day is around 15,000 on normal days and around 35,000 on special occasions (Table II.24.1). The food is served three times a day. Breakfast is provided only to the temple staff, whereas the public is served with lunch and dinner.

Table II.24.1 Number of dining halls at Sri Mookambika Temple

Sr. no.	Name of the dining hall	Category of people served	Number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	Thapaswini (two floors)	General public	Around 15,000	Around 35,000
2	Yashaswini dining hall	Only for VIP and VVIP		

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.24.2 Number of times and timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served <sup>a</sup>	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	8 am	Only for staff	Only for staff	Only for staff	1,000
Lunch	Noon to 3 pm	Unlimited	Unlimited	15,000	35,000
Dinner	7 am 10 pm	Unlimited	Unlimited	10,000	25,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> School children will get food through buffet item.

During peak season, to manage the crowd, there is a restriction on serving timings. In normal times, it is served continuously till 11 pm. The dining hall has tables and chairs. During peak season, a buffet system is arranged to control and manage the crowd. The queue system is followed to manage the devotees. Between noon and 3:00 pm, around 15 to 20 batches of devotees are served food during peak season, whereas during normal seasons, 10 to 15 batches are served. The food items served are rice, *sambar*,<sup>394</sup> *rasam*,<sup>395</sup> *payasam*,<sup>396</sup> vegetable curry, and buttermilk. Special food is prepared during festivals like *Dasara*<sup>397</sup>/*Navratri* and *Jatra*.<sup>398</sup>

#### 24.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The temple kitchen employs modern technologies to prepare food, which renders cooking faster and easier. Around 700–8,000 quintals of rice are cooked per day in a normal season, and during peak season, it is around 12,000–15,000 quintals per day. Initially, the food items are prepared based on the estimated number of devotees likely to turn up. The estimates, made by kitchen management and staff, are based on their experience. On Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, the number of people visiting the temple is more comparatively (Table II.24.3).

Table II.24.3 Quantity of food prepared per day at Sri Mookambika Temple

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	700–800 kg	1,200–1,500 kg
2	Sambar	6,000–9,000 L	15,000–20,000 L
3	Rasam	8,000–10,000 L	15,000–18,000 L
4	Vegetable curry/Sagu	3,000–5,000 L	5,000–10,000 L
5	Payasam	5,000–7,000 L	10,000–15,000 L
6	Buttermilk	Around 150–200 L of curd is used	Around 200–350 L of curd is used

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Based on instruction from the manager, the kitchen staff prepares food to avoid leftovers. Sometimes, the flow of devotees is more than expected, in such times, the staff is well prepared to cook the extra food within 10–15 minutes. Food leftovers, if any, are fed to cattle and sent to piggeries.

Table II.24.4 Total volume of major ingredients used per day at Sri Mookambika Temple

Ingredients	Quantity in kg	
	Normal season	Peak season
Rice	800 kg	1,500
Tur dal	100 kg	150 to 200 kg
Chana dal	150 to 200 kg	200 to 300 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.24.5 Timings of *anna-daan* at Sri Mookambika Temple

Meals	Timings		Number of times	
	Thapaswini	Yashaswini dining hall	Thapaswini	Yashaswini dining hall
Breakfast	Not served	Not served	One time	Not served
Lunch	Noon to 2:30 to 3 pm	Noon to 2:30 to 3 pm	Around 12 to 16 times in peak season 7 to 8 times in the normal season	11 am to 4:30 to 5 pm
Dinner	7:00 pm to 9:30 pm	7:00 pm to 9:30 pm	7:00 pm to 10:30 pm	7:00 pm to 10:30 pm

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).



Table II.24.6 Food items served per meal at Sri Mookambika Temple<sup>a</sup>

Breakfast normal season	Breakfast peak season	Lunch normal season	Lunch peak season	Dinner normal season	Dinner peak season
Only staff	Poha <sup>b</sup> Upma/rice Coffee/tea	Plain rice Rice item <sup>c</sup>  Sambar/saar <sup>d</sup> Rasam  Sweet – payasam Buttermilk  Chutney	Plain rice Rice item <sup>c</sup>  Sambar/saar Rasam  Sweet – payasam Vegetable curry/kutt Buttermilk Chutney	Plain rice Sambar/saar Rasam Buttermilk  Vegetable curry/kutt Buttermilk Chutney	Plain rice Rice item <sup>c</sup>  Sambar/saar Rasam  Sweet – payasam Vegetable curry/kutt Buttermilk Chutney Sweets

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> The quantity served is difficult to say, because since the *anna daan* is unlimited, devotees can have full meals without any restriction.

<sup>b</sup> Dish prepared with beaten rice.

<sup>c</sup> All are items made from either rice or wheat with various spices

<sup>d</sup> Plain stew eaten with rice.

#### 24.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The temple has a committee comprising nine members to look after the management and accountability of *prasadam*, and once every five years, the committee decides about the *anna-daan* details and makes changes if required. When it comes to *prasadam*, there is a rule that no one should take the *prasadam* to his home, but one can eat unlimited *prasadam* during lunch and dinner.

#### 24.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

With the latest technologies adopted in the kitchen, the time taken to prepare the food is less. For instance, preparing rice takes 15–20 minutes, as they keep hot water ready to save time. The total time taken for preparation of lunch is around 4–5 hours. The cooking starts at 6:00 am and is completed by 11 am. For dinner, the preparation starts at 4:00 pm and is completed by 8:00 pm. It takes 4 hours, as the quantity of food prepared is less compared to the lunch because the crowd is also smaller.

The time taken to serve food is 10–15 minutes – i.e., the time taken to have food for one batch is 15–25 minutes. As soon as two or three rows of devotees in the dining hall are complete, the food is served and, meanwhile, two to three more rows have been filled up and their serving begins. In brief, serving food is a continuous process throughout the allocated time.

### 24.2.7 Nutrition

It is the responsibility of the manager of *anna-daan* to provide *prasadam* with nutrition. Temple management staff introduce varieties of ingredients and fresh vegetables to make sure that a good amount of nutrition is provided through *prasadam*. The menu remains the same throughout the year, except on special days. Ingredients/vegetables will be changed seasonally.

### 24.2.8 Human resources

The total number of people involved in *anna-daan* is 47, and the details specific to the two dining halls are provided in Table II.24.7.

Table II.24.7 Human resources involved at Sri Mookambika Temple

Temple staff		
	Thapaswini Dining Hall	Yashaswini Dining Hall
Supervisors	2	1
Cooks	3	1
Serving staff	21	5
Cleaning	5	5
Watchmen	2	2
Total	33	14

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

During peak season, around 200–300 volunteers (college students and known devotees) are involved in maintaining the large influx of devotees. Volunteers are involved in serving, managing the crowd, collecting donated items, and other work. They are not allowed to handle cooking, cleaning, or vegetable cutting, etc., for which the regular cleaning staff is assigned.

### 24.2.9 Working hours

The kitchen staff works in shifts. The first batch works from 6 am to 4 pm and the second batch from 4 pm to 10 or 11:00 pm every day. Based on mutual understanding, the staff adjusts time for short breaks in between for coffee, tea, and rest. One weekly off day is allowed on a rotation basis.

### 24.2.10 Management

This temple comes under the responsibility of the Religious and Endowment Department of the government of Karnataka (Muzarai Department). The administrative board is yet to be constituted but, at present, the temple has a management committee (for the last three years) consisting of nine members who take care of all the activities of the temple.

Appointment of staff, procurement of raw materials (groceries and vegetables), purchase of equipment for kitchen and dining hall, repairs, etc., are decided by the management committee.

#### 24.2.11 Finances

The temple receives and accepts various forms of donations like *Hundi*,<sup>399</sup> *Seva*,<sup>400</sup> and in-kind. Guesthouse rent and donations are used to meet the expenditure of *anna-daan*. The interest amount earned by corpus deposits is also used for maintenance and other expenditure of the temple, including *anna-daan*. The dining table system was introduced three years back. Both dining halls together have 1,300 chairs.

The temple receives and accepts various forms of cash and in-kind donations for *anna-daan*. At present, the expenditure for *anna-daan* is met from *hundi*,<sup>401</sup> *seva*, donations<sup>402</sup>, and devotees *kanike*<sup>403</sup> fund of the temple. Sometimes the interest earned on a fixed deposit of the corpus fund is used to meet other expenses of the temple, including *anna-daan*. Around 1.3 million is toward staff salary and 1 million for transportation of vegetables and groceries. Expenditure on *anna-daan* is around 1 million per month. The electricity bill is another 0.015 million per month.

Table II.24.8 Expenditure towards *anna-daan* at Sri Mookambika Temple Rs. in millions

Kitchen	Time	Expenditure per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
Thapaswini and Yashaswini dining hall	Breakfast	NA	0.1
	Lunch	0.3	0.8 to 0.10
	Dinner	0.2	0.6 to 0.8

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 24.2.12 Quality of raw materials

Concerning the quality of raw materials used, the temple authority follows the standard procurement procedure with an ISI mark. All the raw materials (groceries and vegetables) are procured from nearby markets through e-tenders.

Tenders are awarded to suppliers with low quotes without compromising the quality of raw materials. The duration of the tender is for one year. The supplier must deposit Rs. 0.1 million, which is refundable after the completion of one year. If the material supplied by the supplier is of low quality, the temple authorities reject the goods and the deposit is forfeited.

#### 24.2.13 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are priorities and are ensured through compliance with the FSSA 2006. Food inspectors carry out random checks at the temple for quality and safety. If found satisfactory, the temple is awarded a food safety certificate by the food inspectors

from time to time. The safety of raw materials is ensured by washing them twice – once in cold water and later with warm/hot water. The cold storage facility is available in the temple kitchen. Cooking and serving vessels are sterilised before and after cooking and serving. The manager is responsible for the quality of food, and he visits the kitchen to check the quality of food supplied every day before serving the *anna-daan* to devotees.

#### 24.2.14 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen at the temple has adopted the latest technologies. With this, the preparation of food has become easy and less time-consuming as compared to the manual system. Earlier, steam boilers were used to prepare food with wood used as fuel. Under this arrangement, cooking took a lot of time, which resulted in long queues of devotees waiting to be served (Table II.24.9).

Table II.24.9 Details of kitchen equipment

Dining halls	Kitchen equipment								
	Steam boilers	Huge vessels	Steel plates	Steel glass	RO plants	Gas stove	Gas cylinder	Tables and trolley for serving rice	
							Normal	Peak	
Thapaswini and Yashaswini dining hall	12	12 (1 for sar, 1 for rasam, 1 for sambar, 1 for payasam, 5 for rice, 1 for kutt, and 2 for hot water)	500	1,000	2	3	10 to 12	20 to 25	1,300 person capacity and 6 trolleys from both dining halls

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

At present, food is served on banana leaves. During peak seasons, the food is served on paper plates. Placards are displayed in both the dining halls and other places on the temple premises to provide information about the *anna-daan*.

#### 24.2.15 Waste management

The quantity of wet waste generated varies between 100 to 200 kg per day. Generally, the manager instructs the cook to prepare food based on the number of devotees likely to

come for food. If there are food leftovers, they are sent to temple-managed *goshala* and piggeries in the local village. Vegetables are peeled and cut twice a day for lunch and dinner. Some of this waste is used for making manure; some is sent to the temple *goshala*; the remaining is dumped in a yard located at some distance from the temple.

#### 24.2.16 Key issues/requests

The temple management feels the need for financial support and permission from the government to provide special food items during peak season.

### Temple website

[www.kollurmookambika.org](http://www.kollurmookambika.org)

### Notes

- 380 Creator and the protector of all forms of life.
- 381 One of the 18 *Puranas* or a genre of 18 Hindu religious texts. The *Skanda Purana* is the largest *Mahāpurāna*.
- 382 *Adi Shankaracharya* was an Indian philosopher and theologian.
- 383 [www.kollurmookambika.org](http://www.kollurmookambika.org).
- 384 *Navaratri* is a Hindu festival that spans nine nights celebrated every year in the autumn.
- 385 *Rudrabhisheka* is *pooja* performed to please *Lord Shiva* and seek his blessings.
- 386 Sacred Fire (*Homam*) dedicated to the Goddess *Shakthi* as *Chandi*.
- 387 Nine different types of decorations of Goddess *Kali*.
- 388 *Vijayadashami* marks the end of the nine-day long *Navratri* celebrations and celebrated as a representation of a day of victory of good over evil.
- 389 Auspicious custom followed among Hindus in India before starting child's schooling.
- 390 Hindu festival dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- 391 Special ritual performed to the idol.
- 392 [www.kollurmookambika.org](http://www.kollurmookambika.org).
- 393 Food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before eating it.
- 394 *Sambar* is part of a tradition of lentil-based vegetable stews in southern India.
- 395 Indian soup prepared with sweet-sour stock prepared with tamarind, lime, or mango.
- 396 A sweet dish or a desert of Indian cuisine.
- 397 Hindu festival celebrated usually during September/October, for nine nights.
- 398 A series of *poojas* performed to a deity for number of days, usually by the whole populace of a village/small town.
- 399 A Hundi is a **cash collection box** which is kept in most of the temples, to put the cash offerings by the devotees. Hundis would be locked, and Hundi income contributes a major source of income for the temples.
- 400 The concept of *Seva* is considered a religious duty in Hinduism. *Seva* is simply defined as the 'selfless act that aims to protect, help, and provide under-privileged human beings and animals, a service that is performed without any expectation of reciprocation, monetary benefits, or awards.
- 401 Hundi is a collection box used in temples to collect cash offerings from devotees.
- 402 *Seva* donations indicates people's vow in offering donations.
- 403 *Kanike* is also offerings in cash or kind.

## Case study 25 Sri Nimishamba Temple, Jayanagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

N. Latha\*

### 25.1 Introduction

Nimishamba Devi temple is located at Jayanagar, Bengaluru, in the State of Karnataka, South India. The temple was inaugurated in April 2012. Earlier, there was the Lord Abhaya Ganapathy Temple, which was built in 1991, and then the Lord Shanimahatma Temple was built in 2004, along with Raja Gopura<sup>404</sup> and Vimana Gopura.<sup>405</sup> It is believed to be one of the popular temples, and people from all over the state visit it. The main deity is the divine mother Nimishamba Devi.

#### Significance of the temple

The deity Nimishamba Devi is unique and powerful. She has a *shivaling*<sup>406</sup> on her forehead denoting the union of Lord Shiva and Durga Shakthi.<sup>407</sup> Except for the Durga temple located in TirupuraKodram, Tamil Nadu, none of the Devi temples in India have a deity with a *shivaling* on her forehead. Hence, the deity is unique. All vows and prayers of the devotees who come here are believed to be fulfilled by the divine mother *Nimishamba*. Some of the special occasions observed at the temple are *Durga Homa*<sup>408</sup> every *amavasya*,<sup>409</sup> *Satyanarayana Swami pooja* every *poornima*<sup>410</sup> and *Sankastahara Chathurthy* every month, *Navarathri*,<sup>411</sup> *Ganesh chathurthi* during the month of September, and the three-day annual day.

### 25.2 Anna-daan at Nimishamba Devi Temple

*Anna-daan* at the temple was started in 2013 and is held every Friday and Saturday. A large number of devotees are served *prasadam*<sup>412</sup> with no discrimination over caste, gender, culture, or status.

#### 25.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna-daan* was started with the purpose of feeding the people and devotees who have come from far-off places. Since *anna-daan* is one the most precious *daans* and is also one of the loved *sevas*<sup>413</sup> for the deity *Nimishamba Devi*, it is performed regularly. Since its inception, *anna-daan* has been active throughout, having completed 358 weeks.

#### 25.2.2 Rituals and prayers

*Artti*<sup>414</sup> is carried out by placing the flowers before food preparation starts. Once the food is prepared, it is first served to the deity *Naivedyam* and then to the devotees.

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### 25.2.3 Number of people served

The temple provides lunch every Friday. During normal seasons, the number of people served varies. Fridays are believed to be the most auspicious days, and the number of devotees goes up to 4,000. Friday's lunch is served between noon and 3 pm for all the devotees visiting the temple. Even on Tuesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, the number of people visiting the temple reaches 1,000 and 1,500. Apart from weekly *anna-daan*, on special occasions like *navarathri*,<sup>415</sup> which is held for nine days, around 1,500 to 2,000 people are served food daily.

Table II.25.1 Number of devotees served *anna-daan* and timings

Meals	Timings	Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season
Lunch – on Fridays	Noon to 3 pm	4,000	15,000
Tuesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays	Continuously	1,500	5,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 25.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

Food items served are rice, *sambar*,<sup>416</sup> *rasam*,<sup>417</sup> curd rice, and any of the rice items like pulao, vegetable rice, and a sweet like *payasa*.<sup>418</sup> The amount of plain rice cooked per day is about 150 kg, the variety of rice items cooked is about 100 kg, *sambar* is 1,200 L, and *payasa* is around 1,000 L (Table II.25.2). Around 100 coconuts and approximately 20 L of oil are also used per day. On Saturdays and Sundays, only *prasadam* (any rice item like *puliyogare*<sup>419</sup> or *pongal*, etc.) is served.

Table II.25.2 Quantity of food prepared per day at Sri Krishna Mutt Temple, Udupi

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Plain rice	150 kg	300 kg
2	<i>Sambar</i>	1,200 L	2,000 L
3	<i>Rasam</i>	1,000 L	1,500 L
4	Rice item	100 kg	200 kg
5	<i>Payasa</i> <sup>a</sup>	1,000 L	2,500 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> A sweet dish.

The temple has a small open area where food is served. On Fridays, tables and chairs are laid out for the devotees to sit comfortably and have lunch. On other days, a buffet system is followed to distribute food on areca plates. Lunch is distributed on steel plates with tumblers for water.

### 25.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Cooking takes about 6 hours. On Thursdays, cooks reach the temple at 5 pm and work there till 8 pm, cleaning and cutting vegetables. On the day of *anna-daan*, they work from 4:30 am till 10 am.

### 25.2.6 Human resources

The total number of staff involved in the whole process of *anna-daan* is 23 (Table II.25.3). The programme is monitored by two to three trustees.

Table II.25.3 People involved in *anna-daan* at different levels

Sr. no.	Category	Number of people
1	Cook	4
2	Volunteers	10
3	Cleaners	6
4	Trustees/trust members	2–3
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Food is served by volunteers. During normal days, around ten volunteers distribute food. During the peak season and special occasions, the distribution of food is done by 15–20 volunteers.

### 25.2.7 Management

The temple is governed by a trust constituted in the year 1995. The trust has a chairman (he is the head of the trust), a managing trustee, a treasurer, and eight trustees. All important issues are discussed at meetings attended by all and decisions reached unanimously.

### 25.2.8 Finances

It is estimated that an amount of Rs. 6 lakh is required to organise the *anna-daan* every Friday; whereas on Saturday evenings, the cost comes down to Rs. 0.1 million. The main source of funds for *anna-daan* is the contribution made by the devotees for *anna-daan seva*. The temple authority has various options for generating the funds required to conduct *anna-daan*. Devotees can contribute a fixed amount of Rs. 0.03 million for one-day *anna-daan*. For this *seva*, one family can contribute the whole amount, or three families may jointly (at the rate of Rs. 0.01 million per family) contribute the required amount. The temple authorities have launched food packets which the public may buy for Rs. 100. It is estimated that around 200–300 packets are sold every week, generating Rs. 0.2–0.3 million.



Table II.25.4 Financial aspects of *anna-daan* (Rs. in millions)

Approximate cost of <i>anna-daan</i> on Fridays	0.06
Approximate cost of <i>anna-daan</i> on Saturdays	0.01
Contribution fixed for one-day <i>anna-daan</i>	0.03

Sources: Primary Survey (2021).

If devotees bring food for distribution as *anna-daan*, then that food is served along with the temple food.

Table II.25.5 Contributions for various kinds of *anna-daan*

Items	Contribution
<i>Bisibelebhaat</i> <sup>a</sup>	0.01
Any two rice items with chutney	0.006
Any one rice item (like <i>pulao</i> , <sup>a</sup> <i>puliyogare</i> , <sup>a</sup> <i>upama</i> , <sup>a</sup> etc.)	0.004

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> All are items made from either rice or wheat with various spices.

There is no corpus fund maintained for *anna-daan*. Donations received from devotees every week are used in the programme. The cooks' salaries come to 0.05 million per month. There is no expenditure on vegetables as the entire quantity required is donated by a devotee every week. Groceries are purchased from a local shop on a weekly basis, as there is no sufficient space for storage.

### 25.2.9 Quality of raw materials

The vegetables and groceries are sourced from a devotee or a local shop after verification of quality to ensure the safety and well-being of the partakers of the food.

#### 25.2.10 Food safety

To ensure food safety, the vegetables and groceries are washed twice. The cooks and other kitchen staff wear caps and gloves while preparing and serving the food. The vessels are manually cleaned with hot water before cooking. Vessels and other utensils are made of food-grade steel. Sterilised vessels are used for cooking.

#### 25.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The three steam boilers (capacity 25 kg each) at the temple kitchen were donated by devotees in 2017. The RO plant has been in operation since 2017 for providing clean and good-quality drinking water. Cooking is done on gas stoves. In a week, five to six cylinders of 19.5 kg capacity each are required on normal days and ten during special

occasions. Around 20 CCTV cameras have been installed on the temple premises as a precautionary measure to avoid unwanted incidents.

## Notes

- 404 A Raja gopura is a monumental towers erected over the entrance gateways, usually ornate, at the entrance of a Hindu temple, in the Dravidian architecture of the Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, and Telangana states of Southern India.
- 405 Vimana gopura is a tower erected over the central shrine.
- 406 An aniconic representation of the Hindu god Shiva.
- 407 The cosmic energy and represents the dynamic forces that are thought to move through the entire universe in Hinduism.
- 408 Pooja for mother Goddess Durga.
- 409 New moon.
- 410 Full moon.
- 411 A festival which lasts nine nights during which different decorations are adorned to the deity.
- 412 Food offered to the deity and then served to the people, hence, holy food.
- 413 A Sanskrit word meaning to serve; wait or attend upon; honour; or worship.
- 414 A Hindu religious ritual of worship.
- 415 A major festival held for nine days, usually celebrated in the month of November.
- 416 A popular south Indian dish which is lentil-based vegetable stew/porridge/soup.
- 417 A thin, very spicy southern Indian soup.
- 418 A sweet dish.
- 419 Tamarind rice.

## Case study 26 Sri Siddaganga Mutt, Tumkuru District, Karnataka, India

M. L. Rakshitha\*

### 26.1 Introduction

Sri Siddaganga Mutt<sup>420</sup> is a sacred ancient ashram located in Kyathsandra of Tumkur District, Karnataka, South India. Sri Siddaganga Mutt is known for its *Trivida Dasoha*, the three sacred services – namely, food, education, and shelter. Sri Siddaganga Mutt runs the Sri Siddaganga Education Society, consisting of around 127 educational institutions, and is noted for providing free education, food, and shelter for more than 10,000 children hailing from different parts of the state and studying at the *mutt's* educational institutions. The *mutt* follows the philosophy of *Kaayakave Kailasa* (work is worship) and *Sarve Janaha Sukhino Bhavantu* (welfare of all mankind) propagated by social reformer Sri Basaveshwara.<sup>421</sup> The *mutt* is a secular institute and attracts devotees from all religious and social identities.

Sri Siddaganga Mutt was fostered by his holiness Dr. Sri Sri Shivakumara Mahaswamijigalu, who has been awarded *Karnataka Ratna* and *Padma Bhushan* by the state government and the Government of India, respectively. Dr. Shivakumara Swamiji (aged 111 years) was the most popular of the *mutt's* chairpersons. He had several lakh

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followers, and in his regime, the *mutt* received great political attention. His devotees affectionately called him *Nededaduva Devaru* (walking god).

#### Significance of Sri Siddaganga Mutt

Sri Siddaganga Mutt is a historical place, having been established by Sri Gosala Siddeshwara Swamijigalu in the 15th century AD. It was established to continue the tradition and philosophy of *shivayogi* movement<sup>422</sup> of the 12th century started by Sri Basaveshwara. The *mutt* aimed to serve society by spreading awareness of *shivayogi tattva*, the philosophy of sages who worshipped Lord Shiva, and guiding people to follow the right path. The *mutt* was low on resources till the period of Dr. Shivakumara Swamiji. During the 1960s when Karnataka went through a severe drought, there was a food shortage in the rural district of Bengaluru and Tumkur. By then, the *mutt* was known for its *Trivida Dasoha*, and people started rushing towards Siddaganga Mutt in search of food and shelter. This caught the attention of the then chief minister of Karnataka Sri S. Nijalingappa, who visited the *mutt* and announced government aid to the people. From no resources to having enough to build a place for food and shelter, Shivakumara Swamiji has come a long way. This way, the *mutt's* service to society continues to this day.

*Swamiji* established the Siddaganga Education Society in the year 1963 where at that time 6,000 students received free education. Currently, around 30,000 students are provided free education. *Swamiji's* words for whoever visited the *mutt* were, "Take the *prasad*<sup>423</sup> before you go". *Dasoha*<sup>424</sup> happens every day in the *mutt*.

#### Special occasions

The annual cattle fair and car festival, locally called *jaatre*, are among the special occasions that have been taking place at the *mutt* in February every year since 1905. They last for nearly 15 days during which around 50,000 people visit the *mutt* each day. During this occasion, an agriculture and industry exhibition is also held. The other occasion includes the birthday celebration of Dr. Shivakumara Swamiji, which witnesses a mammoth gathering of 1 to 3 lakhs of people/followers.

## **26.2 Anna-daan at Sri Siddaganga Mutt Tumkur**

Sri Siddaganga Mutt popular for its *anna-daan*, a sacred food offering considered to be the most superior offerings of all. *Anna-daan* was initiated by *Sri Atavireshwara Swamigal* in the year 1917 by lighting firewood. It is believed that the fire is still burning. Devotees from across the state have *prasad* at all times of the day throughout the year.

### **26.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan**

Philanthropy is the main purpose of *anna-daan*. Siddaganga Mutt believes strongly that no devotee should return on an empty stomach. People donate to *anna-daan* because of the belief *anna datosukhi bhava*<sup>425</sup> and *anna-daann param danam*.<sup>426</sup> People who eat food bless the server and believe that offering food is the noblest of all deeds.

### 26.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Every day in the morning at the hilltop temple, food is cooked and offered as *naivedya* (special food offering to god) to Lord Siddalingeshwara, and later food is served to students and devotees. Cooks can enter the kitchen only after taking a bath. There are no other rituals like performing *pooja* and prayers before cooking. The only belief is *Aathma Shuddi*, establishing the primacy of attaining the inner purity of the soul.

Management is very strict about not wasting food. *Dasoha* managers tell people through announcements not to leave food on their plates in the dining halls. They check the plates, and if there are food leftovers, they make sure that the concerned person eats the food. There are quotations written on the walls of the dining hall indicating the importance of food.

### 26.2.3 Number of devotees served

Currently, there are around 11,000 students in the *mutt*, and every day, about 2,000 devotees visit the *mutt*. There are about 1,000 workers. Thus, in a day, *anna-daan* is offered to about 14,000 people during the normal season. In peak season, the number of devotees may reach around 30,000 per day.

### 26.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

It is amazing to know that the food is prepared in huge volumes to cater to the students and others. Around 8 quintals of rice are used for the preparation of breakfast every day. In addition, 13,000 *chapatis* and around 11,000 *ragi* balls (made from finger millet) are prepared every day.

Table II.26.1 Quantity of food prepared

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day
1	Breakfast (rice item)	8 quintals
2	<i>Ragi ball</i>	11,000
3	<i>Chapatti</i>	13,000
4	Buttermilk	200 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Every day, about 35 quintals of rice are cooked, around one quintal of *ragi* is used per day to make *ragi* balls, and about 4 quintals of wheat are required to prepare *chapatis*.<sup>427</sup> *Chapatis* are made at the hostel of the *mutt*'s Siddaganga Institute of Technology where the kitchen is better equipped. About 4 quintals of *rava*<sup>428</sup> are used for preparing *upama*<sup>429</sup> for breakfast. A special menu is prepared once a week for the students. If it is *payasa* (sweet dish), it requires about 4 quintals of *moong dal*. In a day, Rs. 10,000 worth of vegetables are used. The tender is called for the supply of vegetables. The details on the volume of other ingredients used are given in Table II.26.2.

Table II.26.2 Total volume of ingredients used per day

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Quantity per day</i>
Rice	35 quintal
Millet	1 quintal
Wheat	4 quintal
<i>Tur dal</i>	3 quintal
Bengal gram	30 kg
Sugar	1 quintal
Sambar powder	80 kg
Chilly powder	60 kg
Jaggery	200
Coconut	1,000
Buttermilk	200 L
Milk	Powder
Ghee	2 kg
<i>Rava</i>	4 quintal
Tamarind	50 kg
Coconut	300
Salt	80 kg
Spices	6–7 kg
Vegetables	Worth Rs. 10,000 daily

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

After offering to the Deity, the food is served first to the students and then to the devotees. Students in first to fifth grade are served first followed by students in the fifth to seventh and then eighth to tenth standard and finally to college students. Every evening students gather to perform mass prayers following which dinner is served.

There are three dining halls in the *mutt* – Baktara Hall, Shivakumara Swamiji Hall, and Basaveshwara Hall. The Baktara Hall is allocated to the students and the other two halls are for the general public. The number of students and the public served is given in Table II.26.3.

Table II.26.3 Dining halls in the *mutt*

<i>Name of the dining hall</i>	<i>Category of people served</i>	<i>Approx. number of people served</i>
Baktara hall	General public	400
Shivakumara Swamiji Hall	Students	4,000
Basaveshwara hall	Students	2,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The *mutt* has refurbished the Baktara Hall with dining tables and chairs to make seating comfortable for elderly people. Shivakumara Swamiji Hall and Basaveshwara Hall have chairs for the people who cannot squat; those who can have to sit on the floor to have food. Food is served on steel plates for both devotees and students. Both devotees and students wash their plates after having food.

Table II.26.4 Number of people served per day

Meals	Time	Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season ( <i>jaatre</i> )
Breakfast	7:30–10:30 am	12,000	12,000
Lunch	10:30–5:00 pm	14,000	30,000
Dinner	7:00–11:00 pm	14,000	30,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Across these dining halls, food is served throughout the day. Breakfast is served between 7:30 am and 10:30 am. From 10:30 am onwards till 5:00 pm, lunch is served, and dinner is served between 7 pm and 11:00 pm. Any visitor arriving at the *mutt* after 11:00 pm is served dinner to ensure that he does not go hungry. During special occasions of *jaatre* and other events, food is prepared in four different places to cater to a very large number of people.

### 26.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is fully equipped for large-scale preparation of food. The preparation of breakfast starts at 6 am and takes about one and a half hours. If the food prepared turns out to be insufficient, the kitchen staff prepares an extra quantity within 20 minutes. Preparing rice takes just 20 minutes with the upgradation of steam boilers. Earlier, it used to take 30 to 45 minutes. Thus, these interventions, have saved a lot of time and effort. The cooking staff is ever ready to provide the devotees with hot and fresh food.

#### Storage

*Ugrana* (storage space) is located adjacent to the kitchen and dining hall. *Ugrana* stores all the purchased as well as donated groceries. *Ugrana* is one of the oldest buildings on the *mutt* premises and is efficient in terms of its capacity to retain the quality of the groceries.

### 26.2.6 Nutrition

It should be noted that Siddaganga Mutt provides nutritionally balanced food which includes either *chapati* or *ragi* balls for lunch and dinner. Rice with *sambhar* including vegetables and *dal* also meets the nutritional requirement for good health. The *mutt* has around 300 cattle to provide milk and its derivative products for the devotees and students. Every morning at 6:30 am, students are served a nutrient powder (in-house preparation) made up of healthy grains with hot milk. Siddaganga Mutt also provides sweet dishes such as *rava* or *tur dal payasam* with the meal.

### 26.2.7 Human resources

About 50 workers (five managers, 35 cooks and 10 cleaners) are working at various levels and in different capacities in the *mutt*. Also, there are 45 women from poor economic

backgrounds who are involved in peeling and cutting the vegetables and cleaning the kitchen and dining halls; they are provided shelter in the *mutt*. The kitchen staff works from 6 am to 2 pm and from 2 pm to 10 pm in two shifts. Managers ensure that good quality raw materials are used for cooking. The students help in serving the food to the devotees as an act of *seva* or service. During the time of festivities and celebrations, devotees also serve others as an act of *seva*.

Table II.26.5 Human resources

Regular paid staff (temple staff)	Normal season
Senior kitchen manager	5
Cooks	35
Cleaners	10
Serving	300 students
Women	45

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### Volunteers on special occasions

During special occasions like the *swamiji's* birthday, there are thousands of volunteers offering themselves to work. Women from neighbouring villages help in preparing pickles,<sup>430</sup> sweet *boondi*,<sup>431</sup> *karaboondi*, and *maaldi*<sup>432</sup> a month before the celebration begins. Teachers from various Siddaganga Mutt sister institutions are also called upon to serve food. Devotees also offer themselves to serve food.

#### 26.2.8 Management

Five managers look after *dasoha* in the *mutt*. These managers are very effective in managing the crowd, ensuring discipline, and making sure no food is wasted by the crowd. Managers keep a close watch to avoid overcrowding in the dining halls.

Sri Siddaganga Mutt is headed by Sri Siddalinga Swamiji at present, who is the supreme authority. The administration is looked after by the administrative officer. The *mutt* has decentralised the responsibilities with the result that each department (such as education, *dasoha*, agriculture, water) is managed more efficiently by the concerned managers.

#### 26.2.9 Finances

The expenditure incurred on the performance of *anna-daan* is met from donations received from the devotees in cash and from the Government of Karnataka under the *dasoha* programme. Also, there are offerings made in-kind on a daily basis, as well as on special occasions by the devotees. These offerings are recorded in the *mutt* account, as there is no special unit to maintain the accounts of *anna-daan*. The bills for the groceries are handed over to the accounting section by *dasoha* managers, and the bills are paid by the management.

It must be noted that there are no issues faced by Siddaganga Mutt in terms of funds, human resources, quality, and management of *anna-daan*. Siddaganga Mutt is successfully providing *anna-daan* for thousands of people every day.

#### 26.2.10 Food safety

Every year, health officials from Tumakuru City Corporation monitor the quality of food and drinking water. Food quality checks are done thrice a year.

#### 26.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen of Siddaganga Mutt is equipped with the latest equipment. As a result, the preparation of food has become much easier and takes less time. Earlier, firewood was used as fuel, which slowed down the process of cooking – leading to long wait times. Firewood boilers used to waste about 25% of firewood. The installation of steam boilers has ensured the safety of cooks and reduced the cooking time.

#### 26.2.12 Wastage management

On normal days, there are no food leftovers. Excess rice is used to prepare *oggarane anna* (fried rice with spices) and served with breakfast. If the rice cannot be used, it is fed to pigs. Food leftovers are also fed to cattle. Waste generated from the kitchen and dry waste is handed over to the municipality.

### Notes

420 *Mutt* is a socio-religious, philosophical and knowledge centre.

421 He was a 12th century Indian statesman, philosopher, poet, social reformer.

422 The Bhakti movement refers to the trend that was brought forward by a number of Hindu saints in medieval Hinduism that sought to bring religious reforms by adopting the method of devotion to achieve salvation. While *shivayogi* moment refers to Lord Shiva focused bhakti movement.

423 Devotional offering made to a god, typically consisting of food that is later shared among devotees.

424 It is an ancient Indian word for charity or giving.

425 Let the giver/donator of this food live well.

426 Food donation is the most valuable among donations.

427 Indian bread made from wheat.

428 Processed wheat granules.

429 Dish prepared from wheat granules.

430 Relish consisting of vegetables or fruit preserved in vinegar or brine.

431 Sweet dish with tiny sweet round balls made of *besan* and dipped in sugar syrup.

432 Sweet prepared from powdered chapatti and jaggery and is a festive favourite in Karnataka.



## Case study 27 Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri, Chikkamangaluru, Karnataka, India

Shivakumara Nayka\*

### 27.1 Introduction

Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham is the first of the four *Amnaya Peethams*<sup>433</sup> established more than 12 centuries ago by Jagadguru Sri Adi Shankara<sup>434</sup> to promote *Sanatana Dharma*.<sup>435</sup> It is located at Sringeri, Chikkamagalur district, Karnataka, South India. According to the Madhaviya Shankara Digvijayam,<sup>436</sup> Acharya taught the principle of *Advaita*<sup>437</sup> and started an appeal to the Divinity of Knowledge, Goddess Sharada, and consecrated an icon of the Goddess. The *Peetham* has been blessed with a continuous *Guru Parampara*.<sup>438</sup> A *mutt* is also a great place of traditional learning owing to the presence of Goddess Sharada and a centre of spiritual power. Sri Sureshwaracharya, the first Acharya of the *Peetham*, was instrumental in bringing forth commentaries on the *Vedas*<sup>439</sup> and in further expounding the *Bhashyas*<sup>440</sup> of Sri Adi Shankaracharya.

#### Significance of the temple

Sri Sharada Peetham functions primarily as a centre of excellence in the study of the *Shastras*<sup>441</sup> and Vedic observances. Over time, the activities of the *Peetham* towards the sustenance and propagation of *Sanatana Dharma* have intensified. Currently, it has widened its areas of contribution to involve education, healthcare, and many social and charitable activities. The activities of the *Peetham* take place under the leadership of an administrator and CEO with the direction and inspiring guidance provided by Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji.

### 27.2 Anna-daan at Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham

*Anna-daan* was started around 120 years ago. The motivation for *anna-daan* is to provide free food for every pilgrim who comes to the *Peetham* to seek the blessings of Sri Sringeri Sharada. All devotees, irrespective of their religion, language, caste, or creed, are offered two vegetarian meals.

#### 27.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

Philanthropy is the main reason behind performing *anna-daan*, as people believe that they get rid of difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. After the meal is cooked, it is served as *Naivedyam*<sup>442</sup> to the deity, and after *pooja*, it is served to the devotees. Only during special occasions<sup>443</sup> is the *pooja* performed before the cooking starts. However, there is no practice as such by the temple authority to spread awareness about the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan*. However, the tradition is well-known and practised.

#### 27.2.2 Number of devotees served

Devotees are served a two-course meal. On normal days, the average number of devotees served is around 15,000, and during peak seasons it increases from 30,000 to 35,000 (Table II.27.1).

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Table II.27.1 Number of devotees served *anna-daan* and timings

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	Only for staff			300–500	1,000–3,000
Lunch	12:15 pm to 2 pm	15–20 batches	15–25 batches	15,000	20,000
Dinner	7:30 pm to 8:30 pm	5–7 batches	10–15 batches	10,000	15,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Breakfast is served only to the staff (around 1,000 people). On normal days lunch is served between 12:15 pm and 2 pm and dinner between 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm. During peak season, there are no restrictions on timings, and a buffet system is arranged to manage the crowd with a queue system. Between noon and 5 pm, around 15–25 batches are served in the peak season; in the normal season, it is 15–20 batches.

The temple has one dining hall named Sri Bharathi Theertha Prasada with the capacity of accommodating nearly 2,500 people at a time. The dining hall is attached to a modern, hygienic, automated kitchen. The kitchen is self-sufficient in every form. Food is served on steel plates or plantain leaves. Delicious, nutritious food is prepared and served under the most hygienic conditions.

### 27.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The modern equipment in the kitchen has rendered the cooking process easier and less time-consuming. Around 10 to 12 quintals of rice are prepared per day in the normal season, and during peak season, it is around 25 to 30 quintals per day. The quantity of food is prepared based on the estimated number of devotees. In case of food shortfall, additional food is cooked immediately. On weekends and festival days, the number of devotees visiting the temple increases. Every day, around 5,000 to 8,000 L of *sambar*,<sup>444</sup> and 5,000 to 8,000 L of *rasam*<sup>445</sup> are prepared in the normal season. During peak season the quantity of *sambar* and *rasam* goes up to 10,000 to 15,000 L and 10,000 to 12,000 L, respectively. Tables II.27.2 and II.27.3 give an overview of the details on the quantity of food prepared per day and food items served.

The kitchen staff prepares food as per the estimate provided by the manager to avoid leftovers. Surplus rice, if any, is used for preparing spicy rice for the next day's breakfast for staff.

Table II.27.2 Quantity of food prepared per day at Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	1,000–1,200 kg	2,500–3,000 kg
2	<i>Sambar</i>	5,000–8,000 L	10,000–15,000 L
3	<i>Rasam</i>	5,000–8,000 L	10,000–12,000 L
4	Vegetable curry	3,000–4,000 L	5,000–10,000 L
5	Chutney <sup>a</sup>	2,000–4,000 L	5,000–8,000 L

(Continued)

Table II.27.2 (Continued)

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
6	Payasa <sup>b</sup> (godhi, akki, daal)	5,000–10,000 L	15,000–20,000 L
7	Buttermilk	Around 100–150 L of curd is used	Around 300–500 L of curd is used

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Chutney is a spicy dish.

<sup>b</sup> A sweet dish.

Table II.27.3 Food items served per meal at Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham

Breakfast	Lunch normal season	Lunch peak season	Dinner normal season	Dinner peak season
Avalakki <sup>a</sup>	Plain rice	Plain rice	Plain rice	Plain rice
Upma <sup>b</sup> /spicy Rice preparations	Sambar	Rice item <sup>c</sup>	Rasam/sambar	Rice item <sup>c</sup>
Coffee/tea	Rasam Chutney Different types of sweets/payasa (rava, akki, dal with boondi <sup>d</sup> ) Buttermilk Khadi <sup>e</sup>	Sambar/sar Rasam Different types of sweets/payasam (rava, akki, dal with Boondi) Vegetable curry Buttermilk	Buttermilk Vegetable curry Chutney Buttermilk Khadi	Sambar Sambar/rasam Different types of sweets/payasam (rava, akki, dal with boondi) Vegetable curry Buttermilk

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes: The quantity of food served is difficult to estimate, as there is no restriction on the amount of food that a devotee helps himself to.

<sup>a</sup> Dish prepared from flattened rice.

<sup>b</sup> Dish prepared from broken wheat.

<sup>c</sup> They are varieties of rice made using different spices and recipes with rice as the main ingredient.

<sup>d</sup> Savoury prepared with gram flour.

<sup>e</sup> A thick gravy based on gram flour, and contains vegetable fritters.

#### 27.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

Preparation of lunch takes around 3–4 hours. The cooking process starts at 5:00 am and the lunch is ready by 11 am or 11:30 am. Dinner is cooked between 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Compared to lunch, dinner cooking takes lesser time, as the number of devotees to be catered to is smaller. Rice cooking time has been reduced from 15 to 30 minutes to 10–12 minutes, thanks to the modern kitchen equipment which allows hot water to be ready for the next round of rice cooking. Serving takes around 10–15 minutes. To serve one entire batch of devotees takes 25–30 minutes.

### 27.2.5 Nutrition

Every day, different varieties of fresh vegetables (like sweet pumpkin, carrot, fresh beans, chow chow, bottle gourd, lady's finger, cabbage, cauliflower, and peas) and different types of grams (*tur dal*, *chana dal*, *urad dal*, greengram, blackgram, and horsegram, etc.) are used to prepare food to ensure that good nutrition is provided to devotees.

### 27.2.6 Human resources

Around 200 people are working in the temple; 80 are assigned to *anna-daan*. Regular staff in this section includes 3 managers, 3 supervisors, 10 cooks, 20 helpers, 30 serving staff, 10 cleaning staff, and 4 watchmen (Table II.27.4). During peak season, around 100 to 150 volunteers (mostly college students and devotees) are involved in cooking, serving, managing the crowd, cleaning and cutting the vegetables.

Table II.27.4 Human resources

Staff	Number of people
Manager	3
Supervisors	3
Cooks	10
Helper	20
Serving staff	30
Cleaning/helper	10
Watchmen	4
Total	80

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 27.2.7 Working hours

The staff works in two shifts: from 5 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 10 or 11:00 pm every day. With mutual understanding, they take short breaks for rest and refreshments.

One weekly off day is allowed on a rotation basis. Appointment of staff, procurement of raw materials (groceries and vegetables), purchase of kitchen equipment, dining hall furniture, repairs, etc., are decided at the meeting of the management committee under the leadership of *Sri Bharathi Theertha Swamiji*.

### 27.2.8 Finances

The temple receives various forms of donation (*kanike*)<sup>446</sup> like daily *seva*, *homaseva*, Friday *seva*, yearly *seva*, and *hundi*.<sup>447</sup> In addition, devotees make in-kind donations of groceries and vegetables for *anna-daan*.

At present, the monthly expenditure of Rs. 7 million on *anna-daan* is met from cash donations and *hundis*. Sometimes the interest earned on bank deposits is also used on *anna-daan* and the maintenance of the temple.

### 27.2.9 Quality of raw materials

With respect to raw material procurement, the temple staff members follow the standard procurement procedure and procure items with an ISI mark. All the raw materials are purchased from the local markets and also directly from farmers.

### 27.2.10 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are the priority and are ensured by abiding by food safety standards. Food inspectors visit the temple for quality and safety checks. From time to time, food inspectors give the temple food safety and standard certificate for following certain protocols. The safety of raw materials is ensured by washing them twice, once in cold water and later in warm/hot water. The storage facility is available in the kitchen. Cooking and serving vessels are sterilised before and after usage. The manager visits the kitchen to check the quality of food every day before allowing it to be served to the devotees.

### 27.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Though modern equipment is installed in the kitchen, it also uses manual *chulas* to prepare food during peak season. With these facilities, the preparation of huge quantities of food became easier and faster.

### 27.2.12 Waste management

Waste is segregated at the source. Organic waste is used for making compost. Dry waste is handed over to the municipality.

## Website referred

- 1 [www.sringeri.net](http://www.sringeri.net) accessed on 8 April 2021

## Notes

- 433 Four *Mutts* at four directions in India.
- 434 An Indian philosopher.
- 435 Means the eternal duty of God.
- 436 These are traditional biographies of the philosopher *Adi Shankara*.
- 437 *Vedantic* non-dualism that denies the separateness of any aspect of reality from the impersonal oneness of *Brahma*.
- 438 Refers to the uninterrupted succession of gurus or teachers.
- 439 Collections forming the earliest body of Indian scripture.
- 440 In Indian philosophy, a long commentary on a basic text of a system or school.
- 441 A work of sacred scripture in Hinduism.
- 442 Food offered to the Deity and later distributed to the devotees.
- 443 Special *poojas* include *Akshaya Thadige*, *Samuhika Upanayana*, *Navarathri Mahotsava*, *Sriman Maha Chandika Homa*, *Pattabhishekothsava*, *Deepotsava*, *Rathotsava*, *Havi*, *Samuhika* Marriage and *Sriman Maha Rathotsava*.
- 444 Southern Indian dish consisting of lentils and vegetables cooked with tamarind and other spices.
- 445 Soup prepared with sweet-sour stock made from tamarind, lentils, added spices and garnish.
- 446 Donations.
- 447 A *Hundi* is a collection box used in Indian temples to collect cash offerings from devotees.

## Case study 28 Chottanikkara Bhagavathy Temple, Ernakulam, Kerala, India

Jyothish Vijayan\*

### 28.1 Introduction

Chottanikkara Bhagavathy Temple is one of the most celebrated Hindu shrines in Kerala, South India. The temple is in hilly terrain surrounded by greenery and is the most important temple among the 393 shrines, spread over 3 districts of Kerala. Thousands of pilgrims and devotees visit the temple and make their reverential offerings to redeem themselves of their afflictions.

The divine mother known as Rajarajeswari<sup>448</sup> (also called Adiparashakti) is worshipped here in three forms: Saraswaty<sup>449</sup> in the morning, Lakshmi<sup>450</sup> at noon, and Durga<sup>451</sup> in the evening. The idols of other deities Lakshmi and Narayana, idols of Brahma,<sup>452</sup> Shiv,<sup>453</sup> Ganapati, Subramanya, and Sastha<sup>454</sup> are on the same pedestal. The pleasant atmosphere in the temple gives mental peace and harmony to devotees.

#### Significance of the temple

The original idol of Goddess Bhagavathy is around four feet tall, facing east, and is made of red laterite. The goddess is believed to be *swayambhu*' (self-manifested), and the image is called *Rudraksha*<sup>455</sup> *Silas* and is irregular in shape. This image can only be viewed early in the morning when the sanctum opens for *nirmalyam*.<sup>456</sup>

The golden-hued idol of Goddess Bhagavathy in the main temple is beautifully decorated with colourful saris<sup>457</sup> and exquisite jewels. Besides, she is also seen holding in her upper right hand the disc; the upper left hand bears the conch, the lower right hand is seen in a pose conferring boons, and the lower left is seen in the *abhaya mudra*.<sup>458</sup> The conch and disc are the celebrated weapons of Vishnu.<sup>459</sup> Hence Goddess Bhagavathy is also viewed as an embodiment of Vishnu. The temple complex serves as an example of wooden architecture and sculpture, which remains one of the biggest in Kerala. The bursting of crackers is a unique form of worship undertaken by the devotees here, and this popular ritual goes by the name *Vedi Vazhipadu*.<sup>460</sup> The mentally afflicted are brought in for cleansing and healing amidst percussion and prayers.

#### Special occasions

*MakomThozhal*<sup>461</sup> is the most important festival celebrated in the month of *Kumbham*<sup>462</sup> (February/March) as it is believed that Bhagavathy in her full attire gave *darshan*<sup>463</sup> to *Vilwamangalam Swamiyar*<sup>464</sup> on that day. The Bhadrakaali<sup>465</sup> at *Kizhukkavu* is believed to exorcise evil spirits from devotees after conducting *bhajanam*.<sup>466</sup> The *Guruthi Pooja*<sup>467</sup> is another special ritual conducted in the late evening every day, attracting devotees in large numbers.

### 28.2 Anna-daan at Chottanikkara Bhagavathy Temple

Chottanikkara Bhagavathy Temple is one of the pioneers of practising *anna-daan* in the state of Kerala with a legacy of over 50 years. It was started by some devotees as a charity

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for the public. Later, this was considered a ritual, and the temple started practising this traditional affair. Initially, when *anna-daan* was started, lack of sufficient funds was an issue. Later, with the increasing number of devotees, especially women, the donations towards *anna-daan seva* increased, resulting in the continuation of the legacy.

### 28.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

Offering *anna-daan* is believed as auspicious, which helps in bringing goodness, peace, and prosperity to the donor. The temple authority ensures that all the devotees have food at the temple.

### 28.2.2 Rituals and prayers

There is a practice of the chief cook conducting prayer before lighting the stove to cook food.

### 28.2.3 Number of devotees served

Chottanikkara Temple's *anna-daan* is one of the largest in terms of the number of people served and continues throughout the year. An average of 1,000 devotees visit the temple on weekdays; the number goes up to 2,000 during the weekends and festive days. There have been instances of the crowd reaching up to 4,000 per day during the *Makamthozhal*<sup>468</sup> festival.

Food is served two times a day: lunch and dinner. Breakfast is provided only during the festival days. *Anna-daan* starts at 12:30 pm and extends up to 3 pm during normal days whereas during weekends and festive days, the time is 11:30 am to 3:30 pm.

Table II.28.1 Timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Timing	Menu provided
Breakfast	7:30 am to 11:00 am	<i>Upma</i> , <sup>a</sup> <i>chutney</i> <sup>b</sup>
Lunch on ordinary days	12:30 to 3 pm	Traditional Kerala meals
Lunch on festival days	11:30 am to 4:00 pm	Traditional Kerala lunch with sweets

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Dish made from wheat granules.

<sup>b</sup> Dish made from coconut and other ingredients.

### 28.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Traditional Kerala meals are provided to the devotees regularly, which include, rice, *sambar*,<sup>469</sup> *thoran*,<sup>470</sup> *aviyal*,<sup>471</sup> buttermilk, and pickle. During *Ekadashi*,<sup>472</sup> *papad* is provided along with the other regular items. During festive seasons, like *Onam*, *Makom*, etc., traditional lunch is provided with additional dishes of *payasam*<sup>473</sup> of two kinds and banana, etc. On festival days, *Upma* is served at breakfast along with chutney.

The temple owns a dining hall called *Anna-daan Mandapa*,<sup>474</sup> which has a capacity of 600 people at a time. The hall has tables and chairs. Steel plates are used to provide food

for the devotees during regular days. There are about 2,500 plates and glasses available for *anna-daan*. On auspicious days, the meal is provided on plantain leaf, as it is an ancient tradition followed in Kerala and other parts of India for serving lunch.

There is not much food left over since food is cooked according to estimates based on the turnout of the devotees at the temple every day. Food is served hot all the time. Leftovers, if any, are given to the devotees at the end of the day.

### 28.2.5 Nutrition

The quality of the food is certified by the health department weekly based on rules and regulations. This ensures that only quality food is provided at the temple.

### 28.2.6 Human resources

The temple trust has four cooks, one of whom is the main cook, and the other three help the main cook. Cleaning, serving, and managing are done by the temple employees and *Upadeshakasamithi*<sup>475</sup> members. Fifteen security personnel are employed by the temple on daily wages for crowd control and management during *anna-daan* and other festivals. There are volunteers also who help with various tasks like cleaning, serving, crowd management, etc. The cooks are recruited on a contract basis and are certified. They work 8–10 hours a day. The working hours of the security staff and the cooks vary according to the seasons and festivals of the temple.

### 28.2.7 Finances

The *anna-daan* of Chottanikkara Temple is fully funded by the devotees. The devotee who provides *anna-daan* should pay the amount in the account of the temple *anna-daan* fund. Devotees must book in advance and donate money to perform *anna-daan* for a minimum of one day. During normal days, the rate for *anna-daan* for a single day is Rs. 18,000, and if it is on festive days, the amount goes up to Rs. 24,000 per day. There is no fund shortage at Chottanikkara Temple for *anna-daan*, as there are large numbers of devotees ready to donate for *anna-daan* every year.

#### 28.2.7.1 INVESTMENTS

The temple authorities have made a huge investment in setting up the infrastructure and maintaining the properties used for *anna-daan* purposes. A biogas plant is used for the generation of fuel from food waste. The temple still uses firewood for cooking along with gas stoves and biogas. An average of five gas cylinders are used per day along with biogas and firewood for preparing food.

There are boilers in the kitchen and huge vessels, plates, glasses, trolleys, rice chutes, and *sambar* tanks. The CCTV cameras are mounted in the kitchen for surveillance.

#### 28.2.7.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

Annual audits are done by the superintendent. The local fund audit is done by the audit wing of *Devaswom*.<sup>476</sup>



### 28.2.8 Quality of raw materials

Proper monitoring and inspections are done by the temple authorities as well as the health department to ensure that quality food is served for *anna-daan*. The vessels plates and other utensils are well cleaned and sterilised.

### 28.2.9 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen is equipped with the latest machines such as steamers and boilers. CCTV cameras are installed in the kitchen, and payments for *anna-daan* and other *poojas* are accepted online effectively.<sup>477</sup>

### 28.2.10 Waste management

The temple has got its own biogas plant, which is a major source of fuel for preparing food. Food wastes and kitchen wastes are used in the biogas plant. This has considerably reduced the expenses incurred on firewood and LPG. Moreover, this makes *anna-daan* an environment-friendly activity.

## Website referred

- 1 info@chottanikkarabhagavathy.org accessed on 19 February 2021
- 2 eo@chottanikkarabhagavathy.org accessed on 20 February 2021

## Notes

- 448 Mother Goddess.
- 449 Goddess of wisdom.
- 450 Goddess of prosperity.
- 451 Goddess of war, strength and protection.
- 452 One of the principal deities of Hinduism.
- 453 One of the main deities of Hinduism.
- 454 Name of a Hindu deity in Hinduism.
- 455 Special kind of bead.
- 456 Special ritual performed early morning.
- 457 A garment traditionally worn by women from South Asia.
- 458 Hand gesture for blessings by gods.
- 459 Vishnu in essence means the giver and provider of things. Along with Brahma, the creator and Shiva, the destroyer, Lord Vishnu is one of the three main male deities in Hinduism and they are together known as the TRIMURTI.
- 460 Fire cracking ritual.
- 461 One of the largest celebrated festival of women that considered to be most effective for long married life and for getting best marriage for girls.
- 462 Malayalam month.
- 463 An opportunity to see or an occasion of seeing an idol of deity.
- 464 A celebrated priest.
- 465 Goddess of war and death.
- 466 Devotional concert traditionally conducted in temples.
- 467 A special ritual conducted here.
- 468 The largest ritual in the temple Chottanikkara.
- 469 A dish with gravy.
- 470 A dry vegetarian dish.
- 471 Another dish made using coconut, traditionally.
- 472 Festival in Kerala comes in Malayalam calendar.

473 Sweet dish provided after lunch in all southern states.

474 Place like auditorium.

475 Managing board.

476 *Devaswom* meaning 'belonging to the God' are socio-religious trusts in India that comprise members nominated by both government and community. Hindu temples and their assets and to ensure their smooth operation in accordance with traditional rituals and customs.

477 Rituals done at temples.

## Case study 29 Guruvayur Temple, Thrissur District, Kerala, India

Jyothish Vijayan\*

### 29.1 Introduction

Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to the Lord Guruvayurappan (a four-armed form of Lord Vishnu<sup>478</sup>), located in the town of Guruvayur in Thrissur district of Kerala, South India. Mention about the Guruvayur temple in the history is found in the Tamil<sup>479</sup> literary works of the 14th and 16th centuries. Melpathur's<sup>480</sup> composition called *Narayaneeyam* made this temple very famous. The central shrine was built in 1638 AD. The temple features a typical Kerala type of temple architecture. The main deity can be seen from the entrance gate.

#### Significance of the temple

It is one of the most important places of worship for Hindus in Kerala and is often referred to as Bhuloka Vaikunta.<sup>481</sup> It is also India's third-largest temple in terms of the number of pilgrims, attracting more than seven million devotees annually. On the day of Kerala New Year, Vishu, the sun's rays touch the feet of Guruvayoorappan.<sup>482</sup> The image of Guruvayoorappan is a charming one with four hands carrying *Shankha* (conch), *Chakra* (discus), *Gadha* (mace) and *Padma* (lotus). The idol is said to be made of a highly powerful stone called *Patala Anjanama*, which has several healing and miraculous properties. The main festivals are the ten-day festival in the Malayalam month of *Kumbham*; *Sri Krishna Janmashtami*<sup>483</sup> in the month of *Chingam*;<sup>484</sup> *Ekadasi*<sup>485</sup> in the *Shukla paksha*<sup>486</sup> in the month of *Vrischikam*, popularly called *Guruvayur Ekadashi*; and *Vishu* on the first day of the month of *Medam*. During these special occasions, thousands of devotees visit the temple.

### 29.2 Anna-daan at Guruvayur Temple

*Anna-daan* is the largest of its kind in the state of Kerala. During the early years of the temple, there was a tradition called *Brahmana Bhojanam*<sup>487</sup> in which the members of the Brahmin community who served the deity were provided food inside the temple. Later, because of certain developments, the *Brahmana Bhojanam* was converted to *Mishra bhojanam*<sup>488</sup> in around 1980–84. Since then, the *anna-daan* is provided for all the devotees irrespective of their caste, creed, or gender.

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### 29.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

People consider *anna-daan* to be auspicious and hence vows are taken by devotees to provide food for the poor. Philanthropy is also a major reason for *anna-daan*, and those who receive *anna-daan* consider it to bring good luck. Traditionally, the senior cook starts the fire by praying and breaking a coconut as an offering to Lord *Ganesha*<sup>489</sup> for performing *anna-daan* to go on without any obstacles. The practice of serving food to the deity locally called *Pakarcha*<sup>490</sup> is followed by the temple every day.

### 29.2.2 Number of devotees served

As the temple witnesses the largest influx of devotees every day, *anna-daan* is performed on a large scale. It is interesting to know that around 4,000 to 5,000 devotees are served food on weekdays. During the weekends, the number goes up to nearly 7,000. In addition, on festival days or special occasions like *Guruvayoor Ekadasi*, *Ashtami Rohini*,<sup>491</sup> and *Onam*,<sup>492</sup> the number of devotees served is between 25,000 and 30,000 per day. It is good to know that the temple is well guarded by private security and the police; with their help, the temple authority feels that the management of such a huge crowd is not a difficult task for them. The queue system is followed to manage the crowd.

The temple has a huge dining hall named *Annalakshmi Hall*, with a capacity of 500 persons per round. The hall has steel tables and chairs. Food is served three times a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The breakfast serving was initiated in November 2019. Breakfast is provided from 5:00 am to 9:00 am and is served on steel plates while lunch is served on banana leaves representing the tradition of South India. The breakfast contains *idli*,<sup>493</sup> *sambar*,<sup>494</sup> and *chutney*<sup>495</sup> for one day and *upma*<sup>496</sup> or *pongali*<sup>497</sup> and banana on alternate days, along with tea. The lunch is served from 10:30 am to 3 pm. The food items served for lunch include rice, *kalan*,<sup>498</sup> buttermilk, *sambar*, *rasam*,<sup>499</sup> *olan*,<sup>500</sup> *pachai-koottu*,<sup>501</sup> pickle, and *pappad*. Sweets are provided occasionally and *payasam*<sup>502</sup> served only if there is any kind of *vahipadu*.<sup>503</sup> All the food items are served in unlimited quantities except *payasam*. During the festive days, the menu for lunch has additional food items and varieties of sweets *pazham*<sup>504</sup> *payasam* and *pal*<sup>505</sup> *payasam*, especially during *Ashtami Rohini*.<sup>506</sup> The food items served are delicious and nutritious.

In addition, evening snacks are served from 5 pm to 6:30 pm with *upma*, *chutney*, and *sambar*. From 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm, *kanji*<sup>507</sup> and *puzhukku*<sup>508</sup> are provided to everyone, and from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm *Nedhyam*<sup>509</sup> of the deity is provided for devotees. During festivities, breakfast is not served, as it is difficult to manage the huge crowd; instead, lunch is served a little earlier from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Table II.29.1 Timings of *anna-daan* and items served

Meals	Timings	Menu provided
Breakfast	5:00 am to 9:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Idly</i>, <i>sambar</i>, <i>chutney</i>, tea</li> <li>• <i>Upma</i> (<i>Rava</i>/wheat), <i>chutney</i>/banana, tea</li> <li>• <i>Pongal</i>, <i>chutney</i>, <i>sambar</i>, tea</li> </ul>
Lunch	10:30 am to 3:00 pm	Traditional Kerala lunch with sweets
Evening snacks	5 pm to 6:30 pm	<i>Upma</i> and <i>chutney/sambar</i>
Dinner	6:30 pm to 7:30 pm	<i>Kanji puzhukku</i>
	7:30 pm to 9 pm	<i>Nedhyam</i> consists of rice items

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 29.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

For breakfast, around 7,000 to 8,000 *idlis* are prepared every day. For *pongal* or *upma*, around 75 kg of *rava* and 60 kg of crushed wheat are used per day. A minimum of 1,000 bananas are provided for breakfast, with *upma* on alternative days. Around 300 L of *sambar* and chutney are prepared, along with 500 L of tea.

### 29.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The preparation of breakfast takes 1.5 hours, while lunch takes 3 hours. The serving time is just 10 minutes for one batch, and the cleaning process is about 10 minutes. One single batch takes on an average of 20 minutes to finish serving, eating, and cleaning the dining hall.

### 29.2.5 Human resources

The manager is responsible for overseeing the overall process of *anna-daan*. There are 13 cooks employed by the temple. The head cook is a certified cook by the state government and is hired on a permanent basis, while the others are hired on a contract basis. Lately, around ten cooks are employed, which has helped in the smooth and hustle-free conduct of *anna-daan* during festive days. There are three quality control managers. Traditionally, the cleaning of the dining hall, kitchen premises, and utensils, etc., is done by the ladies from *Variyar*<sup>510</sup> families. Moreover, there is a *Keezhshanthi* family taking care of the food serving. On normal days, the cooks and other staff work for 6 to 7 hours a day, while on festive days, they work around the clock. Volunteers are also involved in the smooth and easy management of the *anna-daan* process. The police department, National Cadet Corps volunteers, and members of *Mahila Samajam*,<sup>511</sup> the ladies organisation, help in cleaning and cutting vegetables, managing the crowd, serving the food, and cleaning the dining hall, etc. Also, there are 15 ex-service personnel appointed by the *Devaswom*<sup>512</sup> as watchmen in and around the temple. They also help in managing the crowd during the festive season. The cooks and other staff inside the temple premises must follow the dress code.<sup>513</sup>

### 29.2.6 Finances

The expenditure for performing *anna-daan* is met from donations received in cash from the devotees. There are various *sevas*<sup>514</sup> with specified amounts. The *Thulabharam*<sup>515</sup> *seva* offerings are also used. According to the temple authorities, the fund received for *anna-daan seva* is sufficient for only 50% of the total expenditure. The remaining amount comes from the *Devaswom* board for *anna-daan*, which is organised daily, as well as during the festival season. It is estimated that the average amount spent is Rs. 0.35 million to 0.4 million per month. The temple maintains the corpus fund for *anna-daan* activities. Annual auditing is carried out by a chartered accountant of the temple. The board monitors the finances annually.

### 29.2.7 Quality of raw materials

Vegetables, cereals, pulses, and other ingredients are supplied by families belonging to the *Variyar* community based near the temple. It is an old-age tradition that has been followed for years. Only these families are given the right of supplying the items for the

temple *anna-daan*. Milk is procured from the Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation. The suppliers of other raw materials are selected by board members.

### 29.2.8 Food safety

The temple is highly cautious about the food that is served to the devotees. There are several quality control managers in place to maintain the quality of the food served. Another prominent feature of *anna-daan* is that the food served to the devotees daily is inspected by the authorities.

### 29.2.9 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The temple has invested in facilities like 24 steam boilers, 5 huge vessels, 2,000 steel plates utensils, glasses, 2 RO plants, and other items used for cooking, cleaning, and serving. Recently, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, the temple purchased gas stoves and gas cylinders. CCTV has been installed everywhere in the temple and on its premises.

### 29.2.10 Waste management

Food leftovers are very rare in the temple. Surplus food, if any, is distributed to the people outside the temple. The management of waste from the food and the kitchen is taken care of by the temple authorities and especially by the traditional communities associated. The waste generated is used for bio-composting and fertilising the temple-owned lands.

## Website referred

- 1 [guruvayurdevaswom.in](http://guruvayurdevaswom.in) accessed on 8 May 2021

## Notes

- 478 A deity believed to have descended from heaven to earth in several incarnations.
- 479 A *Dravidian* language of Tamil Nadu state, India, and of northern and eastern Sri Lanka.
- 480 He was a member of Kerala School of Astronomy and Mathematics.
- 481 Holy Abode of Vishnu on Earth.
- 482 Deity of *Guruvayur* temple, Lord Krishna.
- 483 Birthday of Lord Krishna.
- 484 The beginning of the New Year in Kerala.
- 485 It is the eleventh lunar day (*tithi*) of each of the two lunar phases.
- 486 Bright fortnight.
- 487 The food for the Brahmin communities.
- 488 Food for all communities or castes.
- 489 Son of *Shiva*, remover of obstacles.
- 490 Serving to the deity.
- 491 An annual Hindu festival that celebrates the birth of Krishna, the eighth avatar of *Vishnu*.
- 492 Ancient harvest festival of Kerala.
- 493 A south Indian steamed cake of rice.
- 494 Is a lentil-based vegetable curry.
- 495 A spicy condiment of Indian origin.
- 496 A dish originating from the Indian subcontinent.

- 497 South Indian dish made of processed wheat.
- 498 A sour-tasting traditional dish made with curd or buttermilk and veggies like yam and plantain.
- 499 A thin, very spicy southern Indian soup served with other dishes, typically as a drink.
- 500 Dish prepared from white gourd or ash-gourd, and black-eyed peas.
- 501 Lentil and vegetable stew in South Indian, particularly in Tamil and Kerala cuisines.
- 502 Traditional sweet served along with meals.
- 503 Offerings to the deity.
- 504 Made of banana.
- 505 Made using milk.
- 506 Birthday of Lord *Krishna*.
- 507 Cooked rice with the rice soup.
- 508 Dish made from mixing tuber crops and vegetables into a thick sausage. Highly nutritious.
- 509 The food offered for the deity.
- 510 An upper-class community in Kerala belonging to *Ambalavasi* caste which comes under Brahmin and Nair community. They are the people who were taking care of the temple, its surroundings, and supplies to the temple such as flowers, cereals, etc.
- 511 Registered Women's Organisation.
- 512 These are socio-religious trusts in India that comprise members nominated by both government and community.
- 513 Shirtless for men and traditional for women.
- 514 A ritual in honour of the gods
- 515 Traditional offering of something in the weight of the devotee to god, mainly grains and vegetable.

## Case study 30 Swami Nithyananda Ashram, Kanhagad, Kerala, India

Shreya Victor\* and K. J. George†

### 30.1 Introduction

Swami<sup>516</sup> Nithyananda Ashram<sup>517</sup> is located at the heart of the municipal town of Kanhagad, in the Kasaragod district, Kerala, South India. The *ashram* was established by, and dedicated to, Swami Nithyananda, a great *sannyasin*<sup>518</sup> who had miraculous *yogic* powers. Swami Nithyananda was one of the great spiritual leaders of the state, and thousands used to visit him for intercession, blessings, and guidance. Swami Nithyananda was born in 1897, at Quilandy, a small town in the state of Kerala. At the age of 12, he left his home to lead an austere hermit life in the Himalayas. With an enlightened mind and immense *yogic* powers, Swami visited countries such as Myanmar and Sri Lanka and the Indian states of Karnataka and Kerala. The visits manifested his divine powers and great wisdom, and the people who witnessed his miracles started establishing *ashrams* and prayer (*bhajan*) halls in his name. Swami Nithyananda established an *ashram* in 1920 at Kanhagad. In 1931, Swami Nithyananda travelled to Mumbai where he established another *ashram* in Ganeshpuri. He stayed in Mumbai till his death in 1961.

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The *ashram* gained greater glory under the leadership of Swami Janananda, the successor of Swami Nithyananda. Swami Janananda led the *ashram* for five decades, maintaining its sanctity, simplicity, and prosperity, till his death in 1982. The trust which was formed by Swami Janananda constitutes the present governing body of the *ashram*.

#### Significance of the *ashram*

Swami Nithyananda Ashram is a major spiritual centre in northern Kerala. The *ashram* is known for its holy caves, constructed by the command of Swami Nithyananda, that are used by *sannyasins* for meditation. There are 44 caves, all carved on single stones. It is prophesied by *Swami* that those great sages will visit these caves and bring the dawn of the golden age of *Sanatana Dharma* (divine justice and order).

Major celebrations at the *ashram* involve *Shivaratri*,<sup>519</sup> *Swami Nithyananda Prana Pratishtha* day,<sup>520</sup> *Guru poornima*,<sup>521</sup> *Swami Nithyananda Samadhi* day,<sup>522</sup> and *Datthathreya Jayanti*.<sup>523</sup> During these special occasions, a larger number of devotees visit the *ashram*.

### **30.2 Anna-daan at Nithyananda ashram**

*Anna-daan* has been done at Nithyananda Ashram since 1950. It was initiated by *Swami Janananda* in response to the instruction from *Swami Nithyananda*. The primary intention of this initiative was to feed the poor and the devotees arriving from remote places. *Anna-daan* is done three times a day throughout the year. Anyone, irrespective of religion and caste, who is hungry is served food in the full spirit of hospitality and as an act of service to God. Food is served in the dining hall of the ashram.

#### **30.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan**

Philanthropy is a major motivating factor behind performing *anna-daan*, for the teaching of *Swami Nithyananda* insists on cultivating the virtue of compassion to humanity irrespective of man-made differences. However, other factors such as vows and the belief that feeding the poor brings good luck, grace from God, and blessings from people motivate *anna-daan*.

#### **30.2.2 Rituals and prayers**

Prayers, *arati*,<sup>524</sup> and chanting are performed before cooking each meal. Once the meals are prepared, *prasadam*<sup>525</sup> is offered to the *swami* before distributing it to people. Furthermore, it is necessary that cooks should have eaten before the distribution. There is a *mandapam*<sup>526</sup> and an idol of *swami* in the dining hall. People bow before the idol and recite *Om Nithyanandam* before occupying their seats in the dining hall.

A brief announcement from the *ashram* conveys the spiritual significance of *Nithyananda Ashram* and the noble motive behind *anna-daan*. Subsequently, a short meditation session is held and followed by meal distribution.

### 30.2.3 Number of devotees served

During the normal season, breakfast is served to 25 people, lunch to 200 people, and dinner to 30 people. During peak season, the number increases to 50, 250, and 60, respectively. Breakfast is served between 8:30 am and 9:00 am, and lunch and dinner are distributed between 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm, and 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm, respectively. The dining hall of the *ashram* accommodates 400 people at a time. Three hundred seats are adequate for serving food during ordinary days. During the peak season, extra seats may be added, or the floor may be used for sitting. Food is served on stainless steel plates, and the crowd is managed through the token system.

Table II.30.1 Timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	8:30 am–9:00 am	1	1	25	50
Lunch	12:30 pm–1:30 pm	1	2	200	250
Dinner	8:00 pm–9:00 pm	1	1	30	60

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 30.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

*Upma*<sup>527</sup> and *curry*,<sup>528</sup> *idli*<sup>529</sup> and *sambar*,<sup>530</sup> and *dosa*<sup>531</sup> and *chutney*<sup>532</sup> are breakfast items, while lunch and dinner include rice, *sambar*, a vegetable dish, and buttermilk.<sup>533</sup>

About 40 kg of rice is prepared per day in the normal season, which increases to 50 kg in the peak season. Likewise, 35–45 L of *sambar*, 20–25 kg of vegetable *curry*, and 50 L of buttermilk are required on ordinary days. During peak season, 60 L of *sambar*, 40 kg of vegetable *curry*, and 70 L of buttermilk may be required.

Table II.30.2 Quantity of food prepared per day

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	30–40 kg	40–50 kg
2	<i>Sambar</i>	35–45 L	50–60 L
3	Vegetable curry	20–25 kg	30–40 kg
5	Buttermilk	About 50 L	About 70 L
6	<i>Idli/upma/dosa</i>	About 15 kg	About 30 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The ashramites and employees, owing to their long experience, can predict the possible number of guests, and the food is prepared accordingly. However, the timings are extended if there is excess food. Likewise, if the crowd is found to be bigger, immediate arrangements are made to cook more food to meet the need. Generally, there are no



leftovers because of limited cooking. For unanticipated reasons, if any food is left over, it is distributed among the poor in neighbourhood.

*Table II.30.3* Quantity of food served per meal (in grams)

<i>Time/season</i>	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
<b>Breakfast</b>		
<i>Dosa, chutney</i>	300–400 gm	Do
<i>Upma, curry</i>	300–500 gm	Do
<i>Idli sambar</i>	300–500 gm	Do
<i>Tea/coffee/milk</i>	300 mL	Do
<b>Lunch</b>		
<i>Plain rice</i>	500 gm	Do
<i>Sambar</i>	300 mL	Do
<i>Vegetable curry</i>	150 g	Do
<i>Buttermilk</i>	300 mL	300 mL
<b>Dinner</b>		
<i>Plain rice</i>	500 gms	Do
<i>Sambar</i>	300 mL	Do
<i>Vegetable curry</i>	150 g	Do
<i>Buttermilk</i>	300 mL	300 mL

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 30.2.5 *Accountability of food*

It is expected that the food should be distributed entirely to the guests, and no staff can take it to his house, which is followed ardently. The leftovers, if any, must be distributed to the poor in the neighbourhood.

### 30.2.6 *Time taken for preparing food*

Preparation of breakfast takes 2 hours, from 6:30 am to 8:30 am. Likewise, lunch requires another 2 hours of work, from 10:30 am to 12:30 noon. Dinner is prepared in 1 hour, from 6:30 to 7:30. About 20 minutes are required for serving food to one batch of guests, and equal time is required for cleaning plates, utensils, and tables.

### 30.2.7 *Nutrition*

It is observed that the meals served at the *ashram* ensure well-balanced nutrition. Rice, *sambar*, vegetable curry (which has several vegetables in it), and buttermilk served daily at the ashram are rich in proteins and major vitamins.

### 30.2.8 *Human resources*

The total number of people involved in *anna-daan* at Swami Nithyananda Ashram is 23, out of which 13 are the regular staff of the *ashram*, and the remaining are volunteers. Table II.30.4 illustrates the manpower distribution.

Table II.30.4 Human resources involved

Staff/Season	Number of people	
	Normal season	Peak season
<b>Regular paid staff (ashram staff)</b>		
Senior kitchen manager	1	1
Cooks	5	
Cleaners	2	
Servers	4	
Watchman	1	
Total	13	
<b>Volunteers for a specific purpose</b>		
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	5–10	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Generally, volunteers' task involves cleaning and cutting vegetables. During festival seasons, however, they assist in serving food, cleaning the premises, and managing the crowd. The staff spends around 10 hours at the *ashram*, though they are not fully engaged throughout the duration. One day off per week is admissible to all employees.

### 30.2.9 Management

Nithyananda Ashram is governed by a trust constituted in the year 1950, with a governing body consisting of 22 members. The composition of the board includes a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, and executive members. All matters, such as property management, appointment of staff, organising programmes, and *anna-daan* are supervised by the board.

The chairman acts as the EO of *anna-daan*, and the vice-chairman assists him in this task. However, all major decisions are taken by the *ashram* board.

### 30.2.10 Finances

The expenses of *anna-daan* are met mostly by the offerings of the devotees. Additionally, donations from benefactors, *sadya*<sup>534</sup> offers from the public, and the income from *ashram* properties are also used for *anna-daan*. The *ashram* has got a few hectares of land that generate some agricultural revenue. However, the *ashram* is largely dependent for its various needs on the generous support of devotees.

Table II.30.5 Expenditure on *anna-daan*

Time	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	Rs. 6 million per year	
Lunch		
Dinner		

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.30.6 Investment in kitchen

Particulars	Numbers	Cost (Rs. In million)
Construction of kitchen	1	Total cost: Rs. 13.1 million
Steam boilers	1	
Huge vessels	6	
Roti-making machines		
Insulated vessels	6	
Plates	500	
Glasses	500	
Bowls	100	
RO plants	2	
Gas stoves	4	
Gas cylinders		
Cauldrons	5	
Trolleys	2	
Rice chutes	10	
Dal/sambar tanks	3	
Cutting boards	5	
Knives	20	
Construction of dining hall		
Tables	60	
Chairs	300	
CCTVs (number and cost)	2	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

To ensure better hygiene and respectful and equal treatment of people, the *ashram* has arranged dining tables, chairs, stainless steel plates, and vessels for *anna-daan*. The ashramites always pay great attention to the saying “*Atithi Devo bhava*” (let guests be God), and *anna-daan* at Swami Nithyananda Ashram is served with devotion.

It is estimated that the operation cost of *anna-daan* amounts to 0.76 million per year. Table II.30.7 presents the allocation of expenses.

Table II.30.7 Fund allocation and expenditure

Particulars	O&M costs (in millions)
Salary of employees	1.6
Procurement of raw materials: vegetables	6.0
Procurement of raw materials: groceries	
Transportation cost	
Fuel cost: gas cylinders, pellets, etc.	
Power cost	
Housekeeping: cost of the dining hall	
Repairs and maintenance of kitchen equipment	
Repairs and maintenance of kitchen and dining hall premises	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Since Nithyananda Ashram is registered as a charitable institution, a properly audited account is submitted to the government each financial year. Additionally, the details of

financial transactions are scrutinised by an internal auditing system and presented to the executive committee for approval.

### 30.2.11 Quality of raw materials

Raw materials for food preparation are procured from a close-by local market. Materials are supplied by vendors who are familiar with the *ashram* and those who maintain a clean record of service. Additionally, the staff of the *ashram* performs regular inspections to verify the quality of the material supplied. The *ashram* procures fresh materials daily and does not prefer to keep things in cold storage. The safety of raw materials is assured by washing them multiple times in clean water, and likewise, the hygiene of the dining hall, utensils, and kitchen is ensured by regular cleaning and sterilisation. The EO pays regular visits to the *anna-daan* premise to assure the quality of food distributed. Sterilised vessels and spoons are used for serving food. The entire activity of *anna-daan* is performed under CCTV surveillance and constant monitoring.

### 30.2.12 Technology adoption in the kitchen

*Anna-daan* at Nithyananda Ashram makes use of advanced technologies that assist in quality maintenance. In addition to CCTV surveillance, regular announcements ensure proper conduct in the dining hall. Additionally, the kitchen of the *ashram* is well equipped with steam boilers, RO units, hot insulated vessels, and safe inlets of cooking gas. Each dining table is made of sparkling stainless steel and the entire floor of the dining hall is paved with lustrous granite.

### 30.2.13 Waste management

The quantity of wet waste generated per day is about 20 kg, mostly from processing vegetables and food leftovers in plates. Additionally, 500–700 L of wastewater are generated mostly from water drained from cooked rice. However, the waste generated causes no big trouble to the *ashram*, for it is used either as cattle feed or for making bio fertiliser.

### 30.2.14 Key issues

The management is of the view people should avoid wasting food while the whole world is fighting against hunger. The ashramites try their best to make people aware of their responsibility.

## Website referred

- 1 [www.namonithyananda.org](http://www.namonithyananda.org) accessed on 9 August 2021

## Notes

516 Swami – the Sanskrit word *swami* means “he who is one with the Self”.

517 Ashram – a place, often in a forest, where people who have withdrawn from society can live apart as a group; a religious retreat; a hermitage.

- 518 Sannyasin – a Hindu female religious mendicant; sannyasi is a male mendicant.
- 519 Shivratri – a Hindu festival celebrated annually in honour of the god Shiva.
- 520 Prana Pratishtha Day – refers to the rite or ceremony by which a murti (vessel for the spirit of god) is consecrated in a Hindu temple, wherein hymns and mantra are recited to invite the deity to be resident guest, and the murti's eye is opened for the first time. Practiced in the temples of Hinduism, the ritual is considered to infuse life into the Hindu temple, and bring to it the numinous presence of divinity and spirituality.
- 521 Gurupoornima – is a tradition dedicated to all the spiritual and academic gurus, who are evolved or enlightened humans, ready to share their wisdom with very little or no monetary expectation, based on Karma Yoga. It is celebrated as a festival in India, Nepal and Bhutan by the Hindus, Jains and Buddhists.
- 522 Samadhi day – the day on which the act of consciously and intentionally leaving one's body at the moment of death.
- 523 Datthathreya Jayanti – is a Hindu festival, commemorating the birthday celebration of the Hindu god Datthathreya, a combined form of the Hindu male divine trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
- 524 Aarati – light offering to God.
- 525 Prasadam – grace, mercy. Generally, refers to remnants of food offered to the deity.
- 526 Mandapam – (in southern India) a temple porch/a temporary platform set up for weddings and religious ceremonies.
- 527 Upma – is a breakfast dish cooked as a thick porridge from dry-roasted semolina or coarse rice flour. Various seasonings and/or vegetables are often added during the cooking.
- 528 Curry – is a variety of dishes originating from the Indian subcontinent. It uses a combination of spices or herbs, usually ground turmeric, cumin, coriander, ginger, and fresh or dried chillies.
- 529 Idli – is a type of savoury rice cake made by steaming a batter consisting of fermented black lentils (de-husked) and rice.
- 530 Sambar – a lentil-based dish common in India and Sri Lanka.
- 531 Dosa – is a thin pancake or crepe, originating from South India, made from a fermented batter predominantly consisting of lentils and rice.
- 532 Chutney – It is a family of condiments or sauces in the cuisines of the Indian subcontinent. Chutneys may be realized in such forms as a tomato relish, a ground peanut garnish, yogurt or curd, cucumber, spicy coconut, spicy onion or mint dipping sauce.
- 533 Buttermilk – is a fermented dairy drink. Traditionally, it was the liquid left behind after churning butter out of cultured cream.
- 534 Sadhya – variety of traditional vegetarian dishes usually served on a banana leaf in Kerala as lunch. Sadhya means banquet in the local language Malayalam.

## Case study 31 Sabarimala Ayyappa Swamy Temple, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India

Jyotish Vijayan\*

### 31.1 Introduction

Sabarimala Sri Dharma Sastha<sup>535</sup> Temple, dedicated to Lord Ayyappa<sup>536</sup> is the most famous and prominent among all the *sastha* temples in Kerala and is situated on a hilltop amidst the Periyar Tiger Reserve in the Western Ghats. The temple is quite different from

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the other temples, as it is not open throughout the year; it is open on *Mandala pooja*,<sup>537</sup> *Makaravilakku*,<sup>538</sup> *Vishu*,<sup>539</sup> and on the first day of every Malayalam month.<sup>540</sup> The temple attracts millions of pilgrims from all over India and abroad every year. It is the tradition that the pilgrims must observe celibacy for 41 days before going to Sabarimala, and they carry *irumudis*<sup>541</sup> with them. Pilgrims take the traditional forest routes, as well as the one from *Pamba*,<sup>542</sup> which is less physically challenging to reach the temple. The devotees of Ayyappa worship the river Pamba with as much devotion as the river Ganga.<sup>543</sup> Sabarimala is as holy as Kasi.<sup>544</sup> Legends say that Dharmasastha<sup>545</sup> sent Parasuraman,<sup>546</sup> who resurrected the land of Kerala from the bottom of the ocean to Sabarimala. It was he who carved the figure of Lord Ayyappa and installed it on the day of *Makara sankranti*.<sup>547</sup> Anyone who has remained celibate for 41 days can visit the temple. As such, therefore, there is no discrimination on the basis of caste or religion in the temple. Moreover, the devotees visit *vavarunada*,<sup>548</sup> the famous mosque, before visiting Lord Ayyappa, which is the symbol of religious harmony all over the world.

### 31.2 Anna-daan at Sabarimala Temple

Lord Ayyappa, the presiding deity of Sabarimala temple, is also addressed as *anna-daanprabhu*.<sup>549</sup> Therefore, providing food to the pilgrims who visit the temple is an act of devotion here. The Travancore Devaswom Board, the governing body of Sabarimala temple, has implemented a free food scheme for devotees, both at Sabarimala and Pamba, including the *idathavalams* (resting places for devotees). The board has formed the Sabarimala Sri Dharma Sastha *Anna-daan* Trust with the main objective of providing free food to pilgrims and has constructed a huge *anna-daanmandapam*<sup>550</sup> that is equipped to serve more than 2 lakh pilgrims around the clock every day.

*Anna-daan* was initiated during the early 2000s, but the history of this ritual dates to the beginning of the temple. When the devotees started coming to the temple in huge numbers during peak season, there were no amenities for them. Some well-off devotees residing near the temple started providing food for the visitors, which later became a regular practice by these families. They thought that it is their sacred duty to continue the tradition started by their forefathers. Since 2005, the temple started offering *anna-daan* regularly for all the devotees on a pilot basis, and since 2016, the temple authorities have been providing food for all the devotees who visit the temple 24/7 in every season.

Presently, there is a provision for the grandchildren and other members of families who initiated the tradition to continue to provide *anna-daan* as the legacy of their forefathers. The devotees who wish to perform *anna-daan* must pay the rent of the hall and utensils they use for *anna-daan*.

#### 31.2.1 Rituals and prayers

There are no special *poojas* or rituals conducted by the temple priest before performing *anna-daan*, except that the chief cook lights a lamp on day one of *anna-daan* for the season. The lamp is lit for the *Mandalakala*<sup>551</sup> and is put off on the last day after the temple closes for the season.

The *arthi*<sup>552</sup> is performed for the deity using camphor placed on cooked rice before it is served to the devotees. Food is first served to the deity as *Naivedyam*<sup>553</sup> and then to the pilgrims. Thus, devotees have a strong belief that the food served to them is *prasadam* given by the god himself.

### 31.2.2 Number of devotees served

Currently, the food is served in the newly constructed hall behind the *Malika Puram*<sup>554</sup> temple near the *Sannidhana*.<sup>555</sup> This is one of the largest *anna-daanmandapa*<sup>556</sup> in India with a capacity of 2,500 people at a time. But at present, only 1,600 people are served per batch. The temple follows a queue system for crowd management.

The dining hall is provided with steel tables and foldable steel chairs. The food is served on steel plates and steel tumblers for drinking water. There are approximately 2,000 plates and tumblers. A dishwasher was installed in 2018 in the hall premises to carry out the cleaning of the vessels more efficiently in the minimum time. During peak season, food is served 24/7, but on regular days like *masa pooja*, food is served till 7 pm.

### 31.2.3 Quantity of food preparations and items served

Breakfast is served between 6 am and 11:30 am and the items served include nutritionally rich *upma*,<sup>557</sup> Bengal gram curry, and *chukkukappi*.<sup>558</sup> The devotees can also avail of warm water for drinking. Lunch starts at noon and continues to be served till 4 pm. The lunch menu includes rice prepared using *ponni*<sup>559</sup> rice, *sambar*, *aviyal*,<sup>560</sup> *thoran*,<sup>561</sup> pickle, *rasam*,<sup>562</sup> *pappad*,<sup>563</sup> and buttermilk. Dinner, consisting of *kuthari*<sup>564</sup> *kanji*,<sup>565</sup> cooked green gram, and pickle, is served between 6 pm and 11 pm.

Table II.31.1 Timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Timings	Menu provided
Breakfast	6 am to 11:30 am	<i>Upma</i> , Bengalgram curry, <i>chukkukappi</i>
Lunch	12 pm to 4 pm	<i>Rice</i> , <i>sambar</i> , <i>aviyal</i> , <i>thoran</i> , pickle, <i>rasam</i> , <i>pappad</i> and buttermilk
Dinner	6 pm to 7 pm/11 pm	Traditional Kerala dinner

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

It is amazing to know that the number of devotees who are served food goes up from 3,000–4,000 per day on normal days to 25,000–30,000 per day in peak season. Each batch takes 25 to 30 minutes to complete. Since the hall can accommodate 1,600 people at a time, the number of servings is less.

In its attempt to avoid food wastage, the temple authority sanctions only a limited amount of food to be cooked at the beginning of the day, say, 150 kg of rice. Subsequently, depending upon the inflow of devotees, rice may be cooked in batches of 25 kg and 50 kg. Approximately, 200 to 250 kg of *rava*<sup>566</sup> is used for cooking *upma* and 100 kg of Bengal gram for curry every day for breakfast. Normally, 400 to 600 kg of rice are used for lunch which may go up to 800 to 1,000 kg during the peak season.

Table II.31.2 Volume of ingredients

Items	Volume used per day
<i>Rava</i> or <i>suji</i>	200–250 kg
Bengal gram	100 kg
Rice	400–600 kg (normal season), 800–1,000 kg (peak season)

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 31.2.4 Nutrition

The cooks recruited are certified cooks and are conscious of the importance of nutrition. The quality of food is certified by the health department every week. They inspect the food regularly to make sure that the quality is maintained as per the rules and regulations.

### 31.2.5 Human resources

Every year, the temple trust recruits 10 cooks, 50 helpers for cooks, and more than 300 people for cleaning, serving, and crowd management. Each year, the temple trust recruits afresh for *anna-daan*. The watchmen are also recruited for a year, and they along with police personnel manage the crowd. Thus, there is no permanent staff for *anna-daan*. One officer and an assistant are deputed from the Devaswom Board to take care of *anna-daan*.

Not only is the recruitment of human resource annual, even the tenders for supply of the groceries and vegetables for *anna-daan* are valid for a year. The food inspectors are responsible for the quality of food items and ingredients provided for *anna-daan*.

Table II.31.3 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*

Details	Numbers
Cooks	10
Helpers	50
Cleaning, serving, and crowd management	300
Total	360

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 31.2.6 Finances

The temple has a unique system of letting some families organise the *anna-daan*. Those who are following the legacy of their forefathers who began the *anna-daan* can conduct *anna-daan* three times a day for as many days as they want. But they must pay rent for the hall and utensils they use for *anna-daan*. They also pay for cooks, cleaners, etc., during these days. This is a unique feature of the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala.

The *anna-daan* trust has a corpus which earns a huge amount of interest to fund various activities of the temple. The temple is one of the richest temples in Kerala in terms of annual revenue generation. A continuous flow of funds for *anna-daan* is ensured. Moreover, to ensure regular fund flows, the trust had come up with new schemes for donors/sponsors as follows:

Table II.31.4 Finance for *anna-daan*

Rupees 50 lakhs	<i>Anna-daan</i> for three times/day for ten years in the name of the donor/nominee
	Rent-free accommodation for five days in a year, excluding four days preceding <i>Mandala Pooja</i> and <i>Makaravilakku</i> <sup>a</sup>
	Facilities for convenient <i>darshan</i> .
	<i>Prasadam</i> kit inclusive of two cans of <i>Aravana</i> <sup>b</sup> and two packets of <i>Appam</i> <sup>c</sup> for 15 years.

(Continued)



Table II.31.4 (Continued)

Rupees 25 lakhs	<p><i>Anna-daan</i> for three times/day for four years in the name of the donor/nominee.</p> <p>Rent-free accommodation for three days in a year excluding four days preceding <i>Mandala Pooja</i> and <i>Makaravilakku</i>.<sup>c</sup></p> <p>Facilities for convenient <i>darshan</i>.</p> <p><i>Prasadam</i> kit is inclusive of two cans (250 ml each) of <i>Aravana</i> and two packets of <i>Appam</i> for ten years.</p>
Rupees 20 lakhs	<p><i>Anna-daan</i> will be provided three times a day for three years in the name of the donor/nominee.</p> <p>Rent-free accommodation for two days in a year, excluding four days preceding <i>Mandala Pooja</i> and <i>Makaravilakku</i>, for ten years.</p> <p>Facilities for convenient <i>darshan</i>.</p> <p><i>Prasadam</i> kit is inclusive of two cans (250 ml each) of <i>Aravana</i> and two packets of <i>Appam</i> for ten years.</p>
Rupees 15 lakhs	<p><i>Anna-daan</i> will be provided <i>three times a day for two years</i> in the name of the donor/nominee.</p> <p>Rent-free accommodation for three days in a year excluding four days preceding <i>Mandala Pooja</i> and <i>Makaravilakku</i> for five years.</p> <p>Facilities for convenient <i>darshan</i>.</p> <p><i>Prasadam</i> kit is inclusive of two cans (250 ml each) of <i>Aravana</i> and two packets of <i>Appam</i> for ten years.</p>
Rupees 10 lakhs	<p><i>Anna-daan</i> will be provided <i>two times a day for two years</i> in the name of the donor/nominee</p> <p>Rent-free accommodation for two days in a year excluding four days preceding <i>Mandala Pooja</i> and <i>Makaravilakku</i> for five years.</p> <p>Facilities for convenient <i>darshan</i>.</p> <p><i>Prasadam</i> kit is inclusive of two cans (250 ml each) of <i>Aravana</i> and two packets of <i>Appam</i> for ten years.</p>
Rupees 5 lakhs	<p><i>Anna-daan</i> will be provided <i>two times a day in a year</i> in the name of the donor/nominee.</p> <p>Rent-free accommodation for one day in a year excluding four days preceding <i>Mandala Pooja</i> and <i>Makaravilakku</i> for two years.</p> <p>Facilities for convenient <i>darshan</i>.</p> <p><i>Prasadam</i> kit inclusive of two cans (250 ml each) of <i>Aravana</i> and two packets of <i>Appam</i> for ten years.</p>
Rupees 3 lakhs	<p><i>Anna-daan</i> will be provided <i>one time in a day for one year</i> in the name of the donor/nominee.</p> <p>Rent-free accommodation for one day in a year excluding four days preceding <i>Mandala Pooja</i> and <i>Makaravilakku</i> for one year.</p> <p>Facilities for convenient <i>darshan</i>.</p> <p><i>Prasadam</i> kit is inclusive of two cans (250 ml each) of <i>Aravana</i> and two packets of <i>Appam</i> for ten years.</p>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Torch lighted during the *Mandalakala* at *appachimedu* – a hill visible from Sabarimala.

<sup>b</sup> Sweet dish like Palani Panchamritham that is provided as *prasadam*.

<sup>c</sup> A kind of snack provided as *prasadam*.

**Investments:** The temple authorities have invested in the kitchen to gear it up to perform *anna-daan*. The kitchen has 10 rice boilers and 5 water boilers along with huge vessels, plates, glasses, trolleys (around 50), and *sambar* tanks (5). There are around 25 gas stoves, out of which 16 are currently used. Approximately 10 gas cylinders are used per day for preparing food. In addition, there are also water heaters and a dishwasher for vessels.

The new hall complex was built in 2015, while the old hall was converted into the *Appam*<sup>567</sup> and *Aravana*<sup>568</sup> sale counter. The new dining hall is equipped with CCTV cameras and is monitored by the police and temple authorities. The procurement of groceries is done by tendering like that for appointing the contract labourers.

To ensure financial accountability, an annual audit of accounts is carried out by the temple's chartered accountant. The temple board is subjected to the Right to Information (RTI) which ensures transparency.

### 31.2.7 Food safety

Proper monitoring and inspections are done by the temple authorities as well as the health department to ensure that the food served for *anna-daan* is of good quality. It is done at least once a week. There are no cold storage facilities available in the *sannidhanam*.

While cooking and serving, the cooks and other workers are mandated to wear caps, gloves, and uniforms. The vessels, plates, and other utensils are well sterilised before and after use.

### 31.2.8 Technology adoption in the kitchen

As stated earlier, the kitchen has boilers steamers, plate washing machines, CCTV, and an online payment facility. There are electric incinerators for waste management and disposal.

### 31.2.9 Waste management

The waste is collected three times a day and transported to the disposal area owned and operated by the temple. There the waste is segregated and disposed of using electric incinerators. The temple authority is in the process of setting up a biogas plant to reduce the usage of LPG. The plant is expected to be operational soon.

## Website referred

- 1 <http://travancoredevaswombboard.org> accessed on 25 August 2021

## Notes

- 535 Another name of Lord *Ayyappa*.
- 536 The male child born out of the union of *Mohini* (the female persona of Lord Vishnu) and Lord *Siva*.
- 537 Occasional *Puja* of *Sabarimala*.
- 538 Traditional fire in the forest during *Makara* festival.
- 539 Kerala new year.
- 540 Kerala calendar.
- 541 Traditional offering for Lord *Ayyappa*.
- 542 Lower river valley of the hill on which the temple is situated.
- 543 Holy river of Hindu religion originates from the Himalayas.
- 544 A holy place of Hindu religion.
- 545 Another name of Lord *Ayyappa*.
- 546 Holy incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*.
- 547 The festival of *Sabarimala*.
- 548 Friend of Lord *Ayyappa* who is a Muslim.

- 549 Lord of *anna-daan*.  
 550 Hall for *anna-daan*.  
 551 Season for which the temple opens for rituals. Sabarimala has a unique feature of closing the temple for most of the times in a year. The temple opens for first five days of every month and 64 days continuously for *Vrischika* (a Malayalam month) pooja.  
 552 *Aarthi* is a ritual of praying deity using fire.  
 553 Food offered to god.  
 554 Deity at Sabarimala.  
 555 Sanctum sanctorum, the innermost sanctuary of where the idol of the lord is placed.  
 556 *Mandapa* in Indian architecture, especially Hindu temple architecture, is a pillared hall or pavilion for public rituals.  
 557 *Upma* – is a dish originating from the Indian subcontinent, is a breakfast, cooked as a thick porridge from dry-roasted semolina or coarse rice flour.  
 558 *Chukkukappi* – a famous traditional healthy coffee of Kerala people made by brewing dry ginger with coffee powder.  
 559 Special variety of rice.  
 560 Dish made from mixing most of the vegetables with coconut.  
 561 A side dish made of a vegetable in Kerala; it can be any vegetable like carrot, beetroot, cabbage, etc.  
 562 Soup prepared with sweet-sour stock made from tamarind, lentils, added spices and garnish.  
 563 *Papadam* or *papad* is a thin, crisp disc-shaped food typically based on a seasoned dough usually made from peeled black gram flour (*urad* flour), fried or roasted.  
 564 A variety of red rice.  
 565 *Kanji* – a rice water-based dish.  
 566 Broken wheat.  
 567 *Appam* – tasty lacy soft hoppers made from a ground, fermented rice and coconut batter.  
 568 *Aravana* – prepared by using rice, *jaggery*, and ghee.

## Case study 32 Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Thiruvanthapuram, Kerala, India

Jyotish Vijayan\*

### 32.1 Introduction

The Padmanabhaswamy Temple is in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The temple is built in the Chera style combined with the Dravidian style of architecture with high walls, and the *gopura* is from the 16th century. The principal deity Padmanabhaswamy is the tutelary deity of the royal family of Travancore. The titular king of Travancore is the trustee of the Temple. The origin of the Temple of Sri Padmanabhaswamy is lost in antiquity. It is not possible to determine with any exactitude, from any reliable historical documents, or other sources when and by whom the original idol of Sri Padmanabhaswamy was consecrated. The temple has references to epics and *Puranas*.<sup>569</sup> *Srimad Bhagavatha*<sup>570</sup> says that Balarama<sup>571</sup> visited this temple, bathed in Padmatheertham,<sup>572</sup> and made several offerings. Nammalwar, the 9th-century poet, composed ten hymns in praise of Lord Padmanabha. Some well-known scholars, writers, and historians, like the late Dr. L.A. Ravi Varma of Travancore, have expressed the view that this temple was established on the first day of *Kali Yuga* (which is over 5,000 years ago). The legends of the temple were handed down through the centuries.

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## 32.2 Anna-daan at Anantha Padmanabhaswamy Temple

Serving food for the deity is an age-old tradition in almost all Hindu temples across India. The *anna-daan* started during the time of the kingship of Marthanda Verma<sup>573</sup> which was later stopped during the 20th century. The decision to restart *anna-daan* was taken into consideration in 2005 and was started in 2007 by the Travancore Devaswom Board as a charity for all the devotees who visit the temple. Though the reason to start *anna-daan* was to continue the historical tradition, it has become a part and parcel of the routine rituals of the temple eventually. *Anna-daan* is active and practised every day round the year.

### 32.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

The spiritual component of *anna-daan* includes people's beliefs that providing *anna-daan* is an auspicious service which brings good luck. The main reason behind the service is that the vow is to be fulfilled; the people who are fed bless the donors with good health and prosperity. People also experience a feeling of positivity as they donate food to the needy and hungry.

The offerings to the god, called *Nedya* in Kerala, are considered divine. *Anna-daan* service is the *Nedya* for the deity, Padmanabha, which is served for the devotees. The rituals of offering prayers before cooking, placing flowers, and performing *arathi* before cooking are followed meticulously. After cooking, *prasadam* is served to the deity before serving to the devotees. The temple management authority attempts to make people understand the significance of *anna-daan* and the spirit behind it through display boards which have been put up on the temple premises.

### 32.2.2 Dining hall

The food is served in the temple's *Kalyana Mandapa*<sup>574</sup> built in 1991 specifically to serve the food. Tables and chairs are arranged to sit comfortably and eat. Steel plates and glasses are used for serving. Banana leaves are also used during festive seasons like *Onam*, etc. The dining hall or the *Kalyana Mandapa* can accommodate 300 people for a single turn of a meal. It is equipped with a generator. The kitchen has modern cooking machines to cater to 3,000 people at a time. A queue system is followed which is taken care of by the police and temple officials.

Table II.32.1 Dining hall details

Details	
Number of dining halls	One
Number of people it can accommodate	200
<b>Seating</b>	
Ground	No
Dining table	Yes
Served in	Plates/banyan leaves
Management of crowd	Queue system
Cleaning: number of times	After every round

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 32.2.3 Serving anna

*Anna-daan* has been organised every day since 2006–07 for 400 to 500 devotees per day. During peak season, it increases to 6,000 per day. Food is served between 11:30 am to 3:00 pm two to three times a day. During the peak season, food is served around seven to eight times a day. During peak season, food is served in the nearby auditorium owned by the temple. About 75 kg of rice are used during the normal season and 900 kg during special occasions. Lunch includes food items such as rice, *dal*, *sambar*, vegetable curry, buttermilk, *rasam*, and sweets. Leftover food is used for the preparation of lemon rice, *sambar* rice, tamarind rice, or, curd rice in the evening and distributed to devotees and the public outside the temple. Certified chefs are employed by the temple authorities to maintain the quality of food.

It is interesting to know that the spice powder that is used in the temple is handmade by the temple employees. The temple authority procures the raw materials required from the local markets and prepares the spices powder as they need to give the devotees the real flavour of traditional Kerala meals. This is a unique feature of Padmanabha Temple that makes the *anna-daan* more special.

The quantity of food served is unlimited. *Anna-daan* is managed by the temple authorities and the *prasadam* is given on a first-come, first-served basis.

#### 32.2.3.1 ANNA PREPARATION TIME

The preparation of food takes 3 hours to prepare; the serving time is around 10 minutes; cleaning takes another 10 minutes. So, the total time taken to get one batch through (including serving, cleaning, and eating) is 20 to 25 minutes.

### 32.2.4 Human resources

On regular days, there are around 15 staff employed by the temple authority to manage the process of cooking, serving, and cleaning the premises. During special occasions, the temple authorities depute around 50 staff to manage the increased load of work. Also, volunteers are engaged in various stages such as cleaning and cutting vegetables, serving food, cleaning the dining hall, utensils, etc. Regular temple staff works for eight hours a day during the normal period; they work for 10 hours on special days. They have one day off per week.

Table II.32.2 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid staff (temple staff)	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	1	1	8	10	1	1
Cooks	2	4	8–9	24/7	1	NA
Cleaners	4	10–15	5–6	10–12	NA	NA
Servers	8	20–30	3–4	6–7	NA	NA

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Apart from the temple staff and volunteers involved in the process of *anna-daan*, other religious and social leaders are also motivated to participate in *anna-daan*.

### 32.2.5 Temple administration board

The temple was the property of the Travancore maharaja, and there was a clash between the government and the palace regarding the administration of the temple. In 2020, the Supreme Court gave its verdict in favour of the palace and instructed the palace to work with an administrative body comprising a chairperson, an EO, a member-secretary, and four board members. It is a decision-making body about temple management and administration. Concerning *anna-daan*, the manager is the decision-making authority for routine chores, while major decisions are taken by the board members.

### 32.2.6 Financial accountability

The accounts section keeps track of funds collected for *anna-daan* and expenses incurred. The annual audit of accounts is carried out by chartered accountants. The financial records are monitored by the administrative board annually to keep the financial activities transparent.

### 32.2.7 Quality assurance monitoring

Efforts are made by the temple authorities to ensure the quality of raw materials supplied at various stages of the process – including procurement, storage, handling, preservation, cooking, and serving. Quality control measures in FSSA 2006 are strictly followed. Safety protocols are observed while cooking and serving such as sanitisation before cutting the vegetables, sterilisation of cooking vessels, employing quality officers in the kitchen to monitor the quality of cooked food, and regular personal hygiene and food safety training to kitchen staff, etc. Vessels are washed with hot water to ensure complete hygiene and safety.

### 32.2.8 Usage of technology

Technology has played a major role in the smooth functioning of *anna-daan*. The usage of several technically advanced machines is seen in the kitchen and the dining hall. For cooking, steam boilers are used. Usage of insulated vessels and surgical steel vessels are used to keep the food hot and hygienic. CCTVs are installed in the dining halls. Announcements are made regularly for the devotees to come in an organised manner to have food. Instructions have to be followed to keep the premises clean and hygienic and avoid wastage of food.

### 32.2.9 Waste management

Waste produced in the temple is segregated into wet and dry waste. It is handed over to the city corporation for disposal. There is no facility for the dumping and composting of the waste within the temple premises.

## Notes

569 Puranas – Hindu religious texts.

570 Srimad Bhagavatha – revered text in Vaishnavism, a Hindu tradition that reveres Lord Vishnu.

571 Balarama – Hindu god and the elder brother of Krishna.

572 Padmatheertham – the sacred pond associated with the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple.

573 Marathwada Verma (1706–58) is considered the founder of the kingdom of Travancore.

574 Kalyana mandapa – a *mandapa* dedicated to divine marriage.

## Case study 33 Thiruvambadi Sri Krishna Temple, Thrissur, Kerala, India

Jyothish Vijayan\*

### 33.1 Introduction

Thiruvambadi Krishna Temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna and Devi Vishnumaya, is located at Thrissur, Kerala, South India. Though small in stature in its physical appearance, the temple is highly significant as a Mahakshethra due to its extensive rites of worship and holds the distinction of being the only temple in Thrissur with a gold-covered flag-mast and organising the highest number of festivals and auspicious days among all the temples in Kerala. The main deity at Thiruvambady is Unnikrishna (Lord Krishna in infant form). Thrissur Pooram is one of the special occasions celebrated in the temple. It is the most colourful festival that starts with a ceremonial procession of fully caparisoned elephants, choicest percussion ensembles like *Panchavadyam*<sup>575</sup> and *Pandimelom*,<sup>576</sup> and climaxing with a colourful display of fireworks. Year-round activities of divine worship are aimed at providing a spiritual avenue for peace and tranquillity for thousands of devotees.

### 33.2 Anna-daan at Thiruvambadi Temple

*Anna-daan* has a long history of the evolution of traditions as seen in its current form. However, *anna-daan* to all devotees was initiated in 2009. From the very beginning of the temple, there was a traditional ritual called *Nedyam* for the deity – that is, presenting a freshly cooked meal ‘*Sadham*’. To cook the meal, there was a traditional kitchen associated with the temple called the *oottupura*. Conventionally, the cooked food, after an offering to the lord, was distributed to the devotees. Later, the temple authority started the tradition of cooking food for the Brahmins, the priests of the temple, which was gradually developed to be a tradition called ‘*Kalaichoottu*’. Later, the tradition of offering food was extended to non-Brahmins. *Anna-daan* encompassing all devotees was started as recently as 2009. People perform *anna-daan* as a part of their offerings to god for various reasons. Usually, people involve themselves in the process by financing, volunteering for cooking, cleaning, etc. People believe that performing *anna-daan* brings them good luck and positive feelings. It is a tradition to perform prayers before cooking at the *oottupura*.

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### 33.2.1 Number of devotees served

The number of people served daily is around 100. However, during other auspicious days, the number of people visiting the temple increases to nearly 5,000 per day. During such days, it is difficult for the temple *ottupura* to manage the crowd. As a result, *anna-daan* is held in three different temple-owned auditoriums located nearby. Each auditorium has the capacity of accommodating 300–500 people at a time. During such occasions, the crowd is managed by the auditorium staff and security staff.

Table II.33.1 Dining hall details

Details	
Number of dining halls	<i>Ottupura</i> and auditorium on the auspicious occasion
Number of people it can accommodate	25 per batch in <i>ottupura</i>
<b>Seating</b>	
Dining table	Yes
Served in	Steel plates
Management of crowd	Not crowded on normal days. Only during auspicious days
Cleaning: Number of times	Every day and after every round

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.33.2 Number of times, number of people, and volume of food served per day

Meals	Timings	Number of times	
		Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	Nil	Nil	Nil
Lunch	11:30 am to 2 pm	100	5,000
Dinner	Nil	Nil	Nil

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

During regular days, lunch is served from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm and for at least five batches, whereas on special occasions, the number of times reaches 20. During festivals like *Ekadashi*<sup>577</sup> and *Sangeethotsavam*,<sup>578</sup> breakfast is served for four to five days for the performers involved in the celebrations. The timing of the *anna-daan* is displayed on the notice board, along with the name of the sponsors.

### 33.2.2 Food items served and time taken for preparation

The food items served are plain rice, *sambar*,<sup>579</sup> vegetable curry, buttermilk and *rasam*,<sup>580</sup> *payasam*,<sup>581</sup> *papad*,<sup>582</sup> and pickle. The devotees can eat the sumptuous meal as much as they want to. Only one sweet per person is allowed.

The time it takes to prepare breakfast is around 1.5 hours, and for lunch, it is approximately 3 hours. Serving time is approximately 15 minutes, while cleaning takes 10 minutes. Hence the total time taken for the completion of one round of serving is around



25 to 30 minutes. The temple staff and volunteers clean the dining hall each time a batch is through with eating.

Table II.33.3 Cooking and serving time

<i>Time taken for cooking</i>	
Breakfast	1.5 hours
Lunch	3 hours
Serving time per batch	15 minutes
Cleaning time	10 minutes
<b>Total time for one batch to complete – serving, dining, and cleaning</b>	<b>25–30 minutes max</b>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 33.2.3 Human resources

Since the traditional way of *oottupura* is followed in the temple, the overall management in charge is called *Karyakar*. The *Karyakar* has traditionally been in charge of managing the daily routines of the temple, including *anna-daan*, till date. Along with *Karyakar*, the decisions are taken by the *Devaswom* committee of 19 members, including the president and secretary. The *oottupura* consists of two permanent employees: one cook and an assistant to help him and to clean the premises. The cook works from 10 am to 2 pm, and the other staff members work till 4 pm. During the festive season, they work around the clock for four to five days, along with the temporary staff assigned by the temple *Devaswom*.<sup>583</sup> The details are given in Table II.33.4.

Table II.33.4 People involved in *anna-daan*

<i>Staff</i>	<i>Number of people</i>		<i>Hours of work</i>	
	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
<i>Temple staff</i>				
Cooks	1	10	4	Around the clock
Cleaners	1	5	5	Around the clock
Serving	—	25	—	4
Watchman	2	2	12	12
<b>Volunteers</b>				
Cutting vegetables	—	10	—	3 to 4

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 33.2.4 Management

Regular administration is carried out by the temple board, which is under the *Devasom*.<sup>584</sup> The board is elected by the trustees of the *Devasom* every 3 years and consists of 19

members with a president, vice president, secretary, and joint secretary. All decisions regarding the temple are taken by consensus, adhering to majority votes.

### 33.2.5 Finances

The annual budget required for performing regular *anna-daan* only on normal days is estimated to be approximately Rs. 1.0 million per day, whereas on special occasions it is about Rs. 1.25 million per day. There are various ways of funding *anna-daan* activities: the first being the interest on the endowment fund, the second funding from Devasom, and lastly, donations or offerings from the devotees. There is no corpus fund maintained to conduct *anna-daan*. Since these funds are received on a non-regular basis, it makes the process of accounting cumbersome.

#### 33.2.5.1 INVESTMENT COST

Since the *oottupura* was traditionally developed among other temples in Kerala, many of the utensils and other items were antiques, and most of them were donated by the rulers, *diwans*,<sup>585</sup> and elite classes. There are around 1,500 plates and 3,000 glasses with an investment of Rs. 0.75 million, 5 trolleys, 20 tables, 60 chairs, and 3 gas stoves. The temple authorities spend Rs. 0.25 million per month on the salaries of the *anna-daan* staff and another 0.05 million per month on fuel for cooking food. The temple's chartered accountant conducts an annual audit of accounts. The accounts are monitored by the board also.

### 33.2.6 Quality of raw materials

Efforts are made for the procurement of good quality raw materials used for the preparation of food. The selection of suppliers is made by the temple authorities and the raw materials procured are required to comply with the relevant specifications adapted from the FSSA 2006. Vegetables are washed using normal salted water, and cooking vessels are sterilised before use. Also, personal hygiene and food safety training is given to the kitchen staff regularly. The kitchen staff wears caps and gloves while preparing and serving the food.

### 33.2.7 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The temple authorities have made use of technology to facilitate online booking for *darshan* for the devotees. This helps the kitchen management to plan for the volume of food to be prepared. The temple authority updates the temple website regularly to provide necessary information to the public.

### 33.2.8 Waste management

Food leftovers are very rare in the temple. Organic waste generated from vegetable peels, fruits, etc., is used for generating compost, which is used in farmlands.

### 33.2.9 Key issues/requests

One of the main issues was the shortage of funds for performing *anna-daan*.

## Notes

- 575 An orchestra of five instruments, basically a temple art form that has evolved in Kerala.
- 576 Is a classical percussion concert or *melam* (ensemble) led by the ethnic Kerala instrument called the *chenda*.
- 577 It is the 11th lunar day (*tithi*) of each of the two lunar phases.
- 578 An annual Carnatic music festival held in the temple.
- 579 It is a lentil-based vegetable curry.
- 580 It is a light and subtle-flavored dish prepared from white gourd or ash-gourd and black-eyed peas.
- 581 Traditional sweet served along with meals.
- 582 It is a thin Indian wafer, sometimes described as a cracker, usually made from dried lentils and eaten fried or roasted.
- 583 *Devaswom* (*Belonging to the God*) are socio-religious trusts in India that comprise members nominated by both government and community. Hindu temples and their assets and to ensure their smooth operation in accordance with traditional rituals and customs.
- 584 Are socio-religious trusts in India that comprise members nominated by both government and community.
- 585 Socio-religious trusts in India that comprise members nominated by both government and community.

## Case study 34 Sri Balaji Mandir, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India

M. V. Lavanya\*

### 34.1 Introduction

Sri Balaji Mandir, situated in the Gwalior district of Madhya Pradesh, India, was inaugurated on 7 May 1990. This is a community complex where many deities are installed in one place. Here we come across Sri Ayyappa<sup>586</sup> (Murugan) Temple, Sri Hanuman<sup>587</sup> Temple, Sri Ram-Sita<sup>588</sup> Temple, gurdwara,<sup>589</sup> masjid,<sup>590</sup> church, and many more. These temples, masjids, and churches are built by Indian Air Force employees with the help of local citizens. As many communities come together to serve our nation, the temple complex is a unique example symbolising diversity in one place. Indian Air Force provided the land for all these community developments.

**Special occasions:** This temple celebrates a three-day festival in April every year. The festival starts on the fourth Friday and continues up to Sunday. Devotees gather in huge numbers to celebrate this occasion. The temple celebrates another important annual festival called *Brahmotsavam*.<sup>591</sup>

### 34.2 Anna-daan at Balaji Mandir

Historically, if we observe all the communities in India, providing food to the devotees is referred to as auspicious, as it is believed that the lord himself comes disguised as a devotee to have the offerings made by the people.

Usually, most temples or pilgrim centres are in remote places or high altitudes requiring intense travelling or walking. By the time the devotees reach the pilgrim centre, they

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are exhausted physically, mentally, and financially. So, to provide some relief to the devotees, the centres provide food and accommodation for free or at minimal charges.

*Anna-daan* was started at 199 centres of the Indian Air Force (for Telugu employees). *Pooja* without *anna-daan* is believed to be incomplete. The temple is open throughout the year. Every Saturday dinner is served in the form of *prasadam* to devotees, and lunch is served on Sundays. All Air Force employees gather in temples from a cultural and spiritual perspective.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the temple provided food packets twice a week to about 150 poor people and construction labourers. The packets consisted of *samosas*,<sup>592</sup> *puliyogre*,<sup>593</sup> and water.

### 34.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

*Anna-daan* was started with the philanthropic objective of helping the devotees, the poor, and the needy. It is believed that helping the needy brings good luck to those involved in this good deed. And the spiritual reason behind *anna-daana* is to please the deity and get his blessings. By performing such an auspicious deed, trust is built between the temple and devotees by bringing harmony and preserving faith in the lord.

### 34.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Prayers are performed before cooking, and the priest chants *Vishnu Sahasranamam*.<sup>594</sup> After cooking, the food is offered to the deity as *naivedyam*<sup>595</sup> before it is consumed by others. People accept the food as god's *prasadam*,<sup>596</sup> and gratitude is shown by doing *pranam*<sup>597</sup> at the first morsel. All are advised not to waste food.

The temple management makes people understand the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* and has placed placards in the temple dining hall telling people that *Food offered here is equivalent to prasad*. Announcements are also made to *Get served only as per your need and hunger. Don't waste food as it is disrespectful*.

### 34.2.3 Number of devotees served

On normal days, food is served to 100–150 people, and during peak season, it is up to 600 people. On Saturdays, approximately 70–100 people are served during the normal season and up to 500 during the peak season. Annually, close to 5,500 to 6,000 people receive *anna-daan* at this temple. The *prasadam* is served twice a week – that is, every Saturday and Sunday. The food is served around 7:30 pm and continues till 9:00 pm or until the last devotee is served.

Table II.34.1 Number of times, people, and volume of food served per day

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
<b>Lunch every Sundays</b>	1:00 pm	3	Varies	100–140	300–600
<b>Dinner every Saturdays</b>	9:00 pm	3	Varies	70–100	400–500

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The temple has one dining hall. Another hall at the gurdwara (which is within the temple premises) is used if the temple dining hall (with a capacity of around 300 people at a time) is unable to serve all the devotees. Devotees sit on the ground, and food is served on banana leaves. A queue system is followed to manage the crowd. The hall is cleaned after every batch.

#### 34.2.4 Quantity of food preparations and items served

The menu for *anna-daan* is plain rice, spicy mixed rice, *sambar*,<sup>598</sup> and *laddoo*.<sup>599</sup> The menu remains the same during the normal season and peak season. Only the quantity of food varies as the number of visitors to the temple increases.

Table II.34.2 Total volume of food served

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	25 kg	100 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	30 kg	1,100 kg
<i>Sambar</i> <sup>b</sup>	30 L	1,200 L
<i>Laddoo</i>	100 pieces	500 pieces

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> *Puliyogare*, vegetable *bhaat*, ghee rice, *bisibele bhaat*, *pongali*, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Stew with lentils, vegetables, and spices.

Table II.34.3 Quantity of food served per meal (in grams)

Lunch	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	250	250
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	300	300
<i>Poori</i>	30	30
<i>Daal</i>	30	30
<i>Laddoo</i>	200	200
Vegetable curry	100	100
<b>Dinner</b>		
Plain rice	250	250
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	300	300
<i>Dal</i>	30	30
<i>Laddu</i> (sweet)	200	200
<i>Poori</i> (Indian bread)	30	30
Vegetable curry	100	100

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> *Puliyogare*, vegetable *bhaat*, ghee rice, *bisibele bhaat*, *pongali*, etc.

The monthly requirement of groceries and daily vegetables are handled by the head cook and kitchen volunteers, and accountability is maintained by the trust member in charge of the kitchen.

### 34.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The cooks begin the routine of cooking at 6 am and take around 3 hours each to prepare lunch and dinner. Volunteers help the kitchen staff in chopping and cleaning vegetables, groceries, and fruits. Every batch takes around 30–45 minutes to serve and to eat. Approximately, 10–15 minutes are taken to clean the dining hall after each batch.

### 34.2.6 Nutrition

The temple food has fresh ingredients and is thus filled with nutrition. It is a complete meal fortified with proteins, carbohydrates, minerals, etc. The quality of the groceries is not compromised. Only fresh food which is prepared that day is served and not the left-over or preserved food. Even the leftover oil/ghee is not reused.

### 34.2.7 Human resources

The temple has a regular working staff which varies in number during the normal and peak season. A total of 13 people are involved in *anna-daan* during the normal season, which includes quality control managers, cooks, cleaners, and watchmen. During the peak season, the staff increases to 25 members due to an increase in the number of devotees. The temple also has volunteers for specific work (Table II.34.4).

Table II.34.4 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid staff (temple staff)	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Quality control manager	1	2	1	2	1	1
Cooks	8	15	4	10	2	1
Cleaners	2	4	4	6	1	1
Servers						
Watchman	2	4	8	12	1	1
<b>Volunteers for specific purpose</b>						
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	10	20	4	8	1	1
Cleaning utensils	2	4	2	4	1	1
Cleaning dining hall	—	—	—	—	—	—
Serving people	5	10	4	6	1	1
Managing the crowd	2	6	2	5	1	1

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Volunteers procure vegetables and groceries from select merchants. They along with the kitchen staff prepare *prasadam* and food in *Madi*.<sup>600</sup>

Other people involved in *anna-daan* are religious leaders from the Tirupati Temple in Andhra Pradesh. Local social leaders and individuals who donate to temples and volunteers from the Air Force Station join hands with the temple authority on all the occasions of the temple.

### 34.2.8 Management

The temple administration board, set up in the year 1990, is the backbone of all the activities such as *pooja* at the shrine, maintenance of kitchen and dining hall, finance, and human resource. The board has 20 members, including the head priest.

The temple administration board is responsible for the procurement of raw materials, funding all temple activities (including those on special occasions), ensuring hygiene, etc. Before the formation of the temple administration trust four years back, the board used to be a society. The trust members collectively take decisions. The head priest assigns the routine of the day to the staff.

### 34.2.9 Finances

The temple gets most of its funds from donations. The temple trust records every transaction of the temple. An audit is done yearly by the chartered accountant.

### 34.2.10 Quality of raw material

The temple pays great attention to the quality of raw materials and the selection of suppliers. The kitchen is sanitised before food for each batch of devotees is prepared. All the vegetables and groceries are washed with warm water. Vessels and spoons are washed twice before they are used. There is a cold storage facility at the temple to preserve perishables and to keep them fresh. The head cook regularly inspects the cleanliness of the kitchen and the dining hall and the quality of cooked food by tasting it. He also ensures that food is served on schedule. Wearing gloves and caps is mandatory for the kitchen and serving staff. Volunteers are trained by the temple board in food safety and waste disposal.

### 34.2.11 Technology in the kitchen

Steam boilers are used for cooking, which helps speed up the process of cooking. The food prepared is stored in insulated vessels and casseroles. RO water is supplied by the Air Force Station as of now, but there are plans to install RO plants at the temple. The temple harvests rainwater. The water thus collected is used for cleaning and gardening purposes.

Social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are used extensively for organising people. On-demand from the devotees, the temple introduced online *darshan*<sup>601</sup> during the COVID-19 pandemic to contain the spread of the disease. The temple does not have CCTVs as of now but soon plans to install them in the dining hall and the kitchen. The watchmen and representatives oversee managing the crowd. Intercoms are used to make announcements on the temple premises.

### 34.2.12 Waste management

The quantity of wet waste and dry waste produced daily is 30 kg and 40 kg, respectively. Cleaners segregate them in bins. The wastes are collected from the temple every day for treatment at a facility of the Air Force station. The wet waste is used as compost in the garden.

### 34.2.13 Key issues

As a result of the low turnout of the devotees at the temple during the pandemic, donations have been less. It has impacted the *anna-daan* activities. To pare down the costs, the temple has been withdrawing some of the dishes or reducing the quantity served at *anna-daan*. People waste food despite announcements. The sanctity of the temple is sometimes compromised due to noise made by the pilgrims. Managing the supply chain also becomes difficult during the festive seasons.

### Notes

586 A Hindu deity, also known as *Manikanta*.

587 A Hindu god.

588 A Hindu deity and an incarnation of *Vishnu* and *Lakshmi*.

589 A Sikh place of worship.

590 A Muslim place of worship, also called mosque.

591 A festival to commemorate an offering by Lord *Bramha* to Lord *Vishnu*.

592 A triangular savoury pastry fried in ghee or oil containing spiced vegetables.

593 Tamarind rice.

594 Sanskrit hymn which contains a list of 1,000 names of *Vishnu*.

595 Food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual before eating it.

596 A religious offering in both Hinduism and Sikhism by worshippers after worship.

597 A respectful greeting made by putting one's palms together and often touching the feet of the person greeted.

598 A lentil-based vegetable curry, cooked with pigeon pea and tamarind broth.

599 A sphere-shaped sweet.

600 It indicates that a person is bodily pure.

601 It is the auspicious sight of a deity.

## Case study 35 Sri Saibaba Temple, Shirdi, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India

M. S. Umesh Babu\*

### 35.1 Introduction

Sri Saibaba Samadhi<sup>602</sup> Temple is in the Shirdi town of Rahata Taluka of the Ahmednagar district, Maharashtra state, India. Sri Saibaba is a *fakir*<sup>603</sup> and spiritual leader and is dear to both Muslim and Hindu devotees. The name Sai Baba comes from *sai*, a Persian word used by Muslims to denote a holy person, and *baba*, a Hindi word for father.<sup>604</sup> Sri Saibaba's birth is unknown, but his birth year is assumed to be 1838. He reached Shirdi at the age of around 16<sup>605</sup> and stayed there for more than 60 years until his death in 1918. He took his *maha-samadhi*<sup>606</sup> at Shirdi where the present temple is located.

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### 35.2 Anna-daan at Sri Saibaba Samadhi Temple

The Shirdi Saibaba Sansthan Trust looks after the management of the temple, including *anna-daan*. The trust has launched a ‘Nitya Annadaanam Padhakam’ (Everyday Food Programme)<sup>607</sup> to provide free food to all the devotees. Giving food to the deprived and hungry is one of the preachings of Sri Sai Baba to all his devotees. Respecting the *guru*’s message, the Shirdi Sai Baba Sansthan Trust is promoting food charity at the temple. Further, it supplies free food to Sri Sai old-age homes, schools, and hospitals. Under this programme, breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided to approximately 40,000 devotees daily.

Earlier, Sri Saibaba used to visit the nearby houses for *bhiksa* (begging). After collecting food, he kept it in *kolamba* (a stone pot) outside the masjid<sup>608</sup> for insects, birds, and animals to eat first. He ate what was left of it.<sup>609</sup> Later, he would purchase cereals and pulses to prepare food for his devotees. The food was cooked in *chuli*<sup>610</sup> and offered to *Allah* first and then served to his devotees. Sri Saibaba used to grind wheat himself through *Jata*<sup>611</sup> thereby conveying a message that the seed of *karma*<sup>612</sup> when crushed and transformed to flour destroys the consequences of all good and evil deeds and liberates the soul from the cycle of *karma*.<sup>613</sup> He used to cook *khichdi*<sup>614</sup> and sweets in copper pots to serve to his devotees. The same tradition is continued to this day. Presently, Shirdi Saibaba Sansthan Trust manages *anna-daan* for all the devotees.

#### 35.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

Sri Saibaba was always a servant to his followers or devotees in terms of *anna-daan*. One of the preachings of Sri Sai Baba is to feed the deprived and hungry. *Anna-daan* was initiated at the temple in honour of this preaching. He himself cooked and served food to the hungry and deprived people who were visiting him. He used to say to his devotees, *Whoever asks for food please provide them. Also, before having, you should serve food to the poor and helpless around you including your relatives*. His spiritual motivation is continuing even to this day.

#### 35.2.2 Rituals and prayers

The food cooked in the temple is offered to Sri Sai Baba, and then to the devotees. No one tastes or eats the food while it is being cooked and before offering it to the deity. Temple authorities give instructions to the devotees not to waste food.

#### 35.2.3 Number of devotees served

Every day around 40,000 people are served food at the temple. This includes devotees visiting the temple, people residing in old-age homes (500 people), hospitals (300–500), Sri Saibaba Yatri Niwas<sup>615</sup> (500 people), homeless, deprived residing next to the temple, and others. In the festival season like *Purnima*,<sup>616</sup> *Dussera*,<sup>617</sup> *Diwali*,<sup>618</sup> and *Ganesh Chaturti*,<sup>619</sup> the number of devotees goes up to 90,000 to 1,00,000. During the weekends, the number of devotees touches 50,000 to 55,000. The temple serves three major meals every day. Food is served in the dining hall named Sri Sai Prasadalay,<sup>620</sup> which has a capacity of 5,500 people. Prasadalay has steel tables and chairs in rows. Each batch takes around 20–25 minutes during normal days; it reduces to 15 minutes in festive seasons so that a huge crowd could be served in a limited time. Every day, *anna-daan* starts at 10:00 am and ends at 10:00 pm. The maximum number of people opt for lunch served between 12:00 pm and 4:00 pm. Nearly 1,500 people queue up for breakfast (7 am to 10 am every day).

### 35.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

Vegetarian food is served at the temple, and the main course for lunch and dinner includes steamed rice, *chapati/roti*,<sup>621</sup> *dal*,<sup>622</sup> and vegetable curry (two types). Sometimes or on special days, *kheer*<sup>623</sup>/sweet is served along with the main course. Different types of vegetables are served regularly. Breakfast items include *idli*,<sup>624</sup> *wada*,<sup>625</sup> *upma*,<sup>626</sup> biscuits, bread, coffee, and tea. Temple authorities themselves prepare wheat flour and spices (*masala*<sup>627</sup>) required for cooking.

Table II.35.1 Quantity of food items prepared on normal and special days

Food items	Quantity (kilograms)	
	Normal days	Special occasions
Rice	3,000	5,500
Wheat flour	5,000	9,000
Dal	1,200	2,500
Vegetables	750	1,700

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 35.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

Temple authorities ensure that *anna-daan* is conducted properly. They monitor the items used in cooking and the quantity of food prepared per day. Authorities assess the inflow of devotees on a day-to-day basis and suggest the quantity of food to be prepared accordingly. Cooks keep the ingredients and other raw materials ready for immediate cooking of additional food if required. The temple management is keen that no one should go back from the temple hungry. Food is free and devotees can have as much as they want.

### 35.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The Sri Sai Prasadalay kitchen is equipped with modern equipment like a rice boiler, automatic *chapati* maker, and big vessels for preparing *dal* and vegetables. Due to these facilities, the preparation of food takes minimum time. Rice takes roughly 20 minutes; the *chapati*-making machine rolls out 2,000 *chapati* per hour. *Dal* preparation takes 35–50 minutes, and vegetable curries take 30 minutes. Overall, 2–3 hours are required to get the food ready. Breakfast preparation takes roughly 1 hour.

### 35.2.7 Nutrition

Changing varieties of *dal* and vegetables every day ensures that the nutrition level is maintained in every meal. Moreover, they also use good quality rice and wheat flour for preparing steam rice and *chapatis*. In addition, cooks themselves prepare wheat flour and other *masala* (spice powders) items required for preparing the dishes. Hence, quality and nutrition are maintained all the time. Apart from that, great attention is given to the quality and nutrition of vegetables, pulses, and cereals purchased from the local market. Some vegetables are grown in temple-owned fields, which are substituted for the vegetable items required for preparing the meal.

### 35.2.8 Human resources

Since a large amount of food is to be prepared for *anna-daan*, around ten cooks work in two shifts every day. In addition, around 100 people are involved in cutting vegetables, grinding, and mincing activities. The first shift's duration is from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm, and the second is also for 8 hours, from 3:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Around 200 people are involved in cleaning the dining hall, washing utensils, dumping waste, and managing crowds at the gates and halls. Overall, around 400 staff, including management, are involved in *anna-daan* every day. In addition, volunteers also take part in the kitchen, while serving food and cleaning utensils, etc.

Table II.35.2 Human resources

Temple staff	Number of persons
Cooks	10
Helping staff	100
Cleaning staff	200

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 35.2.9 Management

The Executive Committee and Shirdi Saibaba Sansthan Trust are the supreme authority for taking decisions regarding *anna-daan* and other activities related to the temple. The Executive Committee is headed by Sri B. Gangadhar, chairman, and other members. The Executive Committee and the trust decide on the food to be cooked and the procurement of groceries. In addition, they maintain the fund collection and expenditures as well.

### 35.2.10 Finances

All financial matters are monitored by the Executive Committee and trust. Temple receives donations from the government, the public, and devotees. Devotees can express their respects in the form of *anna-daan* in their name by donating the required funds to the temple. Around 1 million rupees is spent on *anna-daan* at the temple every day.

### 35.2.11 Quality of raw materials

Vegetables for the kitchen are generally procured from local markets through auction. Some vegetables are also grown on the agricultural land of the temple. Tenders are renewed every year for the purchase of groceries, spices, etc., at rates fixed by the respective department.

### 35.2.12 Food safety

Food is prepared as per standards prescribed by the government and trust. Supervisors monitor the food preparation and items served to devotees. Sri Sai Prasadalay is ISO 22000-2005 certified and is cleaned regularly before and after serving the food. All utensils and equipment used for cooking food are always maintained well throughout the year. Therefore, devotees have built trust in the Sri Sai baba *anna-daan* scheme at the temple.

### 35.2.13 *Technology adoption in the kitchen*

Sri Sai Prasadalay is equipped with most of the modern machines, including rice boilers, solar steam cooking, automatic *chapati* maker, and big capacity vessels for preparations of *dal* and vegetable curries. A vegetable chopper, onion and garlic peeler, flour-making unit, grinder, dishwasher, and wheeled trolleys for carrying food to serve the devotees are great help in the quick preparation and serving of food. In addition, an RO plant is installed to provide safe drinking water. Vegetables and other perishable items are kept in cold storage. Food and water are served on steel plates and cups. Apart from this, the dining hall has steel tables and chairs. Cooking is done on LPG and solar systems.

### 35.2.14 *Waste management*

Vegetable peels and residues are taken by local residents to feed their cattle, and the organic waste is used for composting in their own fields. Dry waste like plastic, paper, and inorganic materials are collected by municipal garbage collectors.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://www.sai.org.in/> accessed on 18 June 2021
- 2 <https://online.sai.org.in/#/login> accessed on 18 June 2021
- 3 <https://www.saisansthan.in/> accessed on 18 June 2021
- 4 <https://www.baba.org/annadanam---donations-1.html> accessed on 18 June 2021

### Notes

- 602 Sai Baba's remains were interred at Shirdi, which later became a place of worship.
- 603 Religious ascetic who lives solely on alms.
- 604 <https://www.britannica.com/print/article/1549220> accessed on 17.09.2021.
- 605 *Satcharita* Chapter 4, ovi 111/ <https://www.sai.org.in/en/history>.
- 606 Contemplation.
- 607 Source: <https://www.saisansthan.in/schemes.jsp> accessed on 16.09.2021.
- 608 A mosque is a place of worship for followers of Islam.
- 609 Source: <https://www.sai.org.in/en/history> accessed on 16.09.2021.
- 610 Traditional stove.
- 611 Hand mill – a pair of stone crushers used for grinding wheat
- 612 In Hinduism and Buddhism, the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences.
- 613 Source: <https://www.sai.org.in/en/history> accessed on 16.09.2021.
- 614 A dish prepared by mixing all food items like rice, *dal*, vegetables.
- 615 Devotees or tourist homes.
- 616 Guru's day.
- 617 Hindu festival.
- 618 Hindu festival.
- 619 Hindu festival.
- 620 Dining hall of temple.
- 621 Dish made from wheat flour.
- 622 Dish made from pulses.
- 623 Wet pudding.
- 624 Dish made from rice.
- 625 Dish made from mixture of ground pulses and Bengalgram flour.
- 626 Dish made from broken rice.
- 627 Is a blend of ground spices.

## Case study 36 International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Iskcon), Imphal, Manipur, India

Soumesh Ghosh\*, Paramita Roy† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 36.1 Introduction

Lord Krishna is the ultimate breath of *Baishnabas*, in the Hindu religion, where Lord Krishna is the extreme power among all Hindu deities. The centres of ISKCON preach the verse and thought of Lord Krishna under the concept of *Vaishnavism*<sup>628</sup> around the world. Thus, it is an international organisation that mainly focuses on the Hindu scriptures based on the mind of Sri Krishna. Imphal ISKCON is one of the centres of Krishna consciousness and reflects the supreme power from the serenity of the temple in Imphal. It is a place of peace; it is a place of the serene eternity of Krishna. The ISKCON Temple, also famous as Sri Sri Radha-Krishna Chandra Temple, has a peaceful resonance of *Hare Krishna Hare Ram*. It has immense importance in the context of Manipur as according to the 2011 census, 41.39% of people practise Hinduism. Thus, in a state like Manipur, Imphal not only holds the attraction of tourism but also is a beating heart of Manipuri Hinduism. This temple is situated near the bank of the river Imphal, and it has a natural lighting system that has the translucent image of the Sankirtan<sup>629</sup> area. During festivals such as *Janmashtami*, *Radhastami*, *Nityananda Troyodoshi*, *Ratha Yatra*, and other festivals,<sup>630</sup> the temple is beautifully decorated and illuminated with lights of different colours, attracting devotees in large numbers.

### 36.2 Anna-daan at ISKCON, Imphal

According to *Bhabisya Purana* Lord Krishna says, “One, who gives food, gives all that is worth giving in this world”. The ISKCON temple of Imphal has been practising the tradition of *anna-daan* for the past 41 years. The founder member of ISKCON Srila Prabhupada made food distribution mandatory in all ISKCON Temples as it is believed that providing food to people is like giving life to them. In the temple of Imphal, they also follow the ritual of *anna-daan*, which varies from time to time. When the donations are generous, they generally cook 15 items, depending upon the capacity.

The main objective of *anna-daan* at this temple is to popularise the ideas of *Sri Krishna*. So, mainly the vegetarian food that is offered to Krishna is distributed among all pilgrims. During the festive season, the devotees make special dishes for all. Over a period of time, this practice of charity became a tradition in all the temples of ISKCON in the country.

#### 36.2.1 Rituals and prayers

Before serving food to the devotees, it is first offered to Lord Krishna. They chant the mantra *Hare Krishna Hare Rama* while serving the food to the devotees. *Anna-daan* is

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practised in greater grandeur during the festive seasons. Food is served to all irrespective of caste, creed, gender, and class. It is also a part of the Hare Krishna movement with the objective of ensuring food for all. Mainly the tradition of distributing food is conducted in the *anna-daan* hall of the ISCKON Imphal Temple. Generally, after the morning *pooja* (prayers), lunch is served to the visitors in the hall. In the evening, *anna-daan* begins after the completion of *arti*<sup>631</sup> and offering the food to Lord Krishna. The blessings of Lord Krishna are accepted through this auspicious tradition. It can be viewed as a social and cultural ceremony accompanied by delicious food.

### 36.2.2 Number of devotees served

Food is served in the *anna-daan* hall, which has the capacity to hold more than 700 people at a time. On a regular day, a minimum of 200 pilgrims are served, and during the peak seasons like *Nityananda*, *Troyodoshi*, *Ratha yatra*, *Janmashtami*, and *Radhashtami*, more than 2,000 people are served *maha anna-daan* (special *anna-daan*). During the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in India, all programmes of *anna-daan seva* were halted. There are two systems of food distribution: one is dry *khichdi* (a dish prepared with lentils, rice, and spices) and another is rice with *sabjis* (vegetable curry). Generally, in normal times when someone offers *anna-daan*, they cook 15 items according to their capacity and mass. They manage this event very strategically, as lots of pilgrims come and relish the meals. Discussions with devotees revealed that the food served here is very delicious and tastier than other homemade or hotel or restaurant food. Many devotees completely indulge themselves in food serving and management. Nearly six to seven devotees are in the cooking hall performing the task of preparing food. The other devotees are involved in the part of serving. *Anna-daan* is managed by the management of ISKCON, Imphal.

Table II.36.1 Rituals related to *anna-daan*<sup>a</sup>

Festivals	Months	Number of devotees served (Approximate)
<i>Janmashtami</i>	June–July	3,000–5,000
<i>Radhashtami</i>	September	2,000–5,000
<i>Rathajatra</i>	June–July	2,000–4,000
<i>Govardhan pooja</i>	October	2,000–4,000
<i>Ram Navami</i>	March	2,000–5,000
<i>Gourapurnima</i>	March–April	2,000–4,000
<i>Narasimha chaturdashi</i>	May	2,000–4,000
<i>Balarama purnima</i>	August	2,000–5,000
<i>Jhulanjatra</i>	August	3,000–4,000
<i>Gita jayanti</i>	November	2,000–4,000
Normally (daily)	January–December	200–800

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Data from tripnetra.com.

Usually, ISKCON Imphal serves food at specific times during the day and during special *anna-daan*. Only lunch and dinner are provided; there is no breakfast.

Table II.36.2 Timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Timings	Menu
Lunch	10:30 am to 11:30 am	Mainly rice with vegetable curry, pulses, and sometimes a dry mixture of rice and lentils (Known as <i>khichdi</i> ) with kidney beans curry. (It depends on the situation.)
Dinner	6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	<i>Puri</i> , pudding sometimes rice, and vegetables

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 36.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Based on their experience, cooks determine the quantity of food to be cooked. They have their ingredients measurement method. Usually for measuring rice, they have *pipkins* (containers) which can contain 7 kg of rice. Four containers are generally used to cook the rice. Usually, they cook 28 kg of rice for 100 people. Generally, five to six kg of *dal* (pulses/lentils) and 15 to 18 kg of green vegetables are required for hundred people. Around 15 kg of wheat flour mixture is needed to make *puris* (a type of Indian bread) for 100 people. Different kinds of *halva* (sweet recipes) are prepared with a variety of ingredients.

Table II.36.3 Volume of ingredients

Items	Volume used per day/100 people (kg)
Rice	28–30
Moog dal (pulses)	5–6
Green vegetables	15–18
Potatoes	20

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

In this ISKCON Temple of Imphal, *anna-daan* is for lunch and dinner. Lunch is served around 10:30 am and dinner around 6 pm. A variety of delicious food items are served for lunch and dinner. Special dishes are prepared every Sunday. When there are more sponsors of *anna-daan*, as many as 15 items including rice, double-decker *pakoda*,<sup>632</sup> green gram (*mug dal*), green salad, and fried nuts mixed with other vegetables are cooked. Local vegetables like *Maroithongb*, *Utithongba*,<sup>633</sup> peas mixed with *Uti*, Paneer, etc., are also cooked on special occasions apart from festivals. On regular days, dry *khichdi*, kidney beans curry, or *puri* and vegetable curry or pudding and *puris*<sup>634</sup> are served alternatively. On certain days, milk is served to devotees at night. Thus, depending on the season, donation, and festival, the composition of *anna-daan* is planned. Based on their calculation of the food quantity required per hundred people and their estimate of the number of devotees who may visit the temple on any given day, the cooks prepare the food so that there is no wastage.

#### 36.2.4 Human resources

There are five cooks appointed for food management. They are experts in their field and are aware of the importance of nutrition. There are maids to keep the kitchen clean and hygienic and wash the dishes and utensils. In the peak season, since the number of devotees is more, they take the help of volunteers known to them to cope with the increased workload. There is no one officially appointed to inspect the food and its nutritional quality.

#### 36.2.5 Finances

Imphal ISKCON Temples mostly depend on institutional and individual donors. Mostly the privileged families make donations and contribute towards *anna-daan*. Besides, interest on corpus funds is used to meet certain expenses. Some families offer to cover the full expenses of *anna-daan*, and some donate some portion of the total expenditure. The temple has designed various schemes for donations, under which individuals, depending on their financial capacity, can sponsor specific ingredients, like rice or lentils or complete meals. Some families donate on special occasions and the anniversary of the temple. *Anna-daan* costs the temple approximately Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000 per day.

The authorities of the temple have made huge investments in kitchen and ancillary items for the proper conduct of *anna-daan*. In the kitchen, there are four containers for storing rice and other items, vessels to keep the cooked food, lots of plates, bowls, water containers, trolleys, gas stoves, and other nuanced things required for cooking.

To maintain and ensure transparency in its various activities, the accounts as well as the annual report of the Imphal temple are sent to ISKCON headquarters at Mayapur, West Bengal, for audit.

#### 36.2.6 Quality of raw materials

The five devotees who are responsible for cooking monitor the quality of food and maintain the cleanliness of the kitchen. It is the responsibility of the temple management to maintain and inspect the food quality from time to time. The vessels and plates are sterilised after serving. After *anna-daan* is done for the day, the place is cleaned by the cleaning staff.

#### 36.2.7 Technology adopted in the kitchen

Several new pieces of equipment are being used to make cooking less labour intensive. There are dishwashers to wash vessels and vacuum cleaners to clean up the premises. CCTV is used for surveillance and proper management of the crowd during the busy hours of the day.

#### 36.2.8 Waste management

Some local people collect waste from the temple and transport it to the disposal area in the city. Apart from that, some management staff of the temple are engaged in waste management. The temple also uses waste to make organic compost.



## Website referred

- 1 Imphal Sri Sri Radha Krishnacandra Temple | Sangaiprou Imphal ISKCON – Temples In India Info – Slokas, Mantras, Temples, Tourist Places.
- 2 Nitya anna dan- ISKCON Bangalore.

## Notes

- 628 *Vaishnavism* is centred on the devotion of Lord *Vishnu* and his avataars. Lord *Krishna* is an avatar of Lord *Vishnu*.
- 629 *Sankirtan* is a form of song or chanting performed in public settings to praises God.
- 630 Name of the festivals at ISKCON.
- 631 *Aarti* is a ritual of worship in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to the deity.
- 632 Double decker – *Pakoda* is a two-sided deep-fried item, stuffed with small pieces vegetables, such as potatoes and green peas. It is a south Asian dish.
- 633 *Utithongbais* a local vegetarian Manipuri dish.
- 634 *Puri* is a deep-fried bread made from wheat flour.

## Case study 37 Sri Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple, Pathankot, Punjab, India

M. V. Lavanya\*

### 37.1 Introduction

Mukteshwar Temple is a cave temple and a popular shrine of Lord Shiva. The mandir is located on the bank of the river Ravi, 22 km from Pathankot City, Punjab. It is one of the most sacred places around Pathankot.

These are 5,500-year-old caves, and the temple was built by the *Pandavas*<sup>635</sup> during their exile. According to Hindu mythology, these caves are as old as *Mahabharat*<sup>636</sup> and served as home for six months to the *Pandavas* during their *agyatvaas*<sup>637</sup> for rest and shelter.

#### Significance of the temple

This place is also known as mini Haridwar. Those who cannot perform the last rites of their kin do *Asthivisarjan*<sup>638</sup> at Haridwar. They disperse the ashes in the river Ravi near Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple.

#### Special occasions

There are huge gatherings and fairs every year during the celebrations of the Hindu festivals of *Mahashivarathri*,<sup>639</sup> *Chaitra Chaturdashi*,<sup>640</sup> *Baisakhi*,<sup>641</sup> and *Somvati Amavasya*<sup>642</sup> at the temple. On such holy occasions, a bath and prayer to Mahadev (Shiva) are considered pious parts of the journey to Haridwar. The *asthiyan* (ash remains) of the departed are also offered to a divinity in the waters here so that they

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can achieve the state of *nirvana*.<sup>643</sup> *Pind daan*<sup>644</sup> for the release of the ancestors is also performed here on *Baisakhi*.

### History of Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple

Mukteshwar Mahadev Dham was established by the legendary *Pandavas* during the 12th year of their exile, in the *Dwapar Yuga* (third of four *yugas* as per Hindu philosophy). During their journey, the *Pandavas* reached Mukteshwar Dham after praying to Goddess Chintpurni via *Dsuha*, District Hoshiarpur. They chose the peaceful and serene location of Mukteshwar Dham for their stay. It is believed that they stayed here for six months. After carving five caves to stay here, they reverently established the *Shiv ling* and prayed for Lord Shiva's boon for victory in a probable war in the future. Apart from this, they also enshrined a Holy Fire (*akand dhuna*) and a kitchen (*rasoi*). This kitchen is now known as Drapaudi's Kitchen. With the turning of the wheel of time, one of these caves has collapsed and is closed. Before the start of their period of *incognito* exile, the *Pandavas* crossed the river Ravi and entered the Kingdom of Virat whose capital is believed to be today's *Akhnoor* in Jammu and Kashmir. The vertical and horizontal lines which are visible on the idol at the temple are representative of blood veins and are a symbol of energy and strength.

## **37.2 Anna-daan Sri Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple**

In the northern part of India, *anna-daan* is referred to as *langar*, which is similar and as auspicious as *anna-daan* in the southern part of India. At this temple, *langar* was started in the year 2014. As the temple is in a hill station, food and other necessary items were difficult to arrange for the devotees and tourists. The *langar* was started to provide everyone food, irrespective of their caste, class, religion, and gender. Devotees visit the place with their families and friends for its beauty and serenity. To reach the temple, one must climb 256 steep steps. Upon reaching the temple, the devotees find it very welcoming and blissful to be served hot and delicious food by the temple. People express satisfaction with the quality of food and feel that *langar* is the only place where you can have quality food.

### *37.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan*

Before serving the food to devotees, *bhog (naivedyam)*<sup>645</sup> is offered to the deities at the temple, and an *arathi* is performed.

There are no such rituals other than doing *pranam*<sup>646</sup> to the food before consuming it. The temple management, through announcements via the intercom, advises devotees at *langar* not to waste food, as it is *prasad*.

### *37.2.2 Number of devotees served*

On normal days, around 400 to 500 devotees are provided food. On peak days, the devotees come in huge numbers, and their number may vary from 2,000 to 3,000. The *langar* is open from 9 am to 6 pm as devotees usually do not stay after 7 pm. Food is served throughout the day from morning till evening as devotees arrive. If the quantity of food is insufficient, additional food is cooked immediately so that nobody leaves hungry.

Table II.37.1 Number of times, number of people, and volume of food served per day

	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Food served	9 am–6 pm	It is a continuous process	It is a continuous process	400–500	2,000–3,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

There is one dining hall on the temple premises; it can accommodate 300 to 400 people at a time. People are seated in rows on the ground, and the food is served on plates. The token system is followed to manage the crowd. The dining hall is cleaned after each batch of devotees is through with eating.

Table II.37.2 Dining hall

Details	
Number of dining halls	1
Capacity	300–400 persons at a time
Seating	
Ground	People sit on the ground in rows
Served in	Plates
Management of crowd	No queue system/token system is followed. People sit in rows to eat.
Cleaning: Number of times	The dining hall is cleaned after each serving.

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 37.2.3 Quantity of food and items served

On special occasions like *Mahashivrathri*, *Somavati Amavasya*, and *Chaturthi*, they provide *kadi chawal*,<sup>647</sup> *rajma*,<sup>648</sup> *kheer*,<sup>649</sup> *poori*,<sup>650</sup> *halva*,<sup>651</sup> snacks, etc. As mentioned earlier, the temple facilitates the performance of rituals connected to the last rites of the deceased. Hence, items such as onions, garlic, *chana* (chickpeas), cumin seeds, black salt, black mustard, cucumbers, eggplant, and some kinds of lentils are not consumed as per the belief. The temple ensures that the *langar* is prepared without these items. The main food served here is *dal-chawal*.<sup>652</sup> The temple authorities are not able to quantify the amount of food cooked, as each devotee is served as much as he can eat.

Table II.37.3 Total volume of food served per day

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	1 quintal	8 quintals
Poori	—	15–20 quintals
Dal	50 kg	200 kg
Kheer	—	200 L
Vegetable curry	—	300 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 37.2.4 Accountability of prasadam

All the activities of *langar* are overseen by the chairman of the committee at the temple.

### 37.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The time taken to serve the food is around 10 minutes, and the total time taken to serve one batch is 35–40 minutes.

Table II.37.4 Cooking and serving time

Time taken for cooking (in hours)	3 hours
Time taken for serving	10 minutes
Serving time per batch (in minutes)	35–40 minutes
Time taken for cleaning	10 minutes
Total time to get one batch through (including serving, cleaning, and a new batch taking their place)	35–40 minutes

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 37.2.6 Nutrition

The nutritional content of the food served is given serious thought. Only fresh and quality ingredients are used. Devotees said that even though it was a holy place, they were appreciative of the efforts made by the temple authorities to serve them tasty and delicious food. The food served remains the same throughout the year except on special days.

*Bhandaar*<sup>653</sup> is the place where groceries like rice, cereals, oil, and ghee are stored. The menu is decided by the main cook. There are no refrigerators, as the weather is moderate or cold most of the time.

### 37.2.7 Human resources

There are seven people managing the *anna-daan* (Table II.37.5). The main cook starts cooking at seven in the morning, as the food is to be ready to serve by 9 am. During the cold months, the cooking starts at 8 am so that the food remains hot when the serving begins. The helpers serve the food to the devotees as and when they arrive; hence, the actual time taken cannot be calculated. The devotees can have as much food as they want. Devotees themselves clean the plates and spoons used by them. Cleaners clean the dining hall. Normally, the staff works for 8 hours a day; it can stretch to 12 hours on special occasions.

Table II.37.5 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid staff	Number of people		Hours of work	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	1	5	8	12
Cooks	1	10	8	12
Cleaners	2	8	8	12
Servers	3	13	8	12
Watchman		2		12

(Continued)

Table II.37.5 (Continued)

Regular paid staff	Number of people		Hours of work	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
<b>Volunteers for a specific purpose</b>				
Cleaning and cutting vegetables		10		8
Serving people		15		8
Managing the crowd		20		8

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

During the normal season, the temple manages its activities with the help of its employees, but during the peak season, they hire additional priests, cooks, cleaners, and watchmen. For other activities like managing the crowd and serving, 150 to 200 volunteers are taken. The volunteers are motivated by a sense of *seva* with *tan*, *man*, and *dhan* (work with total dedication) on these auspicious occasions.

### 37.2.8 Management

The governing body of the temple is the Jai Baba Mukteshwar Mahadev Parabandhak Committee. It was registered in the year 2006. It has 20 members, 7 of which are board members. Another committee called Baba Mukteshwar Dham Bachao Sewa Smiti was formed in 2014 to save the temple from a dam which, if constructed, would immerse the temple. The temple authorities have petitioned both the state and the central governments to protect the temple from the deluge by building a strong wall around it. So far both governments have been non-committal, even though Rs. 100 million (against an estimated cost of Rs. 3,500 million) has been sanctioned for the wall. The approval of the estimated cost is pending. Around 10,000 people have joined the save the temple movement.

Table II.37.6 Temple administration board

Details	
Year of constitution	2006
Total number of board members	20 members
Composition of the board	7 members
Role in temple administration	<i>Gharbagudi, langar, finance</i>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 37.2.9 Finances

Expenditure varies from season to season. More devotees come in summer than in winter. Accordingly, the total operation and maintenance cost on *anna-daan* varies from approximately Rs. 30,000 during normal times to Rs. 0.4 million during peak times. The approximate total investment in infrastructure cost is 0.5 to 0.6 million.

Table II.37.7 Expenditure towards *anna-daan*

Kitchen	Expenditure per month	
	Normal season	Peak season
<i>Langar</i>	20,000–30,000	0.3–0.4 million

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.37.8 Investment in the kitchen

Dining halls	Kitchen equipment								
	Steam boilers	Huge vessels	Steel plates	Steel glass	CCTV	RO plants	Gas stove	Gas cylinder	
								Normal	Peak
Construction of the dining hall	2	7 (For both rice and dal)	1,000	600–700	4	2	2	8–10	10–20

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The temple board has an accountant cum cashier who takes care of the financial matters of both the temple and the *langar*. He visits the temple twice a week. The chartered accountant prepares the balance sheet every year. All payments are made by cheque.

### 37.2.10 Quality of raw materials

The chairman himself procures the raw material for *langar* by considering two or three quotations from vendors. The groceries are stored in *bhandaarghar* where the temperature is low and does not require refrigeration. Milk is stored in the cold water brought from the Ravi River.

The main cook inspects the food items and the quantity to be used for preparation. He samples the food to ensure that the food served to the devotees is of acceptable quality and taste.

Vegetables and groceries are washed twice in warm water. The main cook trains the helpers in personal and kitchen hygiene, especially in view of COVID-19.

Servers wear gloves and caps and use spoons and spatulas for serving.

### 37.2.11 Technology in the kitchen

The technology used is very minimal in this temple. There was very little response from devotees on the virtual *darshan*. But the temple has a good informative website. There are 2 RO filters – one at the entrance of the temple and another at the caves.

Sixteen CCTV interconnected cameras have been installed at the parking, *langar*, caves, and on the banks of the river.

Important announcements are made through intercoms.

### 37.2.12 Waste management

The dry waste is collected by the municipal garbage collector once a week. Wet waste like vegetable and fruit skins and leftover food is fed to fish in the river and left in the forest for the monkeys.

### 37.2.13 Key issues

- Garbage disposal is a major issue during the festive seasons.
- People do not maintain hygiene even after strict instructions.
- People waste food despite requests.
- Managing the crowd during festival season is another key issue.
- Parking space becomes inadequate in the peak season. Improvement of infrastructure facilities at the temple is held up due to the fear that the temple may one day immerse in dam water.
- A ropeway is the need of the hour for quick transit of devotees and to manage waste disposal.

### Website

- 1 <http://www.mukteshwarmahadev.com/> accessed on 5 September 2021

### Notes

- 635 The *Pandavas* refers to the five brothers who are the main characters in the Hindu epic, *Mahabharat*.
- 636 Indian epic.
- 637 *Agyatvaas* is an interesting part in the story of Mahabharat. Following the last game of dice, the *Pandavas* were forced by the *Kauravasto* vacate Hasthinapur along with their wife *Draupadi*. As per the agreement entered into under the supervision of the elders and the court-ers, the *Pandavas* were to spend 12 plus 1 year in exile.
- 638 Leftover bones and ashes of a dead person collected in earthen pots and consigned in a holy river.
- 639 A Hindu festival celebrated annually in honour of the god *Shiva*.
- 640 Fourth day of *Chaitra*, a month of the Hindu calendar.
- 641 *Baisakhi*, also called *Vaisakhi*, is known as the harvest festival of Punjab. It is celebrated by people across religions.
- 642 A new moon day celebrated to worship Lord *Shiva* and Goddess *Parvati*.
- 643 Place of perfect peace and happiness like heaven.
- 644 Ritual of offering homage to departed souls.
- 645 Offering the food prepared to the deity.
- 646 Respectfully putting one's palms together.
- 647 Curd curry with rice.
- 648 Curry prepared from kidney beans.
- 649 Sweet rice pudding.
- 650 Deep-fried bread made from wheat.
- 651 A sweet dessert.
- 652 Dish made with lentils and rice.
- 653 Storeroom.

## Case study 38 Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareshwarar Temple, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

G. Boopalakrishnan\* and M. S. Umesh Babu†

### 38.1 Introduction

The historic Hindu temple Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareshwarar Temple is in the centre of the temple city of Madurai on the southern bank of the Vaigai River.<sup>654</sup> The temple is one of the 275 Paadal Petra Sthalam<sup>655</sup> dedicated to Lord Shiva and revered by various Tamil *Saiva Nayanars*.<sup>656</sup> This temple was built by King Kulasekara Pandya<sup>657</sup> (1190–1216 CE). He built the main portions of the three-storeyed gopura<sup>658</sup> at the entrance of Sundareshwarar Shrine and the central portion of the Goddess Meenakshi Shrine. These are some of the earliest surviving parts of the temple. Though the temple has historic roots, most of the present structure was rebuilt after the 14th century CE. It was further repaired, renovated, and expanded in the 17th century by Tirumala Nayaka.<sup>659</sup> The temple is a major pilgrimage destination among the followers of *Shaivism*.<sup>660</sup> The large temple complex is the most prominent landmark in Madurai and attracts thousands of visitors a day. The temple has been adjudged the best Swachh<sup>661</sup> iconic place in India as of 1 October 2017 under *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*.<sup>662</sup>

**Special occasions** – The annual ten-day *Meenakshi Tirukalyanam*<sup>663</sup> festival is one of the most special occasions celebrated during the Tamil month of Chittirai (April–May and the Chaitra month of North India). During this festival, a *rath*<sup>664</sup> procession is taken out which attracts over a million pilgrims and visitors. Other occasions fall in the month of *Chitthirai* (in April, lasting 12 days), the *Aavani* festival in the month of (in August, lasting for 18 days), and the 10-day festival of *Navarathri*.<sup>665</sup>

### 38.2 Anna-daan at Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareshwarar Temple

The *anna-daan* scheme was launched on 23 March 2002 by the late chief minister J Jayalalithaa.<sup>666</sup> Subsequently, the scheme was extended to two sub-temples, Arulmigu Marriamman Temple, Theppakulam, and Arulmigu Thiruvappudaiyar Temple, Sellur.

*Prasada*<sup>667</sup> is cooked in Madapalli,<sup>668</sup> which is a kitchen specifically for *prasad*. The *anna-daan* is organised at the request of devotees at the rate of Rs. 4,000 per 200 persons, which is charged to the *anna-daan* fund. Only lunch is provided in *anna-daan* from 2 pm to 2:30 pm, as after the morning *poojas*,<sup>669</sup> the temple is closed by noon and reopens at 4 pm.

#### 38.2.1 Rituals and prayers for anna-daan

There are no special *poojas* or rituals conducted by the temple before performing *anna-daan*. The devotees have a strong belief that the food served as *prasad* is given by the goddess.

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### 38.2.2 Number of devotees served

Currently, the food is not served in the dining hall (capacity of 200 persons at a time) because of COVID-19. The dining hall has steel tables and foldable steel chairs. The food is served on banana leaves. During the pandemic, packed food was provided to 100–200 poor and needy persons. During the peak season, 700 devotees are served per day. The number of devotees who can be fed per day is fixed by the government rule. Also, the food items are prepared as per government guidelines.

### 38.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

During COVID-19, the temple staff distributed around 100 packets of food. Each food packet consisted of *sambar* rice (vegetable stew with rice), a variety of rice items, and vegetables. *Kootu*<sup>670</sup> (locally called *porial*), *rasam*,<sup>671</sup> *pappad*,<sup>672</sup> pickles, and buttermilk are also served for regular *anna-daan*. Approximately, 80–100 kg of rice and 10–15 kg of *sambar* are cooked per day. The quantity of food cooked is limited to avoid leftovers.

### 38.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The preparation of food starts at 6 am and ends at 11 am. By 11:30 am the food is ready to be served. It takes 20 to 30 minutes to be through with one batch and 10 minutes to clear the tables for the next batch. Serving starts as soon as two to three rows are filled up. In the meantime, other devotees come in and occupy their places in rows. As soon as an adequate number of devotees have sat, they begin to be served. This process goes on till all the devotees have been fed.

### 38.2.5 Nutrition

Every day different types of vegetables such as drumstick, sweet pumpkins, carrots, fresh beans, bottle gourd, brinjal, potatoes, okra, cabbage, cauliflower and peas, and different types of pulses (*tur daal*,<sup>673</sup> *Ccanadaal*,<sup>674</sup> *urad daal*,<sup>675</sup> green gram, black gram, etc.) are used for preparing food, thus ensuring a good amount of nutrition through *prasadam*. The ingredients remain the same throughout the year, except on special days and during seasons.

### 38.2.6 Human resources

The temple has ten persons on its rolls who are involved with *anna-daan*. The remaining are the volunteers and devotees who help with serving. The staff includes one in charge, three cooks, and one OA; the remaining are helpers for cutting vegetables, cleaning, and serving. However, the volunteers are not involved in cooking, cleaning, and vegetable cutting.

Table II.38.1 Human resources

Details	Numbers
In charge	1
OA	1
Cooks	3
Serving, cleaning, and helping	5
Total	10

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 38.2.7 Management

The temple is maintained by the government of Tamil Nadu. Procurement of raw materials, groceries, and vegetables, purchase of kitchen and dining hall equipment, repairs, etc., are decided by the temple management committee. In terms of Tamil Nadu government order No.1198 of 29.3.1937, the temple was brought under the direct supervision of the Board of Hindu Trust. From being administered by first grade EO, the administration was upgraded in phases and today it is being administered by a joint commissioner/EO.

### 38.2.8 Finances

The temple accepts various forms of *anna hanam Nangodai*,<sup>676</sup> including cash and Hundi. The donor may participate in this scheme by investing Rs. 12,500, and from the interest on this investment, every year, *anna-daana* is given to 500 persons, and individuals, firms, companies, etc., may make donations, and they are eligible for uniform privileges besides income tax benefits under Section 80 (G) of the Indian Income Tax Act, 1961.

### 38.2.9 Quality of raw materials

The temple management ensures that standard tender procurement procedure is followed in purchasing ingredients and raw materials with ISI and FSSI marks. Raw materials are purchased at cooperative stores and local markets through tender per government rules and regulations. Suppliers participating in tender are selected based on their offer without compromising on the quality of raw materials. All the items are purchased and prepared fresh, and stock is replenished frequently.

### 38.2.10 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are taken very seriously by the temple management. All relevant food safety standards are complied with. The person responsible for the quality of food served under *anna-daan* visits the kitchen to check the quality of food items supplied every day by vendors. He also keeps an eye on the quality of food served to devotees. Raw materials are rendered safe by washing them twice in clean water. Storage facility is available in the temple kitchen, and cooking and serving vessels are cleaned properly before and after cooking. The devotees are provided with purified drinking water. A steam vessel system is used to ensure hygiene. *Anna-daan* is served to devotees on banana leaves.

### 38.2.11 Technology adopted in the kitchen

The well-equipped kitchen makes it possible to cook large quantities of food hygienically and in minimum time, retaining the wholesomeness of food. The kitchen at Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple has steam boilers, huge vessels for cooking rice, *sambar*, and *rasam* on an LPG gas stove.

### 38.2.12 Waste management

The kitchen waste generated is handed over to the Municipality.

## Notes

- 654 The Vaigai is a river in the Tamil Nadu state of southern India.
- 655 275 temples of Lord Shiva that were revered by various Tamil Saiva Nayanars during the 6th–9th centuries CE.
- 656 Saiva nayanars were a group of 63 saints living in Tamil Nadu during the 3rd to 8th centuries CE who were devoted to the Hindu god Shiva.
- 657 Pandyan king who ruled regions of South India.
- 658 A large pyramidal tower over the entrance gate to a temple precinct.
- 659 Tirumala Nayaka was the ruler of Madurai Nayak Dynasty in the 17th century.
- 660 Shaivism is one of the major Hindu traditions that worships Shiva as the Supreme Being.
- 661 Clean.
- 662 Clean India Mission.
- 663 It is an annual Tamil Hindu celebration in the city of Madurai during the month of April.
- 664 Chariot.
- 665 Nine nights. The festival is associated with the prominent battle that took place between Durga and demons (the Mahishasura) and celebrates the victory of the good over the evil.
- 666 The former chief minister of Tamil Nadu.
- 667 Holy offerings.
- 668 The term Madapalli derived from the Tamil words *maṭai* meaning cooking and *palli* meaning place of worship).
- 669 Act of worship.
- 670 Vegetable curry.
- 671 Spicy soup eaten with rice.
- 672 Fried crisps.
- 673 Pigeon pea.
- 674 Bengal gram or split chickpeas.
- 675 Black lentils.
- 676 Donation for *anna-daan*.

## Case study 39 Satyagnana Sabha (the Vallalar Temple), Vadalur, Tamil Nadu, India

S. Lukkumanul Hakkim\* and M. S. Umesh Babu†

### 39.1 Introduction

Satyagnana Sabha<sup>677</sup> (Temple of Wisdom) is a Hindu temple built by the *Saivite*<sup>678</sup> saint Sri Ramalinga Swamigal<sup>679</sup> in the town of Vadalur in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, South India. It is an octagonal structure<sup>680</sup>; the sanctum sanctorum<sup>681</sup> of this temple is hidden from the main hall by seven curtains which are opened only on the day of *Thai Poosam*.<sup>682</sup>

The Satyagnana Sabha is divided into three *Sabhas*<sup>683</sup>: (1) The *Chirchabai* represents the moon or people's left eye. (2) The *Porchabai*<sup>684</sup> or golden *Sabha* represents the sun or people's right eye. (3) The *Gnana Sabha*,<sup>685</sup> which represents the third eye or people's

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knowledge. The main theme of the mission is to commit oneself to selfless service to human beings at large. According to the saint, he who loves best serves best.

### 39.1.1 *Special occasions*

Vallalar started the *Jyothi Darshan*<sup>686</sup> on *Thai Poosam* in 1872 and is celebrated with great devotion during which devotees are allowed to have *darshan* after removing all the seven curtains in the Gnana Sabha. The seven curtains are removed that day at 6:30 am, 10 am, 1 pm, 7 pm, 10 pm, and 5:30 am the next morning.

#### Significance of the temple

Vallalar established the Sathya Dharmasala<sup>687</sup> on 23 May 1867 to feed the poor every day. The practice is continuing to this day. The oven he lit on that day is still burning to continue the great charity. The temple does not use matchboxes, and although no cooking is done at night, a temple staff member places firewood in the oven to keep it burning. The *anna-daan* is carried out not only for the devotees but for the birds as well, who are fed first. Devotees sprinkle *Theenchuval Water*<sup>688</sup> (from Vallalar's *Theenchuval* canal) on their heads in the belief that it cures illnesses. There is also a home for elderly people at the temple. The elderly people come to the temple to spend their final days, and the temple looks after them.

### 39.1.2 *Holistic vegetarianism*

Vallalar promoted the worship of inner light in all human and living beings – the universal fundamental right of all living things to oneness with heartfelt compassion. Vallalar's path of *Samudra Sudha Sanmargam*,<sup>689</sup> the highest evolutionary spiritual path due to its science of deathlessness, draws people from all walks of life, given that every living being is a soul capable of experiencing joy and pain in the various forms of hunger, fear, disease, torture and so on. Innate intellect (the Supreme Divine Within) discovers ways to avoid, overcome and achieve supreme bliss. Vallalar repeated the chant *Arutperunjyothi*<sup>690</sup> several times (Blissful Spark of Light). His teachings outlawed all sorts of violence and cruelty towards other living beings, and he encouraged holistic vegetarianism as an effective spiritual practice for consciousness expansion.

#### The principle of Jeeva Karunya

Swami Ramalinga Adigal<sup>691</sup> established *anna-daan* (house of food charity) on 23 May 1867, with the principle of *Jeeva karunya*<sup>692</sup> or symbolic CHAP (Chronic Hunger Alleviation Programme) to raise consciousness and eliminate chronic hunger among fellow human beings. The land of Vadalur was purchased with the help of friends and well-wishers, and a simple structure was built to house the kitchen. Donations of food grains and vegetables were welcomed from deserving individuals, and the kitchen began operations. The inauguration was well attended, with people coming from across the neighbouring areas to hear the *swamiji* and observe how the kitchen worked.

## 39.2 **Anna-daan at Vallalar Temple**

This free feeding of the underprivileged has been going on for more than a century and a half. As the highest form of worship, Swami Ramalinga Adigal advised feeding the

destitute. *Anna-daan* is the biggest donation in all forms and is an important aspect of the *Sanatan Dharma*. The Vallalar centre in Vadalur serves food to everyone at any time of the day. The kitchen has remained open for almost 150 years and has never been closed. Swami Ramalinga Vallalar gives no value to spirituality that has isolated itself from the common people. He was never at peace when others went hungry. What was the point of being nice and loving if one did not feed the hungry and the poor? Furthermore, food was the body's primary requirement, and the body was the seat of the soul. How could someone take care of the soul that dwelt in the body if they did not take care of the body? According to the *swamiji*,<sup>693</sup> the foundation of spirituality is the removal of hunger.

### 39.2.1 Number of devotees served

The food is served five times a day as mentioned in Table II.39.1. This is known as *Thirukappitta Arai*.<sup>694</sup> On normal days, around 1,500 devotees are fed daily; the number of devotees increases to more than 10,000 during peak season.

Table II.39.1 Timings of *anna-daan* and number of devotees served at Vallalar Temple

Meals	Timing	Normal season	Peak season (the festival of Thai Poosam)
	6 am	100 (Mostly members and elderly people who live inside the temple)	Above 1,000
Breakfast	8 am	400 above	Above 1,000
Lunch	Noon	400 to 500	2,000 to 3,000
Evening	5 pm	300	2,000 to 3,000
Dinner	8 pm	200 to 300	2,000 to 3,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The temple has a dining hall and a kitchen for *anna-daan* food preparation and serving called *Dharmshala*. The dining hall has more than 300 chairs and more than 100 tables. During festival season, a buffet system is followed for better management of crowds.

The temple has a well-equipped kitchen. The oven is lit by Vallalar in the *Satya Dharmshala* and has never been extinguished in more than 100 years. The major fuel is firewood. All kinds of technologies are used to prepare a large quantity of food daily.

### 39.2.2 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The major food items served are mentioned in Table II.39.2. Food items may change on a day-to-day basis. *Thai Poosam* (an annual festival) is an example of a special day where food is provided throughout the day with no restrictions. Many devotees who come from all over India to attend the festival donate cash or groceries and vegetables for *anna-daan*.

Table II.39.2 Food items served in *anna-daan*

Meals	Items served
Opening time	<i>Kanji</i> <sup>a</sup>
Breakfast	<i>Idli with sambar</i> , <sup>b</sup> <i>pongali with</i> , <sup>c</sup> <i>sambar</i> <sup>d</sup>
Lunch	Rice, <i>sambar</i> , and some side dishes
Evening	Curd, <sup>e</sup> <i>payasam</i> , <sup>f</sup> <i>rasam</i> <sup>g</sup>
Lunch	<i>Pongal</i> , <i>upma</i> <sup>h</sup>
	<i>Pongal</i> , <i>idli with sambar</i> (it will change daily)

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Rice boiled with water and some Ayurveda items.
- <sup>b</sup> A food item in South India.
- <sup>c</sup> A rice item with cooked with some spices and leaves.
- <sup>d</sup> A South Indian curry dish of vegetables.
- <sup>e</sup> Rice cooked with curd.
- <sup>f</sup> A sweet dish.
- <sup>g</sup> Soup prepared with sweet-sour stock made from either kokum or tamarind, along with tomato and lentil, added spices, and garnish.
- <sup>h</sup> A thick porridge from dry-roasted semolina or coarse rice flour.

### 39.2.3 Time taken for preparing food

Cooking and serving for *anna-daan* is from 6 am until 8 pm every day. Food is prepared throughout the day. The oven is always on throughout the day, and cooking is continuously going on from morning till evening.

### 39.2.4 Nutrition

During discussions, food served to worshipers including the devotees and the public was opined as tasty and nutritious. *Sambar*, for example, a popular curry meal in South India, is rich in fibre, protein, and antioxidants, and the temple prepares it, using a variety of high-quality vegetables such as carrots, okra, potatoes, and onions. When compared to restaurant meals, for which people pay an exorbitant price, the free food provided by these temples in the name of *anna-daan* is much tastier and more satisfying to eat, opined the devotees.

### 39.2.5 Human resources

The total staff strength at the temple is 25, and these people are engaged in a variety of work such as cooking, cutting, and cleaning vegetables; washing vessels; cleaning the kitchen; serving; and security. During festival times, the temple hires extra hands to handle an increased quantum of work due to a large influx of devotees.

Table II.39.3 Staff details at Vallalar Temple

Details	Numbers
Kitchen	10 (daily change)
Rituals	10 (daily change)
Guard	5
Total	25

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The staff is changed daily. In addition to the paid staff, some of the staff are devotees and individuals and are working for free.

Normally, temple is open from 6 am to 6 pm. On special occasions, it remains open for 24 hours. Staff is on a daily rotation basis with refreshments being provided by the temple.

### 39.2.6 Finances

Vallalar Temple is under the control of the Government of Tamil Nadu. There is a trust working under the government to manage accounts and run the temple. The major source of funds is cash or in-kind donations from devotees.

### 39.2.7 Waste management

Indoor trash and waste baskets are placed at various locations to ensure that trash is thrown in these baskets and that the temple premises are kept clean and organised, even though many devotees visit the temple to pray and partake of food. Waste generated is handed over to the municipality.

## Notes

677 *Satyagnana Sabha* is the official name of *Vallalar* temple.

678 Branch of a Hinduism devoted to the worship of Lord *Shiva*.

679 *Sri Ramalinga Swamigal* also called as the Saint *Vallalar*.

680 The octagon was drawn in between as that shape that connects the two. Occasionally, the octagon was viewed as a symbol for infinity. It was suggested that the octagon is a circle attempting to become a square and a square attempting to become a circle.

681 Means "holy of holies".

682 Festival in the *Vallalar* Temple.

683 *Sabhas* means hall.

684 Represents the sun or people's right eye.

685 People's knowledge.

686 Lamp of *darshan*.

687 Food for hunger.

688 Water from *Vallalar's Theenchuval* Canal.

689 The highest evolutionary spiritual path due to its science of deathlessness.

690 Blissful Spark of Light.

691 *Vallalar* also known as Swami Ramalinga Adigal.

692 Chronic Hunger Alleviation Programme.

693 Swamiji, the saint (*Vallalar*).

694 *Thirukappitta Arai*: dining room.

## Case study 40 Sri Lakshmi Narayani Golden Temple, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

Shivakumara Nayka\*

### 40.1 Introduction

Sri Lakshmi Narayani Golden Temple, also known as Sri Narayani Peedam, is located at Thirumalaikodi, Tamil Nadu, South India. The temple was built in August 2007 and the main deity is Goddess Sri Narayani. The temple is known for its spiritual oasis and an architectural marvel. It is the brainchild and the divine vision of Sri Shakthi Amma.<sup>695</sup> The temple sits on 100 acres of land and has star-shaped pathways such that it absorbs maximum energy from nature, which creates enormous peace and brings relaxation to the devotees.

#### Significance of the temple

The Golden Temple has used over 1.5 tons of gold in 15 layers, mounted on hand-etched copper plates, to create a traditional, *Vedic* style temple architecture. It is the world's largest Golden Temple and one of the most visited holy shrines in the world.

### 40.2 Anna-daan at Sri Lakshmi Narayani Temple

*Anna-daan*, which was one of the divine visions of the Sri Sakthi Amma, began in 1999 and extended to local schools and local government-run orphanages. It takes place every day at Sri Annapoorani Mandapam, a large dining hall built recently to cater to the increasing number of devotees. Philanthropy is the main reason behind performing *anna-daan*, as people believe that they get rid of their personal difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. It is a common belief (the temple authorities also abide by it) that when materials (such as money or clothing) are donated, the recipient will never be satisfied fully. However, when a person is offered food, at some point their desire is satisfied. Hence, providing food for people is a very special form of *seva*.<sup>696</sup>

#### 40.2.1 Rituals and prayers

Although there are no specific rituals and prayers performed before cooking, the meal is first offered to Sri Lakshmi Narayani as *Naivedyam*,<sup>697</sup> and after *pooja*,<sup>698</sup> it is served to the devotees. It is only during special occasions that the *pooja* is performed before the cooking begins. Concerning awareness about *anna-daan*, there is no tradition or institutional arrangement at the temple to spread awareness about the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* among the devotees. However, it is imbibed among the devotees about its significance at large.

#### 40.2.2 Number of devotees served

Every person who visits the temple to seek the blessings of the deity is offered free food. It is served irrespective of religion, language, caste, or creed. Lunch is served daily to all

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visitors, whereas breakfast is given only to the temple staff. Dinner is provided to all during special occasions.<sup>699</sup> Breakfast is served for around 2,000 to 5,000 people per day only during special occasions.

Lunch is served between noon and 3 pm, and the rest of the day, *prasadam* is served in the limited quantity in disposable cups. Around 6,000 people are served lunch daily during the normal season; during special occasions, the number of people served goes up to 15,000 (Tables II.40.1 and II.40.2). During peak season, there is a restriction on timing, as food is served till 10:30 pm. A buffet system is followed to control and manage the crowd.

Table II.40.1 Number of devotees served and timings

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	Only for staff			300 to 500	2,000 to 5,000
Lunch	Noon to 3 pm	5 to 10 batches	15 to 25 batches	6,000	15,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.40.2 Number of dining halls

Sr. no.	Name of the dining hall	Type of People reserved for	Number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	Annalakshmi Mandapam	Common for everyone	Around 6,000	Around 25,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 40.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

South Indian food is served. The breakfast menu includes *poha*<sup>700</sup>/*avalakki* or *upma*<sup>701</sup>/*pongal*, *puliyogare*,<sup>702</sup> or *lemon rice*.<sup>703</sup> Lunch includes rice, *sambar*,<sup>704</sup> *rasam*,<sup>705</sup> *payasa*,<sup>706</sup> vegetable curry, buttermilk, and *pongal*<sup>707</sup> (Table II.40.3). Special dishes are prepared during festivals.

As mentioned in Table II.40.4, around 5 to 7 quintals of rice are cooked per day during the normal season; during peak season, it is around 10 to 15 quintals per day. Every day, around 1,000 to 2,000 L of *sambar* and 1,000 to 5,000 L of *rasam* are prepared during a normal season; during the peak season, it goes up to 10,000 to 15,000 L and 10,000 to 20,000 L, respectively. The volume of food prepared is based on the cooks' experience. Different varieties of fresh vegetables, grains, and pulses are used to prepare the *prasadam* to ensure that it is fortified with nutrition.

Table II.40.3 Food items served

Breakfast normal season	Breakfast peak season	Lunch normal season	Lunch peak season	Dinner normal season	Dinner peak season
<i>Poha/avalakki</i> <i>Upmal</i> variety rice <i>Pongal</i>	<i>Poha/avalakki</i> <i>Upmal</i> variety rice	Plain rice <i>Sambar</i>  <i>Rasam</i>  A type of sweet buttermilk	Plain rice Rice item <sup>a</sup>  <i>Sambar/sar</i> <i>Rasam</i>  A type of sweet Vegetable curry Buttermilk	Plain rice <i>Rasam/sar</i>  Buttermilk Vegetable curry  Buttermilk	Plain rice Rice item <sup>a</sup>  <i>Sar</i> <i>Sambar/rasam</i>  A type of sweet Vegetable curry Buttermilk

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

<sup>a</sup> They are varieties of rice made using different spices and recipes with rice as the main ingredient. The quantity served is difficult to calculate because devotees can eat as much as they want without any restriction.

Table II.40.4 Quantity of food prepared per day

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Rice	500 to 700 kg	2,000 to 2,500 kg
2	<i>Sambar</i>	1,000 to 2,000 L	10,000 to 15,000 L
3	<i>Rasam</i>	1,000 to 3,000 L	10,000 to 15,000 L
4	Vegetable curry/ <i>sagu</i>	1,000 to 3,000 L	10,000 to 20,000 L
5	<i>Payasa</i> sweet <i>pongali</i>	5,000 to 10,000 L	15,000 to 20,000 L
6	Buttermilk	Around 50 to 75 L of curd is used	Around 200 to 500 L of curd is used
7	<i>Pongal/sambar</i> rice/ <i>curd</i> rice	1,000 to 2,000 L	10,000 to 15,000 L

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 40.2.4 Human resources

Out of a current staff strength of around 200 in the temple, 90 work for *anna-daan*. The staff comprises managers, supervisors, cooks, helpers, servers, cleaners, and watchmen (Table II.40.5). In addition, around 200 to 250 volunteers are taken on board during peak season for managing the crowd, cutting vegetables, serving, cleaning, etc. The kitchen staff works in two shifts: from 6 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 10 pm.

Table II.40.5 Human resources

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Number of staff</i>
Manager	3
Supervisors	5
Cooks	9
Helpers	20
Serving staff	25
Cleaners/helpers	20
Watchmen	10
Total	92

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 40.2.5 Finances

The main source of finance for the temple is donations/contributions from devotees. Specific to *anna-daan*, there are provisions made by the temple to accept donations either in-kind or cash. The expenditure on *anna-daan* is met from donated *hundis*,<sup>708</sup> various *sevas*, and the interest earned on the corpus.

#### 40.2.6 Quality of raw materials

Temple follows the standard procurement procedures. ISI marked raw materials are purchased from markets in Vellore, Hosur Bengaluru, and Chennai. Procurement is also made directly from farmers. Tenders are floated to select suppliers with low quotes without compromising the quality of raw materials.

#### 40.2.7 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are ensured by complying with the food safety standards. Food inspectors visit the temple for random checks of quality and safety; based on their findings, they issue safety and standard certificates from time to time. The safety of raw materials is ensured by washing them twice – once in cold water and later with warm/hot water. Cooking and serving vessels are sterilised. The manager visits the kitchen to check the food quality before serving.

#### 40.2.8 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen has a combination of the latest equipment and manual *chulas* to prepare food during peak season. Since early 2020, solar energy has been used to cook rice. Biogas is also used to tap renewable energy, resulting in saving of up to Rs. 3 million annually.

#### 40.2.9 Waste management

The temple has the best waste management practises and serves as a model temple. It was awarded the ExNoRa Best Green Temple Award, ExNoRa Best Green Campus Award, by the then chief minister in 2007. They have a zero-waste management programme

which generates income as well. Besides, they have adopted several eco-friendly features: wastewater recycling, rainwater harvesting, and others.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://www.sripuram.org/pages/about-peedam> accessed on 18 June 2021
- 2 <https://www.sripuram.org/pages/sri-narayani-temple> accessed on 18 June 2021
- 3 <https://www.sripuram.org/pages/sri-lakshmi-narayani-temple> accessed on 18 June 2021
- 4 <http://narayanipeedam.org/annadhanam-mandapam/> accessed on 18 June 2021

### Notes

- 695 Spiritual leader.
- 696 Service.
- 697 Food offered to a Hindu deity as part of a worship ritual.
- 698 A worship ritual performed by Hindus to offer devotional homage and prayer to the deity.
- 699 Special days include *Velli Ganapathy Yargam*, *Maha Kumbha Abhishekam*, *Pooja*, *Pongal*, *Akshaya Thadige*, *Navarathri*, *Deepotsava*, *Rathotsava*, and *Sriman Maha Rathotsava*.
- 700 Dish prepared from flattened rice.
- 701 Dish prepared from broken wheat.
- 702 Traditional rice preparation in the South Indian states.
- 703 Rice-based dish widely prepared in South India.
- 704 Southern Indian dish consisting of lentils and vegetables cooked with tamarind and other spices.
- 705 Soup prepared with sweet-sour stock of tamarind, lentils, spices, and garnish.
- 706 A sweet dish.
- 707 A popular South Indian rice dish.
- 708 A large pot placed in most of the Hindu temples in India. Many devotees offer money to God, and Hundi is the place where they drop their monetary offerings.

## Case study 41 Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, India

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### 41.1 Introduction

Nataraja Temple, also known as the Chidambaram Nataraja Temple or Thillai Nataraja temple located in Chidambaram town, Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu, South India. It is a Hindu temple dedicated to Nataraja-Shiva, the Lord of Dance. The current temple was established in the 10th century during the Chola<sup>709</sup> reign in Chidambaram, making it one of the oldest surviving operational temple complexes in South India. Following its

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consecration in the 10th century by Cholas, they revered Nataraja as their family deity. The temple is considered the most subtle of all Shiva temples in Hinduism and is one of the five-element lingas<sup>710</sup> in the Shaivism<sup>711</sup> tradition. It is also a venue for performing arts, including the yearly Nautilus Festival. It hosts performance arts events, such as the annual Nataraja dance festival on *Mahashivaratri*.<sup>712</sup>

#### Significance of the temple

The temple is positioned at the magnetic equatorial centre of the planet. Chidambaram is one of the *Pancha Bootha*<sup>713</sup> temples that represent the sky. Wind is represented by *kalahasthi*.<sup>714</sup> Kanchi Ekambareswar<sup>715</sup> means land. These three temples are all in a straight line at 79° 41'. This is an incredible reality and astronomic miracle and is verifiable. Chidambaram temple is modelled on the human body, with nine entrances representing nine body entrances or openings. The temple ceiling is built of 21,600 gold sheets, representing the 21,600 breaths taken by a human being each day. These 21,600 gold sheets are fastened to the *Vimanam* (nerves) in the human body. According to Tirumular,<sup>716</sup> man represents the shape of Shivalingam, which represents Chidambaram, which represents Sadashivam,<sup>717</sup> which depicts Lord Shiva's dance.

Ponnambalam<sup>718</sup> is positioned slightly to the left. This is an image of our heart. To get there we must climb five steps known as *Panchashastrapadi*.<sup>719</sup> The five *Panchashastra*<sup>720</sup> mantras are *Si, Va, Ya, Na, Ma*. The *Kanagasabha*<sup>721</sup> is supported, by four pillars, which symbolise the four *Vedas*. Ponnambalam features 28 pillars that represent the 28 *Ahams*,<sup>722</sup> as well as the 28 ways to worship Lord Shiva. The cross beams are blood vessels that travel across the human body. The nine *Sakthi*<sup>723</sup> or energies are represented by the *Kalasa*s<sup>724</sup> on the golden roof. The *Artha Mantapa*'s six pillars reflect the six types of *sashtras*.<sup>725</sup> The adjacent *Manatapa*'s<sup>726</sup> 18 pillars represent the 18 *puranams*.<sup>727</sup> Western scientists refer to Lord Nataraja's dance as the Cosmic Dance. The Chidambaram Nataraja Temple is related to a variety of tales. *Aani Tirumanjanam*<sup>728</sup> and *Margazhi Tiruvaadirai*<sup>729</sup> are two annual festivals and traditions that are celebrated with the utmost grandeur and pomp.

#### **41.2 Anna-daan at Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram**

The Nataraja Temple has been conducting *anna-daan* since 2018 with great sincerity. The temple is under private ownership, and a group of people called *Deekshithar*<sup>730</sup> (*Aiyyar* families) has taken care of the temple from the beginning. People conduct *anna-daan* with the motivation of providing food for every pilgrim visiting the temple. Cooking and other allied things are under the control of the authority. Devotees are to provide raw materials or money for *anna-daan*. During the pandemic, the temple authorities were giving food to the people outside the temple in keeping with the COVID-19 protocols.

In addition to food served at the dining halls of the temple, the devotees are also given *prasad* (food served after *poojas*<sup>731</sup>) with no discrimination of caste, creed, culture, or status. However, taking the *prasad* home is not allowed. The food items like *Kalkkanda Sadam*,<sup>732</sup> *Puli Sadam*,<sup>733</sup> *Thairu Sadam*,<sup>734</sup> and *Chakkara Pongal*<sup>735</sup> are given as *prasad*.

#### 41.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

Thillai Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram is one of the famous tourist attractions in India. Many devotees visit the temple, not only from Tamil Nadu but also from other states in India and abroad. *Anna-daan* is mainly provided to the people who visit the temple. Providing food to these devotees is an act of philanthropy. Besides, people strongly believe that by doing *anna-daan* they will overcome their difficulties.

#### 41.2.2 Rituals and prayers

There are no rituals and prayers performed before cooking the meal. After the meal is cooked, it is served to Lord Shiva as *prasad*, and then after the *pooja*, it is served to the devotees. Only on special occasions like *Aaani*, *Thirumanjana* festival, *Aarudhara Dharshana* festival, *Naayanmaar Utsavam*,<sup>736</sup> *Mahashivaratri*, and *Panguni Utsavam*<sup>737</sup> is *pooja* performed before cooking. However, there is no tradition or institutional arrangement by the temple authority to spread awareness about the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* among the devotees.

#### 41.2.3 Number of devotees served

*Anna-daan* is provided for lunch and dinner. A minimum of 300 devotees are served food regularly. During festival seasons, the number of devotees goes up to 2,000.

Table II.41.1 Number of devotees served food

Meals	People served	No. of people	
		Normal days	Peak days
Breakfast	Staff	200 above	1,000 above
Lunch	Devotees and the public	300 above	1,500 to 2,000
Dinner	Devotees and the public	200 above	1,500 to 2,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The temple has three dining halls, of which one is reserved for the staff and the other two are for the public. Breakfast on normal days is served only to the temple staff – around 200 people. During peak seasons, as many as 1,000 staff members are served breakfast. As per the temple authority's (*Deekshithahrs*) instruction, during peak season or festival times, there are no fixed timings, and food is served continuously from morning till night. During special occasions, arrangements are made to serve food inside as well as outside the temple.

#### 41.2.4 Uantity of food prepared and items served

*Sambar*, rice,<sup>738</sup> *Puli Sadam*, *Thairu Sadam*,<sup>739</sup> *Thakkali Sadam*,<sup>740</sup> and lemon rice are served at lunch, while for dinner, food items include *chapati*,<sup>741</sup> vegetable *korma*,<sup>742</sup> *idly*, *sambar*, and *chutney*.<sup>743</sup>

#### 41.2.5 Nutrition

As far as the nutritional content of food served at the temple is concerned, the various varieties of dishes like *Sambar Sadam*, *Chakkara Pongal*, *Puli Sadam*, *Thairu Sadam*, sweets, and *prasad* are prepared using nutritious ingredients such as fresh vegetables, special rice, fresh ghee, and fresh curd.

#### 41.2.6 Human resources

As mentioned earlier, Nataraj Temple is administered by a private trust involving a Brahmin community called *Deekshithar*. The members of this community have protected and maintained the temple since the beginning. Even *anna-daan* and *prasad* are managed by them. As mentioned in Table II.41.2, the temple has 48 people to manage the *anna-daan*, cooking, and serving. During peak seasons, due to a substantial increase in the number of people visiting the temple, additional people are taken for security, cleaning, and keeping the environment clean. However, guards, volunteers, and cleaners are not involved in cooking and other allied activities.

Table II.41.2 Details of staff at Nataraja Temple

Category	Numbers
Cooks	3
Helpers	10
Servers	5
Cleaners	20
Guards	10
Total	48

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 41.2.7 Working hours

The staff works in 3 shifts: from 4 am to 12 pm, 2 pm to 5 pm, and 5 pm to 11 pm. The staff adjusts time with mutual understanding for short breaks for refreshments. The guards have only two shifts: day and night.

#### 41.2.8 Management

*Deekshithars* who are experts in the *Vedas*<sup>744</sup> and *Yagnas*<sup>745</sup> manage the temple. The community of *Deekshithars* lives in Chidambaram, follows ancestral traditions, and serves the temple. They are also called *Thillai Muvayiravar* or the *Three Thousand of Thillai*. Every married *Deekshithar* has the right to be a trustee and *archaka*<sup>746</sup> of the temple. A practice unique to the community is that the priest wears a tuft<sup>747</sup> of hair in front of the head like the *Nambuthiris*<sup>748</sup> in Kerala.

#### 41.2.9 Finances

The main source of finance is donations in cash or in-kind. Most of the food items such as rice, vegetables, and other ingredients are provided by well-wishers or by people who

are interested in *anna-daan*. Approximately, Rs. 20,000 per day is the minimum expense of providing *anna-daan*. This increases manifold during festival seasons.

Table II.41.3 Expenditure on *anna-daan*

Meals	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	20,000	200,000
Dinner		

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 41.2.10 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are taken very seriously, and these are ensured by complying with the established food safety standards. Delicious nutritious food is prepared and served under the most hygienic conditions.

Food inspectors visit the temple for quality and safety checks. Depending on their findings, they award food safety and standard certificates to the temple from time to time. The safety of raw materials is ensured by washing them twice. The kitchen is maintained neatly.

#### 41.2.11 Technology adopted in the kitchen

There are two kitchens: one is for cooking the *prasad* and the other is for cooking food for the temple staff. Both the kitchens in the temple are well equipped and maintained. LPG is used as fuel.

#### 41.2.12 Waste management

Usually, there is no leftover food in the temple. Other wastes are handed over to the municipality.

#### 41.2.13 Key issues/requests

During the rainy season, the temple premises gets flooded due to a lack of proper drainage. The existing drainage was built long ago. So, there is a need for a proper drainage system at the temple.

### Notes

709 *Chola* dynasty was a Tamil thalassocratic empire in southern India.

710 *Lingam* means a symbol of generative energy, especially phallus or phalli's object as a symbol of *Shiva*.

711 *Shaivism* is one of the major Hindu traditions that worships *Shiva*.

712 *Mahashivaratri* is a Hindu festival celebrated annually in honor of the god *Shiva*.

713 *Pancha Bhoota* five great elements, also five physical elements.

714 *Kalahasthi* is temple located at Andhra Pradesh, South India.

715 *Kanchi Ekambareswar* is a temple.

716 Tiru Mular was a *Tamil Shaivite* mystic and writer.

717 *Sadashivam* is the supreme being Lord *Shiva* in the *Mantra Margasidhanta* sect of *Shaivism*.



- 718 *Ponnmabalam* means Lord Shiva.  
 719 *Panchashastrapadi* means five scriptures.  
 720 *Panchashastra* mantras means some sort of prayer to Lord Shiva.  
 721 *Kanagasabha* means gathering of dancers.  
 722 *Ahams* means worshipping Lord Shiva in different ways.  
 723 *Sakti* means energy.  
 724 *Kalasa* is metal pot.  
 725 *Sashtras* is a work of sacred scripture.  
 726 *Manatapa's* is a pillared hall or pavilion for public rituals.  
 727 *Puranams* is Hindu mythology.  
 728 *Aani Tirumanjanam* is a festival celebrated at the temple.  
 729 *Margazhi Tiruvaadirai* is a festival celebrated at the temple.  
 730 *Deekshithar* are a *Vedic Shaiva Brahmin* servitor community.  
 731 *Pooja* is prayer.  
 732 A dish cooked with rice and rock candy and other spices.  
 733 Tamarind rice.  
 734 Curd rice.  
 735 A popular rice dish in Tamil Nadu, where rice is cooked with sugar and some spices.  
 736 Festival at the *Nataraja* temple.  
 737 Festival at the *Nataraja* temple.  
 738 *Sambar* rice a southern Indian dish consisting of lentils and vegetables cooked with tamarind and other spices.  
 739 Curd rice.  
 740 Dish of rice cooked with tomato, onion, and other spices.  
 741 Indian bread made from wheat.  
 742 Vegetable curry.  
 743 *Chutney* is coconut paste with salt and curry leaves and other spices.  
 744 *Vedas*, any of the four collections forming the earliest body of Indian scripture, consisting of *Rig Ved*, *Sam Ved*, *Uajur*, *Ved*, and *Atharva Ved*, which codified the ideas and practices of *vedic* religion and laid down the basis of classical Hinduism.  
 745 *Yagnas*, a ritual involving the sacred fire.  
 746 *Archaka* means senior priest.  
 747 Tuft, a bunch or collection of threads, grass, hair, etc.  
 748 *Malayali Brahmin*.

## Case study 42 Sri Gnana Saraswati Temple, Basara, Telangana, India

Saumya Thukra\*

### 42.1 Introduction

Established in 2002, Sri Gnanaprasunamba Basara Saraswati Temple, Basara, Nirmal, Telangana, is dedicated to Goddess Saraswati<sup>749</sup> and is one of India's most famous temples of the Goddess of Learning. It is the only temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati in South India. Situated by the banks of the river Godavari<sup>750</sup> near the serene Kumaranchala Hills, the Basara Temple is visited by thousands of devotees throughout the year. They

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bathe in the Godavari and pray for the goddess' blessings. The temple attracts thousands of pilgrims from all over India during the festivals of *Dassera*,<sup>751</sup> *Navratri*,<sup>752</sup> *Vasantha Panchami*,<sup>753</sup> and *Mahashivaratri*.<sup>754</sup> Having started with 50 pilgrims visiting the temple every day, it now attracts 300 pilgrims daily; it goes up to 400 pilgrims a day on Saturdays and Sundays.

Basara's Sri Gnana Saraswati Temple was initially dedicated to the divine trinity: Goddess Lakshmi,<sup>755</sup> Goddess Saraswati, and Goddess Kali.<sup>756</sup> Legends say that sage *Veda Vyasa*, after the *Mahabharat*<sup>757</sup> war, meditated and appeased the goddess. Impressed by his devotion, she appeared and asked him to collect three handfuls of sand at three different places every day. The dunes collected by him were said to have transformed into the divine trinity idols.

Brahmanda Purana mentioned the production of the *Ramayana*<sup>758</sup> by Valmiki for Goddess Saraswati in this region. Maharishi<sup>759</sup> Valmiki's tomb is found near the temple area. The temple was rebuilt 200 years ago and came to be known as Basara Temple. At the Basara Saraswati Temple, children are taught that education is one of the highest priorities. The *Pranaamam*<sup>760</sup> is paid using both hands as the *Mukulitha Hastha Pranaamam* is auspicious.

## 42.2 Anna-daan at Basara Temple

When pilgrims visit the Basara Temple, providing food to them is an act of devotion. The temple provides free food to the devotees who visit the temple. This tradition of offering food to the pilgrims has been followed since the Vedic period, known as *Annadata Sukhibhava*.<sup>761</sup> The tradition is practised for the attainment of all spiritual aspirations.

During the initial years, no amenities or food was offered to the devotees by the temple. Therefore, well-off devotees would provide food for the pilgrims, which became a regular practice among the family members. Along with the age-old tradition, the temple started providing *anna-daan* as a sacred duty for spiritual purposes.

### 42.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

The devotees and temple representatives believe that *anna-daan* provides good luck to those who receive and offer it, thereby creating a positive impact on society. Every devotee is offered *anna-daan* irrespective of caste or class. When receiving, the devotees bless the donors, thereby creating a positive feeling and harmony among the people. *Anna-daan* instils devotion and dedication in devotees and creates a good experience among them, which paves the way for the temple's popularity and media coverage.

### 42.2.2 Rituals and prayers

The temple conducts the spiritual *prardhana*,<sup>762</sup> *Jai Saraswati Devi*, as a special ritual before the cooks start preparing the food. The cooks and temple representatives complete the prayer, place flowers, and perform *arti*<sup>763</sup> before preparing the food. Once the food is ready, the *prasadam*<sup>764</sup> is first served to the deity and then to the devotees in the temple. The cooks are not allowed to eat before serving.

*Saraswathi Slokam*<sup>765</sup> is chanted before consuming the food. The *sloka*m is chanted to pay respect to Goddess Saraswati as follows:

*Yaa Kundendutushaarahaaradhavalaa,  
Yaa shubhravastraavritha  
Yaa veenavaradandamanditakara,  
Yaa shwethapadmaasanaa,  
Yaa brahmaachyuthashankaraprabhritibhir  
DevaisadaaVanditha (poojitaa)  
Saa Maam Paatu Saraswatee Bhagavatee Nihsheshajaadyaapahaa*

#### Translation

*She is the one who wears the garland of dazzling white jasmine flowers,  
She is the one who always decorates herself with very clean clothes,  
She is the one who has in her hand a Veena which she plays,  
She sits on the throne of white lotus,  
She is worshipped by Gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva,  
And let that Goddess Saraswati who removes ignorance look after me.*

The devotees believe that the food they receive is a *prasadam* given by the goddess herself. The spiritual purpose and significance of *anna-daan* are announced through the microphone on the temple premises and on the temple website. The temple management makes announcements at intervals before the food is served, asking the devotees not to waste food as food is the embodiment of Lord Brahma (*Annam Parabrahma Swarupam*).

#### 42.2.3 Number of devotees served

During the regular season, the number of devotees is around 300. Each batch consists of 100 devotees. During the peak season, four batches are served. The *Basara* temple only offers lunch between 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. The temple has one dining hall, which can accommodate 100 people at a time. With no seating arrangements, the dining hall has tables where devotees are served food on plates. To manage the crowd and to make serving easier during peak season, the temple makes use of a ticket system. Cleaning is done immediately after every batch is through with eating. This is to ensure that the next batch comes in an orderly fashion for food. The temple serves the food continuously (even beyond the stipulated time) until all the cooked food is finished.

#### 42.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The food items served are plain rice, *dal*,<sup>766</sup> *sambar*,<sup>767</sup> vegetable curry, buttermilk, and sweet (*chakrapongali*<sup>768</sup>). Nutrition is uppermost in the temple authorities' minds. As a result, only certified cooks, who are aware of the importance of nutrition, are hired. The food is prepared with cow ghee, which enhances the quality of the food. The management of food is done efficiently across seasons, keeping in mind the health rules and regulations. During peak season, when the number of devotees visiting the temple goes up sharply, temple authorities ensure that adequate food is cooked. The distribution of *prasadam* is monitored by the concerned temple staff.

Table II.42.1 Total volume of food served per day

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	75 kg	100 kg
Dal	12 kg	20 kg
Sambar	50 L	75 L
Vegetable curry	25 kg	40 kg
Buttermilk	50 L	80 L
Sweet	20 kg <i>Chakrapongali</i>	30 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 42.2.5 Time taken for preparing the food

The preparation of food for lunch takes around 3 hours from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Serving a set of 100 people takes approximately 40 minutes. Cleaning is done after every batch and usually takes about 10 minutes. The total time taken for serving, cleaning, and accommodating the next batch takes around 50 minutes.

Table II.42.2 Cooking and serving time

Items	Time taken
Cooking lunch	3 hours
Serving lunch	40 minutes per batch
Cleaning	10 minutes per batch
Total time (serving, cleaning, and letting the next batch in)	50 minutes

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 42.2.6 Human resources

There are 25 regular paid staff involved in the conduct of *anna-daan*, including a manager, cooks, cleaners, servers, and security guards. There are 10 cleaners and 10 servers, along with 1 security guard. They are provided a weekly day off with internal adjustments. Volunteers are also hired from *Yuvasevakula*.<sup>769</sup> The human resource team also employs workers on a contract basis to clean and cut vegetables, clean utensils, and the dining hall, and serve the devotees. One security guard is recruited to manage the crowd. *Anna-daan* is attended by individuals who donate to the temple, volunteers, and daily donors.

Table II.42.3 Human resources involved at Sri Gnana Saraswati Temple

Details	Numbers
Senior manager	1
Cooks	3
Serving staff	10
Cleaning/helpers	10
Security guard	1
Total	25

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 42.2.7 Working hours

The management recruits one senior kitchen manager who works for 3 hours during non-peak time and 5 hours during peak season. Three cooks work for 4 hours during the regular season and 5 hours during peak season.

#### 42.2.8 Management

The activities and decisions of the temple are first handled and decided by the EO. There are two AEOs. The superintendents are assisted by senior assistants and junior assistants.

#### 42.2.9 Finances

The fund requirement is met from the interest on the temple's bank deposits. These funds cover the cost of food ingredients, salaries of cooks, cleaners, etc. In addition, the temple has a corpus fund income to the tune of Rs. 0.5 million per month for the temple's various other activities. The temple requires a total of Rs. 81.5 million per year for vegetables, groceries, transportation, fuel, power, housekeeping for dining halls, repairs, maintenance, and dining hall. The salary of employees, both regular and contract, adds up to Rs. 2.0 million per year.

The investment cost covers the construction of the kitchen, 2 steam boilers, 5 massive vessels, 5 hot insulated vessels, 3,000 plates, 3,000 glasses, 30 big bowls, 1 RO plant, 5 gas stoves, 15 gas cylinders, 2 trolleys, 5 rice chutes, 5 *dal/sambar* tanks, 20 cutting boards, 25 knives, 80 tables, 3,000 chairs, and 10 CCTVs. CCTVs are used in dining halls, entrances, and other areas to monitor the crowd.

The annual audit of accounts is carried out by a chartered accountant employed by the temple board. The annual audit includes the internal and external audits of the temple finances.

#### 42.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Inspection of raw materials and cooked food is done regularly by the temple authorities, led by the EO. The EO takes care of the quality control processes, quality inspections, and selection of suppliers while meeting the required raw material specification standards adapted from the FSSA<sup>770</sup> 2006.

#### 42.2.11 Food safety

The cooks and workers must sanitise themselves before they begin the preparations for cooking. There is a cold storage facility and two fridges to store perishable items so that they remain fresh. Before cooking, the vessels are sterilised. The head cook regularly conducts personal hygiene and food safety training for the kitchen staff and employs quality officers in the kitchen to maintain the quality of cooked food. The servers and cooks wear caps and gloves while preparing and serving the food.

### 42.2.12 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The Basara Temple uses a lot of technology for quick and efficient cooking and serving of food daily. Announcements are made to inform the crowd about *anna-daan* and to instil a sense of discipline in them. CCTVs and volunteers are used for monitoring and surveillance of the crowd.

To maintain hygiene, hot water is provided for washing vessels, and chlorinated water is used to wash the vegetables. Hot insulated containers preserve the quality of the food during the lunch period. Fossil-free fuel is used in the kitchen for cooking purposes.

### 42.2.13 Waste management

The temple generates 30 kg of wet waste and 70 kg of dry waste daily. The concerned staff at the temple segregates the wastes before transporting them to a designated dump yard. The wastes are collected in bins of different colours for easy segregation and disposal.

### Website referred

- 1 [www.basaratemple.org](http://www.basaratemple.org) accessed on 25 January 2021

### Notes

- 749 Hindu goddess of Learning, Knowledge, and Wisdom.
- 750 India's second longest river.
- 751 Hindu festival celebrated for the victory of the good over the evil.
- 752 Hindu festival to worship Goddess *Durga*, goddess of War.
- 753 Hindu festival celebrated for spring.
- 754 Hindu festival to worship God Shiva.
- 755 Hindu goddess of Wealth.
- 756 Hindu goddess of Death and Time.
- 757 War between the *Kauravas* and *Pandavas* mentioned in the Hindu epic, Mahabharat.
- 758 Hindu epic which narrates Rama's life.
- 759 Indian guru.
- 760 Respectful greeting with palms together.
- 761 Translates to "Let my provider of this food be happy".
- 762 Prayer to God.
- 763 *Arti* is a ritual of worship in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to the deity.
- 764 Religious offering.
- 765 Hymn or poem chanted.
- 766 Pulses.
- 767 Vegetable curry with lentil.
- 768 Sweet dish made with rice, ghee, lentils, sugar, cardamom and nuts.
- 769 Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission.
- 770 Laws related to food for safety.

## Case study 43 Sri Sitha Ramachandra Swamy, Bhadrachalam, Telangana, India

Saumya Thukral\*

### 43.1 Introduction

Sri Sitha Ramachandra Swamy Temple is one of the most famous temples dedicated to Lord Ram.<sup>771</sup> Situated on the banks of River Godavari,<sup>772</sup> it has a rich history and is considered to be one of South India's biggest holy shrines. The temple is in Bhadrachalam, Bhadrachalam-Kothagudem, Telangana State, South India. Constructed in the 17th century by a devotee of Lord Ram, the temple attracts thousands of devotees from across India to pay respect to the Sri Mahavishnu's<sup>773</sup> seventh incarnation.

Built on a hill near the holy river Godavari, the area existed in the Dandakaranya<sup>774</sup> forest during the period of *Ramayan*<sup>775</sup> where Ram and Laxman,<sup>776</sup> along with Sita, spent their *Vanavasa*<sup>777</sup> and *Parnashaala*.<sup>778</sup> Maharishi Bhadra<sup>779</sup> performed reparation to get Lord Ram's grace, but Lord Ram was in search of his consort and had promised Bhadra that he would fulfil his desires on his way back. But Ram could not keep the promise, so Sri Mahavishnu himself manifested as Vykuntha Ram.<sup>780</sup> He came to Bhadra with Sita and Laxman to bless him. This place was later transformed into *Bhadrachalam*. Sri Sitha Ramachandra Swamy Temple was constructed by Bhakta Ramadas<sup>781</sup> in 1674 AD. Ramadas visited Bhadrachalam when he heard the news of a *Jatara*<sup>782</sup> to be occurring there and asked for contributions from villagers for temple construction.

### 43.2 Anna-daan at Sri Sitha Ramachandra Swamy Temple

Sri Sitha Ramachandra Swamy Temple initiated the *anna-daan* scheme in 1990 to provide food to devotees coming from different parts of India. The *anna-daan* scheme is active throughout the year. The temple initially received around 50 pilgrims a day, and now the number has gone up to around 500 devotees daily on average. On Saturdays, Sundays, and other important days, some 800–1,000 pilgrims visit the temple.

#### 43.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna-daan* is auspicious and an age-old tradition that is believed to bring good luck to those serving and accepting the food. Spiritually, *anna-daan* is practised for the attainment of spiritual aspirations. Since the *Vedic* period, the tradition of offering food to pilgrims has been followed by the Hindus. For this, people donate funds to the temple to play a part in providing a generous *anna-daan*. This donation is exempted from income tax under the Exemption of Income Tax U/S 80 G.

Serving and having food under *anna-daan* is considered to bring good luck. It leaves a positive impact on the society and a positive feeling among the devotees. People from all castes, classes, and genders are treated equally and, they bless the donors. The practice of *anna-daan* develops harmony among the devotees, instilling dedication and devotion in them.

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### 43.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Before cooking and serving the food, rituals are practised by the cooks and temple authorities. Spiritual *prarthana*<sup>783</sup> is performed before the preparation of lunch every day. Prayers, the ritual of placing flowers, and *arthi*<sup>784</sup> are performed before cooking. The food and *prasadam*<sup>785</sup> are first served to the deity before it is served to the devotees. The cooks are not allowed to partake of the cooked food before serving. A ritual of chanting the following prayer in praise of Lord Ram is practised by the devotees before consuming the food.

*Jai Shreeramsree Rama Jayarama Jaya Jaya Rama*  
*ShreeramaJayaramaSundaraNaama*  
*ShreeramaJayarama Jaya Jaya Rama*  
*ShreeramaJayarama Mangala Naama*  
*ShreeramaJayaramaAtma Rama*  
*ShreeramaJayaramaSheetha Rama*  
*ShreeramaJayarama Sai Rama*

#### Translation

Victory to Rama  
 Whose name is sweet and auspicious  
 Who is the dweller of all beings  
 Victory to the consort of Seeta  
 Victory to Sai Rama

To make the devotees understand the significance and spirit behind the *anna-daan*, the temple management makes announcements through the PA system and electronic display boards. *Anna-daan* is considered an auspicious programme, and it is believed that the person who performs *anna-daan* will be blessed by God. The devotees are requested not to leave or waste any food and believe in *Annam Parabrahma*<sup>786</sup> *Swarupam* (Food is a form of God). The website offers visuals and audio clippings of the practises to be followed.

### 43.2.3 Number of people served

The number of devotees crosses 500 during the regular season, while during the peak season, 800–1,000 devotees visit the temple. During the regular season, the food is served three times, while during the peak season, the food is served five times. Only lunch is served (from 11:30 am to 2 pm); there is no provision for breakfast or dinner.

Table II.43.1 Number of people served and timings of *anna-daan*

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	11:30 am to 2 pm	3	5	500	800 to 1,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).



There are two dining halls, of which one is used regularly for *anna-daan*. Each dining hall can accommodate 200 people. Devotees sit at dining tables, and the food is served on plates. The temple management makes use of a ticket system to manage the crowd in the temple. Cleaning is done after each batch.

#### 43.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

It is interesting to know that huge volumes of food are prepared in a limited amount of time to cater to the crowd. The amount of food prepared per day during both normal and peak seasons is listed in Table II.43.2.

Table II.43.2 Food items served and their quantities

Food Items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice <sup>a</sup>	100 kg	200 kg
Puliyogare <sup>b</sup>	10 kg	15 kg
Dal	25 kg	50 kg
Sambar <sup>c</sup>	50 L	100 L
Vegetable curry	60 kg	120 kg
Buttermilk <sup>d</sup>	50 L	100 L
Sweet	20 kg <i>Chakrapongali</i> <sup>e</sup>	40 kg
Others (specify) Chutney <sup>f</sup>	15 kg	30 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Puliyogare, vegetable *bhaat*, ghee rice, *Bisibelebhaat*, *Pongal*, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Rice prepared with tamarind.

<sup>c</sup> Vegetable curry with lentils, pigeon peas, and tamarind.

<sup>d</sup> Fermented drink made from butter and cream.

<sup>e</sup> A sweet dish made with lentil, rice, sugar, ghee, and nuts.

<sup>f</sup> Sauces.

#### 43.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The preparation of lunch takes a total of 3 hours. The food is served within 30 minutes for one batch. Ten minutes are taken for cleaning up after each batch. Each batch takes 40 minutes to eat, including serving and cleaning.

#### 43.2.6 Nutrition

Nutrition in *prasadam* especially is ensured through the ample use of vegetables, lentils, and cow ghee.

#### 43.2.7 Human resources

During the regular season, the temple kitchen has a senior kitchen manager who works for 3 hours, three cooks who work for 4 hours, ten cleaners, and ten servers. The quality control management is done by the superintendents, AEO and EO. During the peak

season, the senior kitchen manager works for 5 hours, along with the cooks, cleaners, and servers.

The temple has one security guard who oversees the crowd. For the *anna-daan* programme, the volunteers are only Hindus and are hired by the *Yuvasevakulu*.<sup>787</sup> Cleaners are hired by contract. Servers and workers for cutting vegetables are also employed on contract.

Table II.43.3 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid staff	Number of people	
	Normal season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	1	1
Quality control manager	2	2
Cooks	3	4
Cleaners	10	15
Serving	10	15
Watchman	1	4

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Apart from workers, volunteers and daily donors are available for the proper conduct of *anna-daan* regardless of whether it is the normal season or peak season.

#### 43.2.8 Management

The temple is administered through a temple administration board, which consists of an EO, four AEOs, superintendents, senior assistants, and junior assistants. All the decision-making is done by the EO after consulting the other board members. The administration board of the temple handles *anna-daan* in which the matters related to the *anna-daan* first go to the EO, then to the AEO, and finally to the superintendent. The superintendent then passes the activity list to the senior and junior assistants.

The temple has several wings in the establishment, including accounts; accommodation; temple; *anna-daan*; engineering; revenue; stationery, printing, and publication; *Dharma Pracharam*<sup>788</sup>; audit; and computer.

#### 43.2.9 Finances

The funding requirement for *anna-daan* every year is Rs. 15 million. The main source of finance is donations made by the devotees. The temple receives a regular flow of Rs. 0.4 million per month. The temple has a corpus of Rs. 2,700 million. Interest earned on the corpus is used to procure raw materials, including vegetables and groceries; transportation; fuel, such as gas cylinders, pellets, and power; housekeeping for dining halls; repair and maintenance of kitchen equipment; kitchen; and dining hall premises. A total of Rs. 3.6 million is set aside every year for the salary of regular and contract employees.

A huge investment has been made in the construction of the kitchen, kitchen equipment, and tables and chairs for the devotees (Table II.43.4). The temple premises are monitored by ten CCTV cameras.

Table II.43.4 Kitchen equipment

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Construction of kitchen	1
Huge vessels	10
Hot insulated vessels	20
Plates	5,000
Glasses	5,000
Bowls	50
RO plants	2
Gas stoves	10
Gas cylinders	25
Trolleys	2
Rice chutes	10
<i>Dal/sambar</i> tanks	5
Cutting boards	20
Knives	25
Construction of dining hall	
Tables	90
Chairs	5,000
CCTVs (number and cost)	10

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The annual audit of the accounts is carried out by a chartered accountant appointed by the temple. The internal and external audits are prepared by the temple-chartered accountant.

#### 43.2.10 *Quality of raw materials*

While procuring the raw materials, the temple EO takes the utmost care in the selection of suppliers. Quality of raw materials is ensured by complying with the raw material specifications as defined in FSSA 2006.

#### 43.2.11 *Food safety*

In the kitchen, raw materials are stored, handled, and preserved well for the utmost hygiene and quality. The vegetables are sanitised before cutting, and the temple has two refrigerators for vegetables and other ingredients to keep them fresh.

The vessels used for cooking are sterilised before use. The head cook of the kitchen trains the kitchen staff in regular personal hygiene and food safety. In addition to this, there are quality officers to monitor the hygiene and quality of the food prepared. The staff members who serve food to the devotees wear caps and gloves while preparing and serving food. They use serving ladles.

### 43.2.12 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The temple kitchen has steam boilers and RO plants. To maintain hygienic standards, hot water is available for cleaning and washing the utensils. For maintaining the quality of food, hot insulated vessels are used. Fossil-free fuel gas and pellets are used as fuel for cooking purposes.

Devotees at the temple are organised in queues for easy management. Volunteers are also hired to monitor the crowd. This is done by making announcements over the PA system. Announcements are also made to acquaint the public with *anna-daan* procedures and rules while serving food. There are CCTVs installed in the *anna-daan* halls for surveillance.

### 43.2.13 Waste management

Thirty kilograms of wet waste are generated per day, which are used to make organic fertilisers. The concerned staff segregates the waste before putting them in different coloured buckets. The waste is then transported for treatment and disposal.

### Website referred

- 1 [www.badrachalarama.org](http://www.badrachalarama.org) accessed on 10 February 2021

### Notes

- 771 Hindu deity worshipped for his chivalry and virtue.
- 772 India's second-longest river.
- 773 Hindu deity known as the Supreme Being who created the universe.
- 774 Forest which was mentioned in the *Ramayana*.
- 775 Hindu epic.
- 776 Lord *Rama's* younger brother.
- 777 Forest stay.
- 778 Hut.
- 779 A Hindu *Rigvedic* sage.
- 780 Incarnation of *Sri Mahavishnu*.
- 781 Devotee of Lord *Rama* and composer of Carnatic music.
- 782 A festival.
- 783 A prayer.
- 784 Part of puja where a flame is offered to God.
- 785 Sacred food blessed by God.
- 786 Supreme *Brahman*.
- 787 Public service commission in Andhra Pradesh.
- 788 Bringing people together and celebrating tradition.

## Case study 44 Yadagirigutta Laxminarasimha Swamy Temple, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Saumya Thukral\*

### 44.1 Introduction

Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple is situated in Yadagirigutta on a serene hillock and is devoted to Lord Narasimha,<sup>789</sup> who is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.<sup>790</sup> Yadagirigutta is about 60 km from Hyderabad, Telangana, South India.

*Skanda Purana*<sup>791</sup> narrated that Yada Maharishi<sup>792</sup> performed penance to Lord Narasimha at this place. The lord appeared before Maharishi in five forms – namely, Jwaalaa<sup>793</sup> Narasimha, Yogananda<sup>794</sup> Narasimha, Lakshmi<sup>795</sup> Narasimha, Gandabheranda<sup>796</sup> Narasimha, and Ugra<sup>797</sup> Narasimha. After witnessing the five forms, Yada Maharishi pleaded with the lord to stay on the hill in all his forms. Therefore, the temple has all five deities of Lord Narasimha. These five forms are worshipped as Pancha<sup>798</sup> Narasimha Kshetram.<sup>799</sup>

#### Significance of the temple

The temple has the golden Sudarshana<sup>800</sup> Chakra<sup>801</sup> of Lord Vishnu atop the Sanctum Sanctorum of the temple, which is visible from 6 km afar. It is believed that the symbol guides the devotees towards the temple. Legend says that the Chakra has mystic powers and value, and turns on its own; human hands cannot turn it. Devotees from across India visit the temple and pay their respects to Lord Narasimha Swamy and Goddess Andal Ammavaru<sup>802</sup> when inside the temple. The significance of the temple attracts a large number of devotees each day throughout the year.

### 44.2 Anna-daan at Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple

*Anna-daan* tradition involves serving or donating food. In 1981, the temple began the *anna-daan* scheme at the initiative of EO Chowdhary. The scheme is active throughout the year. Initially, the temple received around 150 pilgrims a day, and now it receives 500 devotees per day for *anna-daan*. Peak days are Saturdays and Sundays, and the number of devotees goes up to 800.

#### 44.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan*

*Anna-daan* is an age-old tradition which continues to be fulfilled even now. It originated from the *Vedic* period when food was offered to the pilgrims in the Hindu temples believing in *anna data sukhi bhava*.<sup>803</sup> It is auspicious and is believed to bring good luck and a positive impact to all those who participate in this tradition. Apart from following the tradition, *anna-daan* is practised for the attainment of all spiritual aspirations.

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#### 44.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Before the preparation of food begins, the cooks and temple authorities perform a *prarthana*,<sup>804</sup> which includes the ritual of placing flowers and *arthi*.<sup>805</sup> After the food is prepared, the *prasadam*<sup>806</sup> is served to the deity before it is served to the devotees. The cooks, temple authorities, and devotees chant the following prayer in praise of Lord Narasimha.

*Aum KraumNarasimbhayaNamaha*  
*Aum Ksaum Namobhagavata narasimbhaya*  
*Jvala-maline dipta-damstrayagni-netraya*  
*Sarva-raksho-ghnayasarva-bhutavinashaya*  
*Sarva-jvara-vinashayadahadaha pacha pacha*  
*Raksha Raksha hum phat*

#### Translation

Obeisance to the Lord Narasimbhaya  
 Burning with His own scorching effulgence which are ablaze and whose eyes pour forth torrents of living fire,  
 Matched only by the glow of His glowing teeth.  
 Obeisance to the destroyer of all demons, to the slayer of all ghosts, to the destroyer of all sorts of fever.  
 Burn and burn, cook and cook, preserve and preserve.

The temple management uses the PA system to make announcements on the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan*. Devotees are requested not to waste food.

#### 44.2.3 Number of devotees served

Food is served to 500 devotees every day. The devotees are served only lunch between 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. During regular days, three batches of people are served. During peak season, four batches of devotees are served.

Table II.44.1 Timings and numbers

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	3	4	500	800

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The temple has two dining halls. Each dining hall can accommodate 100 people at a time. People can utilise the dining tables and plates for their *anna*. The temple manages the crowd by using a token system. Cleaning is done after serving every batch.

#### 44.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The menu for lunch includes plain rice, rice item, *dal*, *sambar*, vegetable curry, buttermilk, and sweets. The menu remains the same during the peak season as well. Table II.44.2 lists the volume of food served to the devotees per day. The chairman, EO, AEO, superintendent, and clerks maintain and oversee *anna-daan*.

Table II.44.2 Food items served and their quantities

Food Items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	120 kg	150 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	20 kg <i>Puliyogare</i> <sup>b</sup>	35 kg <i>Puliyogare</i>
<i>Dal</i>	20 kg	30 kg
<i>Sambar</i> <sup>c</sup>	80 L	120 L
Vegetable curry	25 kg	40 kg
Buttermilk <sup>d</sup>	70 L	100 L
Sweet	20 kg <i>Chakrapongali</i> <sup>e</sup>	30 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> *Puliyogare*, vegetable *bhat*, ghee rice, *Bisibelebhat*, *pongali*, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Rice prepared with tamarind.

<sup>c</sup> Vegetable curry with lentils, pigeon peas, and tamarind.

<sup>d</sup> Fermented drink made from butter and cream.

<sup>e</sup> A sweet dish made with lentil, rice, sugar, ghee, and nuts.

#### 44.2.5 Time taken for preparing the food

The cooks take a total of 3 hours to get the lunch ready. Forty minutes are taken to serve one batch. After each batch is through with eating, cleaners take around 10 minutes to clean the dining hall. Therefore, the total time taken for completing a single batch, including serving, cleaning, and people's entry, is 50 minutes.

#### 44.2.6 Nutrition

*Prasadam* is believed to be blessed by the gods. Since it is a spiritual food, special attention is given to its nutritional aspect. It is made in cow ghee and other quality ingredients, which not only make the *prasadam* tastier but also adequately fortified with nutrients.

#### 44.2.7 Human resources

One senior kitchen manager and three cooks are present in the kitchen for 3 hours during normal days and 4 hours during peak days. The quality control manager is responsible for the quality of the food cooked. The human resource team hires 15 cleaners and 15 servers, along with 1 security guard who is responsible for managing the crowd. Only Hindu volunteers are hired for *anna-daan* by *Yuwasevakulu*.<sup>807</sup> Workers for cleaning and cutting vegetables, cleaning the utensils and the dining hall, and serving people are employed on contract.

Table II.44.3 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*

<i>Temple staff</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Senior kitchen manager	1
Cooks	3
Quality control manager	1
Cleaners	15
Servers	15
Security guard	1

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

During the normal and peak season, some individuals visit the temple to donate. Volunteers help in organising *anna-daan* during both seasons.

#### 44.2.8 Management

The temple board consists of a chairman, an EO, four AEOs, superintendents, senior assistants, and junior assistants. Decisions regarding *anna-daan* activities are taken by the chairman and EO.

#### 44.2.9 Finances

*Anna-daan* is funded by interest income on deposit and corpus (which earns an interest of Rs. 1 million per month) and donations from devotees. Donations are exempt from income tax under u/s 80 G.

#### 44.2.10 Investment

The temple has invested in the construction of a kitchen with supportive infrastructure as described in Table II.44.4. There are ten CCTV cameras on the temple premises for security and maintenance.

Table II.44.4 Kitchen equipment

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Kitchen	1
Steam boilers	4
Huge vessels	15
Hot insulated vessels	35
Plates	3,000
Glasses	3,000
Bowls	30
RO plants	1
Gas stoves	10
Gas cylinders	20
Trolleys	5
Rice chutes	10
<i>Dal/sambar</i> tanks	10
Cutting boards	30

(Continued)



Table II.44.4 (Continued)

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
Knives	45
Tables	80
Chairs	3,000
CCTVs	10

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Most of the O&M costs per year are met from corpus interest. These costs include procurement of vegetables and groceries, transportation, fuel, power, housekeeping of dining halls, repair and maintenance of kitchen equipment, and dining halls. The salary of both regular and contract employees is to the tune of Rs. 4.5 million per year.

The annual audit of accounts is done by the chartered accountant. Both the internal and external audits are taken care of by the chartered accountant.

#### 44.2.11 Quality of raw materials

The quality of the food served is assured by the vigilance officer. The EO of the temple takes care of the selection of suppliers, quality control process, and inspection. The temple authorities ensure that the raw material specifications, adapted from the FSSA 2006, are complied with. Vegetables are sanitised before cutting and cooking. There are two fridges for food and ingredients.

To maintain hygienic conditions, the cooking vessels are sterilised before use. The head cook trains the kitchen staff on personal hygiene and food safety and employs quality officers to monitor the quality of the cooked food in the kitchen. The cooks and servers wear caps and gloves while preparing and serving the food to the devotees. They use ladles to serve.

#### 44.2.12 Technology in the kitchen

The cooks in the temple kitchen use steam boilers. RO plants provide drinking water. For hygienic purposes, hot water is used for washing vessels, and chlorine water is used for washing vegetables. The cooks use hot insulated vessels to maintain the quality of food. Gas fuel is used for fossil-free cooking.

For monitoring and surveillance purposes, the temple has invested in CCTVs in *anna-daan* halls and uses volunteers to manage the crowd. While serving food, announcements are made at frequent intervals.

#### 44.2.13 Waste management

The temple generates 50 kg of wet waste and 100 kg of dry waste per day. The segregation of the waste is done at the temple in different coloured bins. The waste is then transported in a truck to a dumping area or treatment plant. Wet waste is used to make organic fertilisers, whereas dry waste is converted into fertilisers.

### Website referred

1 <https://yadagiriguttasrilakshminarasimhaswamy.org> accessed on 18 March 2021

## Notes

- 789 The fourth incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*, having the body of a man and head of a lion.  
 790 Hindu God who preserves the universe.  
 791 Hindu religious text.  
 792 Hindu guru.  
 793 Most ferocious form depicted with eight hands.  
 794 Lord in a meditative pose.  
 795 Lord with *Lakshmi*. This form is a calm depiction of the Lord.  
 796 Eight-faced Lord form.  
 797 Ferocious Lord form.  
 798 Sanskrit word meaning five.  
 799 Holy location.  
 800 Auspicious vision.  
 801 Dish-like weapon.  
 802 Female Alvar from the 12 Alvar saints.  
 803 Meaning wishing prosperity to those who provide food.  
 804 Prayer to God.  
 805 Praying to God with a devotional song and a flame.  
 806 Food blessed by God.  
 807 Andhra Pradesh public service commission.

## Case study 45 Tripura Sundari Temple, Udaipur, Gomati, Tripura, India

Soumesh Ghosh\*, Anusree Mukherjee† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 45.1 Introduction

Tripura Sundari Temple is one of the holiest shrines in the country where Goddess Tripureshwari is worshipped. The temple is situated in the ancient city of Udaipur in Gomati district of Tripura. Popularly known as Matabari, the shrine is set upon a small hillock, which resembles the hump of a tortoise (*kurma*), bestowing the name *KurmaPeetha*. According to Tripura Rajmala, the royal chronicle of Tripura's Manikya kings, Maharaja Dhanya Manikya Bahadur constructed the temple in 1501 after getting a swapnadesh or divine order from the Supreme Mother or Aadishakti in his dream. The temple is constructed in the Bengali *ek-ratna* style.

#### Significance of the temple

It is a custom that even the Muslims of Udaipur offer their first crop and milk to Devi Tripura Sundari. The goddess is also popular among the tribal communities of Tripura. Sacrifice is offered daily except on *Dashami Tithi*<sup>808</sup> as per custom. The temple receives

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the second highest number of devotees in northeast India after the *Kamakhya* temple at Guwahati. Some of the special occasions celebrated every year at the temple are *Diwali*,<sup>809</sup> *Astami Puja*, and<sup>810</sup> *Mahalaya Amavasya* (moonless night).

## 45.2 Anna-daan at Tripura Sundari Temple

The ritual of *anna-daan* was initiated at the temple as far back as the establishment of the temple itself. The temple regularly offers *anna-daan* as *prasad*<sup>811</sup> to devotees, conditional upon their purchasing a coupon of Rs. 50 and producing it at the counter to receive their share of *prasad*. During the pandemic, this system was suspended. In its place, an online facility was introduced under which a person, by registering his phone number and paying Rs. 40, could collect his *anna-daan* between 2:30 pm and 4 pm. A maximum of five persons can take *anna-daan* against a single phone number.

### 45.2.1 Rituals and prayers

Food served to the devotees during *anna-daan* is the *prasad* that is being served to the deity during the daily *pooja*.<sup>812</sup> After offering *prasad* to the deity, it is served to the devotees. There are no special rituals conducted on behalf of the temple or the devotees before performing *anna-daan*.

### 45.2.2 Number of devotees served

Food is served once a day at 1 pm. Devotees are required to purchase a coupon of Rs. 50. During normal days, there are around 200 people to whom food is served per day, whereas during the peak season, it is around 350 people per day. During special occasions and during weekly *Nishi Pooja*, the number of devotees coming to the temple increases.

Table II.45.1 Number of people served and timings

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	From 1:00 pm	1–2	4–5	200	350

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Food is cooked in the kitchen located on the temple premises. It is served in a dining hall which can seat 200 people at a time. Steel plates and glasses are used for serving food. These are washed after use by the cleaning staff.

### 45.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Food items such as vegetables, grains, spices, and oils, are brought from vendors selected through tender. Approximatel, 40 kg of rice, 5 kg of *dal*, and 30 kg of mixed vegetables

are made daily. As mentioned in Table II.45.2, this quantity increases during peak season and on special occasions.

Table II.45.2 Quantity of ingredients required per day for *anna-daan*

Ingredients	Volumes used per day
Rice	35–40 kg
Moong dal (pulse)	5 kg
Green vegetables	30 kg
Potatoes	10 kg
Milk	10 L
Dessert ( <i>gobindobhog</i> rice)	5 kg
Sugar	3 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The menu includes the following:

Table II.45.3 Food menu

Menu of *anna-daan* (*anna bhog*)

- 1.2.1. Rice
- 1.2.2. Dal (pulses)
- 1.2.3. Fried seasonal vegetables
- 1.2.4. Vegetable curry made of seasonal vegetables
- 1.2.5. Payesh<sup>a</sup>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Desert made of milk and rice.

#### 45.2.4 Human resources

A 26-member team including cooks, servers, and cleaning staff is involved in organising *anna-daan*. The cooks have been serving the temple for generations and are usually from the same families. The other staff members are subject to change.

Table II.45.4 Staff of the temple involved in *anna-daan*

Staff	Normal season
Regular paid staff (temple staff)	
Cooks	6
Cleaners	4
Serving	10
Watchman and helpers	5
Caretaker	1

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 45.2.5 Management

The Mata Tripura Sundari Temple Development Committee was replaced by the Mata Tripura Sundari Temple Trust on 21 May 2018. The chief minister of the state is the *ex-officio* chairman of the trust. Members of the trust comprise the district magistrate and the main priest of the temple. The collector, Gomati district, is a member-secretary of the trust. Decisions regarding the temple management and the *anna-daan* are taken by the trust members. Each day, the *Pradhan Purohit* (the main priest) of the temple changes.

#### 45.2.6 Finances

Based on the application of trust members to the District Magistrate Office, funds are allocated by the state government on an annual basis for organising *anna-daan*, other rituals, and operations of the temple.

Procurement of food items for *anna-daan* is done by the Cooperative Society of the Temple. Annual audits are carried out by the trust, and a report is submitted to the Office of the District Magistrate.

#### 45.2.7 Technology in the kitchen

The kitchen is equipped with large and heavy utensils which are used for the preparation of food for *anna-daan*. No modern equipment is installed in the kitchen. Food processing and cooking are done by the staff traditionally.

#### 45.2.8 Waste management

Proper monitoring is done by the temple authorities regarding waste management and proper utilisation of leftover food. The excess or leftover food is served to the poor and needy people in and around the temple. Waste generated is collected after meals each day and disposed of in a waste disposal chamber located near the temple.

#### 45.2.9 Key issues

It is desirable to increase the items on the menu for *anna-daan*. Shortage of manpower hampers *anna-daan*. Lack of modern facilities/latest technologies especially in the kitchen is another concern. There is a pressing need for a chimney and exhaust fans in the kitchen.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://www.incredibleindia.org> accessed on 28 November 2021
- 2 <https://matabaritemple.in/> accessed on 28 November 2021

### Notes

- 808 The tenth lunar day.
- 809 A Hindu festival which symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, generally celebrated in November.
- 810 The eighth day of *Navarathri*.
- 811 A devotional offering made to a god, typically consisting of food that is later shared among devotees.
- 812 Ritualistic prayer.

## Case study 46 Karshni Ashram, Ramanreti Mahaban, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India

Srinivas Singh\*

### 46.1 Introduction

There are many places in the town of Gokul<sup>813</sup> which have played host to several episodes in Lord Krishna's<sup>814</sup> life. One of these is Raman Reti, also known as *Raman Van*, located in the east of Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India. The attractions in Gokul occupy a special position in the hearts and minds of the locals. It was believed that Lord Krishna, along with Balarama<sup>815</sup> and their friends, spent his childhood days in fun and frolic.

Sri Raman Reti is the playground of Lord Balakrishna. In *Gargsambhita*,<sup>816</sup> there is clear evidence related to the position of *Raman Reti*. This picturesque playground of Lord Balakrishna was discovered by Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya ji<sup>817</sup> with his divine spiritual vision. Based on sacred texts *Brahmavaivarta*<sup>818</sup> and *Gargasambhita*, it is believed with certainty that the lord, along with his ancestors *Dau* and *Hari, Tosh*, etc., had sanctified this place by dancing. There are three temples on the right side of *Raman Reti*: Lord Shiva, *Nava Graha*, and *Radha-Krishna*, which is the main temple.

In the temple, one can find more than 50 small huts (made from natural materials) where sadhus, saints, and students live.

In addition, the temple has a mini zoo on its premises where approximately 500 cows, 200 deer, 5 elephants, 50 horses, 500 peacocks, and other animals live. The temple authority has appointed a veterinary doctor and more than 20 staff to take care of the animals.

#### Significance of the temple

An interesting fact about this place is that here, the Hindu festival of *Holi* is celebrated with sand rather than the traditional colours.

### 46.2 Anna-daan at Udasin Kasin Ashram Trust

The ashram is involved in various charitable work, with *anna-daan* being the major one. There is a belief that the food served during *anna-daan* comes straight from God and is therefore holy food. Hence, most devotees who visit the temple eat the food without fail.

#### 46.2.1 Number of people served

Every day, more than 5,000 persons are served free food, while on some special occasions like *Holi*,<sup>819</sup> *Krishna Janmashtami*,<sup>820</sup> etc., more than 25,000 persons are served. The temple serves food three times a day – breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast is served between 6:30 am and 8:20 am, lunch between noon and 1 pm, and dinner between 6 pm and 8:30 pm.

The temple has two dining areas – one of which is used for serving the devotees. A queue system is followed to maintain the crowd, and food is served on steel plates in a

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buffet system. After collecting their share, they move to the garden area, which is located next to the serving area, and eat food sitting on the ground.

*Sadhus*,<sup>821</sup> saints, and *Batuk*<sup>822</sup> (the students) are served in the other dining hall. They have lunch in *pangat*<sup>823</sup> sitting on the ground in a row.

#### 46.2.2 Volume of food prepared and items served

To ensure that there is no wastage of food, the temple authorities instruct the cooks to prepare food in limited quantity at the beginning of the day. If they notice an abrupt increase in the number of devotees, they instruct the cooking staff accordingly. The menu for breakfast includes *daliya*<sup>824</sup> and tea; for lunch, it is rice, *chapati*,<sup>825</sup> dal, and vegetable curry. On special occasions, sweets are served. The quantity of ingredients used per day during normal days and peak seasons is given in Table II.46.1.

Table II.46.1 Volume of ingredients

Items	Volume used per day	
	Normal	Peak
Flour	200 kg	500 kg
Pulse	80 kg	180 kg
Rice	300 kg	500 kg
Milk	50 L	
Vegetables	80 kg	120 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

#### 46.2.3 Nutrition

The cooks recruited are certified and conscious of the nutritional requirements. The quality of the food is certified by the health department every week. Officials from the health department visit the temple frequently and inspect the food to make sure the quality is maintained in accordance with the rules and regulations. Temple authorities have their own nutrition expert who decides the menu items and changes them according to seasons.

#### 46.2.4 Human resources

There are two units. Both units have their own working staff, kitchen, and dining area. Presently, each unit has 8 cooks, 4 helpers for cooks, and 100 temple students (*batuk*) for cleaning and serving the food.

Table II.46.2 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*

Temple staff	Number
Cooks	16
Serving staff (students)	100
Helpers	4

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

#### 46.2.5 Finances

The total annual expenditure is around Rs. 30 lakhs. The board has its own chartered accountant to audit the temple's finances. The temple board comes under RTI which ensures transparency.

#### 46.2.6 Quality of raw materials

There are three rooms for storing raw materials used for preparing food. There are two large deep freezers to store ingredients. Proper monitoring and inspections are done by the temple authorities, as well as the health department, to ensure that quality food is served under *anna-daan*. The ingredients are purchased at least one week in advance and stored. While cooking and serving, the cooks and other workers are mandated to wear head caps, gloves, and uniforms. The vessels and other utensils are well sterilised before use.

#### 46.2.7 Technology adopted in the kitchen

The technology used in the temple is quite new. The kitchen has equipment like *roti*-making machines, vegetable cutting machines, and flour grinders, along with huge vessels, plates, glasses, trolleys, and *sambar* tanks. There are around five gas stoves in each unit. In addition, the dining hall is equipped with CCTV cameras to ensure safety. An online payment facility is also available to make the payment process for *anna-daan* hassle-free.

#### 46.2.8 Waste management

Waste is managed efficiently. The food waste is transferred to cow sheds for use as cattle feed. The entire campus of the ashram is plastic-free. Animal waste is used in the biogas plant.

### Notes

813 A place where Lord Krishna was raised as a child.

814 In Hinduism, Krishna is one of the most popular of Indian deities, an avatar of Vishnu.

815 A Hindu god and the elder brother of Krishna.

816 The name of two Sanskrit texts: an account of the life of Krishna.

817 An Indian philosopher.

818 Sacred texts in Hinduism.

819 A Hindu spring festival celebrated in February or March in honour of Krishna.

820 A Hindu festival celebrated annually in August or September in honour of the birth of Krishna.

821 A holy man, sage.

822 Students of the Ashram.

823 Community/group.

824 *Porridge*.

825 Indian bread.



## Case study 47 Sri Annapurna Anna-daan Mutt, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

Srinivas Singh\*

### 47.1 Introduction

Annapurna Mutt is located close to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, North India. Annapurna Temple is dedicated to the deity Annapurna or Annapoorna Mata, the goddess of food or the goddess of nourishment (*anna* means food and *purna* means complete or full). There is a golden idol of the Annapurna Mata in the Annapurna Temple. She is the goddess of Varanasi city. The local people believe that the goddess always protects the Kashi and blesses their devotees with food. Annapurna Mata is considered the queen of the Kashi and Lord Shiva<sup>826</sup> the king of the Kashi.

According to an anecdote, Lord Shiva is believed to have said to Goddess Parvati that the whole world was an illusion and that food was part of *maya*. Mata Parvati became angry at this observation, and to show the importance of food, she removed it from the earth. In the absence of food from the earth, people became distressed with hunger. Seeing her devotees suffer, she brought the food back to the earth. She also established a kitchen in the holy city of Varanasi. Lord Shiva came to her and admitted the importance of material things. Mata Parvati became very happy and offered food to Lord Shiva with her own hands. From that time, Mata Parvati came to be worshipped as an *Annapurna*, the goddess of food.

Another mythological story associated with Annapurna is that once Mata Parvati closed all the eyes of Lord Shiva (he has three eyes: sun, moon, and fire), the entire world was engulfed in darkness. The colour of Mata Parvati also became dark (losing her *Gauri* form). She was very sorrowful and asked Lord Shiva to help her get her *Gauri* form back again. Lord Shiva asked her to organise *anna-daan* at Kashi. No sooner had she done it than she regained her *Gauri* form. Her devotees perform *Annapurna pooja*<sup>827</sup> by organising *anna-daan* in Kashi.

#### Special occasions

Annapurna Temple has a huge crowd of pilgrims on *Annacoot*.<sup>828</sup> This festival is celebrated in India every year after *Diwali*. On the occasion of *Annacoot*, coins are distributed to all the devotees. It is believed that whoever worships this coin will be blessed by the Annapurna Mata for a successful and prosperous life. *Nav Durga Yatra* is another festival celebrated during *Navratri*<sup>829</sup> in September or October. *Annapurna* is also called *Mahagauri Durga* and is worshipped on the eighth day of the *Navratri*.

The thread ceremony is another occasion conducted by the Kasi Annapurna Anna Kshetra<sup>830</sup> Trust for Hindu *Brahmin*<sup>831</sup> children. Every year, around 1,000 *Brahmin* children participate in the ceremony.

### 47.2 Anna-daan at Mata Annapurna Temple

*Anna-daan* was started at the temple in 1997. The main motive behind introducing the tradition of *anna-daan* is to serve free food to all those who visit the temple. *Anna-daan*

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is active throughout the year every day. It is believed that Mata Annapurna does not eat till her devotees have had their food. In addition to *anna-daan*, the temple provides free *vedik*<sup>832</sup> education to around 263 students at Annapurna Sanskrit College. All students and employees are provided free food by the trust.

The trust also runs a 25-room old-age home for Hindu men and women. There are around 70 persons in the old-age home, and their stay and food are free.

Under the trust's free marriage scheme, around 200 couples tied the knot. The ceremony was attended by more than 1,000 invitees who were provided free facilities, including food.

#### 47.2.1 Number of devotees served

There are two units (I and II) working for *anna-daan*. Both units work independently but are governed by the temple authority. In both units, food is served twice a day: a full meal between 9 am and 5 pm and evening snacks between 5 pm and 9 pm. At the time of its launch, around 200 to 300 people were fed daily. Currently, more than 3,000 persons per day are served on normal days; on special occasions, such as *Navratri*, the number of persons served food increases to more than 10,000 per day. During the thread ceremony which lasts a week, more than 5,000 people comprising Hindu religious teachers, spiritual *gurus*, and Hindu scholars are served.

#### 47.2.2 Quantity of food prepared and items served

To avoid wastage, a limited quantity of food (say 150 kg of rice) is cooked at the beginning of the day. Based on their experience, the temple authorities make an estimate of the likely number of devotees who might visit the temple that day and give instructions to the cooking staff accordingly. If food runs short, an additional quantity of food is cooked immediately. The food items served include rice, *chapatti*,<sup>833</sup> pulses, *papad*,<sup>834</sup> pickles, vegetable curry, and curd. Both units serve the same menu (Table II.47.1).

Table II.47.1 Volume of ingredients

Items	Volume used per day in kg	
	Normal season	Peak season
Flour	100 to 150 kg	200 to 800 kg
Pulses	50 kg	100 kg
Rice	150 to 200 kg	500 to 800 kg
Curd	100 kg	400 kg
Vegetables	200 kg	500 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 47.2.3 Nutrition

Cooks ensure that food has adequate nutrition. The officials from the health department also inspect and certify the food as per the rules and regulations. In addition, the temple authority has its own nutrition expert to take care of the nutritional aspect of the food. The menu is changed according to the season to make it suitable for people's health.

#### 47.2.4 Human resources

Both units have their own staff for the kitchen and dining area, recruited by the trust. Each unit has two cooks, four helpers, and eight to ten cleaning and serving staff. Temple authority requests additional temporary staff in peak seasons like *Navratri*, *Sawan*,<sup>835</sup> etc.

#### 47.2.5 Management

The process of *anna-daan* is managed by the Kashi Annapurna Kshetra Trust governed by Kashi Vishwanath Temple. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple is governed by Panchayati Akhada Mahanirvani. All decision about *anna-daan* are taken by a four-member working committee. At present, it has only two members, and all the decisions are taken by the chief trustee. In the absence of a chief trustee, the executive trustee manages *anna-daan* activities. Kashi Vishwanath Trust provides guidance to the working committee on matters regarding *anna-daan*.

#### 47.2.6 Finances

Temple authorities incur an expenditure of around Rs. 3 to 4 million per month during normal days. During the peak session, it crosses Rs. 10 million per month. Funds collected are deposited into the temple's bank account. Devotees who donate are given computerised receipts. All transactions are maintained on the computer.

Annual audits are carried out by the board's chartered accountant. The temple board is subject to RTI.

#### 47.2.7 Quality of raw materials

Proper monitoring and inspections are done by the temple authorities, as well as the health department, to ensure the quality of food served during *anna-daan*. The food ingredients required for at least one week are stored. While cooking and serving, the cooks and other workers are mandated to wear caps, gloves, and uniforms. The vessels and other utensils are well sterilised before being used.

#### 47.2.8 Technology in the kitchen

The temple has installed boilers, steamers, *roti*-making machines, CCTVs, and online payment facilities. All the documents regarding expenses and donations are well maintained on the computer. The temple has the facility for home delivery for the payment of Rs. 150 online *prasadam*.<sup>836</sup>

The temple authorities have invested huge amounts on various kitchen equipment and in dining halls. The kitchen equipment includes four rice boilers and two water boilers, along with huge vessels, plates, glasses, trolleys (around 50) and *sambar* tanks (five each). There are around five gas stoves in each unit. The dining hall is equipped with CCTV cameras and is monitored by the police and temple authorities. Approximately three gas cylinders are used per day for preparing food. In addition, they have a *roti*-making machine in both units.

#### 47.2.9 Waste management

Waste generated at the temple premises is handed over to the Municipality - Varanasi Nagar Nigam.

## Notes

- 826 *Mata Parvati's* husband – the Destroyer of Evil.  
 827 The act of worship.  
 828 It means mountain of food. Hindu festival in which devotees worship Govardhan Hill and prepare and offer a large variety of vegetarian food to Krishna as a mark of gratitude.  
 829 *Navratri* is a Hindu festival that spans nine nights and is celebrated every year in autumn.  
 830 Sacred precinct.  
 831 A member of the highest Hindu caste, originally that of the priesthood.  
 832 Education system practised in ancient India.  
 833 A thin pancake of unleavened whole meal bread cooked on a griddle.  
 834 A thin crisp cake.  
 835 In Hindu religion, the whole *Sawan* month is dedicated to the worship of Lord *Shiva* and Goddess *Parvati*.  
 836 Is a religious offering.

## Case study 48 Shri Gorakhnath Temple, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

Srinivas Singh\*

### 48.1 Introduction

The Shri Gorakhnath Mandir is of Nath monastic order. The name Gorakhnath is derived from the name of saint Gorakshanath, a 11th-century yogi who travelled widely across India and is the author of several texts that form a part of the canon of Nath Sampradaya. The Nath tradition was founded by guru Matsyendranath. This *mutt* is situated in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India. The temple performs various cultural and social activities and serves as the cultural hub of the city.

#### Significance of the temple

Shri Gorakhnath Temple is the highest centre of Nath Panth. The Nath Panth is one evolutionary phase of a very old Siddha tradition of India. Guru Gorakshnath is considered the originator of the Nath Panth. The Nath Panth has extensive Shaivism-related theological literature of its own. The panth has two branches: one consisting of sadhus (celibate monks) and the other consisting of householder (married) laypeople. The householders are significantly more in number and have the characteristics of an endogamous caste.

In the post-Independence period, Shri Gorakhanath Temple became the main centre of Hindu religious philosophy. Apart from being a religious temple, Shri Gorakhnath Temple took on the role of spiritual-based social change with the establishment of the Maharana Pratap Education Council in 1932. The council ushered in an educational revolution in eastern Uttar Pradesh. At present, about 48 educational-training, medical, and service institutions, including Mahayogi Gorakhnath University, Gorakhpur, are operating under the council and more than 5,000 employees are serving in these

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institutions. Every year, about 25,000 patients receive medical treatment at Guru Shree Gorakhnath Chikitsalaya and Mahant Digvijaynath Ayurveda Chikitsalaya.

It is not known when or by whom the old Shri Gorakhnath Temple was built. But this temple, built on the austerity of the great yogi Gorakhanath, has kept its features intact. The expansion work of the modern temple started in 1953 and was completed in 1973. In 1956–57, the then Peethadheeshwar<sup>837</sup> Yugpurush Brahmlin Mahant Digvijaynath Ji Maharaj got the lake situated in the courtyard constructed. In the same year, he also got the *Sadhana Bhawan* (also known as *Sant Niwas*) constructed for the residence of sages.

## 48.2 Anna-daan at Goraknath Mandir

*Anna-daan* is being organised at Goraknath Mandir for several years. Free food is provided from the *bhandara*<sup>838</sup> to the devotees who come daily from various parts of the country. The spirit behind initiating *anna-daan* can be traced to a tale.

According to the tale, Mahayogi Gorakhnath, on one of his excursions, reached the place of Jwala Devi in Kangra District (Himachal Pradesh). Upon seeing Mahayogi, Devi manifested herself to welcome him and requested him to receive alms in the *dhaam* itself. Since the food was tamasic and Gorakhnath did not want to have that, he requested Devi to give him *khichdi*<sup>839</sup> and that too in the *madhukari* tradition (it is a way of collecting alms in small amounts from different places like bees). The Devi replied that she would get the cooking area set up and asked him to go and get the alms for *khichdi*. It is said that for alms, Gorakhnath walked towards that part of the Ayodhya area which is now known as Gorakhpur. He took *samadhi* at this peaceful and quiet area in the foothills of Himalayas. The begging bowl which was kept for collecting *khichdi* never got filled even when the devotees kept donating *khichdi*. The Mahayogi never returned to Kangra, where the water kept boiling by the blessing of Jwala Devi. Devotees have been donating *khichdi* to that very begging bowl of Gorakhnath since then. As *shraddha* and *bhakti* increased, an increasing number of devotees thronged the temple. For many centuries, fairs have been organised in which lakhs of devotees take part. *Prasad* is given to all irrespective of their caste or creed. Everyone who reaches the *bhandara* gets a full meal.

### 48.2.1 Number of devotees served

During the normal season, around 500 people are served breakfast, lunch, and dinner. During peak season, as many as 20,000 to 25,000 people are served food. Other details are in Table II.48.1.

### 48.2.2 Quantity of food prepared and items served

*Daliya*<sup>840</sup> and tea are served at breakfast. For lunch and dinner, the menu includes rice, *chapati*, dal, vegetable curry, and sweets (on special occasions). Based on their experience, the temple authorities make an estimate of the flow of devotees every day and instruct the cooking staff on the quantity of food to be cooked to ensure that there is no wastage. See Table II.48.2.

Table II.48.1 Timings and people served

Meals	Timing	Number of people fed	
		Normal days	Peak days
Breakfast	6:30 am to 8:30 am	500	20,000
Lunch	12 pm to 2 pm	500	25,000
Dinner	7:30 pm to 8:30 pm	500	25,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.48.2 Volume of ingredients

Items	Volume of ingredients used per day in kilograms	
	Normal season	Peak season
Flour	75 kg	3,750 kg
Pulse	15 kg	750 kg
Rice	70 kg	2,500 kg
Vegetables	75 kg	3,750 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 48.2.3 Human resources

Presently, the temple has 8 cooks, 4 helpers for cooks, and 300 temple students (*batuk*) for cleaning and serving the food.

Table II.48.3 Human resources

Category	Number	
	Normal days	Peak days
Cooks	8	50
Helpers	4	80
Students ( <i>batuk</i> ) to serve food	20	300

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 48.2.4 Quality of raw materials

Proper monitoring and inspections are done by the temple authorities, as well as the health department, to ensure that good quality food is served at *anna-daan*. While cooking and serving, the cooks and other workers are mandated to wear caps, gloves, and uniforms. Vessels, plates, and other utensils are sterilised before and after use. The temple has a nutritionist to look after the nutritional aspect of the food served. He also makes changes to the menu according to the seasons.

Vegetables are purchased from Gorakhnath Krishi Vigyan Kendra<sup>841</sup> Chowkmafi. These vegetables are organically grown on the land of the Mahayogi, and the land is owned by the temple. Vegetables are also procured from the local market as per

requirement. Wheat and paddy are grown and sourced from land belonging to temple. Milk is procured from the temple's dairy farm.

There are four rooms for storing raw materials and two large deep freezers for milk products and other perishables.

#### 48.2.5 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Temple has installed new steam boilers for cooking rice, a *chapatti*-making machine, and a vegetable-cutting machine. CCTV camera is installed to monitor activities on the premises. See Table II.48.4 for more details.

Table II.48.4 Kitchen equipment

Equipment	Numbers
Vegetable-cutting machine	1
Chapatti making machine	1
Large LPG stove	10
Small LPG stove	25
Atta <sup>a</sup> making machine	2
Stainless steel pots	60
Wok	30
Buckets	50
High-hipped platter	25
Plates	10,000
Tumblers	10,000
Rolling pin and board	20
Flat pan	10
Bowls	10,000
Spoons	10,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Dough.

#### 48.2.6 Waste management

Food waste is used as cattle feed. The temple premises are plastic-free. Cow dung is used as slurry in the biogas gas plant.

### Notes

837 Head seer.

838 Bhandara is the term used mostly in Hindu communities to describe the free meal served to the people invited to the temple.

839 Rice, dal, spices-based dish.

840 Porridge.

841 A district level Farm Science Centre.

## Case study 49 Shree Janaki Mahal Trust Ayodhya, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, India

Srinivas Singh\*

### 49.1 Introduction

Ayodhya Shree Janaki Mahal Trust is in Naya Ghat, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. The Ayodhya city, identified as Ram's capital city, was earlier known as *Saketa*. In the epic *Ramayan*, the city of Ayodhya is cited as the birthplace of Lord Sri Ram, a Hindu deity who was worshipped as Lord Vishnu's seventh incarnation. Ayodhya became a famous pilgrimage destination in the 15th century when Ramananda, the Hindu mystic, established a devotional sect of Sri Ram.

Shree Janaki Mahal and the adjoining buildings were constructed in 1947 by Mohanlal Kejariwal. This place is also popular as Nepali *kothi*. Earlier, the temple was called as *Sita-Ram Var Vivah Kunj*, but later, it was converted into a trust called Janaki Mahal Trust, which manages the temple today. There are five temples on the premises: *Ram Janaki*, *Shiva*, *Hanuman*, *Shri Ganesha*, and *Ram Lala*.

#### Special occasions

The *Ram-Sita Vivah Mahotasav*,<sup>842</sup> *Ramnavami*,<sup>843</sup> *Janaki Navmi*, and<sup>844</sup> *Shravan Jhula* are special occasions celebrated in the temple with a lot of pomp and show. During these days, devotional songs are sung day and night in the temple.

### 49.2 Anna-daan at Janaki Mahal Trust

*Anna-daan* was started by the late Mohan Lal Kajeriwalin the year 1943. The spirit behind initiating *anna-daan* was to serve free food to everyone who visits the place. The trust is of the view that no person should go to sleep on an empty stomach. *Anna-daan* is active throughout the year. When it was started, there were around 100 devotees; now their number has increased to more than 200 per day. During *Ram Navami* and other special occasions such as *Ram Vivah*,<sup>845</sup> more than 1,000 persons visit the temple daily and have food.

#### 49.2.1 Number of people served

The trust provides both lunch and dinner to about 200 people per day regularly. Lunch is served between 10 am and 12 pm and dinner between 6 pm and 8 pm. The temple has two dining halls for serving food. In addition to the daily *anna-daan*, during special occasions, the trust provides food for the poor in hospitals and other temples. Also, in the morning, the trust provides milk, tea, and other snacks outside the temple. Apart from serving food to the devotees, the trust also carries out *bandar seva*, providing food for more than 300 monkeys per day, showing compassion to animals.

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### 49.2.2 Quantity of food cooked and items served

The menu for lunch and dinner includes rice, *chapati*, *dal*, vegetable curry, *papad*,<sup>846</sup> pickle, and curd. Based on their years of experience, the temple authorities make an estimate of the daily arrival of devotees and instruct the kitchen staff to cook food accordingly. The details of the volume of ingredients used per day are given in Table II.49.1.

Table II.49.1 Volume of ingredients

Items	Volume of ingredients used per day	
	Normal	Peak
Flour	80 kg	150 kg
Pulse	25 kg	50 kg
Rice	80 kg	200 kg
Vegetables	30 kg	50 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 49.2.3 Human resources

There are two units at the temple which provide *anna-daan*. Both units have their own working staffs in kitchen and dining area. The trust recruits' employees separately for both units. Each unit has two cooks, four helpers for cooks, and three cleaners for cleaning and serving the food. Also, the temple authority recruits temporary staffs during the peak season to carry out the *anna-daan* smoothly.

Table II.49.2 Human resources

Nature of Job	Number of People
Cooks	4
Helper	8
Food serving	3
Cleaners	3

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 49.2.4 Quality of raw materials

Proper monitoring and inspections are done by the trust authorities, as well as the health department, to ensure that the quality of food served at *anna-daan* is good. The temple has a facility for storing raw materials in adequate quantity for smooth functioning of *anna-daan*.

### 49.2.5 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen is equipped with modern machines like an *atta*-making machine, vegetable cutter, and LPG stoves to make the process of preparation and cooking the food easy.

Apart from this equipment, a traditional *bhatti*<sup>847</sup> (oven) is also used to prepare *rotis/chapatis*. A CCTV camera is installed in the temple area for surveillance. See Table II.49.3 for details.

Table II.49.3 Kitchen equipment

Equipment	Numbers
Vegetable-cutting machine	1
LPG stoves	2
Atta-maker machine	1
Traditional <i>bhatti</i>	1
Stainless steel pots	10
Iron pan	4
Buckets	10
High-hipped platter	10
Plates	100
Glasses	100
Rolling pin and board	20
Flat pan	10
Bowls	100
Spoons	100

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 49.2.6 Nutrition

The cooks are certified and aware of the importance of nutrition. Also, the quality of food is certified by the health department every week. They inspect the food regularly to make sure that the quality is maintained as per the rules and regulations. The temple has its own nutrition expert to monitor the menu frequently and suggest seasonal changes to it.

#### 49.2.7 Finances

The temple authority incurs an expenditure of approximately Rs. 3.06 million annually during normal days. During peak session, it crosses Rs. 12 million rupees. The main source of funds is donations contributed by the devotees. The funds collected are deposited in the temple bank account. All financial transactions are maintained manually. To ensure financial accountability, annual audits are carried out by the trust board. The board has its own chartered accountant, and the temple board is subjected to RTI, which ensures transparency.

#### 49.2.8 Waste management

Waste generated is collected twice daily and sent to Ayodhya Nager Nigam for treatment and disposal.

## Notes

- 842 *Wedding day of Lord Ram Janki Vivah*. 'Baraat' (wedding processing) of Lord Rama is one of the main attractions.
- 843 Celebrated to mark the birth of Lord Rama.
- 844 *Celebrated Goddess Maa Janki 's birthday*.
- 845 A Hindu festival celebrating the wedding of Rama and Sita.
- 846 Thin Indian wafer or cracker.
- 847 A heating unit.

## Case study 50 Gayatri Teerth Shantikunj, Haridwar, Uttarakhand

Pashupati Nath\*, Induja Mishra† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 50.1 Introduction

Gayatri Teerth Shantikunj was established in 1971 by Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya on a small piece of land. Gradually, it spread over to a large area in Gayatri Nagar at Haridwar, North India. In 1988, a campus was established and named Gayatrikunj. Since then, it has been visited by many scholars, dignitaries, and saints including Shri Dalai Lama, Shri Pranab Mukherjee,<sup>848</sup> Shri Abdul Kalam,<sup>849</sup> etc.

Development of divinity in mankind is the foremost goal and the avowed objective. The Shantikunj ashram<sup>850</sup> has *Yagyashala*,<sup>851</sup> temples of ancient *rishis*,<sup>852</sup> and an exhibition of Divine Culture. Besides visiting these places, one can also participate in the daily activities of the ashram. Various training camps are also organised for fulfilment of moral and spiritual values. Shanti Kunj is the place to be for those seeking inner peace and divine inspiration.

Shantikunj is devoted to cultural, ethical, moral, and spiritual awakening and national integration. Dr. Pranav Pandya is the present religious head of Gayatri Tirth Shantikunj, Haridwar. He is also acting as the chancellor of Dev Sanskriti Viswavidyalya. Shantikunj is a unique abode committed to promoting peace, prosperity, amity, love, goodwill, and fraternity irrespective of region, religion, faith, caste, creed, or sect. Visitors of all faiths come to the ashram for its peace and fraternal treatment. The courteous ovation and pleasing treatment add glory to the solemn attraction of the ashram – making the visitors visit the place again and again. Expansion of national unity, amity, and brotherhood and extinction of ignorance, jealousy, hatred, and strife from the globe are being attempted at Shantikunj by popularising *gayatri mantra*,<sup>853</sup> *yagna*,<sup>854</sup> and *sanskaars* (sacramental rites), the adoption of which invokes celestial thoughts and inspires divine deeds. The divinity may be seen firmly fixed in every activity of this holy pilgrimage centre.

The daily routine begins at 3:30 am with a collective prayer followed by special *gayatri mantra* chanting and sun meditation. *Yagna* is also performed every morning, which reminds one of the *Vedic* days in the *ashrams* of the *rishis*.<sup>855</sup>

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### Significance of the temple

Shantikunj Haridwar is a world-renowned ashram and the headquarters of All World Gayatri Pariwar (AWGP). An academy for social and spiritual awakening, this pilgrimage centre has shown the right path and given long-lasting happiness to crores of people. An ideal place which imparts training to the masses based on divine spiritual principles, it aims for the revival of *rishi* traditions.

## 50.2 Anna-daan at Santikunj

*Anna-daan* is an age-old tradition with the motivation of providing food for every devotee visiting Santikunj. Thousands of devotees are served *prasadam*<sup>856</sup> without any discrimination based on caste, creed, culture, or status. Two meals are offered free of cost to every visitor and resident. Delicious, nutritious food is prepared and served under hygienic conditions.

### 50.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

People strongly believe that they overcome their difficulties if they perform *anna-daan*. Devotees are served a two-course meal, making it one of the best-served meals at any place. During normal days, the average number served goes up to 1,500, and during peak seasons, it reaches up to 10,000 devotees per day. The main spiritual belief at Santikunj is *GyaanDaan*.<sup>857</sup> It can be gained by performing three *Sevas*<sup>858</sup>.

### 50.2.2 Rituals and prayers

*Bali Vaishwa*<sup>859</sup> is performed before cooking and preparing the meal for *anna-daan*. It is compulsory for the devotees to recite *gayatri mahamantra*<sup>860</sup> three times before taking the meal. Mornings and afternoons are scheduled for lectures, practical, and fieldwork under different kinds of training programmes. Two special kinds of meditations *Jyoti Avadharan Sadhana* and *Nad Yoga Sadhana* are also performed in the afternoon and morning, respectively, for 15 minutes each.

### 50.2.3 Number of devotees served

During the peak season, there is no time restriction, and *anna-daan* is served continuously from 8:40 am to 2 pm and dinner between 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. During the peak season, special arrangements are made to manage the crowd. The entire crowd is divided into nine to ten batches (vs two to three batches in normal time) and served accordingly.

Table II.50.1 Number of devotees served *anna-daan* and timings

Meals	Time	Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	8:40 am–2:00 pm	1,500	5,000–10,000
Dinner	4:30 pm–7:30 pm	1,500	5,000–10,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.50.2 Dining hall at Shantikunj, Haridwar

Dining Hall	Number of people served	
	Normal Season	Peak Season
1	1,000	1,500

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 50.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Modern equipment like a *roti* maker and steam cooker make it possible to cook large quantities of food instantly and on time. The quantity may vary according to the number of devotees, but the approximate quantity of rice and wheat is around 4 to 5 quintals per day in the normal season and 10 to 15 quintals during peak season. The quantity of food to be cooked depends on the number of devotees. During special occasions like *Guru Puru*<sup>861</sup> and *Basant Panchmi*,<sup>862</sup> the variety of food items to be served to devotees, as well as to visitors, include *puri*,<sup>863</sup> *dahivada*,<sup>864</sup> *kadi*,<sup>865</sup> *mung dal halwa*,<sup>866</sup> a variety of vegetables, *besan burfi*,<sup>867</sup> etc). The management advises the kitchen staff to prepare food in limited quantities to avoid wastage. *Rotis* and rice are continuously made to avoid delays and shortages of food during *anna-daana*.

Table II.50.3 Quantity of food prepared per day at Santikunj, Haridwar

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal season	Peak season
1	Pulses	30–40 kg	50–100 kg
3	Rice	70 kg	100–150 kg
4	Wheat flour	80 kg	100–150 kg
5	Daliya	70 kg	100–150 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Table II.50.4 Food items served per meal at Santikunj, Haridwar

Meals	Normal days	Special days
Breakfast <sup>a</sup>	Sprouts, bread, idli, milk, tea	Same as normal days
Lunch	Pulses, chapati, seasonal vegetable, rice, buttermilk, sweet daliya, plain daliya	Kadi and mung dal halwa are more than served during normal days
Dinner	Same as above	Same as above

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Breakfast will only be available in the modern canteen/cafeteria at a minimal cost for devotees and visitors. During fasting days, food items like *sabudana khichdi* (Made of soaked tapioca pearls) and *aaloo sabzi* (Potato curry) are also available. Moreover, the sweets prepared with desi ghee are also available, such as *pragya prasad*, *gulab jamun* (Indian sweet consisting of a ball of deep-fried *paneer* boiled in a sugar syrup), *mungphali burfi* (A sweet made of split moong beans), *nariyal laddoo* (A coconut sweet which is shaped into a ball), and *besan laddoo* and *burfi*.

### 50.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The devotees take part in the management of the ashram. At present, Shri Jamuna Prasad handles all matters relating to *anna-daan* and *prasadam*. The management of Shantikunj also looks after the accountability of *anna-daan*. Unlimited food is served at lunch and dinner as part of *anna-daan* during the prescribed hours.

### 50.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The cooking of the entire course takes 3–4 hours. The cooking starts at 5 am and is completed by 8 or 9 am. Preparation of dinner takes less time because the number of devotees is less than at lunchtime. Preparation of dinner starts at 2 pm and gets over by 5 pm. Rice cooking takes 15–20 minutes. To meet any shortfall, hot water heated from solar heater is kept ready to prepare additional quantity of rice. Serving the food takes around 5–10 minutes. One batch takes 15–30 minutes to finish. The devotees start serving the food as soon as two to three rows are formed. The devotees voluntarily wash their plates after eating.

### 50.2.7 Nutrition

Gayatri Teerth Santikunj is committed to providing nutritive, healthy, and hygienic food in *anna-daan*. The cooks and managers take care of all the responsibilities related to *anna-daan*. The menu varies according to the availability of ingredients which include fresh seasonal vegetables like potato, peas, beans, capsicum, pumpkin, cabbage, bottle gourd, etc., and pulses (*arhar*, *channa*, *Moong*, and *urad*). The food items are the same, except during special occasions.

### 50.2.8 Human resources

Around 20 to 30 volunteers work on a regular basis during the normal season, but during the peak season, the number of volunteers involved increases to 60. In addition, some devotees take part in serving food before they have their food. However, the volunteers are not involved in cooking, cleaning, and vegetable cutting.

Table II.50.5 Human resource at Santikunj, Haridwar

Details	Numbers
Manager	1
Working staff	53–54
Cooks	3
Helper	15–20
Serving staff	10–20
Cleaning/helper	Devotees serve themselves
Watchmen	15–20

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

The staff works in two batches: one from 5 am to 1 pm and the other from 3 pm to 10 or 11 pm every day. They are allowed to take breaks for tea and coffee.

### 50.2.9 Management

Shantikunj Yogpeeth is managed under the leadership of Shri Mahendra Sharma. The staff and devotees take all necessary actions under his supervision relating to the purchase of necessary ingredients for *anna-daan* (including vegetables, groceries, etc.); purchase, repair, and maintenance of kitchen equipment; maintenance of the ashram campus; recruitment, etc.

### 50.2.10 Finances

The main source of funds is donations given by the devotees and visitors to the ashram in the form of cash, food, and other necessary items required for *anna-daan*. The smooth working of this vast organisation is due to voluntary support received from its devotees.

Table II.50.6 Expenditure towards *anna-daan* at Shantikunj, Haridwar

Expenditure per day	
Normal season	Peak season
Rs. 67,500 approx. (1,000 devotees)	Rs. 225,000 approx. (5,000 devotees)

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 50.2.11 Quality of raw materials

The management of the Shantikunj makes every effort to comply with all the necessary quality standards, rules, and regulations. Care is taken for proper storage and handling of ingredients for *anna-daan*. The cooking staff also takes care of the quality of flour, rice, and other items like vegetables before cooking them for *anna-daan*.

### 50.2.12 Food safety

Food safety and hygiene are the responsibility of the management and cooking staff. Cleaning and hygiene begin from preparing the kitchen for cooking to serving the food to the devotees. All the kitchen equipment is washed before cooking and after serving the food every day. The dining hall is also cleaned twice a day before and after *anna-daan*.

### 50.2.13 Technology in the kitchen

Modern cooking facilities like solar rice steamers and *roti*-making machines speed up the process of cooking – saving time. LPG is used for cooking. At present, food is served on steel plates. Cups and spoons are also made available. Food served during peak seasons may vary.

Table II.50.7 Details of kitchen equipment at Shantikunj, Haridwar

Dining halls	Kitchen equipment						
	Steam boilers	Huge vessels	Steel plates	Tumblers	Water cooler	Gas stove	Tables and trollies for serving
1	1	2	1,500	1,500	20	3–4	10

Sources: Primary Survey and author compilations (2021).

#### 50.2.14 Waste management

Waste is segregated into wet and dry waste. Vegetables wastes are used to make compost and fertilisers in the NADEP (a method of composting invented by farmer Narayan Deotao Pandaripande from Maharashtra, India) unit of Shantikunj. Dry waste is given to the local municipality for disposal.

#### Websites referred

- 1 shantikunj@awgp.org accessed on 8 May 2021
- 2 manager@awgp.org accessed on 8 May 2021
- 3 visitors@awgp.in accessed on 8 May 2021

#### Notes

- 848 An Indian statesman who served as the 13th president of India.
- 849 Indian scientist and politician who served as the 11th president of India.
- 850 A hermitage, monastic community, or other place of religious retreat.
- 851 A place where several ritualistic oblations are performed in the sacrificial fire.
- 852 A Hindu sage or saint.
- 853 A prayer.
- 854 A ritual done in front of a sacred fire.
- 855 A Hindu sage or saint.
- 856 A religious offering.
- 857 Donation of knowledge.
- 858 Service.
- 859 *Bali* means sacrifice or gift, and *vaishva* means for everyone and everything in the entire universe.
- 860 Also known as the *Savitri Mantra*, it is a highly revered mantra from the *Rig Veda*, dedicated to the Vedic deity Savitr.
- 861 GURPURAB is the day dedicated to the guru.
- 862 It is a festival that falls on the fifth day of the Hindu lunar month of *Magha* (January–February in the Western calendar) marking the beginning of winter's end and the coming of spring.
- 863 A small, round piece of bread which is deep fried.
- 864 *Dahi* is yogurt and *vada* is deep fried fritters or dumplings.
- 865 Thick gravy based on gram flour and contains vegetable fritters called *pakoras*, to which yogurt is added to give it a bit of sour taste.
- 866 Sweet made of split *mung* beans also known as green gram, either with or without skin.
- 867 Gram flour sweet.



## Case study 51 Adyapeath Temple, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Kaberi Das\*, Soumesh Ghosh† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 51.1 Introduction

The Adyapeath Temple, also known as the Dakshineswar Ramakrishna Sangha Adyapeath, is one of the renowned temples in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. Adyapeath Temple also has branches abroad. The temple was established in 1921 by Sri Annada Thakur.<sup>868</sup> It is an organisation involved in charity and is completely dedicated to the service of humanity and the worship of the divine mother. Here, the deity *Adya* or *Adishakti* is worshipped. The temple is located in the outskirts of Kolkata in the historic village of Dakshineswar.

Sri Annada Thakur believed in the equality of people and preached that we all are the children of the divine mother. Besides the temple, the administration board Dakshineswar Ramakrishna Sangha operates orphanages, schools, homes for the elderly, and ashrams, and provides services to the poor, including food, clothing, medical care, and treatment. The temple is glorified by the loving devotion of the divine mother, along with one of the greatest *bhakt*s<sup>869</sup> of the divine mother Sri Ramakrishna.<sup>870</sup>

Behind the establishment of the Adyapeath Temple, there's a long history. Briefly, in his dream, Sri Annada Thakur was advised by Sri Ramakrishna to establish a temple for the divine mother. He offered Annada Thakur *moksha*<sup>871</sup> and has relieved thousands of people of their pain.

The temple was established in 1923. In 1927, the temple acquired some 14 acres of land adjoining the Shiv temple, and on 31 January 1928, Sri Annada Thakur broke ground for temple construction. A temple administration board was formed in 1963 and named Dakshineswar Ramakrishna Sangha.

The special occasions celebrated in the temple are *Adyama's Smriti Utsav*, which is the foundation day, *Rathayatra Utsav*, *Purnima Tithi*, and the birthday of Sri Annada Thakur. These occasions attract devotees, creating the opportunities to conduct *anna-daan* on a big scale.

### 51.2 Anna-daan at Adyapeath Temple

The temple opens at 4 am and Mangalarati<sup>872</sup> is performed to wake up the goddess from her sleep. This is followed by regular prayers. *Prasad (bhog)*<sup>873</sup> is given to the goddess. *Sandhya arti*<sup>874</sup> is performed at 7:30 pm.

At this temple, 120 kg of food are cooked daily, 11.4 kg of *bhog* are given to the deity of Sri Ramakrishna, 15.2 kg to *Adya* ma, and 30.4 kg of *bhog* are prepared for the Sri Radha-krishna deity daily.

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### 51.2.1 Number of devotees served

On normal days, 600–700 devotees are served *prasad*. On weekends and special occasions, the number of devotees increases to 800 and 1,000, respectively. Food coupons costing Rs. 40 are given to the devotees. The coupons are distributed till noon. If there is more cooked food, then the distribution of coupons may continue after 1 pm also.

Table II.51.1 Daily rituals and *anna-daan* items served

Time	Name of the ritual	Food items given
4 am	<i>Mangal arti</i>	Butter, <i>luchi</i> , <sup>a</sup> fried vegetables, fruits, sweets.
10:30 am–11 am	<i>Bhog</i> is given to god	Rice, <i>khichdi</i> , <sup>b</sup> <i>pulao</i> , <sup>c</sup> fried vegetables, two types of curry, <i>chutney</i> , <sup>d</sup> <i>payesa</i> , <sup>e</sup> sweets
7 pm–7:30 pm	<i>Sandhya arti</i>	<i>Amrito bhog</i> <sup>f</sup>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Made by flour and then fried.

<sup>b</sup> A food item prepared by pulses and rice.

<sup>c</sup> Indian dish of rice cooked in stock with spices, typically having added vegetables.

<sup>d</sup> A spicy dish.

<sup>e</sup> A sweet dish.

<sup>f</sup> Made with ghee, rice, cashews, resins.

Only lunch is served daily at the Adyapeath Temple. Many people are involved in organising the *anna seva* properly. Daily, the temple distributes food to the poor and the destitute living on footpaths, railway stations, etc. In addition, occasionally, the temple also organises *naranarayan seva*<sup>875</sup> to feed the hungry with reverence and humility.

Table II.51.2 Timings and devotees served

Meals	Timings	No. of times		No. of people involved in serving	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	From noon onwards	Once	Once	15–20	Approx. 30 or more

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Food is served in a dining hall with a capacity to seat 900 persons at one time. Devotees sit on the floor to have their meal. For physically challenged or elderly people, there are 150 chairs and tables. Food is served on steel plates and drinking water in glasses. Paper plates are used during special occasions when the number of devotees is large.

### 51.2.2 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Food items are served in sufficient quantity. Servings include rice, *pulao*, *khichdi*, two types of curry, dipped and fried vegetables (*beguni*), *chutney*, and *payasam*. Huge quantities of food (including 50 kg of rice and 70 kg of pulses) are cooked daily on normal days. During the peak season, the amount increases by more than 100 kg.

Table II.51.3 Ingredients and quantity

Ingredients	Amount (normal season)	Amount (peak season)
Rice	~100 kg	~200 kg
Dal	~150 kg	~200 kg
Vegetables	~100 kg	~120 kg
Milk	~100–200 L	~200 L
Sugar	~100 kg	~200 kg
Dry fruits	~50 kg	~80 kg
Ghee	~10–20 kg	~20 kg
Sweets, curd	~100 kg	~120 kg
Spices	~100 kg	~90 kg
Fruits	~200 kg	>200 kg
Butter	~2–3 kg	~3–4 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 51.2.3 Time taken for preparing food

The distribution of *anna-daan* is done only once a day. The priests/cooks are involved in making *bhog* (*anna-daan*) for God. There is a separate kitchen that is situated beside the main temple, and the priests are designated to prepare the *prasad*. After dedicating the *anna-daan* to the deity, it is distributed among people in the dining hall from noon onwards to those who have the coupon. Each batch takes approximately 1 hour to complete, and food is served on time.

Table II.51.4 Cooking and serving time

Slots	Time taken for cooking (in hours)
Cooking	4 hours
Serving	~30min
Serving time per batch	Food is served intermittently
Time taken per batch	1 hour approx.
Cleaning time	~10–15 min
Total time for one batch to complete serving, cleaning, and people let in to have food	~60 min

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 51.2.4 Nutrition

The cooks themselves are nutrition conscious. Hence, food served at the temple is of high quality and rich in nutrition. It is tasty and devotees are satisfied with the quality.

### 51.2.5 Human resources

There are two to three main priests who mainly prepare the *prasad* dedicated to the deity. There are approximately 44 people who are responsible for cleaning and cutting

vegetables, cooking for devotees, serving, distributing plates and glasses, washing the hall after each batch has finished eating, and ensuring efficient management of the entire process of *anna-daan*. In addition, there are approximately 40–50 security personnel, 20–25 staff and about 2,000 saints or *sadhubhai* as they are called. The Maharaj is involved in preparing *anna-daan*. Others are prohibited from entering the kitchen of the temple where *anna-daan* is made.

Table II.51.5 Manpower

Staff	Normal season	Peak season
Cooks	15	20
Cleaners	10	10–15
Serving	10	25–30
Helpers/volunteers	40–50	100

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 51.2.6 Management

The temple is managed by a board which was established in 1923. It has 12 board members. *Brambachari Tusharbhai* is the secretary and *Brambachari Muralbhai* is in charge of the office work.

### 51.2.7 Finances

There is government funding. The *bhog* is supported by donations from devotees. Another source of funding is donations from the devotees at the foreign branches of Adyapeath temple. An annual audit is done by the audit officer Sri Shankar Chowdhury, and it is under the RTI.

The temple authority has built a good infrastructure to ensure that *anna-daan* is performed efficiently. It has a huge dining hall and a kitchen which is well equipped with serving vessels, plates, glasses, large utensils. The temple trust has kept aside a large amount to meet the O&M cost (estimated at Rs. 1.2 million daily), such as procurement of raw materials, vegetables, transportation, housekeeping, and salaries. The approximate funds requirement for *anna-daan* is Rs. 0.08 million per day in normal times which may increase to 1.5 million per day on special occasions.

Table II.51.6 Operational costs

Particulars	Numbers	Costs in millions
Kitchen	1	—
Steel plates	~600–700	0.035
Steel glasses	~600–700	0.024
Steel buckets for serving	~10–15	0.004
Spoons	~40	0.012
Other utensils	~50	0.01
Dining hall	2	0.1 (one-time cost)

### 51.2.8 Food safety

Food safety at the temple is ensured by keeping the kitchen and dining hall clean and well maintained. Hygiene is maintained by the dedicated staff of 15–20. Fruits, vegetables, food ingredients, and serving vessels and plates are thoroughly washed daily. After a batch has finished eating, the floor of the dining hall is cleaned properly with disinfectant. The volunteers and the people engaged in serving them also maintain a high level of cleanliness.

### 51.2.9 Technology in the kitchen

The kitchen has yet to be modernised. Most of the kitchen-related chores are done manually. The only modern facility the kitchen can boast of is the biogas plant. *Sevayet*<sup>876</sup> do their work wholeheartedly and passionately with respect and dedication to god.

### 51.2.10 Waste management

The temple disposes some of the wastes in designated areas, while the remaining waste is collected by the local municipal corporation.

### 51.2.11 Key issues/requests

As stated earlier the only major source of funds for the temple is donations made by devotees. This needs to be supplemented by government funding to undertake work related to landscaping the temple premises, maintenance of the dining hall, and upgradation of the kitchen, orphanage, old-age home, and school for orphans.

## Notes

868 The founder of the temple and he was the disciple of Thakur Sri Ramakrishna.

869 Bhakt – disciples.

870 Sri Ramakrishna, one of the greatest devotees of *Devi Kalika* who told that we all are same. There are no differences between religions.

871 In Hinduism and Jainism release from the cycle of rebirth impelled by the law of *karma*. The transcendent state attained as a result of being released from the cycle of rebirth.

872 Ritual to wake up god from sleep.

873 Food, that is first offered to a deity and then distributed to the devotees.

874 *Sandhya arti* is an evening worship.

875 *Naranarayanseva* – it is believed that God or lord *Narayana* lived as human so to take care of him is equal to the worship of God.

876 *Sevayet* – main priests who actually are in charge of the *bhog* making or *anna* preparing.

## Case study 52 Sri Ramakrishna Temple, Belur Mutt, West Bengal

Kaberi Das\*, Soumesh Ghosh† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 52.1 Introduction

Ramakrishna Temple, Belur Mutt, is one of the famous international pilgrimages, and it is very well-known for its association with the great Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, who was one of the favourite disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Dev.<sup>877</sup> Later, Swami Vivekananda placed the relics of his *guru* here and envisioned the unique temple.

Belur Mutt is a spiritual organisation that launched a worldwide spiritual movement known as the Ramakrishna movement or Vedanta movement. The temple was founded by Swami Vivekananda on 1 May 1897 and registered on 9 May 1909. The organisation mainly cherishes the Hindu philosophy of Vedanta<sup>878</sup> – *Advaita Vedanta*<sup>879</sup> and *yogic* ideals – *Jnana yoga*,<sup>880</sup> *bhakti yoga*,<sup>881</sup> *karma yoga*,<sup>882</sup> and *raja yoga*.<sup>883</sup> The motto of the organisation is *Atmano moksh artham jagadhitaya cha*.<sup>884</sup> It was formulated by Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vijnanananda, a brother monk of Swami Vivekananda and one of the monastic disciples of Ramakrishna, a civil engineer, designed the temple. Swami Shivananda, the then president of Belur Mutt laid the foundation stone on 13 March 1929. Belur Mutt Temple is a marvel of architecture.

The temple is spread over 40 acres of land near the western bank of river Hooghly, Belur, West Bengal. Several educational institutions affiliated with the Ramakrishna Mission are situated on the vast campus adjacent to Belur Mutt.

#### Significance of the temple

The aims and principles of the mission are purely spiritual and humanitarian. Based on *jiva is shiva*, it exhorts its adherents to serve people or other animals because doing so amounts to serving God.

Sri Ramkrishna's life was enlightened by the holy trio Gita-Upanishads-Vedas.<sup>885</sup> He believed that God is only one, and all religions have only one God. Swami Vivekananda was deeply influenced by this ideology and founded this temple to serve mankind in the loving memory of his *guru*, Sri Ramakrishna and his wife, holy mother Sarada Devi.

#### Rituals of the Belur Mutt Temple

The Mangalarati<sup>886</sup> is performed at 4 am in summer, followed by a worship ritual to the accompaniment of the chanting of Bhagvad Gita *mantras*<sup>887</sup> by monks of the temple between 6 am and 9 am. Preparation of *bhog* (*anna-daan*) starts around 9 am. The temple remains open till noon and opens again between 4 pm and 7 pm. The *noishobhog*<sup>888</sup> is offered to the deity between 8 pm and 8:30 pm.

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### Special occasions

The Belur Mutt Temple celebrates different festivals and occasions (including *Durga Puja*, *Kalpataru Utsav*, English new year day, Shri Ma Sarada Devi's birthday on 22 December, Swami Vivekananda's birthday on 12 January, and Sri Ramakrishna's birthday on 18 February) with special offerings in the form of *anna-daan* (*bhog*). During these festivals, many visitors and devotees visit the temple and participate in *anna-daan*.

## 52.2 Anna-daan in the Mutt

The Belur mutt is housed in a five-storey building. The mutt has a kitchen and a dining hall called *Sarada Sadavrata* – actualising the idea of Swami Vivekananda through *Sarada Sadavrata*, the great *Yagnasala*<sup>889</sup> of food offering. *Narayana Seva*<sup>890</sup> is offered here. Distribution of *prasad*<sup>891</sup> at Belur Mutt is a gigantic event, covering thousands of pilgrims and visitors. The menu contains *khichdi*,<sup>892</sup> which is served in big carts. Sri Ramakrishna Dev used to say, “[S]pirituality cannot be taught on an empty stomach”, and he loved to feed others. The firm conviction of Belur Mutt is that God eats through devotees.

Volunteers participate enthusiastically to provide all kinds of services to devotees, ensuring that there is no breach of discipline and that thousands of devotees eat together in this five-storey community dining hall.

### 52.2.1 Number of devotees served

Approximately 1,000 people come on normal days, and on weekends, it increases to 2,000. On an important occasion or festival, the number of visitors rises even more.

A coupon system is followed to manage the crowd. There is no fixed charge for the coupon – leaving it to the devotees to donate as much as they want. There is another counter for those who cannot afford to make any donations for food. *Anna-daan* for such devotees is provided under *Naranarayan Seva*.

The temple authority has arrangements to feed as many as 1,000 to 1,500 people every day.

Table II.52.1 Number of people

Normal season	Peak season
Daily approx. 1,000 people	During any festival 40,000–50,000 people
On weekends 2,000–2,500 people	—

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

On normal days, the devotees come here to worship God. *Bhog* is normally distributed from 12 pm onwards. A large building spread over three floors has been built for feeding people. Around 600 people are involved in serving food, and this number increases during the peak season. *Maharaj* (monks of Belur Mutt) supervise the entire process to ensure it runs smoothly.

*Anna-daan* is given to the deity of the temple three to four times a day, but devotees and visitors are given *anna-daan* only once a day at lunchtime, and it is called “*biratbhog*” or *mahabhog*.

The Belur Mutt Temple also has a guesthouse for the devotees who wish to stay there overnight. The temple management provides dinner to the devotees staying at the guesthouse in exchange for some donations for the temple.

### 52.2.2 Quantity of food prepared and items served

During *Durga Pooja*, a special *anna-daan* (*bhog*) is served to Goddess *Durga*. The menu includes rice, ghee rice, fried veggies, two or three types of *dal*, many vegetable dishes, *chutney*,<sup>893</sup> *payasam*,<sup>894</sup> and sweets. *Anna-daan* is first offered to God. Then this *anna-daan* is mixed with food for devotees. It is believed that the mixed food turns into *mahaprasad* or *biratbhog*. Then it is distributed among the visitors and devotees.

Table II.52.2 Puja timings and the *anna-daan* offerings

Timings	Food items
Mangalaarati and daily <i>poojas</i> <i>Anna-daan</i> or lunch	Fruits, sweets, etc. <i>khichdi bhog</i> , <sup>a</sup> fried vegetables, a curry, <i>payesam</i> (sweet), chutney, and sweets
Evening <i>pooja</i> or <i>Sandhya Arti</i> <i>Naishabhog</i> <sup>b</sup>	Normally fruits sweets Lichis, fried vegetables, curry (two to three varieties), sweets, etc., or sometimes pulao (rice dish)

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Dish made from dal, rice, and spices.

<sup>b</sup> *Naishabhog* is dinner given to god.

The temple authority requires at least 120 kg of rice and 100 kg of pulses every day. They also need other ingredients, including seasonal vegetables, milk, etc., as mentioned in Table II.52.3

Table II.52.3 Ingredients and quantity of *anna-daan*

Ingredients	Quantity (normal season)	Quantity (peak season)
Rice	100–120 kg	500 kg
<i>Dal</i> (pulses)	100–120 kg	400–500 kg
Vegetables	70–80 kg	5,000 kg
Milk	100 L	>250 L
Sugar	100 kg	200 kg
Dry fruits	50 kg	100 kg
Ghee	5 kg	10 kg
Sweets, curd	90 kg	500 kg
Spices	50 kg	300 kg
Other dry food (like puffed rice, poha, or others)	60 kg	400 kg
Fruits	120–140 kg	500 kg
Flours	50 kg	>200 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.



### 52.2.3 Time taken for preparing food

*Anna-daan*, cooked by *maharaj* and other cooks identified for the purpose, is served only once.

Table II.52.4 Serving duration

Slots	Time taken for cooking (in hours)
Breakfast	Dedicated to deity only
Lunch	Distributed among devotees and visitors
Dinner	Available only for guests who are staying the night
Time taken for serving	~40 minutes
Serving time per batch	~1 hour
Time taken to clean	~10–15 minutes
Total time for one batch to complete serving, cleaning, and letting people in to have food	~1.5 hours

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

### 52.2.4 Human resources

Approximately, the temple has a total staff of 500 to 600, out of which 100 persons are engaged in the entire process of *anna-daan* from cooking, serving, cleaning, maintaining quality, etc. Their hard work and dedication have made the event successful. Some volunteers are also involved in *anna-daan* distribution and the smooth running of the temple work.

### 52.2.5 Management

The Ramakrishna Mutt is administered by a board of trustees. The board of trustees elects a president, one or more vice-presidents, a general secretary, one or more assistant general secretaries, and a treasurer. The board of trustees consists of senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order, chosen by a process of nomination-cum-election. Authority to deal with the ownership of property belonging to different *mutts* in India, appointment of heads of centres, legal transactions, etc., vested with the board of trustees, which also takes major decisions regarding various policies of the Ramakrishna Mutt, including *anna-daan*.

### 52.2.6 Finances

The finance for the *anna-daan* comes from the donations made by devotees and sometimes from the government on a project basis. Besides these, funds are also sourced from different branches of the Ramakrishna Mission that are present worldwide.

Donations also come from the government and other branches of Belur Mutt worldwide. The temple comes under RTI Act. External audit by chartered accountant is done and submitted to the government. In the case of government funds, the audit is done by a government auditor. In addition, the temple authority also does the internal audit throughout the year. As the temple runs on donations, an audit is mandatory to keep information on the source, etc.

The temple authorities have built infrastructure such as kitchens and a multi-storeyed dining area for the proper conduct of *anna-daan*. The infrastructure is adequate to feed nearly 10,000 people at a time. Some trolleys are also introduced to serve food. Nearly Rs. 70,000 to 80,000 is required per day to run the *anna-daan* programme.

#### 52.2.7 Quality of raw materials

Food is made with high-quality ingredients to ensure nutrition. A well maintained and clean dining hall is the primary objective of the cleaning staff of Belur Mutt. Vegetables, food ingredients, and cooking utensils are thoroughly cleaned and washed. In addition, the dining space is cleaned after each batch for the next lot of devotees.

#### 52.2.8 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The temple kitchen is yet to be equipped with modern cooking machines. All the work is done manually. The temple authority plans to introduce modern methods of cooking in the future to reduce the workload on many people every day.

#### 52.2.9 Waste management

Waste at this temple is disposed of by the cleaning staff. Excess food is distributed among local people and other nearby schools and colleges under the Ramakrishna mission.

### References

- 1 Interview and email communication with Swami Girishananda, manager Ramakrishna Mutt <https://belurmath.org> accessed on 12 March 2021

### Notes

- 877 An Indian Hindu mystic and religious leader in the 19th century.
- 878 Vedanta is one of the six schools of Hindu philosophy.
- 879 Advaita Vedanta is a sub-school of Vedanta.
- 880 One of the three spiritual paths of Hinduism emphasizes on the path of knowledge also known as path of self-realisation.
- 881 It is a spiritual path or spiritual practice within Hinduism focused on loving devotions towards any personal deity.
- 882 Also known as Karma Marga, it is one of the three spiritual paths in Hinduism, one based on yoga of action.
- 883 Raja yoga is the yoga of mind and body control.
- 884 Meaning for one's own salvation and for the welfare of the world.
- 885 Hindu scriptures.
- 886 Mangalarati is performed at dawn to wake up god from sleep.
- 887 Prayer.
- 888 Sandhya aratiis the evening to worship god.
- 889 Sacrificial hall.
- 890 Poor feeding.
- 891 A devotional offering made to god.
- 892 A dish in South Asian cuisine made of rice and lentils.
- 893 Chutney is a family of condiments or sauces in the cuisines of the Indian subcontinent.
- 894 Vermicelli pudding.

## Case study 53 Sri Sri Prabhu Jagadbandhu Dham, Dahapara, West Bengal, India

Soumesh Ghosh\*, Kaberi Das† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 53.1 Introduction

Sri Sri Prabhu Jagadbandhu Dham, also known as Dahapara Ashram, is located at Dahapara in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal, India. It is the birthplace of Sri Sri Prabhu Jagadbandhu Sundar, an ascetic *Vaishnava*<sup>895</sup> preacher who propounded the philosophy of *Bhakti yoga*<sup>896</sup> and *Hari Nam Sankirtan*<sup>897</sup> in various parts of Bengal. He was born on 28 April 1871 in a poor but learned *Brahmin*<sup>898</sup> family of Dahapara. Prabhu Jagadbandhu travelled widely, attracted thousands of people, and devoted his life to *Hari bhakti*.<sup>899</sup>

The devotees worship Prabhu Jagadbandhu and celebrate his 1 birth anniversary *Sitanavami*. Besides, *Gurupurnima*,<sup>900</sup> *Jhulanpurnima*,<sup>901</sup> *Maghipurnima*<sup>902</sup> and *Dolpurnima*,<sup>903</sup> *Oshtoprahara*,<sup>904</sup> “*Samadhi day*”<sup>905</sup> of *Gurudev*, and 16 *Prahar* are the special occasions celebrated in the ashram.

Sri Sripat Kunjo Das Mahashaya founded the temple and registered it as a *Seva Sanga* (service group). Later, in the year 2000 (1407 in Bengali Year), the new temple was established with the help of devotees and named Sri Sri Jagadbandhu Sundar Dham Trust. The temple is built on an area of approximately 60 acres.

### 53.2 Anna-daan at Sri Sri Prabhu Jagadbandhu Dham

There is a routine followed meticulously in the temple from early morning to late evening. *Bhajan*<sup>906</sup> starts at around 2 am. The temple opens 2 hours later. It is believed that the *bhajan* would wake up God from his sleep. As a result, the *bhajan* is also locally called *jagoronkirtan*.<sup>907</sup> *Mangalabhog*<sup>908</sup> is given to God after this ritual. Then from 7:30 am to 8 am, *Sevapuja*<sup>909</sup> is conducted. It is the time to bathe the deity. At 11:30 am, *anna bhog* (*anna-daan*) is offered to God. In the afternoon (at 3 pm in winter months and at 3:30 pm in summer months) the *anna-daan* (*prasad*) of *jagoron kirtan* is distributed among devotees. In the evening *sandhya arti* (evening worship of God, with *bhajan* and *arti*) is done for 2 hours. After the *bhajan-kirtan*, *Noishobhog* (dinner given to deity at night) is dedicated to God. Many devotees gather at the temple for these various rituals.

#### 53.2.1 Number of devotees served

The Dahapara Jagadbandhu Dham serves lunch as *anna-daan* only once a day. Lunch is served from 1:30 pm. On a normal day, around 500–1,000 people are served. During the peak season, the number of devotees increases to 20,000–25,000. *Anna-daan* is served free to all the devotees, including *mahaprasad*.

The temple has two large dining halls to serve people every day. They sit on the floor to have food, as that is the traditional practice at many temples.

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Table II.53.1 Different timings and items of *anna-daan*

<i>Anna-daan</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Food items</i>
<i>Mangalabhog</i>	Around 6 am	Sweets, fruits, puffed rice, etc.
<i>Annabhog</i>	11:00 am to noon	Rice, pulses ( <i>dal</i> ), fried vegetables, leafy vegetables fried, two to three types of mixed vegetable curry, sweets, curd, <i>chutney</i> , <sup>a</sup> <i>ayasha</i> <sup>b</sup>
<i>Sandhya arti</i>	6 pm	Fruits, sweets
<i>Noishobhog</i>	Around 8 pm	Rice, pulses ( <i>dal</i> ), fried vegetables, leafy vegetables fried, two to three types of mixed vegetable curry, sweets, curd, <i>chutney</i> , <i>payesha</i>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Sweet dish made of tomatoes/mangoes, with sugar, dry fruits, etc.

<sup>b</sup> A dessert made up of rice, milk, sugar, dry fruits.

Table II.53.2 Timing and devotees served

<i>Meals</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>No. of times</i>		<i>No. of devotees served</i>	
		<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
Lunch	From 1:30 pm	Once	Once	500–1,000	20,000–25,000 (approx.)

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 53.2.2 Quantity of food prepared and items served

Food items served include rice, pulses, *shakbhaji*,<sup>910</sup> fried vegetables, mixed vegetables, curry, *chutney*,<sup>911</sup> *payesha*,<sup>912</sup> sweets, curd, etc.

During normal days, 100 kg of rice are required, along with 120 kg of *dal* (pulses). The quantity increases to 2,000 kg for rice and 1,200 kg for *dal* in the peak season (Table II.53.3).

Table II.53.3 Ingredients and quantity

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Quantity in kg</i>	
	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
Rice	100 kg	2,000 kg
<i>Dal</i>	120 kg	1,200 Kg
Vegetables	60–90 kg	1,000 kg
Milk	100 L	180 L
Sugar	90 kg	200 kg
Dry fruits	20 kg	70 kg
Ghee	2 kg	6 kg
Sweets, curd	90 kg	100 kg
Spices	50 kg	90 kg
Puffed rice/ <i>poha</i>	50 kg	50 kg
Fruits	150 kg	>200 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 53.2.3 Accountability of prasadam

Overall, accountability is taken care of by the temple management. Usually, people eat their food at the temple. However, some devotees at times take a small quantity of food, sweets and fruits to their homes to share them with their family members.

### 53.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The cooks are involved in making *bhog (anna-daan)* for the deity *Sri Sri Jagadbandhu Prabhu*. The *anna-daan prasad* is made by the *sevayet* (priests) of the temple in a kitchen specifically allocated to the lord. *Anna-daan* for the devotees is prepared in another kitchen by other designated cooks and served by noon. After that meal is served to the devotees in the afternoon, it takes nearly 45 minutes to complete one batch on normal days. Each batch has 100–150 people.

Table II.53.4 Cooking and serving time

Slots	Time taken for cooking
Breakfast	Dedicated to the deity only
Lunch	Distributed among people
Dinner	Available only for guests staying overnight
Time taken for serving	45 minutes
Serving time per batch	Food is served intermittently
Total time taken per batch	45 minutes
Cleaning time	10 minutes
Total time for one batch to complete serving, cleaning, and people let in to have food	1 hour

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 53.2.5 Human resources

The Dahapara Dham Temple has over 60–70 staff members and volunteers for the smooth running of *anna-daan*. About 10–15 cooks, 1 senior kitchen manager, and 1 quality control manager are involved in *anna-daan* on normal days. During the peak season, in addition to the aforementioned staff and cooks, 2 quality control managers and some 500 volunteers are responsible for the successful conduct of *anna-daan*.

Table II.53.5 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Staffs	Number of people	
	Normal season	Peak season
Regular paid staff (temple staff)		
Senior kitchen manager	1	1
Quality control manager	1	2
Cooks	10–15	20
Cleaners	7–8	10–15
Serving	15–20	25–30
Helpers/volunteers	40–50	~500

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

People involved in *anna-daan* work very passionately. Food served at *anna-daan* is tasty and nutritious. Efforts are made to ensure that only fresh vegetables, high-quality dry fruits, ghee and pulses are used in making the *prasad*.

### 53.2.6 Management

The temple is governed by a trust and its board members. The trust has 20 members and 6 board members, including one main priest and his other coordinators. These people are called *sevayet*. Of the 20 members, 14 are *sevak* or helping members with other essential works. In the Sri Sri Jagadbandhu Dham Temple, Sri Narahari Das is the main priest, and he looks after the overall events of the temple, including the daily worship. Bondhu Sevabrata Das Bramhachari, another board member, is in the charge of *anna-daan*. Bondhu Sankardash Bramhachari looks after the construction and other issues related to it. Mangal bandhu Bramhachari is responsible for arranging everything required for a smooth conduct of the daily puja. The funds required for *anna-daan* comes from donation of the devotees. The annual audit is done by the local audits officer.

### 53.2.7 Investment

For performing *anna-daan*, investments have been made in construction of 3 kitchens, the purchase of 25 trolleys, some 20 knives, and *salpatas* (leaf plates), which are used as disposable plates. The temple trust has also provided for operational and maintenance costs such as procurement of raw materials, vegetables, transportation, and housekeeping.

Table II.53.6 Operational costs

Particulars	Numbers	Cost
Kitchen	3	—
Plates	1,000	20,000
Trolleys	25	150,000
Knives	20	7,500
Other utensils	50	100,000
Construction of dining hall	1	100,000 (one-time investment)

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 53.2.8 Food safety

Vegetables, cooking utensils, and cooking materials are well cleaned and washed. A well-maintained and clean dining hall is the primary objective of the 20–25 cleaning staff in the Dahapara Dham. After every batch is served, the floors are cleaned with disinfectants. Volunteers and other people engaged in serving also maintain high-level cleanliness. The traditional way of cooking, which is primarily manual, is followed.

### 53.2.9 Waste management

Vegetable peels and other organic matter are fed to the cows at the temple-owned *goseva*. Dry waste is collected by the local municipality.

### 53.2.10 Key issues

The temple has no source of funds except for the donations made by the devotees. The temple authorities are keen to approach the government for funds to develop the temple, *anna-daan*, and build a dining hall, a *kirtan ghar*,<sup>913</sup> and a guesthouse.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://haripurush-jagadbandhu.org/HTML-Texts/dahapara-dham.htm> accessed on 8 November 2021
- 2 <https://murshidabad.gov.in/tourist-place/dahapara-dham/> accessed on 8 November 2021

### Notes

- 895 A member of one of the main branches of modern Hinduism, devoted to the worship of the god Vishnu as the supreme being.
- 896 A spiritual path or spiritual practice within Hinduism focused on loving devotion towards any personal deity.
- 897 A form of song or chanting that praises God and is performed in a public setting.
- 898 A higher class in Hinduism.
- 899 Devotion to the supreme lord.
- 900 A spiritual tradition dedicated to spiritual and academic teachers.
- 901 The day of the full moon in the monsoon month of *Shravan*.
- 902 A day of the full moon that occurs during the Hindu calendar month of *Magh*.
- 903 A day of full moon and *Holi* festival of India.
- 904 Comprises 3 hours. Like 6 am to 9 am, then 9 am to 12 pm, then 12 pm to 3 pm, and then 3 pm to 6 pm.
- 905 It is believed in Hindu religion that the gurus being part of God cannot die. They only leave their physical body. This is called *samadhi*.
- 906 A type of worship to God taking his name, with rhythm and melody like *Hare Krishna, Hare Rama*.
- 907 God's name is recited to wake him up.
- 908 Breakfast dedicated to God.
- 909 It is bath time for the deity.
- 910 Side dish prepared with water spinach and few commonly available spices.
- 911 Made up of tomatoes/mangoes, with sugar, dry fruits, etc.
- 912 Dessert made up of rice, milk, sugar, and dry fruits.
- 913 Places or rooms where *kirtan* (narratives or songs on God) is organised.

## Case study 54 ISKCON Temple, Mayapur, West Bengal, India

Sejuti Bhattacharjee\*, Soumesh Ghosh† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 54.1 Introduction

ISKCON or International Society for Krishna Consciousness was founded by his Divine Grace A. C. *Bhaktivedanta Swami (Srila Prabhupada)* in West Bengal in 1966. ISKCON

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belongs to *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*,<sup>914</sup> a devotional tradition based on the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*<sup>915</sup> and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.<sup>916</sup> ISKCON Temple believes in *Vaishnavism*, which was spread 5,000 years ago by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.<sup>917</sup> In the year 1966, *Shrila Prabhupada*<sup>918</sup> desired that *Vaishnavism* be spread in Eastern India. Mayapur Temples were established in 1972 to carry out the mission. The temple's structure resembles a lotus; hence, it is called Lotus Temple. This area also has historical significance. The founder of *Vaishnavism Srimad Prabhu Chaitanya Dev* took birth here. In the light of this, it was assumed that this place could be the ideal place for the spread of love.

## 54.2 Anna-daan at ISKCON Mayapur Temple

*Shrila Prabhupada* himself vowed to give every family living within 10 miles of the temple access to *anna-daan* activities at the temple. There is a separate *anna-daan* section in the temple that is responsible for conducting the programme. The devotees engaged in this section serve 500 to 600 people daily on a regular basis.

### 54.2.1 History of anna-daan

In the 1970s when the ISKCON Lotus Temple had just been built, the *anna-daan*, as part of a festival, was going on in front of the Lotus Temple and was being watched by *Shrila Prabhupada* from a balcony. He saw that some poor children were scavenging a garbage dump for scraps of food. The sight saddened him, and he declared, "No one should go hungry within 10 miles of Mayapur Temple". To fulfil his vision, free food has been provided to devotees since 2014–15. Before that, there was a canteen in the temple premises where *anna* of God was given to the pilgrims at a very low cost.

### 54.2.2 Rituals and prayers for anna-daan

There are no special prayers during *anna-daan*, but every day an *arathi*<sup>919</sup> is performed by the devotees, and the food is placed before the deity. Vegetarian food (without garlic or onion) is served to pilgrims after the completion of this ritual.

### 54.2.3 Food served and management

The *anna-daan* programme is performed in a dining hall beside the Mayapur Temple<sup>920</sup> *Gaushala* and in front of *Gouranga Kutir*.<sup>921</sup> A free meal scheme named *Food for Life* has been launched with the help of the local government. Under this scheme, initiated in 2014–15, many people are fed every day. During the pandemic, the scheme was suspended. A community kitchen was started to cook food and distribute it to 15,000 people living in villages in the vicinity of the temple. The initiative benefitted people from the weaker sections of society. A modular kitchen equipped with modern gadgets was used to cook food for a large number of people in the shortest possible time.

### 54.2.4 Food items served

Only lunch is served at the temple. Usually, *khichri*<sup>922</sup> is served to the devotees throughout the year. However, on special occasions like *Gour Purnima*,<sup>923</sup> *Radhastami*,<sup>924</sup> and *Janmashtami*<sup>925</sup> *roti and puri*<sup>926</sup> are also prepared. Only vegetarian items are served to the



deity and the pilgrims. A coupon system is followed to manage the crowd on a *first-come, first-served* basis. The quantity of the ingredients required for cooking is determined by the cook. The serving begins at 1 pm in the dining hall, which can seat 350 people at a time.

During the normal season, *anna-daan* is provided to 300 to 500 people on average, but during the peak seasons, the number crosses 1,000 sometimes. The devotees are served on paper plates. They are not allowed to take food home from the dining hall. But in the *sulabh* kitchen, they can buy food or *prasadam* and take that home.

Table II.54.1 Number of devotees served *anna-daan* and their timing

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
<b>Lunch</b>	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	1–2 times	4 times	300–600	Over 1,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

#### 54.2.5 Quantity of food served

Food items served include *khichri*,<sup>927</sup> rice, mixed-vegetable curry, fried vegetables, chutney,<sup>928</sup> *kheer*.<sup>929</sup> Raw materials are purchased from the local shop. During the festival season, *roti* and *puri* are included as special items. No separate *anna* is prepared for the deity.

Table II.54.2 Items served during *anna-daan*

Meal	Food items
Lunch	<i>Khichri</i> , rice, various types of <i>dal</i> , mixed seasonal vegetable curry, fried vegetables, chutney, <i>Kkheer</i>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

Normally, 70 to 80 kg of *khichri* are prepared. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 120 kg of *khichri* was prepared in the community kitchen.

Table II.54.3 Food items and quantity

Food items	Quantity of foods prepared per day	
	Normal season	Peak season
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	200–300 kg	800–900 kg
Rice		
Five types of vegetable fry	50–60 kg	100 kg
Vegetable curry	100 L	900–2,000 L
<i>Payasa</i>	300 L	500–600 L
Sweet	As per required	As per required

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Rice item represents *khichri*

#### 54.2.6 Time taken to prepare food

Usually, it takes 2 to 3 hours to prepare the food. The kitchen has modern equipment like a boiler, grinder, etc., to prepare the food. The preparation starts after 6 am. *Anna-daan* rituals start at 1:00 pm. The community kitchen starts at 12:30 pm.

#### 54.2.7 Human resources

The *anna-daan* section of the ISKCON Mayapur Temple has a structured human resource system. They have 18 staff members. Additional resources are requisitioned from outside during the festive season. Volunteers are allowed to take part in chopping vegetables, serving, and cleaning the utensils.

#### 54.2.8 Quality of raw materials

Raw materials are procured from designated grocery shops every morning. These shops are selected by the executive committee. The quality of these materials is established by the fact that these shops have been supplying the products for ages. The raw materials are ISI marked. Food is cooked under the supervision of the executive committee. A kitchen head is always present and executes the process with the help of the rest of the team members. There is a cold storage facility to keep the raw vegetables.

#### 54.2.9 Nutrition

Care is taken to ensure that the food cooked has an adequate amount of protein. All types of seasonal vegetables and fruits are used in preparing the food

#### 54.2.10 Finance

ISKCON Mayapur has devotees from all over the world who make donations in the form of cash and in-kind. There is an option to make donations online. Earlier, there was the *Sulabh* canteen, which used to sell various types of food at a subsidised price. Currently, the *Food for Life* campaign (with the support of the local government) helps with the funding.

#### 54.2.11 Use of technology

To save time, the kitchen is equipped with boilers, grinders, mixers, etc. Despite the advancement, traditional methods of cooking are very much in vogue, especially during festivals. Food distribution is done on trolleys.

#### 54.2.12 Waste management system

The temple has a well-structured waste management system. The tables and the chairs in the dining hall are connected in such a way that food waste is deposited at a particular place. Waste is segregated into wet and dry waste. Wet waste is deposited in black containers and the dry waste in red (for vegetable waste) containers. These wastes are collected by the municipal vehicle from the dining hall and are dumped in the processing area to make compost.

## References

- 1 ISKCON – Mayapur.com accessed on 14 June 2021
- 2 Iskcon Whitefield | accessed on 14 June 2021
- 3 SrilaPrabhupada accessed on 14 June 2021

## Notes

- 914 Those who worship Lord Vishnu.
- 915 Holy spiritual book of Hindus.
- 916 Holy spiritual books of Hindus.
- 917 *Avatar* of Lord Krishna and Radha who made great impact on *Vaishnavism* in India.
- 918 Founder principle of International Society for Krishna Consciousness Movement.
- 919 Pure fire offerings to the deity.
- 920 Cattle shed for cows and goats.
- 921 Accommodation.
- 922 A dish in South Asian cuisine made of rice and lentils.
- 923 A Vaishnava festival that celebrates the appearance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who founded Vaishnavism. Gour Purnima means “Golden Full Moon”.
- 924 Commemorates the birth anniversary of the goddess Radha.
- 925 Celebrates the birth of Krishna.
- 926 Indian bread made with wheat (type of tortilla).
- 927 A dish which is prepared by mixing rice and pulses, along with vegetables.
- 928 A sweet dish prepared with tamarind, tomato dried fruits, etc.
- 929 A sweet dish of milk prepared with rice.

## Case study 55 Chakla Dham Temple, North 24 Paraganas, West Bengal, India

Soumesh Ghosh\*, Kaberi Das† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 55.1 Introduction

Chakla Dham is one of the well-known sacred places and one of the most visited places in West Bengal after Kalighat and Dakshineswar Kali Temple in India. Chakla village is in Deganga Tehsil of North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal. It is believed to be the birthplace of Baba Lokenath, a glorious Hindu saint born in the 18th century in Bengal.

#### Significance of the temple

Baba Lokenath is the one who dedicated his life to mankind and is believed to help and take care of the needy. The temple follows the path laid by Baba Lokenath to serve people in need irrespective of their caste and community. This place is also known to

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organise extinct ancient religious activities such as *yagnas*,<sup>930</sup> *kirtana*,<sup>931</sup> and several other practises. Apart from being a famous pilgrimage site, Chakla Dham is also a popular tourist spot. It is said that the economic condition of the villagers in Chakla has improved because of the temple.

## 55.2 Anna-daan (bhogaroti) at Baba Lokenath Temple

*Anna-daan*, locally called *bhagaroti*, is practised with immense devotion. The temple opens at eight in the morning. Then the *pooja*<sup>932</sup> and *arti*<sup>933</sup> are done after that *Balyabhog*<sup>934</sup> is dedicated to the deity of the baba. This *bhog*<sup>935</sup> includes fried vegetables, some sweets, etc. At noon, the *bhogarati* is done before giving *rajbhog*. It includes *khichdi* (a dish prepared with rice, *dal*, and spices) or *pulao* (a dish prepared with rice and vegetables), mixed vegetables or paneer curry (a dish made of cottage cheese), chutney (a spicy dish), and *payesa* (sweet). Around six in the evening, *sandhya arti* takes place amid several rituals in the temple.<sup>936</sup>

Thousands of devotees come to worship the deity of Lokenath Baba in the Chakla Dham temple every day. They have a system in place to serve food. Food can be purchased at a reasonable cost. The devotees interested in taking the holy food (*prasada*)<sup>937</sup> must purchase the *bhog* coupon from the counter on the temple premises between 8:30 am and 1 pm. *Bhog* (food offering) is distributed in the dining hall at 1:30 pm. There are two types of *bhogs*: *khichdi bhog* and *pulao bhog*. The *pulao bhog* coupon costs Rs. 65, whereas the *khichdi bhog* costs Rs. 30.

### 55.2.1 Number of devotees served

During the normal season, around 250 to 300 people take the *anna-daan* in the Chakla Dham Temple, and during the peak season, which is during special occasions such as Baba's birth anniversary, the number of people who take the *anna-daan* increases ten times to 2,500 to 3,000 people. On weekends, the number increases a little more. But the peak number comes in the winter season.

Food is served in the dining hall, which has tables and chairs for those who want to use them. People sit down on the floor also to eat. Both *bhogs* are served in separate places in the same hall. The *anna-daan* (*bhog prasada*) is distributed in the *sal* leaf<sup>938</sup> plate.

Table II.55.1 Number of people served and timings

Meals	Time	Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	From 1:30 pm	250–300	2,500–3,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 55.2.2 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The people involved in the *anna-daan* provide nutritious and hygienic meals to the devotees. Usually, the menu is the same as mentioned earlier. The food items like *khichdi bhog*

include *khichdi*,<sup>939</sup> mixed vegetables, fried vegetables, chutney,<sup>940</sup> and the *payesha*.<sup>941</sup> The *pulao bhog* contains food items such as *pulao*,<sup>942</sup> five types of fried vegetables, paneer curry with potato and peas, chutney, and *payesha*.

Table II.55.2 Food items served

<i>Khichdi bhog</i> (Rs. 30)	<i>Pulao bhog</i> (Rs. 65)
<i>Khichdi</i>	<i>Pulao</i>
Fried vegetables	Fried vegetables
Mixed vegetable curry	Paneer curry
Chutney and <i>payesa</i>	Chutney and <i>payesam</i>

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

As mentioned in Table II.55.3, the ingredients are required for the preparation of meals every day. These vary according to season.

Table II.55.3 Types of ingredients and quantities

Ingredients	Quantity (normal days)	Quantity (peak season)
Rice	20 kg	50 kg
<i>Dal</i> (pulses)	30 kg	60 kg
Vegetables (seasonal)	10 kg	20–25 kg
Dry fruits	1 kg	5 kg
Paneer	4 kg	10 kg
Milk	10 L	25 L
Ghee	1 kg	5 kg
Spices	2 kg	8 kg
Sugar	4 kg	10 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 55.2.3 Time taken for preparing food

Food is cooked in the morning hours, and the serving is done intermittently. Serving one batch of people takes around 45 minutes and cleaning the place around 7 to 8 minutes.

Table II.55.4 Cooking and serving time

Slots	Time taken for cooking
Breakfast	1 hour – dedicated to the deity only
Lunch	3 hours
Cleaning time	7–8 minutes
Total time for one batch to complete serving, cleaning, and people let in to have food	45 minutes

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 55.2.4 Human resources

The Chakla Dham Temple has over 100 staff members who are responsible for the smooth running of the temple and its other welfare activities, such as *anna-daan*. They have specific roles to do on the temple premises. For *anna-daan*, there is one senior kitchen manager who ensures that food items and other things are in place for the efficient running of the kitchen. There is one quality control manager who looks after the quality of food from time to time. In addition, there are 8 permanent cooks during the normal season (10–15 cooks during peak season), 5 cleaning staff, 6 servers, and 10 watchmen cum helpers.

Table II.55.5 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Staffs	No. of people	
	Normal season	Peak season
Regular paid staff (temple staff)		
Senior kitchen manager	1	2
Quality control manager	1	1
Cooks	8	10–15
Cleaners	5	8–10
Servers	6	8–12
Watchman cum helpers	10	>10

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

#### 55.2.5 Management

The temple is spread on 20 acres of land. The founder secretary Sri Dev Prasad Sarkar, along with some of his colleagues, and with the help of the villagers of Chakla, took the initiative to establish this temple. The temple was registered in 1981, under the name *Lokenath Sevashram Sangha*; then in 1982, it became a trust by the name *Sri Sri Lokenath Sevashram Sangha*. The trust members are responsible for the management of the temple and its activities.

#### 55.2.6 Finances

The funding comes from the donations of the devotees, the sale of food coupons, and the sale of Baba Lokenath's books, lockets, CDs, etc. In the financial year 2019–20, the temple trust received Rs. 10 lakhs from the state government for the development of the temple and *anna-daan*. An internal audit is done every financial year. The temple does not come under the RTI regulations.

##### Investment

The temple authorities have funded the construction of 2 kitchens; the purchase of 15 trolleys; 200 table chairs; consumables, such as disposable plates; procurement of raw materials like vegetables, groceries, etc.; transportation; housekeeping; repairs; and maintenance of kitchen and dining premises.

Table II.55.6 Operational costs

Particulars	Numbers	Costs (in millions)
Construction of the kitchen	2	
Plates	250 daily	0.022
Trolleys	10–15	0.016
Knives	20	0.0075
Benches	200	0.02
Construction of dining hall	3	1.0 (one time)

### 55.2.7 Food safety

A well-maintained and clean kitchen and dining hall ensures food safety. Hygiene is maintained by the cleaning staff. Vegetables, cooking utensils, and cooking materials are thoroughly cleaned and washed before cooking. After every batch of food is served, the table and floor are cleaned with disinfectants. The volunteers and the people engaged in serving also maintain high-level cleanliness. However, there is no modern equipment in the kitchen.

### 55.2.8 Waste management

Leftover food, if any, is distributed to the needy. After *bhog*, people are supposed to put their paper or leaf plates in the dustbins, which are cleared by the cleaning staff for disposal.

### 55.2.9 Key issues

The temple authorities face a funding shortage, which impacts the overall development of the temple and *anna-daan*. Funds are urgently required to renovate the dining hall to serve more people. A guesthouse on the temple premises is the need of the hour.

### Website referred

- 1 <https://www.bengalchronicle.com/2020/10/20/chakladham/> accessed on 5 October 2021
- 2 <http://lokenathsevasangha.in> – accessed on 5 October 2021
- 3 <https://www.nativeplanet.com/travel-guide/chakla-dham-in-west-bengal-visit-to-birth-place-of-baba-lokenath-004725.html?story=3> – accessed on 5 October 2021

### Notes

- 930 A ritual sacrifice with a specific objective.
- 931 Narrating, reciting, telling, describing of an idea or story, specifically in Indian religions.
- 932 Prayer associated with rituals.
- 933 A Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of prayer, in which light (usually from a flame) is offered to one or more deities.
- 934 Early morning food offerings to God.
- 935 Food offering.
- 936 Several special occasions like *Baba's Samadhi*, *Janamashtami*, *Mangalpradip*, *Mangolik Jogy*, *Tirodhan Utsav*.
- 937 A devotional offering made to a god, typically consisting of food that is later shared among devotees.

- 938 Plate made from leaves of sal tree.  
 939 Made with rice, *dal*, vegetables, etc.  
 940 A sweet dessert made of tomatoes/mango, along with sugar and other dry fruits.  
 941 A sweet dish of rice, milk, sugar, and dry fruits.  
 942 Made of rice, vegetables, dry nuts and ghee.

## Case study 56 Tarapith Temple, Birbhum, West Bengal, India

Kaberi Das\*, Sejuti Bhattacharjee† and M. S. Umesh Babu‡

### 56.1 Introduction

The Tarapith Temple, the place to perform all *tantric*<sup>943</sup> activities, is located on the bank of Dwarka River, Birbhum district, West Bengal, India. It is considered one of the 51 *shakti peeths*<sup>944</sup> in India. According to Hindu mythology, the third eye of *Sati*<sup>945</sup> fell at this place, making it a popular place of worship, as the third eye of *Sati* is believed to be the centre of all power. In Bengali, *Tara* means the eyeball. A special feature of this temple is that the devotees worship Goddess *Tara* with a bottle of whisky, and every morning, a goat is sacrificed. Many saints come here to practise *Dashamahavidya*.<sup>946</sup> The local people believe that Saint *Bamakhepa* practised *tantric sadhana*<sup>947</sup> at the cremation ground located in the temple premises, due to which there exists the power to heal the people.

### 56.2 Anna-daan at Tarapith Temple

The temple has been conducting *anna-daan* for over 100 years. All the devotees, temple associates, and saints who stay at the cremation ground participate in *anna-daan* rituals. Queen of Nator, Rani Bhabani introduced a special *anna-daan* (*bhog*) in the temple. A small quantity of food is distributed to everyone who visits the temple. But there is also a provision for full lunch which can be had by paying Rs. 50 per lunch. The devotees have to purchase a token for Rs. 50 at the *prasad* counter and can have lunch upon producing the coupon.

#### 56.2.1 The spiritual components of anna-daan

In the spiritual context, *anna* (food) is considered a very pure and important part of the *pooja*. During *Kojagori Laxmi pooja*,<sup>948</sup> *anna* is given to the goddess at night. On this day, every villager of Tarapith Temple celebrates *Arandhanbrata*.<sup>949</sup> At night, they take the *prasad*<sup>950</sup> from the temple and break their vow. Devotees from far-off places come to this place to participate in *anna-daan*.

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### 56.2.2 Rituals and prayers

On normal days, there are no special rituals, but on special occasions like *Poila Boisakh*,<sup>951</sup> a goat is sacrificed, and its blood is used in worshipping the goddess. The cooking of the food begins thereafter. During prayers, the cooks (all belonging to the *Brahmin* community) cover their mouths with a piece of cloth and do not talk to each other. Before offering the food to the goddess, a *tulsi* leaf (basil) is placed on her food to make it purer. During the *Baisakh* season, (April–May) a special *anna* is given to the goddess, which is named *baikalikhhog* – containing various types of summer fruits.

### 56.2.3 Number of devotees served

During the normal season, around 800–1,000 people are offered lunch and 100 people dinner. During the peak season, these numbers reach 5,000 and 800, respectively, per day. Food is served three times a day. Breakfast and dinner are given away in hand. Lunch is served on a *sal* leaf.<sup>952</sup> During the normal season, only the devotees are served food. On special occasions, the saints who stay at the cremation ground are also given lunch.

Table II.56.1 Number of devotees served *anna-daan* and their timing

Meals	Timings	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	Noon to 4 pm	8 batches	14–16 batches	800–1,000	5,000
Dinner	7 pm to 9 pm	Not countable	Not countable	100	800

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Lunch is served at *Nuttmandir*.<sup>953</sup> The seating arrangement is adopted for dining, and for the peak season, a buffet system is followed to manage the crowd.

### 56.2.4 Quantity of food prepared, and items served

For breakfast, a mixture of puffed rice, sweet curd and caramel candies, sweets, and fruits are served. The lunch items include plain rice, *pulao*,<sup>954</sup> *khichri*,<sup>955</sup> vegetable curries, fish, chutney,<sup>956</sup> and sweets. For dinner, *Puri-sabji*,<sup>957</sup> five types of fried vegetables, sweets, and coconut water are served (Table II.56.2). Another special feature of *anna-daan* is that the temple authority has a strong belief that *anna-daan* is incomplete without fish and the meat of the sacrificed goat.

Table II.56.2 Items served during *anna-daan*

Meals	Food items
Breakfast	A mixture of puffed rice, sweet curd, caramel candies, seasonal fruits, coconut water
Lunch	Plain rice, <i>pulao</i> , <i>khichri</i> , five types of fried vegetables, vegetable curry, fish, chutney, <i>payesh</i> , <sup>a</sup> sweets
Dinner	<i>Puri-sabji</i> , five types of fried vegetables, sweets, coconut water

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> A sweet dish.

Table II.56.3 provides details on the quantity of food cooked per day.

Table II.56.3 Food items and quantity

Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	500–600 kg	1–2 quintals
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	200–300 kg	800–900 kg
Five types of vegetable fry	50–60 kg	100 kg
<i>Dal</i> <sup>b</sup>	200 L	500–600 L
Vegetable curry	100 L	900–2,000 L
<i>Payesa</i>	300 L	500–600 L
Sweet	As required	As required
Fried fish	60–70 big fish	100–150 big fish
Others (goat meat)	0	Goats are sacrificed at a stipulated time everyday

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> They are varieties of rice made using different spices and recipes with rice as the main ingredient

<sup>b</sup> Thick stew or soup made from pulses.

### 56.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

It usually takes 4–6 hours to prepare the food. The breakfast is ready by 6 am. Lunch is ready by noon. Dinner is cooked between starts at 4 pm and 7 pm. During the peak season, lunch takes much longer to cook. Serving per batch takes 25 minutes during the normal season and 15–20 minutes during the peak season.

### 56.2.6 Nutrition

While preparing the food, importance is given to its nutritional content also. To provide a good amount of nutrition, all types of seasonal vegetables and fruits are used in the food. In addition, enough animal protein is also provided after checking their quality.

### 56.2.7 Human resources

There are 350 members directly associated with the *Tarapith* temple; around 35 of whom work for *anna-daan*. Five staff members are appointed by the management committee to supervise the process of procurement of raw materials. There are five cooks, ten cleaners, and four people for cutting and grinding. They are all *Brahmins*.<sup>958</sup> During the peak season, five extra cooks are hired. The temple staff works an 8-hour shift.

During the peak season, three to four volunteers are engaged. Police are used for crowd management. The volunteers are not allowed to help with cooking or any kind of work associated with it. But in *Kojagori Laxmi pooja*,<sup>959</sup> all the arrangements of food are done by the family members of Rani Bhabani.

Table II.56.4 Human resources

<i>Human resources</i>	<i>Number of staff</i>
Manager	1
Supervisors	5
Cooks	5
Cleaning	4
Serving	8
Helpers	10
Security guard	2
Total	35

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

### 56.2.8 Management

With the help of the state government, a managing committee is constituted to take care of the process of *anna-daan*. The managing committee, whose members are elected every year by the temple members, runs a token counter where the devotees can purchase lunch coupons. The chief member of the committee is nominated by the local government and is responsible for all the affairs of the temple.

### 56.2.9 Finances

The temple runs on donations received in cash and kind from devotees. The treasurer of the committee maintains all the records. Every year, state government officials conduct the annual audit of accounts. On special days, additional funds are released by the finance committee to meet extra expenditures. However, for the celebration of *Kojagori Laxmi pooja*, the entire expenditure is taken care of by the ancestors of Queen Bhabani who presently stay in Kolkata. For special occasions, goats are normally donated by the devotees.

### 56.2.10 Quality of raw materials and food safety

The grocery items are purchased on a daily basis from the local market. Fresh vegetables are delivered by the known shops every day at the temple. Food is prepared under the supervision of a temple committee member. The quantity of raw materials used is given in Table II.56.5. For maintaining the quality, food items with ISI marks are procured. Every day, the management committee purchases fresh food items from local vendors and grocery shops which have been supplying these items for a long time.

### 56.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Traditional cooking equipment and utensils are used to cook the food. The cooks are so efficient that they can cook huge amounts of food in a short time without letting anything get out of hand, even during peak season or an emergency. Serving is done on leaf plates, which are made in-house on a machine.

Table II.56.5 Quantity of raw materials used

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
<b>Breakfast</b>		
Chewra	10 kg	10kg
Rice items	5 kg	5kg
Caramel candies	1 kg	1kg
Sweet	100 pieces	100 pieces
Coconut water	1 full glass	of 1 full glass
Seasonal fruits	2–3 kg	2–3 kg
<b>Lunch</b>		
Plain rice	500–600 kg	1–2 quintals
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	200–300 kg	800–900 kg
5 types of vegetable fry	50–60 kg	100 kg
Dal	200 L	500–600 L
Veg curry	100 L	900–2,000 L
Payasa	300 L	500–600 L
Sweet	As per required	As per required
Fried fish	60–70 big fish	100–150 big fish
Others (goat meat)	0	Goats are sacrificed at a stipulated time
<b>Dinner</b>		
Lunch	500 pieces	500 pieces
Vegetable curry	5 kg	5 kg
Fried vegetables	6 kg	6 kg
Seasonal fruits	1 kg	1 kg
Payasa	50 L	50 L
Vegetable curry	5 kg	5 kg
Sweet	50 pieces	50 pieces

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> They are varieties of rice made using different spices and recipes with rice as the main ingredient

### 56.2.12 Waste management

Wet and dry wastes are stored in separate places. A vehicle from the municipal corporation collects the waste and dumps it in a designated yard.

### 56.2.13 Key issues

Shortage of manpower and workers during the peak season is the major handicap faced by the temple. Waste management is another issue which needs to be addressed. The waste management system should be more scientific.

### Website referred

1 <https://tarapithonline.com/index.html> accessed on 9 December 2021

2 <https://wbtourism.gov.in/destination/details/tarapith> accessed on 9 December 2021

## Notes

- 943 All sorts of spiritual activities with the help of Supernatural Power.  
 944 *Shakthi piths* are the holy places where the remains of Sati, Shiva's wife, are said to be.  
 945 One of the wives of the god Shiva and a daughter of the sage Daksa.  
 946 A group of ten aspects of *Devi* in Hinduism.  
 947 A spiritual practice in which the practitioner sits on a corpse for meditation.  
 948 Special prayer ritual offered to the goddesses of wealth.  
 949 On this day everyone keeps fast and no food is cooked.  
 950 Offering to God first and then served to devotees.  
 951 Bengali new year.  
 952 An Indian eating plate or trencher made with broad dried leaves.  
 953 Outer part of the main temple.  
 954 A rice dish prepared with flavoured spices and vegetables.  
 955 A dish in South Asian cuisine made of rice and lentils.  
 956 Chutney is a spicy dish.  
 957 A popular breakfast dish with deep fried Indian bread served with vegetable curry.  
 958 A social class (upper caste) in Hinduism.  
 959 In October–November, during full moon, the Goddess *Laxmi* is worshipped.

## Case study 57 Humchahombuja, Shimoga, Karnataka, India

Pratibha Parshwanath\*

### 57.1 Introduction

Humcha/Hombuja is a small village near Ripponpet, Hosanagara taluk in Shimoga district in the Indian state of Karnataka. It was known as the capital of the Santaras, a medieval ruling dynasty of Karnataka. Humbaja Atishaya Jain Teerth Kshetra is famous for being home to an ancient temple of Goddess Padmavati, and to the Humbaj Mutt (seminary/monastery), an important institution of the Jain community, in addition, known for its cultural and historical heritage.

Historically, the district was ruled by many dynasties from the days of the Mauryas.<sup>960</sup> Later, the Santaras, an important feudatory line came into existence in the 7th century AD founded by Jinadatta of Ugravamsa. Humcha is associated with a mythological story of Jinadatta, the prince of Mathura who fled to South India due to his family problems. Before leaving, he met Jain Muni Siddhantakirthi and, on his advice, he carried the idol of Goddess Padmāvati. Meanwhile, he reached Humcha and decided to stay overnight under the shelter of Lakki<sup>961</sup> tree. In a dream, he was told by Goddess Padmavathi to install her idol in Humcha. Goddess bestowed on him the power to turn iron into gold. An inscription of 1077 AD also proclaims that Jinadatta founded the temple of Goddess Padmavathi in Pombuccha, the earlier name of Humcha.

#### Yakshini Padmavathi: a popular Jain deity

Humcha is a holy place and is famous for Goddess Padmavati, Yakshini<sup>962</sup> of Lord Parshwanatha, 23rd *tirthankara*.<sup>963</sup> Padmavati is the main deity of the Sri Kshetra

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Humcha. Devi Padmavati is widely worshipped among the Jains. Many ruling families such as Silaharas, Rattas, Santharas, and many high officials of the Jain persuasion became votaries of this goddess and took pride in styling themselves as the favourite devotees of the deity, having adopted the title *Padmavati Dēvi – Labdhasvara – prasāda* in their *prasasti*<sup>964</sup>

The primary festival of the temple is *Ratha Yatra*<sup>965</sup> of Padmavati, organised annually. The annual *Navarātri* festival is also celebrated with great devotion attracting a large number of devotees to Humcha across the country.

## 57.2 Anna-daan at Humcha Jain mutt

*Anna-daan* was started as a gracious gift from deities and doctrine of food charity. Breakfast, lunch, and evening meal are provided as *prasada*<sup>966</sup> throughout the year to all irrespective of their religion, caste, or creed since ancient times.

### 57.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

In Jain philosophy, *anna-daan* is one of the four most pious charities *Aharadaan*,<sup>967</sup> *Abhayadaan*,<sup>968</sup> *Aushadhadaan*<sup>969</sup> and *Shāstradaan*.<sup>970</sup> People receive food as *prasada* – a gracious gift from deities. With *anna-daan*, devotees and other poor people get food for which they bless the donors.

### 57.2.2 Rituals and prayers

There are no rituals and prayers performed before cooking the meal. After the meal is prepared, it is served to God first and then to the devotees.

### 57.2.3 Number of people served

The number of devotees served during normal days is 500–1,000 per day. During festival days, the number of devotees served increases to 3,000–10,000. Breakfast is served from 8:00 am to 10:00 am, lunch from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm, and dinner between 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm, as Jains do not have dinner after sunset. The number of devotees for breakfast during normal days is 500 and in peak season number of devotees reaches 4,000. Almost the same number of devotees come for lunch. Every Friday is a special pooja day, and the number of devotees visiting on that day is more compared to other weekdays.

Table II.57.1 Food served per day

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	8:00 am–10:00 am	Continuous	Continuous	500	4,000
Lunch	11:00 am–2:30 pm	during	during	500–1,000	3,000–10,000
Dinner	4:30 am–6:00 pm	serving	serving		
		hour	hour		

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The temple has three dining halls with a capacity of 1,000 devotees. Devotees follow the queue system, and they self-serve as per their needs. Food is served on plates, and cleaning of tables and plates is continuous during serving hours.

Table II.57.2 Dining halls

Details	
Number of dining halls	3
Capacity	1,000
Seating system	Dining table with chairs during the normal season. Self-service during peak season
Served in	Plates, betel nut leave plates
Management of crowd	Queue system
Cleaning	Continuous during serving hours

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 57.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

The food item served includes *dal*, *poha*,<sup>971</sup> *upma*,<sup>972</sup> *idli sambar*,<sup>973</sup> *puliyogare*,<sup>974</sup> *gojju Avalakki*,<sup>975</sup> tea or coffee rice, *pulav*,<sup>976</sup> *sambar*,<sup>977</sup> vegetable curry, buttermilk, *rasam*,<sup>978</sup> pickle, *papad*,<sup>979</sup> wheat *payasaidlidos*,<sup>980</sup> *moong dal payasa*,<sup>981</sup> and a sweet dish.

Around 30–35 kg of plain rice, 25–30 kg of *pulav*, 5 kg of *payasa*, 25 L of buttermilk are prepared per day during the normal season. During the peak season the quantity of rice cooked per day may increase to 150 kg. The details of ingredients used per day are mentioned in Table II.57.3.

Table II.57.3 Major ingredients and quantities in kilograms

Ingredients	Quantities in kgs	
	Normal season	Peak season
Rice	120	8
Tur dal	15	30
Channa dal	3	12
Moong dal	2	10
Green gram	6	14
Black gram	3	25
Chickpeas	1	5
Bengal gram	2	10
Fried gram	2	5
Salt	12	25
Jaggery	4	30
Sugar	8	50
Coconut	30	120
Tomato	4	25
Drum stick	1	5
Beans	3	30
Coriander leaves	10	30
Cucumber	2	15

(Continued)

Table II.57.3 (Continued)

Ingredients	Quantities in kgs	
	Normal season	Peak season
Sambar cucumber	10	30
Spices	½	2
Sambar powder	1	5
Chilly powder	½	5
Milk	25 L	200 L
Ghee	—	—
Tamarind	1	5

Sources: Primary Survey and author compilation (2020).

### 57.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

*Prasadam* is offered to every devotee. Efforts are made to avoid wastage of food. Leftover food is mixed with fodder and fed to cattle in the temple's *goshala*.<sup>982</sup> Management oversees accountability.

### 57.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The time taken to get breakfast, lunch, and dinner ready is 2 hours, 3 hours, and 1½ hours, respectively. Continuous serving and cleaning are done, as there is no batch system.

Table II.57.4 Cooking and serving time

Meals	Time taken for cooking (in hours)
Breakfast	2 hours
Lunch	3 hours
Dinner	1½ hours
Serving time per batch	Continuous during serving hours
Time taken for cleaning	Continuous during serving hours
Total time for one batch to complete	No batch system

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 57.2.7 Human resources

Human resources vary according to the season. The details are mentioned in Table II.57.5. It is worth mentioning that devotees do not hesitate to offer their services for cleaning, cutting vegetables, managing crowds, and serving people during peak season.

### 57.2.8 Management

The temple has an administrative board headed by the spiritual head. Its activities, including the welfare of the community, are managed and administered by successive *pithadhipatis*.<sup>983</sup> Decisions relating to the management of the temple are made and implemented by functionaries in consultation with and under direction of *pithadhipati*.



Table II.57.5 No. of people involved in *anna-daan*

Temple staff	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season	Normal Season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	1	2				
Manager	1	2	8	8	10	10
Quality control manager	1	1				
Cooks	5	10				
Cleaners	10	20				
Serving	10	20				
Watchman	1	1				
Volunteers for specific purpose						
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	—	5				
Serving people	2	20	Hours of their own choice			
Managing the crowd	2	10				

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 57.2.9 Finances

The main sources of funds are donations and charity in the form of *mushtidana* or cash. In the rare instance of a funds shortage for *anna-daan*, the *mutt* uses *dhruvanidhi*<sup>984</sup> as an emergency fund. This fund was used during the lockdown period of COVID-19 to provide food for 60–80 regular staff of the *mutt*.

Table II.57.6 Finance for *anna-daan* (Rs. in crore)

Meals	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	0.7	1.3
Lunch	1.3	2.2
Dinner	1.0	1.42

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The temple has invested Rs. 70.13 million in kitchen equipment and dining halls (Table II.57.8). It incurs an expenditure of around Rs. 7.8 million to carry out *anna-daan* (Table II.57.9). The books of accounts are annually audited by a chartered accountant.

Table II.57.7 Waste management

Quantity of wet waste generated	50 kg daily
Quantity of dry waste generated	2 kg daily
Segregation	Done
Storage	Wet waste carefully collected and mixed with fodder for cattle
Method of collection	Physical by cleaning staff
Method of disposal of dry waste	Dumped in a pit to generate organic fertiliser

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation.

Table II.57.8 Investment cost

Particulars	Numbers	Cost (in millions)
Construction of kitchen		2.5
Steam boilers	3	0.025
Huge vessels	10	0,05
Plates	3,000	0,15
Glasses	1,000	0.01
Bowls	1,000	0.01
RO plants	2	0.05
Gas stoves	5	0.025
Gas cylinder	20	0.02
Cauldrons	6	0.01
Trolley	2	0.05
Dal/sambar tanks	4	0.015
Cutting boards	10	0.005
Knives	20	0.002
Construction of dining hall	3	4.0
Tables	40	0.1
Chairs	100	0.07
CCTV	3	0.02
Grinder	2	0.04
Mixer	2	
Vegetable cutter	1	
Total		7.12

Sources: Primary Survey and author compilation (2020).

Table II.57.9 O &amp; M costs (per year)

Particulars	O & M costs (per year, in millions)
Salary of employees	1.0
Procurement of raw materials – vegetables	1.15
Procurement of raw materials – groceries	4.95
Transportation cost	0.16
Fuel cost – gas cylinder, pellets, etc.	0.4
Power cost	0.15
Repairs and maintenance of kitchen equipment	0.11
Repairs and maintenance of kitchen and dining hall premises	0.16
Any others (milk, ghee, pickles, papad, etc.)	0.2
Total	7.98

Sources: Primary Survey and author compilation (2020).

### 57.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Good quality, branded food ingredients are purchased from a fixed vendor of APMC. The procured items are inspected by the manager. Apart from this, food items like rice, jaggery, etc., are regularly donated by devotees in the form of *Tulabhara*.<sup>985</sup> Vegetables are washed in clean water before cutting and vessels are sterilised before cooking. Regular personal hygiene and food safety training is given to the cooking staff. Assistants use caps and gloves while cooking and serving the food.

Food safety and hygiene is the first concern of *anna-daan*. The food ingredients are stored in clean containers. Food ingredients are used carefully without wasting them. A person is appointed to monitor and manage the storeroom and issue ingredients to cooks after weighing them. The safety of raw material is ensured by washing the vegetables twice.

#### 57.2.11 *Technology adoption in the kitchen*

The kitchen of the temple is well equipped with grinders and steam boilers. RO plants provide safe water. Clean hot water and organic substances are used for washing the vessels and utensils. LPG cylinders and firewood are used for cooking. The dining hall is under CCTV monitoring and surveillance.

#### 57.2.12 *Waste management*

Waste is segregated into wet waste and dry waste. Around 50 kg of wet waste and 2 kg of dry waste are produced per day. Wet waste is mixed with fodder for cattle. Some of these wastes are dumped in a pit for composting, which is used in the agricultural land belonging to the temple. The wastewater generated from cooking and washing vessels is used to irrigate the land.

#### 57.2.13 *Key issues*

Sometimes there is shortage or excess of food due to the large fluctuation in the number of devotees visiting the temple, resulting in food wastage.

## References

### **Primary sources**

- 1 Swamiji and Jain mutt office staff and devotees

### **Secondary sources**

- 1 S.P. Chavan, Jainism in Southern Karnataka (up to 1565 AD), D.K. Print World(p)Ltd, New Delhi
- 2 <https://hombujapadmavati.org/> accessed on 15 December 2021
- 3 <https://www.jainheritagecentres.com/jainism-in-india/karnataka/humcha-2/> accessed on 15 December 2021
- 4 <https://www.worldwidejournals.com/international-journal-of-scientific-research> accessed on 15 December 2021 (IJSR)/recent\_issues\_pdf/2013/August/August\_2013\_1375426780\_5708b\_69.pdf accessed on 15 December 2021
- 5 <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Humcha> accessed on 15 December 2021

## Notes

960 The Mauryan Empire was a geographically extensive Iron Age historical power in South Asia based in Magadha, founded by Chandragupta Maurya in 322 BCE.

961 *Vitex negundo*.

962 Mythical beings of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain mythology.

- 963 A saviour who has succeeded in crossing over life's stream of rebirths and has made a path for others to follow.
- 964 S. P. Chavan, Jainism in Southern Karnataka, p. 153.
- 965 Chariot festival.
- 966 Food and water offered to a deity during worship which is later distributed among worshippers.
- 967 An act of glorifying God.
- 968 Gift of shelter.
- 969 Gift of medicine.
- 970 Gift of books and imparting of knowledge.
- 971 Dish prepared from flattened rice.
- 972 Dish prepared from broken wheat.
- 973 A south Indian steamed cake of rice, usually served with stew.
- 974 Tamarind rice.
- 975 Dish prepared from puffed rice.
- 976 A rice dish.
- 977 A lentil-based vegetable curry, cooked with pigeon peas and tamarind broth.
- 978 A thin, very spicy southern Indian soup served with other dishes, typically as a drink.
- 979 A thin crisp cake.
- 980 Pancake made from rice flour and ground pulses, typically served with a spiced vegetable filling.
- 981 A sweet dish.
- 982 Cow shed.
- 983 Head monk.
- 984 Money kept as a permanent deposit.
- 985 An ancient practice in which a person is weighed against a commodity (such as gold, grain, fruits or other objects), and the equivalent weight of that commodity is offered as donation.

## Case study 58 Shikharji Temple, Jharkhand, India

Pratibha Parshwanath\*

### 58.1 Introduction

The Jain temples at Shikharji are the most important pilgrimage centres among the Jains. This Jain *tirtha*<sup>986</sup> is where 20 Jain *tirthankaras*<sup>987</sup> attained *moksh*,<sup>988</sup> along with many monks through meditation. Located in the Giridih district in Jharkhand, Shikharji is on the Parasnath hill, which is the highest hill in Jharkhand.

Shikharji means venerable peak as it is a place where the *tirthankaras* attained liberation. Parasnath hill is named after Parshvanatha, the 23rd *tirthankaras*. Source: Author's compilation.

### 58.2 Anna-daan

*Anna-daan*<sup>989</sup> tradition is the act of serving and donating food to the needy and the pilgrims. Sh. Digambar Jain Shaswat of Tirtharaj Sammed Shikhar Trust initiated this tradition in the temple. *Anna-daan* is practised for the convenience of tourists who come to

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visit the temple. The initiative is active throughout the year. A total number of 2,400 devotees are served food every month.

*Anna-daan* programmes involve cooking, serving, and eating food together and are supposed to bring good luck to those participating in the tradition. *Anna-daan* impacts society positively helps in creating a peaceful and harmonious society. All devotees, irrespective of their caste, creed, or gender, are served equally. Food is provided to all who come for *tirtha yatra*.<sup>990</sup> The people served bless the donors, which brings about a positive feeling and develops harmony among the people. This in turn instils dedication and devotion.

### 58.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna-daan* is performed by the temple as a philanthropic activity. It is considered auspicious and is practised for the attainment of good luck and spiritual fulfilment.

### 58.2.2 Rituals and prayers

There is no specific ritual practised by the cooks and temple authorities before the preparation of the food. After the meals are ready, cooks pray among themselves and accept the *prasadam*.<sup>991</sup> Before eating, the devotees chant the *Namokar Mantra*.<sup>992</sup> The cooks should not have tasted the food while it is being cooked.

The temple's motto is to serve good quality, nutritious food. Potatoes, onions, and garlic are not served, as a large number of devotees do not consume onions and garlic.

### 58.2.3 Food serving and management

The temple has two dining halls which can accommodate 200 people at a time. There are tables and benches which can seat 84 people at a time. The temple serves food in four shifts. Cleaning is done after every shift. The crowd is managed with a token system.

The temple serves up to 500 devotees daily during peak seasons and about 50 during normal days. Annually, 20,000 visitors come to the temple, and all of them are provided food without discrimination based on caste, religion, or gender. They stand in a queue for their turn to receive food.

### 58.2.4 Volume of food served per day

The temple offers lunch and dinner to about 50 visitors daily during normal times and 500 per day during peak seasons. Lunch is provided between 11 am and 1 pm, and dinner is served between 4 pm until sunset.

Table II.58.1 Time and numbers

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	11 am to 1 pm	All times	11 am to 1 pm	Under 50	Up to 500
Dinner	4 pm to sunset	All times	4 pm to sunset	Under 50	Up to 500

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The details are in Table II.58.2.

*Table II.58.2* Quantity of food served per meal during normal and peak seasons

<i>Food items</i>	<i>Normal season</i>	<i>Peak season</i>
Lunch		
Plain rice	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
<i>Chapati</i>	50 to 200 pieces	200 to 2,000 pieces
<i>Dal</i>	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
Sweet – payasa	1 kg	3 to 5 kg
Vegetable curry	1 kg	1 to 5 kg
Ghee	1 kg	1 to 3 kg
Dinner		
Plain rice	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
<i>Dal</i>	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
Vegetable curry	1 kg	1 to 5 kg
Buttermilk	No	No
Sweet	1 kg	1 to 5 kg
Ghee	1 kg	1 to 3 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> *Puliyogare*, vegetable bhat, ghee rice, *Bisibelebhat*, *Pongal*, etc.

Leftover food is fed to the cows in *goshala*.<sup>993</sup>

#### 58.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The management ensures accountability of *anna-daan*. Details relating to cooking and distribution of *prasadam* are monitored and maintained manually.

#### 58.2.6 Cooking and serving time

Cooking of both lunch and dinner takes a total of 2 hours. Serving each batch takes 25 minutes. Cleaning is done in 15 minutes. The servers and cleaners take a total of 45 minutes to get one batch through.

#### 58.2.7 Nutrition

Food prepared and served in the temple premises are delicious and care is taken to ensure that the food is nutritious and healthy.

#### 58.2.8 Human resources

During normal and peak seasons, those involved with *anna-daan* work 8 hours per day, with one weekly day off. The kitchen staff includes 2 senior kitchen managers and 12 cooks. There are two quality control managers who check the quality of food prepared

by the cooks. There are three to four cleaners and one watchman to manage the crowd on the temple premises.

#### *58.2.9 Temple administration board*

The temple administration board was constituted in 2015 and has 35 members. All work relating to *anna-daan* is carried out by the trust and employees under the direction and supervision of the board

#### *58.2.10 Finances*

The total fund requirement as per the temple authorities is Rs. 2 million per annum. The temple has no corpus fund. The only source of funds is the daily and monthly donations made by devotees in cash and in-kind.

##### Investment

The temple has invested a sum of around Rs. 3 million into the construction of dining halls, various kitchen equipment (including 5 huge vessels, 6 cauldrons, 1,000 plates, 500 glasses, 150 bowls, 4 trolleys, cutting boards, knives, 6 big and 3 small gas stoves, 5 big and 11 small gas cylinders and 22 big tables with seats, 1 RO plant, and a surveillance system comprising 1 CCTV and 9 cameras.

##### O&M costs

The total annual expense incurred by the temple is to the tune of Rs. 2 million plus. More than half of the amount goes to pay salary, and the remaining money is used on procurement of vegetables and groceries, electricity, gas cylinders, pellets, and house-keeping. Rs. 50,000 is kept aside for repairs and maintenance of the kitchen and dining halls.

#### *58.2.11 Financial accountability*

The temple's annual accounts are audited in-house by a chartered accountant. The annual audit is monitored by the board annually.

#### *58.2.12 Quality assurance and food safety*

The temple takes proper care in the selection of suppliers, monitoring quality control processes and quality inspection. Raw material specifications as mentioned in FSSA 2006 are followed.

Vegetables are washed before cutting. Food and ingredients are stored in deep freezer. Cooking vessels are washed with warm water and soap. The kitchen staff is trained in personal hygiene and food safety. Quality officers are employed in the kitchen to monitor the quality of the cooked food. While preparing and serving food, the cooks and the servers wear gloves and caps. The servers use ladles to serve food.

Table II.58.3 Total quantity of ingredients used per day

Ingredients	Quantity	
	Normal season	Peak season
Rice	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
Tur daal	1 to 3 kg	3 to 7 kg
Chana daal	1 kg	1 kg to 2 kg
Moong daal	1 to 3 kg	3 kg to 7 kg
Green gram	1 kg	1 to 4 kg
Black gram	1 kg	3 kg
Chickpeas	1 to 3 kg	3 to 5 kg
Cowpeas	1 to 3 kg	3 to 5 kg
Rajma	1 kg	4 to 7.5 kg
Salt	1 kg	1 to 2 kg
Sugar	1 to 3 kg	3 to 10 kg
<b>Vegetables</b>		
Tomato	1 kg	1 to 10kg
Ladies finger	1 to 3 kg	3 to 20 kg
Cauliflower	Not Used	Only cabbage used
Beans	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Greens – lettuce	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Coriander leaves	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Cucumber	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Sambar cucumber	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Spices	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Sambar powder	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Chilly powder	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Milk	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Ghee	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya
Tamarind	Used	This item is used in Bhojanalya

Sources: Primary Survey (2020).

### 58.2.13 Technology adoption in the kitchen

For monitoring and surveillance, the temple authorities have installed an RO plant and CCTVs in the *anna-daan* halls. Basic equipment are made use of in the kitchen.

### 58.2.14 Waste management

Leftover food is fed to cows. There is no segregation of waste into dry and wet. All waste is collected in dustbins in the temple premises and disposed to the local municipal corporation.

### 58.2.15 Key issues

At times, there is a shortage of funds to properly conduct *anna-daan*. Besides, it is hard for the management to maintain discipline as people talk loudly on the temple premises, thereby disturbing the sanctity of the place.

## Temple

Website: <https://www.shikharjishaswat.org/>



## Reference

- 1 <https://www.shikharjishaswat.org/> accessed on 25 December 2021

## Notes

- 986 Pilgrimage site.
- 987 Spiritual teacher and saviour of Dharma.
- 988 Liberation from the death and birth cycle.
- 989 Act of providing or donating food or offerings.
- 990 Journeys associated with pilgrimage sites.
- 991 Food offerings made to God for blessings.
- 992 Prayer.
- 993 Cow shelter.

## Case study 59 Kumbhoj Bahubali Temple, Kolhapur District, Maharashtra, India

Pratibha Parshwanath\*

### 59.1 Introduction

Bahubali Kumbhoj is a Jain *tirth* (holy place) in the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra. It is one of Maharashtra's renowned Jain pilgrimage destinations and is an *atishayakshetra*, which means place of miracles. Kumbhoj has its own unique importance in the Jain community. In 1963, a 28-foot-tall marble statue of Lord Bahubali was erected near the hill.

According to history, Kumbhoj is an ancient city where ascetic saint Shri Bahubali Maharaj lived almost 250 years ago. He was a well-known scholar of the science of spells, and it was due to his influence that no wild animal harmed pilgrims visiting the holy site. In honour of the great saint Khamboj Bahubali, the location has been named Kumbhoj Bahubali. One of the most popular rituals/events is *Mahamastakabhishek* (grand religious ablution from head). It lasts for a week and attracts pilgrims from across the country. The event occurs every 12 years (<https://www.kolhapurtravels.com/kolhapur-kumbhoj-bahubali-jahaj-mandir.php>).

### 59.2 Anna-daan at Kumbhoj Bahubali Temple

*Anna-daan* was started in 1934 by the Samtbadraj Maharaj. The main reason for starting *anna-daan* was to accommodate pilgrims visiting the temple from all over the world and the *Gurukul* students, as there were no lodgings available at that time. Food is served throughout the year. On a normal day, food is provided to around 400 devotees; the number of devotees shoots up to 1,000 per day during the peak season or on special occasions.

The Jain philosophy is the main reason behind performing *anna-daan*. Under this initiative, food is provided to the needy and students as well as the devotees without

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discrimination based on caste or religion. Students are also provided an education. There are separate serving areas for men and women.

### 59.2.1 Rituals and prayers before cooking

Before cooking, no rituals are performed, but prayers are said before the cooking process starts. When the meal is ready, it is served to the devotees who chant *Namokar mantra*<sup>994</sup> before eating. Using various means (such as audio clips, posters, and other media), the devotees are made aware of the importance of *anna-daan*.

### 59.2.2 Number of devotees served

Food is served three times a day: breakfast at 7:30 am, lunch at 12:30 am, and dinner at 5:30 pm. On normal days, 400 devotees and on special occasions 1,000 devotees partake of food.

There is one dining hall that can accommodate 500 people. Food is served in plates. Queue system is used to control the crowd. The dining hall is cleaned twice daily.

Table II.59.1 Food served per day

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	7:30 am	1	1	400	1,000
Lunch	9:30 am	1	1	400	1,000
Dinner	5:30 pm	1	1	400	1,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 59.2.3 Quantity of food prepared

Temple kitchen has adopted newer technologies for preparation of food. This makes the task of food preparation simpler and faster.

Table II.59.2 Quantity of food prepared per day

Food Items	Normal Season (kilograms)	Peak season (kilograms)
<b>Breakfast</b>		
<i>Poha</i>	30	50
<i>Upma</i>	30	50
<i>Idli sambar</i>	20	50
<b>Lunch</b>		
Plain rice	20	50
<i>Chapati</i>	20	50
<i>Dal</i>	3	8
<i>Sambar</i>	3	8
<i>Rasam</i>	3	8
Vegetable curry	25	70

(Continued)

Table II.59.2 (Continued)

Food Items	Normal Season (kilograms)	Peak season (kilograms)
Buttermilk	30 L	75 L
Sweet	40	100
<b>Dinner</b>		
Plain rice	20	50
<i>Dal</i>	3	8
<i>Sambar</i>	3	8
<i>Rasam</i>	3	8

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

All efforts are made to ensure that no food is wasted. Leftover food, if any, is distributed to the needy and sometimes to animals.

#### 59.2.4 Accountability of *prasadam*

The committee looks after the management and accountability of *prasadam*.

#### 59.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Cooking takes a total of 7 hours (1 hour for breakfast and 3 hours each for lunch and dinner). One hour is required to serve the food. Cleaning takes 30 minutes. Food is served in batches if the number of people is large.

Table II.59.3 Cooking and serving time

Time taken for cooking	7 hours
Breakfast	1 hour
Lunch	3 hours
Dinner	3 hours
Serving time per batch	30 minutes
Cleaning time	30 minutes
Total time for one batch to complete – Serving, cleaning and people let in to have food	1 hour

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 59.2.6 Nutrition

Ingredients such as milk, ghee, fruits, and a variety of vegetables are used in *prasadam* to ensure that *prasadam* is nutritious. Except on special occasions, the menu remains the same throughout the year. However, ingredients are changed according to seasons to enhance the digestibility of food and to provide seasonal nutrients.

#### 59.2.7 Human resource

Manpower engaged in *anna-daan* is mentioned in Table II.59.4.

Table II.59.4 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Paid staff (temple staff)	Number of people		Hours of work	
	Normal days	Peak days	Normal days	Peak days
Quality control staff	1	2	6	6
Cooks	6	13		
General cleaners	2			
Utensil cleaners	2	4	6	6
Dining hall cleaners	4	4	6	6
Servers	20	40	6	6

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Table II.59.5 Other people involved in *anna-daana*

Category	Normal season	Peak season
Religious leaders	10	20
Social leaders	20	40
Individuals who donate	100	100
Volunteers		40

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

During peak season, more volunteers are required to help in serving, managing the crowd, collecting donated items, and other work. They are not involved in cooking, cleaning, and vegetable cutting, which are taken care of by the regular cleaning staff.

### 59.2.8 Working hours

The staff works for 6 hours daily. Based on the arrangement between them, they take breaks for tea or to rest.

### 59.2.9 Temple Administration Board

The temple administration board was constituted in 1934. At present, it has 27 members. The board has formed a management committee to ensure the smooth conduct of *anna-daan*. Other activities performed by the committee include appointing staff, overseeing the procurement of raw materials, and purchasing kitchen equipment, dining hall fittings, repairs, etc.

### 59.2.10 Finances of *anna-daan*

The temple receives various forms of donations to the tune of Rs. 0.10 million per year. These are used to meet the expenditure of *anna-daan*. In addition, the temple earns interest on corpus deposited in banks. These funds are allocated to various heads as mentioned in Table II.59.6.

Table II.59.6 O&amp;M costs (per year) in million rupees

Particulars	O&M costs (Rs., per year)
Salary of employees	0.8
Procurement of raw materials – vegetables	0.3
Procurement of raw materials – groceries	2 million
Transportation cost	0.04
Fuel cost – gas cylinders, pellets, etc.	0.35
Power cost	0.065
Housekeeping cost of the dining hall	0.1
108 tables	0.35
500 chairs	0.25
10 CCTVs	0.17
Any other	New dining hall and kitchen under construction

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 59.2.11 Food safety

Raw material specifications as defined in FSSA of 2006 are followed. Before cutting, the vegetables are sanitised. There are also cold storage facilities available. The cooking utensils are sterilised before use. The staff maintains good personal hygiene, and the kitchen staff receives food safety training. Officers are hired to track the quality of cooked food.

### 59.2.12 Technology adopted in the kitchen

The kitchen at the temple has acquired equipment such as steam boilers, insulated vessels RO plants, and a *roti*-making system, which have made cooking less taxing and less time-consuming. Hot water is used for washing vessels and chlorine water for washing vegetables.

### 59.2.13 Waste management

About 10 kgs of wet and dry waste are produced daily. Wet waste is used to make compost, while dry waste is collected by the municipal body.

## References

- 1 <https://www.kolhapurtravels.com/> accessed on 15 November 2021
- 2 <https://www.kolhapurtravels.com/kolhapur-kumbhoj-bahubali-jahaj-mandir.php> accessed on 15 November 2021
- 3 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumbhoj> accessed on 15 November 2021

## Note

994 Prayer.

## Case study 60 Mahavir Tapobhumi, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, India

Pratibha Parshwanath\*

### 60.1 Introduction

Ujjain is a historical city in Madhya Pradesh with numerous Jain temples. Many devotees visit this place to pay respect to the Jain *tirthankars*.<sup>995</sup> Mahavir Tapobhumi, located in Ujjain, is one of the most famous Jain *tirthas*<sup>996</sup> in Madhya Pradesh. It has an ancient, rich cultural background and is known to be the place where Bhagwan<sup>997</sup> Mahavir went into deep meditation. Mahavir Tapobhumi is also known as *Siddha*.<sup>998</sup> *Kshetra*<sup>999</sup> as *muni*<sup>1000</sup> Abhayghoshji attained salvation here. The temple has rooms, halls, and a mess for the devotees to receive food.

### 60.2 Anna-daan

*Anna-daan*<sup>1001</sup> is the act of giving and donating food to the needy and to pilgrims who visit the temple for prayer. *Anna-daanam* tradition was started by Munishri Pragya Sagar Ji Maharaj on 17 November 2005 as a symbol of *tapasya*<sup>1002</sup> done by Bhagwaan Mahavir Swami in Ujjain. *Anna-daan* is organised daily throughout the year for some 400–500 devotees and students.

#### 60.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

*Anna-daan* is a ritual performed by the temple authorities, workers, cooks, donors, and devotees for philanthropy. It is considered to be auspicious and gives good luck to persons performing it for the society. Devotees coming from all over the world are served free food of good quality. The temple serves pure Jain food<sup>1003</sup> to all, irrespective of caste, creed, or gender.

*Anna-daan* is believed to be auspicious for those who serve and eat the food. It inculcates a feeling of togetherness. All devotees, including the poor, receive food, as no separate serving is practised. For the food they receive, they bless the donors. The act of serving and receiving the food develops positive feelings and harmony among people. In addition, *anna-daan* instils dedication and devotion in the devotees. Only Jain food is served. The temple practises *anna-daan* as part of Jain *dharma* which aids people to connect to *dharma*.

#### 60.2.2 Rituals and prayers before cooking and serving

The temple cooks and workers pray before cooking and practise the ritual of placing flowers. They also perform *arti*<sup>1004</sup> before starting the food preparation. After cooking, *prasadam*<sup>1005</sup> is served to the deity and then to the devotees. The cooks are not supposed to taste the prepared food before serving. The devotees need to wash their hands before eating. They also pray silently before eating.

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The temple management makes people aware of the benefits of Jain food. They believe that food can be tasty and wholesome without adding onion and garlic. They also make people understand the significance and spirit behind *anna-daan* performed in the temple through visuals and audio clippings. The temple staff and servers meditate before serving food to the devotees. The temple management urges the devotees to maintain silence and practice good hygiene on the temple premises before and after eating.

### 60.2.3 Food serving and management

The temple has one dining hall, which can accommodate a total of 200 people for *anna-daan*. It has 50 dining tables. The devotees are served food on plates and sometimes on banyan leaves and in areca bowls. The crowd is managed by a queue system and token system. After every meal, the dining hall and tables are cleaned before the next batch of people enters. The temple serves 50 devotees daily during normal times and 100 devotees during special occasions. All are treated equally despite their caste, religion, or gender.

### 60.2.4 Food served per day

*Anna*<sup>1006</sup> is served throughout the day from 7:30 am to 5 pm during both normal and peak seasons. Breakfast starts at 7:30 am, lunch at noon, and dinner at 5 pm.

Table II.60.1 Time and numbers

Meals	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	7:30 am	7:30 am	7:30 am	50	100
Lunch	12:00 pm	12:00 pm	12:00 pm	50	100
Dinner	5:00 pm	5:00 pm	5:00 pm	50	100

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Table II.60.2 lists the food items distributed among the devotees.

Table II.60.2 Food items served

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	Yes	Yes
Chapati	Yes	Yes
Dal	Yes	Yes
Vegetable curry	Yes	Yes
Buttermilk <sup>a</sup>	Yes	Yes
Sweet	Yes	Yes
Others (specify)	Daalbhaati, Pudi sabji	

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Fermented drink made from butter and cream.

From experience, cooks know the number of devotees likely to visit the temple and cook food accordingly. So, there is very little chance of leftover food. However, excess food, if any, is distributed among the poor people and NGOs<sup>1007</sup> in the villages.

#### 60.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

Store manager/general manager is responsible to keep an account and funding of *prasadam*.

The management ensures accountability.

#### 60.2.6 Cooking and serving time

As mentioned earlier, breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided to the devotees by the temple. Breakfast takes about 3 hours to prepare, lunch 4 hours, and dinner 3 hours. Each batch is served in 10 minutes. Workers take 10 minutes to clean the dining hall and tables after every batch. The total time taken up by one batch is 20 minutes, which includes serving, cleaning, and eating.

#### 60.2.7 Nutrition

Temple workers, experienced store managers, and cooks purchase only natural, organic, and good quality ingredients, such as vegetables, *dal*, and grams.

#### 60.2.8 Human resources

During normal times, the office has a total staff strength of 44, which increases to 115 during peak seasons. The break down is mentioned in Table II.60.3.

Table II.60.3 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid staff (temple staff)	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	1	1	8	12	1 day	1 day
Quality control manager	1	1	8	12	1 day	1 day
Cooks	6	15	12	18	1 day	1 day
Cleaners	8	10	12	18	1 day	1 day
Servers	10	30	12	18	1 day	1 day
<b>Volunteers for specific purpose</b>						
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	4	8	10	12		
Cleaning utensils	4	8	12	12		
Cleaning dining hall	2	10	8	12		
Serving people	2	20				
Managing the crowd	6	12				

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2021).



Other people who participate in *anna-daan* during normal and peak seasons are religious leaders, donors, and volunteers.

#### 60.2.9 Institutional arrangements

The temple administration board was constituted in 2005. Presently, it has 13 members, with assigned role in the administration. *Maharaj* plays a role in temple administration, and he also handles the *anna-daan* processes and decisions.

The *Maharaj* makes decisions on all tasks related to *anna-daan* and gives instructions to the president. The president, in turn, guides the managing trustee, who then shares the instructions with the manager. The manager interacts with the staff members in the temple on specific tasks and looks after all the processes.

#### 60.2.10 Finances

The temple depends on donations to fund its various activities. It has no corpus fund.

#### 60.2.11 Quality maintenance

The temple trust authorities monitor the selection of suppliers for a good supply chain. The raw materials supplied by them comply with the specifications, as mentioned in the FSSA 2006. Quality inspection takes place in the temple kitchen daily. The raw materials are stored in cold storage to maintain their freshness, hygiene, and quality. The temple workers sanitise the raw materials before using them. Vegetables are washed thoroughly before cutting. During the cooking process, the cooking vessels and utensils are sterilised before use. The kitchen staff undergoes regular personal hygiene and food safety training. Quality officers are employed in the kitchen to monitor the quality of the cooked food before it is served. The cooks and servers, trained to maintain hygiene, wear caps and gloves while preparing and serving food.

#### 60.2.12 Technology adoption in the kitchen

There are steam boilers for preparing food and RO plants to provide quality water. To maintain the utmost hygiene, hot water is used for sterilising vessels before cooking. Chlorine water is used to wash vegetables and other raw materials.

To maintain the quality of the food prepared, hot insulated vessels are used in the kitchen. Cooks use fossil-free fuel for cooking and do not reuse water.

The temple has invested in CCTVs, which are installed in the *anna-daan* halls and temple premises. In addition, a watchman takes care of the manual entry, monitoring, and surveillance. While serving food, the temple makes important announcements using the PA system.

#### 60.2.13 Waste management

The waste from the kitchen, dining halls, and other temple areas is collected in dustbins which are carried away by municipal vehicle.

Sometimes, there is excess food, which is distributed among the poor and NGOs in the village but not wasted.

#### 60.2.14 Key issues

While there is no shortage of funds, sometimes there is discontinuity in fund flow. The temple authorities try their best not to let the non-availability of funds impact the quantity of food cooked. However, there are people who waste food, do not follow the queue, and talk loudly, disturbing the sanctity of the place. Sometime, devotees visiting the temple do not maintain hygiene. Occasionally, there is a sudden surge in the number of devotees visiting the temple during the peak season – thereby setting off hurried activities in the kitchen to meet the additional requirement of food.

#### Notes

- 995 Spiritual teacher and savior of Dharma.
- 996 Pilgrimage site.
- 997 A revered person or guru. Bhagwan is used as a formal name.
- 998 One who has achieved spiritual perfection.
- 999 Area.
- 1000 Sage.
- 1001 Act of providing or donating food or offerings.
- 1002 Austerity or penance.
- 1003 Jains have certain specifications while cooking and ingredients used as well.
- 1004 Ritual of praying to God with a flame.
- 1005 Food blessed by Gods.
- 1006 Food.
- 1007 Non-governmental organization for humanitarian causes.

## Case study 61 Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamilnadu, India

Pratibha Parshwanath\*

### 61.1 Introduction

The holy mountain is in the Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu, known as Arihanthagiri (Thirumalai). Of the huge number of ascetics (*munis*) who accompanied the last Shuruthakevali Bhatrabhagu Muni to South India in the 3rd century AD, a majority of them came to Thirumalai and settled here. It is an important landmark in Jain history. At the foot of the mountain, there is an ancient *basadi* (temple) and beautiful caves. The statues of Bhagawan Neminatha, Bhagawan Parshwanatha, and Kushmaandini Devi (Dharma Devi) were set up in a cave some 900 years ago.

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### Chronicle of Arihanthagiri

The famous Thirumalai Arihanthagiri Jain Mutt<sup>1008</sup> is one of the oldest holy places with a history of more than 1,500 years. The temple complex is now managed by Archaeological Survey of India, but the worship of deities is performed by the *mutt*.

The temple complex has smaller temples. Pancha-Parameshti Temple is an old small temple, beautifully carved in circular stone. Lord Mahaviratemple, built in 1500 AD, has a special tower (*gopura*) and a unique three-staged style ensuring a cool breeze during summer. Lord Neminatha Temple was constructed by Khundavi Nachiyar the sister of the Chola emperor Rajaraja Chola in 1100 AD. The main deity of this temple is Neminatha, the 23rd *tirthankara*<sup>1009</sup> whose 17.5-foot-high statue (his tallest in India) is installed at this temple. Besides these three temples, there are many small cave temples. Mention may be made of two temples: Shree Parshwanatha Temple, established in 1,600, and the newly built Pancakula Devatai Temple (2006), which is known for its attractive sculptures.

### Shree Kshetra Arahantagiri Digambara Jain Mutt

Arahantagiri Jain Mutt is in a peaceful area just before the Thitumalai hill. This *mutt* is excellently managed by Swasti Shree Dhavalakeerthi Bhattaraka Swamiji who is guided by his moto of service. Acharya Shree Akalanka Vidyapita Gurukula was started in 1998 to provide free education, food, and stay to Jains of lesser means.

#### 61.1.1 Significance

There are many caves which were used by Jain monks for meditation, penance, learning, and teaching. The roof of the cave is painted with pictures of Jain monks, *tirthankars*, and other important Jain events. These paintings are more than 1,000 years old. One big cave has water springs and is carved with Jain images.

The primary festivals of the temple are *Pongal* (*Makarsankranti*), *Pournami pooja* for Lord *Nēminātha*, *Panchami pooja*, *Nagadosha pooja*, *Navaratri Pooja*, and *Ashada pooja*. These festivals attract many devotees. On the *pongol* day, nearly 15,000 to 20,000 devotees visit the temple premises and are served food accordingly.

#### 61.2 Anna-daan at Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri

*Anna-daan* was initiated by the Bhattaraka Swamiji on 8 February 1998. The main purpose of starting the *anna-daan* is the significance of the *daan*<sup>1010</sup> concept in Jain *dharma*.<sup>1011</sup>

The six essential duties of Jainism motivated the temple management to start *anna-daan*. As per Jain *dharma*, a charitable act or other good work helps the society. Besides, it is considered fortunate to serve devotees, develops positive feeling and promotes harmony among people.

#### 61.2.1 Rituals and prayers

The cooking area is cleaned every day. The cooking places are decorated with flowers and garlands. *Arti*<sup>1012</sup> is performed daily before cooking gets underway. While preparing

the meal, cooks are not allowed to taste it. The cooked meal is served as *prasadam*<sup>1013</sup> to the deity and then served to the devotees. Before eating, all the devotees and students are required to meditate and chant *Namokar mantra*<sup>1014</sup> and maintain silence and hygiene in the dining hall.

### 61.2.2 Number of devotees served

The temple serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner to around 1,000 devotees and students of Akalanka Vidyapeetha as *prasadam*. On special occasions, 15,000 to 20,000 devotees are served.

Table II.61.1 Number of people served in Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri

Meals	Time		Number of people served	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	7:30 am	7:00 am	200	500
Lunch	1:30 pm	Noon	400	1,000
Dinner	5:30 pm	5:30 pm	300	600

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation.

The temple has two dining halls, both can accommodate around 210 people at a time. Besides, there is an area where 180 devotees can sit on the ground and eat. In normal times, the food is served on plates. During special occasions, food is served on plantain leaves and in areca bowls. To handle the crowd, queue and token systems are followed.

Table II.61.2 Dining halls

<b>Details</b>	
Number of dining halls	2
Capacity	210
<b>Seating</b>	
Ground	180
Dining table	30
Served in	Plates/banyan leaves/areca bowls
Management of crowd	Queue system/token system
Cleaning: number of times	8 to 10 times

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation.

### 61.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and served

Three days in a week *idli*<sup>1015</sup> and *dosa*<sup>1016</sup> are served at breakfast. On the rest of the days, *avalakki*<sup>1017</sup> (*poha*), *poori*<sup>1018</sup> and *upma*<sup>1019</sup> are served. Food is served in unlimited quantity at every meal. Sweets like *payasa*,<sup>1020</sup> *kesaribath*,<sup>1021</sup> *godhipayasa*,<sup>1022</sup> etc., are prepared according to the wishes of the devotees who donate for *anna-daan* to commemorate an important event. Lunch includes rice and *rasam*.<sup>1023</sup>

Food is prepared and served on the basis of the expected number of devotees. To ensure the accountability of *prasadam*, the quantity of food items is recorded daily by the store manager.

#### 61.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The time taken to prepare breakfast is 3 hours, for lunch 4 hours, and 3 hours for dinner. Twenty minutes are taken up to serve and for people to complete their meal. Cleaning of the dining hall takes another 10 minutes.

Table II.61.3 Cooking and serving time

Time taken for cooking	
Breakfast	3 hours
Lunch	4 hours
Dinner	3 hours
Serving time per batch	10 minutes
Cleaning time	10 minutes
Total time taken to serve, to let one batch be through with eating, and to clean up the place	20 minutes

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 61.2.5 Nutrition

Special care is taken to ensure adequate nutrition in the food served. Good quality ingredients are purchased by experienced store managers and cooks. The temple believes in purchasing organic and natural items, including fruits, vegetables, pulses, and grains.

#### 61.2.6 Human resources

The temple has a staff strength of 15 people during the normal season and 42 people during the peak season. Volunteers render their services, such as serving people, managing the crowd, and cleaning the dining hall to get *punya karma*.<sup>1024</sup> During *anna-daan*, 40 permanent employees are engaged to provide care for the elderly at the old-age home, *Vidyapeetha*<sup>1025</sup> students, devotees, and the *goshala*.<sup>1026</sup>

Table II.61.4 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

Paid staff	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal days	Peak days	Normal season	Peak Season	Normal season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	1	2	8 hour	12 hour	1	1
Quality control staff	1	2	8 hour	12 hour	1	1
Cooks	5	10	12hour	18 hour	1	1
Cleaners	4	12	12hour	18 hour	1	1

(Continued)

Table II.61.4 (Continued)

Paid staff	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal days	Peak days	Normal season	Peak Season	Normal season	Peak season
Servers	10	30	12 hour	18 hour	1	1
Watchman	1	2				
Other specific	—					
Volunteers for specific purpose						
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	4	10	8 hour	12 hour	—	—
Cleaning utensils	4	12	8 hour	12 hour	—	—
Cleaning dining hall	2	10	8 hour	12 hour	—	—
Serving people	2	20	8 hour	12 hour	—	—
Managing the crowd	6	12	8 hour	12 hour	—	—

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2020).

On average, a cook works 12 hours a day. During the peak season, they work for around 18 hours while the others work for 8 hours on normal days and extra time during the peak season.

### 61.2.7 Management

At present, the temple administrative board has five members and is known as the Shree Kshetra Arahantagiri Trust. All the major decisions regarding the running of the temple and the administration of *anna-daan* are made by Swasthi Shree Dhavalakeerthi Bhattaraka Swamiji.

Table II.61.5 Temple administration board

Details	
Year of constitution	1998
Total number of board members	5
Composition of the Board	Shree Kshetra Arahantagiri Trust
Role in temple administration	Swastishree Dhavalakeerti Bhattaraka Swamiji
Role in handling <i>anna-daan</i>	Swastishree Dhavalakeerti Bhattaraka Swamiji

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation.

### 61.2.8 Finances

The main funding for *anna-daan* comes from donations made by devotees on special occasions in their families, like the birthdays of family members, death anniversaries, marriage anniversaries, etc.

### 61.2.9 Quality of raw material

The designated persons are responsible for procuring good quality ingredients for *anna-daan* from selected suppliers and local vendors. Quality inspection is done by the store

manager and *swamiji* to ensure that the raw materials purchased meet the specifications as mentioned in the Food Safety Standards Act 2006.

#### 61.2.10 Food safety

To maintain their freshness, the raw materials are stored and preserved properly. Vegetables are sanitised before using. The vessels used for cooking are well washed with hot water. The cook cleans the kitchen before and after the meal is prepared. Food servers and those volunteers who are involved with food serving are required to wear caps and gloves.

#### 61.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

The kitchen has steam boilers and RO plants. The *mutt* uses a PA system to announce the distribution of *prasadam*. The pellets are used as fossil fuel for cooking.

#### 61.2.12 Waste management

The wastes are segregated into wet and dry. Wet waste is used for composting and utilised in the gardens of the *mutt*. The wastewater generated from washing vessels is diverted to pasture land. Excess food is distributed to the needy people of the Tirumalai village or fed to the cows at the *goshala* managed by the *mutt*.

The *daan* concept of Jain philosophy inspired the Swastishree Dhavala Keerti Bhattaraka Swamiji to take up various social service initiatives. Even though the *mutt* is facing an acute shortage of funds, it continues to run old-age homes, provide education to children, run the *goshala*, and provide wheelchairs to the physically handicapped. During the lockdown period, the *mutt* distributed food kits to the needy with the help of donations from the devotees.

#### 61.2.13 Key issues

The major issue before Shree Kshetra Arihanthagiri is shortage of funds. As a result, some of the work like the maintenance of the temple tends to get held up. Lack of discipline among the devotees on the temple premises is another issue. Food served as *prasadam* is wasted by devotees at times. Also, people do not stand in queues, and they disturb the peace of the *mutt* by talking loudly. Shortage of manpower is also a matter of concern.

### Contact details

Temple website: [arihanthagirithirumalai.org](http://arihanthagirithirumalai.org)

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## Notes

- 1008 Monastery.
- 1009 A savior and spiritual teacher of the dharma.
- 1010 Donation.
- 1011 Conduct or path.
- 1012 Wicks soaked in ghee are lit and offered to the deity.
- 1013 Food offering to deity.
- 1014 Prayer.
- 1015 Steamed cake of rice.
- 1016 Crisp savoury pancakes.
- 1017 Flattened rice.
- 1018 Deep fried bread.
- 1019 Cooked as a thick porridge from dry-roasted semolina or coarse rice flour.
- 1020 Sweet pudding made with either milk or coconut milk.
- 1021 A sweet dish made of saffron and semolina.
- 1022 Sweet pudding made with wheat.
- 1023 A soup prepared with sweet-sour stock made from either kokum or tamarind, along with tomato.
- 1024 Virtue that contributes benefits in this and the next birth.
- 1025 College of a particular kind.
- 1026 Shelter for cows.

## Case study 62 Goindwal (Baoli) Sahib Gurdwara, Tarn Taran, Punjab, India

M. S. Umesh Babu\*

### 62.1 Introduction

Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara is situated in the Tarn Taran district of Majha region of Punjab, India. It was established on the banks of river Beas in the year 1552 by the third *guru* Amar Das, a disciple of Guru Angad Dev. During the same year, a *baoli* (stepwell) was dug where devotees took a dip to attain *moksh*<sup>1027</sup> and keep their bodies healthy.

The sacred *baoli* has 84 steps to water or *moksh*. The figure 84 is a symbol of liberation. There is transmigration of the soul through 84 lakhs of different *joons* (lifetimes/life forms) in this world before it unites with god and attains liberation (*mukti*<sup>1028</sup>). To symbolise that God could be reached through remembrance rather than just a cycle of reincarnations, he

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declared that whoever descends the 84 steps for a bath while reciting the *Japji Sahib* of Guru Nanak at each step would be freed from the cycles of births and deaths.

## 62.2 Anna-daan (langar) at Goindwal Baoli Sahib Gurdwara

The free community kitchen is an integral activity of the Sikh community, and it is open 24 hours at Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara. This community kitchen, also known as *Guru ka langar*, commenced its activities when Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara was started. The *langar* is the place where people of all faiths and castes come and sit in rows to partake of meals, thereby promoting equality, inclusiveness, and oneness of all humankind.

*The light of god is in all hearts* (Guru Granth Sahib, 282).<sup>1029</sup>

A large number of devotees visit the gurdwara every Sunday and on special days like *purnima* and other Sikh festivals. They are served free food at the community kitchen for the entire day.

### 62.2.1 Spiritual components of langar

The *langar* system in Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara follows the practises of Guru Nanak Dev where people belonging to different religions or castes or creeds sit together on the floor in *pangat* (line or row) as equals and take free food. The guru's intention was that no one should be hungry in society. He was of the view that those who come to the gurdwara from distant places should first have a meal and then visit the guru for his blessings (*pehlay pangat tay picchay sangat*).

### 62.2.2 Rituals and prayers

*Sewadars*,<sup>1030</sup> with the help of volunteers, cook food in the community kitchen at Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara. During the process of cooking and cutting of vegetables, *sewadars* chant the *gurabani*.<sup>1031</sup> No one is allowed to taste the food before it is offered to God. Once the *langar* is ready, a small portion from each dish is placed in a plate or bowl in front of Guru Granth Sahib to perform *ardas*.<sup>1032</sup> After *guruprasad*, plates are taken back to the kitchen, mixed with other food, and then served to all the devotees as blessed food. Food is not served before performing the *ardas* in Goindwal Sahib Gurudwara.

### 62.2.3 Number of devotees served

Goindwal Sahib receives a huge number of devotees every Sunday and on special days like *purnima*, *Baisakhi*, and the birthdays of Guru Nanak, Guru Amar Das, and Guru Gobind Singhand. On normal days, the gurdwara is visited by 5,000–6,000 devotees (Table II.62.1). All devotees visiting the gurdwara are served a free meal in the dining halls.

Table II.62.1 Food served to number of devotees

Day	Number of devotees served
Every Sunday	20,000–25,000
Special days	50,000–70,000
Normal days	5,000–6,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 62.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

Types of dishes and quantity of food cooked vary. On special days, a few more dishes are prepared in addition to the regular food. In general, *puja*<sup>1033</sup> starts around 4:00 am. Tea/ coffee and biscuits/bread are served at 5:30 am, followed by a light breakfast. The regular meal starts at 8:00 am and continues till all the devotees have been fed.

Gurdwara serves only vegetarian food comprising *roti*,<sup>1034</sup> *dal*<sup>1035</sup> (*channa*, *rajma*, *urad*, *moong*, *toor*), *sabzi*<sup>1036</sup> (potato, gourds, pumpkin, cauliflower, beans, etc.), and *kheer*.<sup>1037</sup> On special days, vegetable salad, sweet, *puri*,<sup>1038</sup> chutney,<sup>1039</sup> pickle, and fruits are also served in addition to the regular meal. Table II.62.2 shows the quantity of food prepared during normal and special days at Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara.

Table II.62.2 Food items required for cooking

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity in kgs		
		Normal days	Every sunday	Special days
1	Wheat flour	500–600	1,200–1,300	2,500
2	Rice for <i>kheer</i>	100–150	150–200	2,500–3,000
3	<i>Dal</i> (pulses)	100	200	300
4	Vegetables	150	300	550
5	Sugar	200	300	500
6	Milk	100	300	1,000

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 62.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) headed by a president and managers looks after the *langar* facilities at Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara. The managers monitor the quality and quantity of food served. Devotees are not allowed to take the *langar* food home.

#### 62.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen at Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara is equipped with the latest cooking gadgets, including an automatic *roti* maker, rice boilers, and big vessels for *dal*, *sabzis*, and *kheer*. As a result, rice, *dal*, and *kheer* take less than an hour to cook; overall, 2–3 hours are required to get the food ready to serve. The traditional system of cooking has been retained. In the event that food runs short, the *sewadars* keep the food items ready for immediate cooking.

Each sitting takes 20–25 minutes to serve and for the devotees to finish eating. During special days, the serve and eat time reduces to 10–15 minutes to cater to a much larger crowd. The food is served by *sewadars* and volunteers.

#### 62.2.7 Nutrition

The *langar* serves nutritive food consisting of wheat, rice, pulses, vegetables, fruits, spices, and sweets which are high in carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins. Moreover, vegetables and pulses are changed every day to ensure that food of different nutritive values are served. In this manner, the food is not only nutritive but balanced as well.

#### 62.2.8 Human resources

Around 150 regular staff members work in the community kitchen, including some SGPC members, cooks, helpers, cleaners, and security guards. The staff strength doubles on special occasions. In addition to the regular staff, there are volunteers and students who are involved in food preparation and serving the food to devotees. The staff works in two batches every day on a rotation basis, changing every week or 15 days.

#### 62.2.9 Management

The elected president of SGPC is the head of the Gurdwara. He looks after all the activities related to the Gurudwara including *langar*. The management is responsible for the procurement of groceries, vegetables, food preparations, quality, quantity, serving, cleaning, maintaining hygiene in the kitchen and *langar* halls, and managing the crowds during special days. In addition, SGPC is responsible for collection and utilisation of funds.

#### 62.2.10 Finances

Goindwal Sahib Gurdwara accepts donations and offerings from devotees and the public. It is not dependent on any government institutions for funding. Devotees offer donations in the form of cash and in-kind, which includes groceries, vegetables, fuelwood, and other items required for the *langar*. *Hundis*<sup>1040</sup> are opened once a month to collect offerings. Each contribution from devotees and other sources are accounted for properly. Part of the donations is used for *langar* facilities every day.

#### 62.2.11 Quality of raw materials

Gurdwara management may purchase groceries and other raw materials either directly from the nearby market and farmers during harvest season or through tenders. Some farmers or devotees offer vegetables, pulses, and cereals during harvest. All purchases or donations are made/accepted only after ascertaining the quality of food items.

#### 62.2.12 Food safety

Food safety is given the utmost importance in the community kitchen. Helpers and cooks are advised to cover their mouths and noses with a mask during cooking and serving. Those who are ill with communicable diseases are not allowed inside the kitchen. *Langar* halls are cleaned frequently, and utensils are washed before and after use. The kitchen manager ensures that during cooking and serving there is no deviation from standards and specifications prescribed by the SGPC.

#### 62.2.13 Technology adopted in the kitchen

The Goindwal Sahib community kitchen is equipped with modern equipment like rice boilers; automatic *roti* makers; big vessels for *dal*, *sabzi*, and *kheer*; vegetable choppers; and grinders for speedy cooking. The kitchen is connected to LPG, biogas, and solar facilities for cooking.

### 62.2.14 Waste management

Vegetable wastes are given to farmers who have livestock. Leftover organic waste is used for composting in the temple field. Dry waste is handed over to municipal garbage collectors.

#### Notes

- 1027 Enlightenment.
- 1028 Salvation.
- 1029 <https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Langar> accessed on 28.08.2021.
- 1030 Selfless workers.
- 1031 Treasure of devotion.
- 1032 *Ardas* is petition to God, a prayer to thank the creators for his gifts and blessings.
- 1033 Act of worship.
- 1034 Prepared by wheat flour.
- 1035 Prepared by various pulses.
- 1036 Curry.
- 1037 Sweet dish.
- 1038 Dish prepared by wheat flour.
- 1039 A spicy or savoury dish made from greens, vegetables and fruits.
- 1040 Money offering box.

## Case study 63 Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

M. S. Umesh Babu\*

### 63.1 Introduction

Sri Guru Singh Sabha is one of the oldest, biggest, and holiest gurdwaras located in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. This gurdwara in Bengaluru was built in 1943 on the bank of Ulsoor Lake.

### 63.2 Anna-daan at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha

Sri Guru Singh Sabha has a free community kitchen called *Guru ka langar*. The community kitchen at Sri Guru Singh Sabha is kept open throughout the day and night, 24/7, and serves free food to all the devotees who visit the gurdwara. On Sundays, the gurdwara has high flow of devotees and receives around 8,000–10,000 devotees. The main motto – equality of mankind – from the Sikh religion is substantiated by the tradition of *langar* that fosters involvement, community participation, inclusiveness, and unity of all humankind.

#### 63.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

The *langar* at Sri Guru Singh Sabha observes the teaching of Guru Nanak, which says that all who visit the gurdwara should sit together on the floor in *pangat* (rows) as equals

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and take free food. The guru<sup>1041</sup> made sure that no one should be starved in society. He was keen that devotees should eat first and then seek the blessings of the guru.

### 63.2.2 Rituals and prayers

Cooks avail the help of volunteers in preparing the food in the community kitchen at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara. It is a tradition that the cooks chant the *gurabani*<sup>1042</sup> during the cooking process. Food is offered to God before serving, and it is taboo not to taste it before offering it to God. The food prepared is offered in front of the Guru Granth Sahib for *ardas*.<sup>1043</sup> After the ritual, the blessed food is mixed with the rest of the cooked food prepared in the kitchen prior to serving the devotees.

### 63.2.3 Number of devotees served

The gurdwara is visited by 8,000–10,000 devotees every Sunday. On special days such as the birthdays of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind and *Baisakhi*, the number of devotees increases to more than 20,000. On the rest of the days, around 1,500–2,000 devotees visit the gurdwara daily. There are two dining halls with a capacity of 500 persons each. Each cycle of serving and eating takes around 20 minutes. During special days, the serving time is hastened and reduced to 15 minutes to be able to serve a much larger crowd.

Table II.63.1 Food served to number of devotees

Day	Number of devotees served
Every Sunday	8,000–10,000
Special days	20,000–30,000
Normal days	1,500–2,000

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 63.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

The gurdwara serves only vegetarian food. Generally, everyday *pooja*<sup>1044</sup> is performed from 3:00 am to 5:00 am, followed by an offer of tea/coffee. Breakfast (*upma*<sup>1045</sup>) is served at 8:30 am. The regular meal consisting of steamed rice, *chapati*,<sup>1046</sup> *dal*<sup>1047</sup> (*rajma*, *urad*, *moong*, *toor*, etc.), *sabzi*<sup>1048</sup> (potato, cauliflower, beans, etc.), and *kheer*<sup>1049</sup> starts at 10:00 am and continues till the devotees arrive throughout the day. Excess food is distributed among slum dwellers.

### 63.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The gurdwara management committee headed by a manager oversees the *langar*-related activities that include quality checks and the quantity of food served. One of the principles to be followed is that the devotees can eat as much as they want to at the *langar* but are not permitted to take food home. The *prasadam* and other activities of the *langar* are monitored and accounted for in a meticulous manner.

### 63.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is well equipped with a *roti* maker, rice boilers, and big vessels for preparing *sambar/dal*, *sabzis*, and *kheer*, thus making cooking convenient and reducing the time in which food can be prepared and served. For example, rice takes only 15–20 minutes, *sambar/dal* 20–30 minutes, and *kheer* takes 20–30 minutes. Overall, 1–2 hours are required to make the food ready for serving. During instances of food shortage with unexpected influxes of devotees, the partly prepared food is immediately cooked and served to the devotees.

### 63.2.7 Nutrition

As mentioned earlier, a regular meal consists of rice, wheat, pulses, vegetables, and sweets. These are high in carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins. Moreover, varieties of vegetables and pulses are cooked on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the food served to the devotees is nutritious.

### 63.2.8 Human resources

The kitchen has 80 persons engaged, viz., managers, supervisors, administrative staff, cooks, servers, helpers and cleaners, and security guards. Also, there are volunteers and students who help in the preparation and serving of the food to devotees. The present staff strength may double on special days. The staff works in two batches every day on a rotation cycle of 7 days or 15 days.

### 63.2.9 Management

The *langar* at the gurdwara is headed by a manager who takes charge of all activities of the *langar*. The management is responsible for buying groceries and vegetables, for their quantity and quality, for food preparations, serving, cleaning, and maintaining hygiene in the kitchen and *langar* halls, as well as managing the crowd during special days.

### 63.2.10 Finances

At Sri Guru Singh Sabha, they accept donations (in-kind and monetary) and offerings from devotees and the public at large and are not dependent on government funding.

### 63.2.11 Quality of raw materials

The gurdwara management purchases only high-quality groceries directly from the market. All the processes are systematised. However, there is no tendering system.

### 63.2.12 Food safety

Hygiene and quality are given primary importance in the community kitchen. Gurdwara management is keen that the cooks, helpers, and volunteers wear masks and caps during cooking and serving. People suffering from communicable diseases are restricted from the kitchen. The *langar* halls and the kitchen are meticulously cleaned often.

### 63.2.13 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara community kitchen is equipped with modern equipment for cooking, including rice boilers, automatic *roti/chapati* makers, big vessels for *dal/sabzi/kheer*, choppers, and grinders. The food, cooked on LPG, biogas, and solar heat, is served on steel plates.

### 63.2.14 Waste management

All wastes are disposed of in the garbage-collecting municipal vehicles every day.

## Notes

- 1041 Spiritual teacher.
- 1042 Treasure of devotion.
- 1043 *Ardas* is a prayer to thank God for his gifts and blessings.
- 1044 A ritual of worship.
- 1045 Prepared with broken rice.
- 1046 Prepared by wheat flour.
- 1047 Prepared by various pulses.
- 1048 Curry.
- 1049 Sweet dish.

## Case study 64 Gurdwara Gurunanak Jhira Sahib, Bidar, Karnataka, India

M. S. Umesh Babu\*

### 64.1 Introduction

Gurdwara Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib is a historical Sikh shrine located in the town of Bidar, Karnataka, India. *Jhira* means a stream, and here *jhira* refers to one flowing near the gurdwara. It is believed to have sprung up as God's answer to the guru's prayer. The gurdwara was built in 1948 and dedicated to Guru Nanak, the first Sikh guru. Bidar is the second town in South India to have been visited by Guru Nanak; hence, this gurdwara is vital to the Sikhs. The water from the spring is collected in *amritkund* (a holy water tank) and then channelled to *sarovar* (big tank) within the gurdwara premises where devotees take a dip (bath). Devotees believe that bathing in *amritkund* is good for their health. The shrine comprises *Darbar Sahib*,<sup>1050</sup> *Diwan Hall*,<sup>1051</sup> and *Langar Hall*.<sup>1052</sup> Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs, is placed in the *Sukhaasan*<sup>1053</sup> room of the gurdwara.

#### 64.1.1 Special occasions celebrated

*Guru Nanak Jayanti*<sup>1054</sup> (*gurupurab*) is celebrated as one of the special days in the gurdwara. As many as 100,000 devotees turn up at the gurdwara on this day to seek

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blessings from the guru. The other important days are *Baisakhi*,<sup>1055</sup> *Guru Gobind Singh*<sup>1056</sup> *jayanti*, and other Sikh festivals like *Hola Mohalla*.

## 64.2 Anna-daan at Gurdwara Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib

The free community kitchen (*Guru ka langar*) at Gurudwara Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib is open 24 hours. Around 8,000 people visit the Gurudwara every day to seek blessings of the guru.<sup>1057</sup> All these visitors are served free food at the community kitchen. *Langar* promotes a serene environment wherein people share, care, and involve in cooking and eating together, thus promoting inclusiveness and oneness among the people, thus practising the tenets of Sikhism.

### 64.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

The *langar* system in Guru Nanak Jhira Gurudwara follows the injunction of Guru Nanak that all people are to be treated equally irrespective of their religion, community, caste, economic status, or gender and that they should sit together on the floor in *pangat* (row) as equals to take free food. The Sikh guru Guru Nanak was compassionate and felt that no one should suffer from hunger. He also propagated that people should have their food in the langar and then visit the holy shrine to avail blessings.

### 64.2.2 Rituals and prayers

*Sewadars*,<sup>1058</sup> with the help of volunteers, cook the food in the community kitchen in Jhira Sahib Gurdwara. Chanting of the *gurabani*<sup>1059</sup> by the cooks as they go about their chores is the practice across gurudwaras. Besides, the food must be offered to God and then served to the devotees. Some portion of the cooked food is placed in front of the Guru Granth Sahib for *ardas*<sup>1060</sup> for blessings, and then the blessed food is mixed with the remaining food, thus, all the food gets blessed. The blessed food is later served to the devotees. As in other gurdwaras, no food is served at Jhira Sahib Gurudwara before performing the *ardas*.

### 64.2.3 Number of devotees served

Guru Nanak Jhiria Sahib is visited by around 8,000 devotees every day. On special days like *Guru Nanak Jayanti* and *Baisakhi*, the number of devotees visiting the gurdwara reaches about 100,000–150,000. On other special days like *Hola Mohalla*, *Dussera*, and *Diwali* the number of visitors increases to around 50,000. The capacity of the dining hall is huge, wherein 7,000 persons can have food at a time. The flow of devotees is taken care of as the serving takes place in batches and is organised well. Usually, the serving, eating, and cleaning time is 20 minutes but will be 15 minutes on special days to accommodate larger crowd. The *sewadars* and volunteers are involved in serving the devotees.

### 64.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

Generally, every day, *pooja*<sup>1061</sup> is performed from 3:00 am to 5:00 am, followed by a serving of tea/coffee at 5:30 am. A light breakfast (*upma*<sup>1062</sup>) is served at 8:30 am. Regular meal (comprising steamed rice, *chapati*,<sup>1063</sup> *dal*<sup>1064</sup> (*rajma*, *urad*, *moong*, *toor*), *sabzi*<sup>1065</sup> (potato, cauliflower, beans, etc.), and *kheer*<sup>1066</sup> starts getting served at 10:00 am and ends



with the last devotee to the gurdwara. Table II.64.1 shows the quantity of food prepared during normal and special days at Jhira Sahib Gurdwara.

Table II.64.1 Quantity of food items cooked

Sr. no.	Food items	Quantity	
		Normal days	Special days
1	Rice	500 kg	4,000 kg
2	Wheat flour	800 kg	7,000 kg
3	Dal (pulses)	300 kg	2,500 kg
4	Vegetables	400 kg	3,200 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 64.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

The Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee is headed by a president who is assisted by managers in directing the *langar* activities at Jhira Sahib Gurdwara. Managers monitor the quality and quantity of food served to devotees. Devotees can eat sumptuously but are not allowed to carry food to their residences. Systems are in place, and everything is accounted for, thus accountability of *prasadam* is maintained.

#### 64.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

Given that there are increasing numbers of devotees coming to the gurdwara, the management of the Jhira Sahib Gurdwara modernised the kitchen with an automatic *roti* maker; rice boilers; big vessels for preparing *sambar/dal*, *sabzi*; and *kheer* to minimise the cooking time. Preparations of rice take 20 minutes, *sambar/dal* 40–60 minutes, and *kheer* 40–50 minutes. Generally, 2–3 hours are required to get the food ready.

#### 64.2.7 Nutrition

A regular meal consists of rice, wheat, pulses, vegetables, and sweets, which are high in carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins. Vegetables and pulses are used extensively and are also replaced every day so that nutrition is ensured.

#### 64.2.8 Human resources

There are nearly 300 staff members in the community kitchen, including managers, supervisors, administrative staff, cooks, helpers, cleaners, servers, and security guards. They work in two batches, on a weekly or 15-day rotation basis. In addition to the staff, volunteers and students are also involved in food preparation and serving the food to devotees. The present staff strength is doubled during special days.

#### 64.2.9 Management

The elected president of the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee is the head of the gurdwara and looks after all the activities related to gurdwara, including *langar*. The

management is responsible for the purchase of groceries and vegetables, their quantity and quality, food preparation, serving, cleaning, maintenance of hygiene in the kitchen and *langar* halls, and handling of the crowd during special days.

#### 64.2.10 Finances

Jhira Sahib Gurdwara accepts donations (cash and in-kind) and offerings (such as groceries for the *langar*) from devotees and the public to manage its operations. Collection boxes are kept on the premises to collect funds. These boxes are opened once a month to collect the offerings. The gurdwara has been able to manage funding on its own and currently does not have any support from the government.

The daily expense for the *langar* is around Rs. 0.1 million, which may go up to Rs. 0.3 million on special days. In addition, there are monthly expenditures to be met for electricity and water.

#### 64.2.11 Quality of raw materials

The gurdwara management purchases groceries directly from nearby markets and does not have a tendering system. Some vegetables are grown in the field owned by Jhira Sahib Gurudwara for the *langar*. Purchases of vegetables and cereals are also made from the local farmers during harvest. The quality is never lost sight of when these procurements are being made.

#### 64.2.12 Food safety

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the quality is kept uppermost when purchases of raw materials are being made. In addition, helpers and cooks are advised to mask their faces and wear caps. Those who are ill with communicable diseases are not allowed inside the kitchen during food preparation and serving. *Langar* halls are cleaned frequently, and utensils are washed before and after use. The *langar* manager is responsible for meeting all cooking and serving standards as prescribed by the government. Sometimes the food inspector visits the *langar* and checks the quality of food and cleanliness of the dining hall.

#### 64.2.13 Technology adopted in the kitchen

The Jhira Sahib community kitchen is equipped with modern cooking machinery, such as rice boilers, automatic *roti/chapati* makers, vegetable choppers, and grinders – big vessels for *dal/sabzi/kheer*. The kitchen has access to LPG, biogas, and solar energy. Food is served on steel plates.

#### 64.2.14 Waste management

Vegetable wastes and leftover food are given away to farmers who rear livestock in the nearby area; they also convert the waste into compost for their crops. Dry waste such as plastic, paper, and inorganic material is collected by the municipal vehicle.

**Notes**

- 1050 House of worship.
- 1051 Hall of audience.
- 1052 Community kitchen where devotees take food.
- 1053 Realm of truth.
- 1054 Birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.
- 1055 The Sikh solar new year.
- 1056 Tenth *guru* of Sikh.
- 1057 Spiritual teacher.
- 1058 Selfless workers.
- 1059 Treasure of devotion.
- 1060 Ardas is petition to God, a prayer to thank the creators for his gifts and blessings.
- 1061 A ritual of worship.
- 1062 Prepared with broken rice.
- 1063 Prepared by wheat flour.
- 1064 Prepared by various pulses.
- 1065 Curry.
- 1066 Sweet dish.

## **Case study 65 Gurdwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi, India**

M. S. Umesh Babu\*

### **65.1 Introduction**

Gurdwara Sri Bangla Sahib is one of the most prominent Sikh worship places and located in Delhi, India. This shrine is one of the nine gurdwaras which was built in Delhi in the 17th century to commemorate the visit of Sri Guru Harkrishan, the eighth Sikh guru to Delhi in 1664. The gurdwara has a large golden dome and a symbolic flagpole. The premises of the gurdwara include a higher secondary school, a library, and a hospital.

#### Significance of the temple

It is believed that if sick people take a dip in the holy water of the gurudwara, they will become healthy. The background to this belief is that at the time of Sri Guru Harkrishan's visit, small pox was rampant in Delhi and lots of people had been affected by it. Guru Sahib out of love and compassion for suffering humanity dipped his holy feet in water and poured *charanamrit*<sup>1067</sup> into small *chaubacha* (tank). All those who took water from this tank were cured of the dreaded disease. Even to this day, people come from far and wide to get rid of their ailments by taking a dip in the holy water.

### **65.2 Anna-daan at Gurdwara Sri Bangla Sahib**

The tradition of *langar* was started by Guru Nanak, who founded Sikhism in the late 15th century. His father had given him some money to invest in business. He diverted

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that money to feed a group of hungry men. He bought them groceries and asked them to cook and eat together, forming the tradition of *langar*, or community meals.

Like the other gurdwaras all over the world, the *langar* is practised in this gurdwaras as well. A huge community kitchen is attached to the gurdwara. Food serving starts as early as five in the morning every day and continues until late into the night. If someone comes to the kitchen for food beyond these hours, he too is given food, which is the commitment the Sikh community lives up to: the truism that no one goes away hungry from this *langar*. During COVID-19, the *gurdwara* delivered cooked food at around 17 locations in Delhi-NCR.

#### 65.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan

The spirit behind *anna-daan* or community kitchen at Sri Bangla Sahib is that the Sikh religion encourages feeding the needy. They believe that there is nothing big about this, that they are just doing their duty and that they want to feed more people every day. They want to make sure nobody sleeps hungry. The kitchen does not close till all are fed for the day.

#### 65.2.2 Number of people served

The community-operated free kitchen is open 24 hours. Over 35,000 people are given food every day and about 100,000 people during special occasions or Sikh festivals eat at the *langar*. The community kitchen starts operating at 4 am and closes only at 11 pm every day. *Langar* is served in the hall at Bangla Sahib where everyone irrespective of religion, caste, or creed is welcome to share a meal.

#### 65.2.3 Dining hall

The dining hall of the gurdwara hosts one of the largest *langars* in Delhi. There is one dining hall that can accommodate between 800 and 900 people at a time. The devotees sit down with their heads covered to have a fresh-off-the-stove vegetarian lunch. The lunch is served on steel plates. Food is served twice a day: 9 am to 3 pm and 7 pm to 10 pm.

#### 65.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

Lunch includes rice, *chapatis*,<sup>1068</sup> *dal*,<sup>1069</sup> and *sabji or vegetable curry*. Butter is applied to the *chapattis* (or *rotis*) before serving. Servings are unlimited, but with the condition that no food is to be wasted.

It is interesting to know that every day around 800 kg of vegetable curry, 700–800 kg of *dal* (lentils), and 1,200 kg of rice are cooked. Around 1,700 kg of wheat flour is used to prepare *chapattis*.

#### 65.2.5 Human resources

The *langar* gives the Sikhs the privilege to perform *sewa*<sup>1070</sup> by way of helping in the kitchen with the preparations, cooking, and cleaning. A large number of volunteers perform many tasks, including making *rotis*, sweeping the dining hall where meals are served, and helping with food distribution to the devotees. They also help in chopping

and peeling large quantities of vegetables, cleaning grains and lentils, etc. Everybody is welcome to volunteer or to take a meal, no matter who you are. As many as 53 *sevaks* are involved in the cooking and distribution process.

Apart from volunteers, regular kitchen workers have their designated duties. There are helpers whose only job is to collect the dough and feed it to the machine which rolls out rotis and roasts them. Others only brush the roasted chapattis with clarified butter (ghee). Cooks and servers are all *karsevaks*.<sup>1071</sup> The Sikhs believe that by doing all these activities, they are serving God.

The gurdwara follows a systematic procedure to make sure everything is ready on time. There are people in charge to look after different aspects of the process – storing ration, chopping vegetables, washing, cleaning, cooking, loading and unloading the *langar* items from delivery trucks, and maintaining a record.

### 65.2.6 Management

The Gurdwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi, is managed by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee or DSGMC, an autonomous organisation that manages gurdwaras in Delhi. DSGMC came into existence in 1974. Under the provisions of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1971, DSGMC also manages various educational institutions, hospitals, old-age homes, libraries, and other charitable institutions in Delhi. The committee entrusted the management, through an ordinance, to a five-member board, the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management (DSGM), which looks after the preparation and distribution of the daily *langar*.

### 65.2.7 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Given the community kitchen's vastness and scale of operation, much of the cleaning and cooking in the Gurdwara Bangla Sahib kitchen is automated. The state-of-the-art kitchen follows an assembly line system, which makes cooking and serving effortless.

The kitchen is an amalgamation of the old and the new. It has many old, huge vessels, or *kadhais*, with a capacity to cook 12 quintal curries. It has soup pots that can cook 34 quintals of *dal* or 3,200 kg of *rajma* (red kidney bean soup) or 1,600 kg of *kadhi* (yoghurt soup thickened with chickpea flour), 30 quintals of rice, or 20 quintals of rice pudding. The community kitchen also has three *chapatti*-making machines that produce around 4,500 *rotis* in an hour. The kitchen also has three storerooms to store groceries and a cold storage for vegetables.

### 65.2.8 Waste management

Before the kitchen acquired a biogas plant, wastes like vegetable and fruit peels and left-over *langar* food used to be thrown away in quintals on daily basis. Currently, these wastes are used to generate energy which is used to cook the *langar* food. Earlier, the gurdwara was dependent on natural gas, which was costly.

## Reference

- 1 <https://theculturetrip.com/asia/india/articles/the-largest-kitchen-in-delhi-that-never-closes/>, The Largest Kitchen in Delhi That Never Closes

## Notes

- 1067 The water that is used to give bath to deities. This water coming down through their lotus feet collects in the brass or bronze pot.
- 1068 Flattened bread.
- 1069 Lentils.
- 1070 Serving other people.
- 1071 Volunteers.

## Case study 66 Gurdwara Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab, India

Gaganpreet Singh\*

### 66.1 Introduction

Sri Harmandir Sahib, or popularly known as Golden Temple, is the holiest and the most revered gurdwara of Sikhism, located in the city of Amritsar, Punjab, India. The temple represents the distinct identity, glory, and heritage of the Sikhs and has a unique Sikh architecture. It is famous for its golden dome. The shrine displays influences of different architectural styles, including the Indo-Islamic Mughal architecture and the Hindu Rajput architecture. It is a two-storeyed structure. While the lower level of the shrine is built of marble, the upper level is covered in gold panels.

After the construction of Harmandir was over, Guru Arjan is believed to have invited the *Sufi* saint Mian Mir of Lahore to lay its foundation stone on 28 December 1588, signalling pluralism. It also conveyed a strong message that the Sikh tradition welcomed all.

Guru Ramdas, the fourth of the ten gurus, constructed the temple and its pool as a place of worship. Since then, the temple has been renovated many times with marble and inlay decoration. Sri Harmandir Sahib is built on 67 square feet of marble, and it has a two-storey structure. Maharaja Rajnit Singh (1799–1849), after founding the Sikh empire, rebuilt it in marble and copper in 1809, and overlaid the sanctum with gold leaf in 1830. Hence, the name Golden.

#### Significance of the Harmandir Sahib Gurdwara

Sikh devotees regard the temple as an important pilgrimage site. They take baths in the purifying water of the tank, offer prayers to the temple deity, and listen to the religious teachings from the original Sikh holy book, the *Adi Granth*.

The *World Book of Records (WBR)*, London, United Kingdom, has listed Sri Harmandir Sahib or the Golden Temple under the distinguished category. It says that the temple is not only a central religious place of the Sikhs but also a symbol of human brotherhood and equality. Built at a level lower than the surrounding land level, the gurdwara teaches the lesson of egalitarianism and humility. The temple has four entrances, signifying that people belonging to every walk of life are equally welcome without discrimination of any kind.

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The Akal Takhat Sahib built by Shri Guru Hargobin<sup>d</sup> (the sixth guru<sup>1072</sup>) near the Harmandir Sahib complex represents a place for Justice and concentration of temporal issues. It is known as the highest earthly authority of the *khalsa* (the collective community of Sikhs) and *jathedars* (the highest spokesperson of Sikhs). During the day, *The Guru Granth Sahib* (holy scripture of the Sikhs) is kept in the temple, and at night, it is moved to Akal Takhat Sahib. The Akal Takhat Sahib also has the weapons used by the Sikh warriors, especially by Guru Hargobind Sahib. The old Jubby Tree in the north-west corner of the compound is believed to possess special powers. It was planted 450 years ago by the Golden Temple's first high priest Baba Buddha, one of the most venerated, primal figures of early Sikhism.

## 66.2 Anna-daan at Harmandir Sahib Gurdwara

*Anna-daan* performed at Sikh gurdwaras (place of worship) is commonly known as *langar*. In Sikhism, a *langar* is the community refectory of a gurdwara, which serves meals to all free of charge, regardless of religion, caste, gender, economic status, or ethnicity. People sit on the floor and eat together, and the kitchen is maintained and serviced by Sikh community volunteers. Every Sikh gurdwara has a *langar*, providing free vegetarian food to all visitors/devotees. *Langar*, the tradition of serving food that takes place in the Golden Temple, is known as the *Guru ka langar* and is one of the world's largest free kitchens. In addition to the ideals of equality, the tradition of *langar* expresses the ethics of sharing, community, inclusiveness, and oneness of all humankind.

*Guru ka langar* was initiated by Guru Nanak Dev and then established by the third guru, Guru Sri Guru Amar Das at Goindwal. *Anna-daan* was started to eliminate discrimination among people as everyone sits together on the floor to have a meal. It is said that even the Mughal king Akbar came and sat among the ordinary people to share *langar*. Since its inception, the *langar* at the Golden Temple has been interrupted only twice: once when the then Sikh Confederacy lost Amritsar to a host of invaders in the 18th century and second during Operation Blue Star in 1984.

In addition to serving food, the institution *langar* also serves the community in many ways. It has ensured the participation of women and children in a task of service for mankind, as women play an important role in the preparation of meals and children help in serving.

Usually, in the community kitchen, each week, a family or several families or other individuals volunteer to prepare and serve the food. Volunteers are involved in cooking, washing the vessels, etc.

### 66.2.1 Reasons for anna-daan

In Sikhism, it is obligatory for all Sikhs to contribute one-tenth of their earnings for the welfare of the community. They believe that donating their earnings for *langar*, rendering service to the community kitchen, and sharing a common meal sitting in a *pangat*<sup>1073</sup> are acts of goodness.

### 66.2.2 Spiritual component of anna-daan

In Sikhism, *langar* is a community service providing free meals to all without discrimination of any kind. People must cover their heads before entering the *langar* hall and sit in a queue to take a meal. The *langar* is served by *sewadars*<sup>1074</sup> (community of volunteers).

### 66.2.3 Rituals and prayers

*Gurbani*<sup>1075</sup> (composition of the Sikh gurus) is recited during meal preparation. Strict rules of hygiene and cleanliness (including head covered, hands washed and gloved, never tasting food while it is being cooked) are important when preparing the *langar*. Individuals with communicable diseases should not participate in the preparation of *langar*.

Once those present in the hall have been served food, one of the volunteers cries out, *Jo bole so nihal* (Whoever utters shall be happy, shall be fulfilled), to which the crowd responds with, *Sat sri akal* (True is the name of God), and then the eating begins.

### 66.2.4 Number of devotees served

The *langar* served at the Golden Temple is one of the biggest in the world, serving around 70,000 people every day. The number shoots up to 1 to 2 lakhs on special occasions.

The temple has two dining halls – each with a capacity of 5,000 people at a time. The devotees sit down on the matted floor inside the *langar* hall in rows. To manage the huge rush, the volunteers allow only a few hundred devotees to enter the hall at a time. The whole operation is carried out meticulously on a daily basis. Devotees must pick up a plate, spoon and bowl and sit down on the mat before the food is served to all those present without any discrimination based on race, gender, caste, social status, etc., while having the food/meal. After finishing the meal, the devotees hand over the plates to the volunteers in the washing area.

There are two hospitals, run by the management committee of the temple, SGPC in Amritsar, where the mentally challenged and drug addicts are treated. Food is sent thrice daily for the patients in these hospitals.

### 66.2.5 Quantity of food prepared and items served

The *langar* serves vegetarian food only, comprising *daal*,<sup>1076</sup> *lauki* (bottle gourd), rice, *rotis*,<sup>1077</sup> *achar* (pickle), a vegetable curry, and sweet (*kheer*<sup>1078</sup> or *halva*<sup>1079</sup>). The menu changes every day. Sometimes it is changed all of a sudden if a devotee has donated a lot of vegetables which have to be used the day they were donated or has paid for a certain dish to be served. There may be extra items on special occasions such as *Gurupurab*<sup>1080</sup> and *Diwali*.<sup>1081</sup> The *langar* is open 24 hours.

It is interesting to know that the massive quantity of food is cooked to feed thousands of devotees every day. More than 200,000 *rotis* are prepared every day. The quantity of cereals and other food items used is given in Table II.66.1.

Table II.66.1 Quantity of food prepared per day

Sr. no.	Food item	Quantity in kgs
1	Wheat flour	4,000
2	Pulses	2,000
3	Rice	2,500
4	Sugar	500
5	Milk	1,000 L
6	Ghee	500
7	Milk powder	750

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).



In addition to regular meals, the kitchen also runs *chai langar* between 5 am and 7:30 am during which an estimated 50,000 cups of tea and biscuits or bread are offered to the devotees.

#### 66.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen runs 24 hours, and volunteers offer their services of their own free will as part of *sewa*.<sup>1082</sup> They help in peeling and cutting vegetables, cooking meals, making *rotis*, even desserts, and often serving the devotees and the visitors. The first meal is kept ready by 8 am when the devotees start streaming in. The kitchen staff cooks in advance to avoid a last minute rush. It usually takes 3 to 4 hours to prepare the food, while *rotis* are being made continuously.

#### 66.2.7 Nutrition

Food items served in the *langar* consist of *rotis*, rice, *dal*, and *kheer*, which are rich in fat, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, calcium, and minerals. The menu changes nearly every day with the aim of providing the maximum nutrients. The *langar* thus provides food which is delicious as well as wholesome, balanced, and nutritious.

#### 66.2.8 Human resources

Some 500 employees, including 13 cooks, work at the kitchen in three shifts. Apart from this, around 150 *sewadars* and 250 volunteers are also involved to carry out a massive *anna-daan* programme. *Sewadars* work under the supervision of the *langar* head. Sometimes they work in shifts. Volunteers are involved in activities organising the devotees, maintaining orderliness, hygiene, cleaning and cutting vegetables. Occasionally, visitors also volunteer their services in the *langar*.

Offering one's services or *seva* for the good of the community without the expectation of a reward or recognition is one of the tenets of Sikhism. The selfless act provides an opportunity for the *sewadars* and volunteers working in the Golden Temple *langar* to cleanse their inner self and become more rooted. The idea of selfless service (*seva*) for the good of community without any expectation of reward is one of the central tenets of Sikhism.

#### 66.2.9 Management

The highest body in the Sikh religion is the SGPC. It is headed by a president. All gurdwaras are managed under his supervision. A *gurdwara* is divided into several sections with the *langar* being one of them, and each section is headed by a supervisor. In the same way, a *langar* has a manager who takes care of all the supervisory work. Then authorised *sewadars* are responsible for all work related to food preparation and managing food items.

#### 66.2.10 Finances

The *langar* is supported by donations from devotees and the monthly interest earned on the gurdwara's bank deposits.

The committee spends Rs. 300 million every year on running the *langar* at the Golden Temple from its annual budget. The cost of running the community kitchen is around Rs. 1.1 million lakh per day, which may inflate up to Rs. 1.6 million on weekends and special occasions.

Stock-taking of raw materials is an ongoing exercise to ensure that there is enough stock of all items for the day. Nearly a quarter of the material required is donated by devotees; the rest is bought in bulk.

#### 66.2.11 Food safety

The highest standards of hygiene are maintained in the kitchen and the dining halls. All cookware, plates, spoons, etc., are thoroughly washed after use and kept properly. Prepared food is kept in big, clean utensils. Cooks are required to wear caps during cooking.

#### 66.2.12 Quality of raw materials

The quality of huge quantities of raw materials which are either procured from local markets or donated by the devotees is checked thoroughly. Even the quality of cooked food is ascertained before it is served.

#### 66.2.13 Technology adopted in the kitchen

The kitchen, spread over an acre, is equipped with the latest equipment to make the cooking process faster and easier. The kitchen has 2 dough-mixing machines and 8 automatic *roti*-making machines with a capacity of 25,000 *rotis* per hour. The yellow dal or the *langar dal* is cooked in a room specially dedicated to it with three mega cauldrons. In each vessel, nearly 400 kg of *dal* are washed and then cooked over a woodfired oven. Each cauldron uses 24 kg of salt; 12 kg of a spice mix; 12 kg of turmeric powder, garlic, and onions; and 48 kg of clarified butter. It takes three hours to prepare it. On *Baisakhi*, an extra kitchen is set up to serve *jalebis*.

In addition to the latest technologies, the traditional method of cooking is also followed. For example, wood and coal (sometimes gas furnaces) are used for making food.

#### 66.2.14 Waste management

As the *langar* is open 24 hours, everything that is cooked is served. Leftover food is distributed among the homeless. Raw material waste is collected in containers and sometimes used as compost in fields. Vegetable peels are collected in garbage bins which are taken away by the municipality.

## References

- 1 <https://feetbeyondroads.com/the-famous-langar-in-the-golden-temple-of-amritsar/> accessed on 20 December 2021 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden\\_Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Temple) accessed on 20 December 2021
- 2 <https://www.goldentemple.amritsarcity.co.in/> accessed on 20 December 2021

**Notes**

- 1072 Spiritual teacher.
- 1073 Line or row.
- 1074 Helpers.
- 1075 Prayer.
- 1076 Lentils.
- 1077 Flattened bread.
- 1078 Pudding.
- 1079 Candy.
- 1080 Sikh tradition of celebrating a *guru*'s birth anniversary.
- 1081 Festival of lights.
- 1082 Service.

## **Case study 67 Concern for the poor in the commercial city: CSI Church of the Victorious Cross, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India**

Joshua Pangaraj\*

### **67.1 Introduction**

The CSI Church of the Victorious Cross is in Ashok Nagar of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, South India. Chennai is one of the major cities of India, and this church is located at one of the popular locations of Chennai. It has a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Many poor visit the church for the mid-day meal held at the church. The calmness in the church gives hope for the poor to go one step further in their lives. The CSI Church of the Victorious Cross is part of the Madras Diocese of the Church of South India. In 1961–62, a small group of Christians who were part of various churches came together to form this church. Initially, lay preachers from Kodambakkam Pastorate conducted the Sunday service and the pastor of Kodambakkam church came to celebrate the Holy Communion once a month. The church service took place at St. Mary's school and YMCA hall in Ashok Nagar. Later, the current location was allotted to them, and the bishop laid the foundation stone on 12 August 1973, and a temporary shed was erected. Then, on 23 November 1975, a new church building was constructed and Bishop Sundar Clarke named it the Church of the Victorious Cross. At present, the church has more than 1,000 families which actively engage in church activities.

#### Significance of the church

The church was established to address the spiritual needs of the people. Various fellowships such as a men's fellowship, women's fellowship, youth fellowship, and children's ministry were formed. The members engage in evangelical works like open-air meetings, street preaching, Sunday school in villages, distributing tracts, and so on.

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Along with this, they also began to incorporate the social dimension in their ministry activities. They began to visit nearby Employee State Insurance (ESI) hospitals and government peripheral hospitals and offered prayers and small material support. In 1980, a medical centre was initiated on the northern side of the church premises with the help of doctors.

## **67.2 Anna-daan at CSI Church**

*Anna-daan* was initiated in 2001 with the aim to fulfil the needs of the poor by the women's fellowship team came forward to begin the Feeding the Poor programme. A big basket was kept to collect voluntary contributions that members of the church offered in the form of rice, *dal*, eggs, vegetables, and so on. Members of the women's fellowship provided monetary or material support if the voluntary contributions fell short.

At present, the other fellowships, such as the men's fellowship, young adult fellowship, and fasting prayer fellowship have joined the women's fellowship to render their support to actively run the programme daily. Around 15 to 25 elderly poor come to the church daily for a mid-day meal. Also, the congregation celebrates members' birthdays, weddings, and so on. The congregation sponsors cooking materials and meets expenses to the extent possible.

### **67.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan**

The women's fellowship team considers *anna-daan* to be a philanthropic activity for the needy as Jesus did for the indigent. The congregation members conduct *anna-daan* for the fulfilment of vows that were made for spiritual purposes.

### **67.2.2 Rituals and prayers**

Generally, there is no prayer conducted before cooking, but the volunteers do pray before they start their work. Once the food is ready, a small thanksgiving prayer is offered to God before serving the food to the elderly poor. Every Friday, the women's fellowship members conduct prayer and share a short speech about God's love and care. On special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, and so on, the sponsors share a few words, sing songs, and receive the blessings of the elderly poor.

### **67.2.3 Number of people served**

The total number of people served is around 25. A queue system is followed to serve food, which is served on palm leaves. At present, only lunch is provided between 12 pm and 1 pm. Excess food is parcelled and handed to the beneficiaries to suffice their dinner needs or to someone else who is in need. The church has one 400 sq ft dining hall and can accommodate around 50 people.

### **67.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served**

The church has a set of elderly poor who are provided food under the *anna-daan* programme. Hence, there is no variation in the quantity of food cooked on normal days and

peak days. Generally, vegetarian food is served. On special occasions such as birthdays or other festivals, non-vegetarian food such as chicken, mutton, or fish is included in the menu. Table II.67.1 provides details of the quantity of food prepared per day.

*Table II.67.1* Quantity of food prepared per day

<i>Food items</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Rice	10 kg
Vegetable curry	3 kg
Sambar	6 L
Payasam	4 L
Buttermilk	4 L
Rasam	2 L
Sweet	25 pieces
Non-vegetarian food items like chicken, mutton, fish	5 kg

*Sources:* Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 67.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

The cooking team takes about 2 hours. Cooking begins at around 10 am, and the food is ready to be served by noon. The food is served in around 30 minutes as the number of beneficiaries is fixed at 25. Cleaning takes about 30 minutes. Overall, the entire process of distributing food, eating it, and cleaning the dining hall takes approximately 2 hours.

#### 67.2.6 Nutrition

The church does not compromise on the nutritional aspect of food. Efforts are constantly on to provide healthy food to the beneficiaries. As all the beneficiaries are elderly poor, the food is prepared with minimum oil and spices. The purchase of healthy oil and other essential materials are monitored by the Feeding the Poor team. Food served provides the required amount of nutrition. Table II.67.2(a) & (b) provides the details of the average quantity of food served per meal per person.

*Table II.67.2(a)* Quantity of food served per meal

<i>Food items</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Rice	400 gm
Vegetable curry	150 gm
Sambar	300 ml
Payasam	200 ml
Buttermilk	200 ml
Rasam	100 ml
Sweet	1 piece
Non-vegetarian food items like chicken, mutton, fish	250 gm

*Sources:* Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Table II.67.2(b) The volume of ingredients used per day

<i>Ingredients</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Rice	2.5 kg
<i>Tur daal</i>	500 gms
Salt	100 gms
Sugar	1 kg
Coconut	2 numbers
Tomato	25 kg
Brinjal	1 kg
Ladies finger	500 gm
Potato	2 kg
Cauliflower	4 numbers
Drumsticks	10 numbers
Beans	2 kg
Carrot	2 kg
Coriander leaves	2
Cucumber	6 numbers
Spices	5
<i>Sambar powder</i>	500 gm
Chilly powder	100 gm
Milk	2 L
Tamarind	100 gm

### 67.2.7 Human resources

Though the numbers of beneficiaries are less, the Feeding the Poor programme is organised systematically. Charismatic individuals make tough work look easy. One senior kitchen manager spends nearly 4 hours per day in the kitchen to check on-time delivery of necessary items for the day and smooth the functioning of *anna-daan*. Two quality control managers monitor the freshness of vegetables and other ingredients. They also monitor the sanitisation of vegetables before cutting. The watchman and other staff members welcome the beneficiaries and make necessary arrangements. Apart from regular staff engaged in *anna-daan*, volunteers help in cutting vegetables, cleaning utensils, and also serving. Regular personal hygiene and food safety training is provided to all the staff and regular volunteers.

Table II.67.3 Human resources involved in *aanna-daan*

<i>Category of regular staff</i>	<i>Number</i>
Senior kitchen manager	1
Quality control manager	2
Cooks	1
Cleaners	3
Serving	2
Watchman	1
<b>Volunteers</b>	
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	3
Cleaning utensils and kitchen	3
Cleaning dining hall	3
Serving people	2

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 67.2.8 Management

The church has an administrative board to maintain the healthy functioning of the church ministry and social ministry. The board was constituted in the year 1975 and has 14 members. It offers financial and administrative support to the *aanna-daan* programme, along with various church fellowships. The chairman of the board, along with other board members, discusses the progress of the Feeding the Poor programme and executes the resolutions passed in the meeting.

### 67.2.9 Finances

The main financial support for *anna-daan* comes from the church board and various fellowships in the church. Apart from this, there are about 10 to 15 sponsors who donate regularly to the *anna-daan* programme. Around Rs. 25,000 is spent on preparing food per day. Around Rs. 0.3 million is set apart as corpus for the *anna-daan* programme. The devotees have also donated several pieces of equipment for the kitchen, which are listed in Table II.67.4.

Table II.67.4 Kitchen equipment

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Number</i>
Plates	50
RO plant	1
Gas stoves	1
Gas cylinders	2
Trolleys	1
Rice chutes	2
Knives	3
CCTVs	2
Grinder	1
Mixer	1

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The annual cost of O&M of the *anna-daan* programme is approximately Rs. 0.334 million per year, as mentioned in Table II.67.5.

Table II.67.5 O&M costs

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Cost per year (Rs. in millions)</i>
Salary of employees	0.2
Procurement of vegetables	0.05
Procurement of groceries	0.05
Fuel cost: gas cylinders	0.009
Repairs and maintenance of kitchen equipment	0.025

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 67.2.10 Financial accountability

Bills, vouchers, and receipts for all necessary items are maintained by the church administrative team. Board members and other external members monitor the accounts annually, and an annual audit of accounts is done by a recognised chartered accountant.

### 67.2.11 Waste management

Approximately 0.5 kg of wet waste and 1 kg of dry waste are produced per day. The segregation of wet and dry waste is monitored by the senior kitchen manager, and the waste is disposed of through the Municipal Corporation of Greater Chennai.

## Case study 68 Board for Research Education and Development (BREAD), Uttar Pradesh, India

Elsy Joseph\*

### 68.1 Introduction

Board for Research Education and Development (BREAD) is a registered public trust under the Public Charitable Trust Act, 1882. It was established on 24 April 2009 to implement the Mary's Meals project in the country. Mary's Meals was the brainchild of the Scottish Catholic Magnus Macfarlane-Barrow to serve meals to under privileged children. The motto of BREAD is *Empowerment through Education*. Today, thousands of children from the most deprived sections of the society, such as rag-pickers, slum dwellers, railway platform juveniles, and orphans, are given food and education in a formal and non-formal classroom set-up. The purpose of the unique programme is to ensure that every child gets access to food and education. The programme strongly believes that educating children is the best way to eliminate poverty.

The main objective of BREAD is to support the children who belong to the voiceless and marginalised sections of the society until they can sustain themselves. Along with education, a school with proper infrastructure and all basic facilities is also the right of every child. BREAD, through the School Improvement (SI) Programme, aims to support the structural development of schools and is committed to imparting education to the impoverished. Thus, attempting to take care of the behind-the-screen necessities of each child for the holistic development of the child.

Mary's Meals implemented by BREAD is an attempt to provide daily nutritious meals to children in a school/non-formal learning centre, regardless of their religion. This meal encourages children to come into the classroom. It gives children the sustenance they

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require, not just to survive, but to concentrate, learn, grow, and develop healthily. In this way, Mary's Meals builds a ladder out of poverty as the education the children receive increases the opportunities for their productive employment and creates more self-reliant and healthier societies. Thus, the world's poorest communities can be transformed.

Mary's Meals was introduced in India for the first time at St. Joseph's School, Assandh, Haryana, in April 2005. It began by serving a daily lunch to 40 poor children in the school. Soon the help was extended to different parts of India. Today, Mary's Meals, in partnership with BREAD, has been able to reach out to the poorest of poor children in six states located in the northern and central parts of the country.

## **68.2 Anna-daan**

The *anna-daan* scheme was launched in 2004 by Joson Tharakan John, IMS. He was inspired to undertake the feeding and education of poor children while interacting with a group of poor women, who shared their misery of poverty and how it was getting in the way of educating their children. This happened in the winter of 2001 while he was conducting a legal aid camp in a village near Gajraula, Moradabad district, Uttar Pradesh, India. His desire to do something for the poor took root when he was introduced to Mary's Meals. Later, he started its Indian branch in 2004 through his congregation's social service wing.

### *68.2.1 Spiritual components of anna-daan*

Acquiring knowledge and attending school becomes attractive if one hot meal a day is provided to the poorest child – enriching him physically and mentally. *Anna-daan* is performed for various reasons, one of them being the purpose of fulfilling the vows. Also, the act is believed to be auspicious conduct which motivates people to donate money or food and brings succour to the poor and aged citizens who otherwise find it difficult to afford meals. The donors serve and offer *anna-daan* for the attainment of spiritual aspirations and to find a sense of satisfaction. Through *anna-daan*, the Mary's Meals initiative also receives news coverage from the local media. It also comes into the limelight when popular leaders visit to see the various schemes and participate in important occasions.

Mary's Meals is a small, invisible tool, but powerful enough to bring in generational changes. Food served in the context of the classroom serves twin purposes: elimination of hunger and empowerment through education. The staff, donors, and volunteers have a great sense of satisfaction and happiness in serving the least privileged. As children eat together in the school as one family, the caste, creed, and big and small feelings are eliminated, and oneness is fostered among them. The other reasons include the following:

- Access to nutritious food
- Improved health
- Food serving as an incentive for attending school
- Children rediscovering their childhood
- High rate of enrolment and fewer dropouts
- Better ambience for learning
- Better community participation

### 68.2.2 Number of people served

The feeding is done on all days when the school is open. The initial feeding was only for 40 children in 2004, but today, BREAD feeds 42,914 children in various far-flung schools of North India and in non-formal centres in the slums of Delhi and the National Capital Region. Food is distributed around 12:30 pm in schools. Most of the children who receive the Mary's Meals would not have been able to afford a breakfast in the morning.

- There is no separate dining hall in most of the schools, as they are run with minimal expenditure. Children sit in the open ground or in the veranda of the school building. In very few instances, schools are given access to halls to carry out *anna-daan*.

Table II.68.1 Number of times, number of people, and volume of food served per day

Meals	Timing	Number of times	Number of people served
		Normal season	Normal season
<b>Lunch</b>	12:30 pm	8	42,914

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 68.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and served

Food served includes plain rice with lentils, potatoes, and eggs. The quantity of food prepared per day is given in Table II.68.2.

Table II.68.2 Total Volume of food served per day

Food items	Normal season
Plain rice	5,122 kg
Lentil	1,024 kg
Potato	2,561 kg
Eggs	43,514

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 68.2.4 Accountability of the food

Purchase, storage, cooking, and distribution of food are done according to a fixed budget. The number of children who take Mary's Meals is noted and cross-checked against the budget.

### 68.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Mary's Meals provides lunch every day, which takes 3 to 4 hours to prepare. Serving each batch of children takes about 30 minutes, after which cleaning takes 1 hour.

Table II.68.3 Cooking and serving time

<i>Time taken for cooking</i>	
Lunch	3–4 hours
Time taken for serving	30 minutes
Serving time per batch	30 minutes
Time taken for cleaning	1 hour

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 68.2.6 Nutrition

Food is prepared keeping in mind the quality and nutrition. The Mary's Meals programme serves nutritious food with cow ghee throughout the season. The quality control is managed by the all India/country coordinator, programme manager, finance manager, purchase officer, two accountants, and eight area coordinators.

### 68.2.7 Human resources

The total staff consists of 245 cooks, 1,000 cleaners, and other staff and senior students who serve food. Manpower required to carry out activities such as cleaning and cutting vegetables, cleaning the dining hall and utensils, serving children, and managing the crowd is outsourced to agencies providing contract workers. See Table II.68.4 for other details.

Table II.68.4 Number of people involved in *anna-daan*

<i>Regular staff</i>	<i>Number</i>
Cooks	245
Cleaners	1,000
Other staff and senior students	1,000
<b>Volunteers for specific purpose</b>	
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	1,000
Cleaning utensils	15
Cleaning dining hall	5
Serving people	102
Managing the crowd	204

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 68.2.8 Management

The Mary's Meals administration board was established in the year 2009. The board comprises a total of five trustees from the public trust. The main composition of the board includes a managing trustee who also functions as the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, along with two trustees/members in the core committee. The roles played in the meals' administration and in handling *anna-daan* are decided by the EO and the chairman who inform the committee members from time to time, and the other board

members monitor the activities taking place. This process of monitoring is through a committee which comprises the chairman, EO, AEO, managing trustee, and the remaining committee members.

### 68.2.9 Finances

The total cost of feeding the children under the Mary's Meals initiative is approximately Rs. 67 million. The funding comes from the parent organisation, Marys' Meals International, Glasgow, Scotland.

### 68.2.10 O&M costs

Major costs include salaries, procurement of raw materials and groceries, electricity, transportation, fuel cost (pellets and gas), housekeeping for the dining hall, and repairs and maintenance of kitchen equipment and the dining hall.

Table II.68.5 O&M costs (per year)

Particulars	O&M costs (per year in millions)
Salary of employees	4.3
Procurement of raw materials – groceries	40.6
Transportation cost	1.98
Fuel cost – gas cylinders, pellets, etc.	5.08
Remuneration for cooking	7.69
Any others (Pl specify)Monitoring, training, workshops, etc.	2.37

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 68.2.11 Financial accountability

The annual audit of accounts is done by M. Thomas and Co., while the monthly audit is done by the BREAD Trust Board. The finances are also monitored by the external members who are appointed by the committee. Monitoring and training of the audits is officially done by the donor agency, M. Thomas and Co.

### 68.2.12 Quality of raw materials

Selection of suppliers is done by inviting quotes from two to three vendors or through tender. The quality control process includes cross-checking:

- Vendors' credentials
- The items to be bought against various parameters
- If child labour is practised
- If the firm had any unethical business deals
- Capacity of delivery

The main quality inspection is done by the purchase manager before each transaction. Storage, handling, and preservation of raw materials through logistics is an important

element. Vegetables and other groceries are sanitised before cooking. The vegetables are cleaned and dried before use. Employing quality officers in the kitchen to monitor the quality of cooked food is done in each school which has a feeding. Caps and aprons are mandatory while preparing and serving food. The cooked food is immediately transferred to small serving vessels to maintain food quality. The cooking vessels and other utensils are sterilised before cooking. Regular personal hygiene and food safety training through workshops for the kitchen staff is an integral part of Mary's Meals feeding programme and is done by the head cook, who is also responsible for employing quality officers in the kitchen to monitor the quality of cooked food.

#### 68.2.13 Technology

Technology is extensively used while organising meals. All vendor payments, staff salaries, and other payments are done online. WhatsApp groups and sub-groups for various sections, monthly monitoring reports, and other tools are shared online, including photos and impact stories. A few schools have installed CCTV cameras for monitoring and surveillance purposes in the *anna-daan* halls. The other common method used to ensure safety is appointing guards or watchmen in certain schools. Although some schools use steam boilers to prepare food, mostly coal, firewood, and *uppala* (dried cow dung cake) are used for cooking in an energy-saving oven.

#### 68.2.14 Waste management

Waste produced is segregated as wet and dry and disposed of in the designated areas or slots in the school. Garbage is carried in the Mary's Meals trucks to a dumping site. The wet waste is also used for composting.

#### 68.2.15 Key issues

Shortage of funds results in lower procurement of groceries and other items. Financial constraints have delayed BREAD's clearance of applications to feed 28,000 students.

## Case study 69 Navajeevan trust: A body of Christian love, Kottayam, Kerala, India

K. J. George\*

### 69.1 Introduction

Navajeevan<sup>1083</sup> is a charitable trust witnessing to agape, the divine love, through the hands of humble humans. Adopting Christ's exhortation "as you did it to one of the least brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me" (Mathew 25:40) as its motto, the trust has

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been doing heroic humanitarian services for the society for more than 50 years. The founder and the members of the trust, however, would like Navajeevan to be deemed a “body of Christian love and prayer” and not merely a “trust”. However, registering the body as a trust was a matter of practical requirement through the Navajeevan belief in compassion beyond limits.

The office of Navajeevan registered as a charitable trust in 1991 and is located in Villoonni, a small village on the outskirts of Kottayam Municipal Corporation, Kerala, a state in South India.

Its philanthropic activities were started in 1969 when the founder, Mr. P. U. Thomas, with just a primary school education, started his compassionate act of feeding poor patients at the medical college hospital. Ever since, Navajeevan has been providing food to needy patients, as well as the poor people living in the vicinity. At the age of 16, Mr. Thomas was admitted to the medical college for the first time as a poor patient suffering from advanced stages of an ulcer caused by hunger. During post-surgery recuperation, he was kind enough to share the little food he had with hungry patients around him. Later in 1969, at the age of 20, he started working as a mess boy at the students’ hostel at the medical college where he continued to serve the hungry patients with his meagre salary, contributions from kind students, and the leftover food from the mess. In 1970, he was appointed as an attendant at the medical college, with a salary of Rs. 70 per month, and it helped him in serving the poor and hungry on a regular basis. Soon his heroic acts of kindness attracted great attention and admiration from the entire community, which helped him continue the acts of compassion without a break. Various philanthropic activities performed today by the trust are fully reliant on the goodwill of the community and not on any other sources.

The major operations of the trust are centred in four big public hospitals of Kottayam: Medical College Hospital, District Hospital, Ayurveda Hospital, and the Institute of Child Health. Among its various humanitarian missions, Navajeevan attracts the greatest attention and appreciation for providing free food on a regular basis to more than 5,000 poor patients and their caregivers who visit the four hospitals. In addition to food distribution at the hospitals, Navajeevan supplies rice and vegetables to the poor in the neighbouring villages and runs a rehabilitation centre for mentally challenged patients from both the psychiatry ward of the medical college and abandoned people. Furthermore, Navajeevan runs a few shelter homes for the destitute and the elderly; gives needy patients support, such as medicine, blood, ambulance service, and money; provides assistance such as study materials to needy students; and runs no-drugs campaigns and health awareness programmes. Additionally, the trust supports the cleaning and maintenance of public hospitals and actively reaches out to the poor who suffer from floods, landslides, and other natural calamities.

## **69.2 Anna-daan at Navajeevan Trust**

As mentioned earlier, the mission statement of Navajeevan Trust is “to provide hygienic food to poor patients and their bystanders who cannot afford to buy their meals”. *Anna-daan* was started by the Navajeevan Trust in 1970 in a humble way: by Mr. P. U. Thomas, a poor attendant of the Medical College Hospital, Kottayam. Gradually, it evolved into a great humanitarian platform to provide food for the poor. Now in the 50th year of its launch, the *anna-daan* activities of Navajeevan have not had a break despite disruptions

such as strikes and lockdowns. Rather, the number of recipients of *anna-daan* increased significantly in such situations.

### 69.2.1 *Spiritual components of anna-daan*

Commitment to gospel values such as love, compassion, and human fellowship are the major reasons behind the *anna-daan*. The members of the trust believe that “the service to mankind is the service to God and it is the Almighty who makes them capable to provide bread to people”. Likewise, people contribute overwhelmingly to Navajeevan’s *anna-daan* on special occasions such as marriages, birthdays, death anniversaries, and housewarmings with the belief that the act of charity ensures God’s blessing. Furthermore, many believe that we have a duty to share joy with others and an obligation to feed the hungry.

### 69.2.2 *Rituals and prayers*

The volunteers start food preparation with a prayer that beseeches God’s mercy to serve the poor better, for speedy recovery of patients, and to bless all those who support this humanitarian act. It ends with a thanksgiving prayer. The spirit of prayer is maintained throughout the activities, for they believe that prayers can do miracles.

### 69.2.3 *Number of people served*

Currently, 5,000 to 8,000 poor patients and their caretakers are beneficiaries of the *anna-daan* daily. The number of people served at each location where Navajeevan distributes food is mentioned in Table II.69.1.

Table II.69.1 Locations of *anna-daan*

Sr. no.	Institution	Beneficiaries	Number of people served	
			Normal	Peak
1	Medical College Hospital of Kottayam	Patients and their aids	Around 2,000	Around 3,500
2	District Hospital of Kottayam	Patients and their aids	Around 1,000	Around 2,000
3	Institute of Child Health, Kottayam	Patients and their aids	Around 1,500	Around 1,700
4	Ayurveda Hospital, Kottayam	Patients and their aids	Around 500	Around 800
5	Navajeevan Rehabilitation Centre	Inmates	Around 300	Around 300

Sources: Primary Survey and author’s compilation (2020).

At the Medical College Hospital, Kottayam, breakfast is served every day between 7:00 am and 8:30 am, lunch from 12.15 pm to 1:30 pm, and dinner from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. At the Institute of Child Health, Kottayam, lunchtime is between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm and dinner between 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm. At the District Hospital, Kottayam, and Government Ayurvedic Hospital, Kottayam, dinner is supplied from 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm. The inmates of the rehabilitation centre get their breakfast at 7:30 am, lunch at

12:30 pm, and dinner at 7:30 pm in the dining hall of the centre. At all other locations, patients collect the food and take it to the hospital rooms or ask the volunteers to serve it at their beds. Likewise, it is possible to get food in one's own containers or parcelled on banana leaves.

#### 69.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

At present, the trust supplies breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the Medical College Hospital Kottayam, and lunch and dinner at the District Hospital Kottayam, Government Ayurvedic Hospital Kottayam, and the Institute of Child Health Kottayam. Items served include rice, three curries (side dishes), and medicated boiled water is included in lunch and dinner. Breakfast is traditional South Indian fare.

As illustrated in Table II.69.2, about 600 kg of rice are cooked per day during the normal season and upto 800 kg during the period of seasonal diseases when the number of patients increases and, likewise, during strikes, lockdowns, and *hartal*, which disrupt the availability of food. Likewise, the two vegetable dishes require 300 kg seasonal vegetables. Furthermore, 250 kg *sambar* are prepared on usual days. These quantities may increase to 400 kg and 350 kg, respectively, when the demand is higher. Six hundred kilograms of breakfast items such as *idli*,<sup>1084</sup> *roti*,<sup>1085</sup> *upma*,<sup>1086</sup> *dosa*,<sup>1087</sup> and curry are prepared on ordinary days, and this may increase to 800 when the requirements increase. In addition to the food cooked in the kitchen of Navajeevan, several institutions within the city and from neighbouring places provide packed food, responding to the “one hand, one pack” mantra of the trust. Navajeevan guarantees that no food is wasted. Lefovers are distributed by volunteers among the hungry on the street. Likewise, the organisations that bring packed food to the trust take the utmost care to ensure quality. Since the whole mission is well rooted in deeper values, no single instance of failure is reported so far.

Table II.69.2 Quantity of food prepared every day

Sr. no	Food items	Quantity of food prepared per day	
		Normal days	Peak days
1	Rice	600 kg	800 kg
2	Vegetable dish 1	150 kg	200 kg
3	Vegetable dish 2	150 kg	200 kg
4	<i>Sambhar</i>	250 kg	350 kg
5	Breakfast items	Around 600 kg	Around 800 kg

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Since the majority of Navajeevan volunteers are from the medical profession, each meal ensures both quantity and quality, which are essential for the speedy recovery of patients. Table II.69.3 presents the average quantity of food served per meal. The figures mentioned in the table consider approximate values, and the real situations might necessitate slight modifications considering the specific needs of patients and the nature of the food recommended.



Table II.69.3 Quantity of food served per meal

<i>Breakfast items</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
<i>Idli/dosa/roti/upma/tapioca/puttu...</i>	300 g
Curry	100 g
Milk/tea/coffee	300 g
<b>Lunch</b>	
Plain rice	300 g
Seasonal vegetable 1	50 g
Seasonal vegetable 2	50 g
<i>Sambar</i> <sup>a</sup> /mixed vegetables curry	100 g
Boiled water	300 g
<b>Dinner</b>	
Plain rice	300 g
Seasonal vegetable 1	50 g
Seasonal vegetable 2	50 g
Curry	100 g
Boiled water	300 g

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Stew made with vegetables.

### 69.2.5 Accountability of food

The members and staff of the trust ensure that the food is served for the intended purpose and that the remaining quantity, if any, reaches the similar needy population living in the slums of the city.

### 69.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

Breakfast preparation requires 3 hours, from 4:00 am to 7:00 am. Preparing lunch and dinner takes longer, 6 hours and 3 hours, respectively, because the major component, which is boiled rice, requires 1 hour of cooking. The cleaning, slicing, and cooking of vegetables need more than 2 hours. Additionally, packing and transporting food to different locations require 1 additional hour. Since the trust gets generous support from volunteers, predominantly medical students and people from the neighbourhood, the whole process goes smoothly.

### 69.2.7 Nutrition

Navajeevan pays special attention to nutrition since they deal with patients and the fact that a quick recovery of patients is significantly dependent on the nutritional components of the food given to them. Therefore, the menu is decided in consultation with experts from the medical college hospital and a proper balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins is ensured through a menu that includes grains, beans, vegetables, and dairy products.

### 69.2.8 Human resources

The total number of human resources required in *anna-daan* by Navajeevan is between 100 and 150, and the number may vary according to the availability of volunteers and the requirement of the day. Table II.69.4 presents the average work involved in *anna-daan*.

It is to be noted that a major share of work is performed by volunteers, and volunteers play multiple roles, such as prepping vegetables, cleaning, and distributing food at different locations. Table II.69.4 incorporates human resources involved in different locations of the *anna-daan* programme. The complete activity requires human labour for the entire day, from 4:00 am till 8:00 pm, and people participate in the task according to their availability.

Table II.69.4 Human resources involved

Regular staff of Navajeevan	Manpower
Supervisors	2
Cooks	5
Serving staff	7
Cleaning staff	10
Guards	2
Drivers	10
<b>Volunteers</b>	40–50
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	50
Cleaning utensils and kitchen	10
Serving food	30

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 69.2.9 Management

The apex body in the organisation is the advisory committee chosen by the members of the trust. Mr. P. U. Thomas, the founder, is the managing trustee, and the structure incorporates an administrator, food coordinator, food management team, and the staff in charge of various activities. At the bottom level, all activities are performed with the support of volunteers.

### 69.2.10 Finances

The entire funding to organise various humanitarian activities, including *anna-daan*, by Navajeevan comes from the goodwill of the common people. The service of Navajeevan attracts generous donations either in cash or in-kind without the trust approaching people for support. The trust receives no financial support from the government, funding agencies, or grants from abroad. At present, a little more than Rs. 0.1 lakh is spent on *anna-daan* per day, excluding the cost of materials donated by generous donors and vegetables harvested from Navajeevan's garden. Table II.69.5 presents the details of the equipment in the kitchen, most of which has been donated by kindred souls. Additionally, Navajeevan uses donated buses, pickup trucks, and vans for food distribution.

Table II.69.5 Investment cost in the kitchen

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Number</i>
Construction of kitchen	1
Steam boilers	5
Stainless steel tanks (capacity: 500 L)	4
Huge vessels	20
Roti-making machines	2
Dosapan (capacity: 50)	1
Plates	400
Glasses	400
Serving containers	50
RO plants	1
Gas stoves	6
Gas cylinders	8
Hearth	3
Trolleys	1
Grinder	5

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 69.2.11 O&M costs

As mentioned in Table II.69.6, the annual cost of O&M of *anna-daan* is Rs. 4.424 million. However, it is difficult to do a precise calculation of the cost, for a significant share of materials comes from donations, and the employees, imbining the spirit of service, take nominal wages. Since Navajeevan is registered as a charitable society, properly audited accounts are submitted to the government.

Table II.69.6 O&amp;M costs

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Costs per year (in millions)</i>
Salary of employees	0.58
Procurement of vegetables and groceries (excluding the donated and cultivated)	41.97
Transportation cost	0.95
Fuel cost: gas and wood	0.32
Power cost	0.12
Repairs and maintenance in the kitchen	0.30

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 69.2.12 Quality of raw materials

Since the recipients of *anna-daan* are patients whose recovery depends on what they are given to eat, the quality of food served to them becomes a prime concern. Both the raw

material suppliers and other contributors ensure that only good quality materials are made available for this noble cause. Navajeevan staff and volunteers take the utmost care while preparing and distributing food to patients. A significant amount of vegetables is harvested from the organic garden of Navajeevan. The expertise of volunteers from the medical profession and regular inspection of food by the regulatory staff are helpful in assessing the quality and safety standards followed at Navajeevan. Raw materials are cleaned multiple times with clean water, and all utensils, equipment, and kitchen are regularly cleaned and sterilized.

#### *69.2.13 Technology adoption in the kitchen*

Navajeevan has adopted accessible and efficient technologies in the kitchen. To ensure better hygiene and greater energy efficiency, steam cooking units are installed in the kitchen. Additionally, ten solar heating units, one water purifier unit, and five grinder units are also installed in the kitchen.

#### *69.2.14 Waste management*

Approximately 30 kg of waste are generated per day while processing vegetables. A part of it goes to the biogas plant and the remaining is collected by animal farm owners. The water drained from rice, approximately 15,000 L, is a major challenge in waste management. The method of multilayer filtration technique is being used to resolve this problem.

#### *69.2.15 Key issues*

The two major challenges that Navajeevan faces today are water related. The first is the scarcity of potable water for food preparation. Though the trust has eight wells for the purpose, only one is providing good quality water and the rest require investment to make their water usable. The second issue is concerning the management of water drained from cooked rice. The unavailability of appropriate technology and the absence of a dairy farm has made the problem intractable.

### **Temple website**

<http://www.navajeevantrustktm.org/>

### **Notes**

- 1083 Everfresh life.
- 1084 Rice dumpling.
- 1085 Indian bread.
- 1086 Spicy dish made from wheat granules.
- 1087 Variety of Indian pancake made usually from rice.

## Case study 70 Salvation army, Chennai, India

Joshua Pangaraj\*

### 70.1 Introduction

The Salvation Army is in Chennai and a few other states as well in India. The Salvation Army is an evangelical church committed to social action. Without discrimination, the Salvation Army works with the community for life enrichment. They are volunteers and professional people caring for the body, mind, and soul. They are an international movement registered in India as a religious and charitable organisation. The Salvation Army was formed in England in 1865 by William Booth, who believed that an essential part of his ministry was to fight against poverty and social injustice. This remains true for the Salvation Army today.

The Salvation Army is registered as a guarantee company under the Indian Companies Act 1913. The Salvation Army's work was started in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, in 1895 by Captain Abdul Aziz with his friend Mahanada. Captain Abdul Aziz was spiritually renewed while attending the revival meeting of Captain Henry Bullard in 1884 in Bangalore, and he dedicated his life to being a Salvation Army officer.

As the migrant labourers were most vulnerable during the lockdown, the Salvation Army began serving food to them in Trivandrum with the consent of the corporation authority and the police department. Initially, the Salvation Army served 350 lunches. This was even before the government opened community kitchens. The number has gone up to 520 lunches per day, covering areas up to Kazhakuttam, 15 kms away from Trivandrum. This continued for a month during which 14,170 lunches were served by the Trivandrum headquarters team alone. Many of the divisions and corps also served the nearby community the same way.

### 70.2 Anna-daan at the salvation army

The *anna-daan* scheme was started in the year 1950 by Major Scott. He was passionate about social service. For people in distress, his motto was soup, soap, and salvation. He was inspired to feed and educate poor children during an interaction with a group of poor women who shared the misery of their poverty and how it got in the way of their children's education. The social service envisioned by the major is being actively provided even to this day. According to a book titled *Great Christians*, the first social work of this kind – food serving – commenced in the year 1868 in London on Christmas Day.

Social media played a vital role in creating an awareness of the Salvation Army's activities and providing a platform to connect people who shared the same vision. Along with the spiritual nourishment daily, on the initiation of Colonel Nihal Hettiarachchi, and the Salvation Army Mission Network team, the information and guidance to the society was updated on social media with attractive captions and headlines. It was widely shared, and many groups joined in to spread the message.

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### 70.2.1 *Spiritual components of anna-daan*

*Anna-daan* is performed and offered for the attainment of spiritual aspirations and satisfaction. Through the *anna-daan* tradition, the Salvation Army receives media coverage in local newspapers, magazines, etc. Political leaders also visit and participate in this tradition on important occasions.

Lieutenant Kiran P. Jose of the Indian Army joined hands with the Salvation Army to serve food to migrants and the destitute. The health services department also came forward to supply food packets to the needy. The district administration and local government authorities immensely supported the mission by giving legal clearance and guidance. Some of the many reasons for the *anna-daan* practice include the following:

1. Vows to be fulfilled by the donor
2. Philanthropic purposes
3. *Anna-daan* is auspicious
4. Performing *anna-daan* brings good luck
5. Positively impacts the society
6. Receiving people's blessings
7. Spreads harmony among people
8. Instils dedication and devotion
9. Media coverage and popularity

### 70.2.2 *Rituals and prayers before cooking and serving*

Prayers are performed by some individuals before cooking and before eating the food. Although there are no such rituals of placing flowers and *arti*<sup>1088</sup> before cooking, the volunteers cook with a feeling of serving the needy.

### 70.2.3 *Number of devotees served*

The church provides meals to 125 people every day around lunchtime. During the peak seasons, which include festivals or events conducted by the church, the footfall for *anna-daan* is estimated to be around 300.

Table II.70.1 Number of times, number of people, and volume of food served per day

Meal	Time	Number of times		Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season/days	Normal season	Peak season
Lunch	1 to 2 pm	2	4	125	300

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 70.2.4 Dining hall

There is one dining hall in the church which can accommodate up to 90 people at a time. Most of the time, children sit on the open ground or veranda to have their meals. The main dining hall in the church has 15 dining tables, and the food is usually served in packets, with all the food items packed in a single wrapping for everyone. There is a token system to manage the crowd during peak times. The hall is cleaned before and after *anna-daan*. The leftover food is distributed among the poor and the homeless.

#### 70.2.5 Accountability of prasadam

Receipts are given to each recipient of *prasadam*. The budget is fixed and purchases, storage, cooking, and distribution are done accordingly.

#### 70.2.6 Time taken for preparing food

The time taken to cook the meals is 1 hour. An additional 15 minutes are required to serve or distribute the food to everyone. After each batch finishes, the hall is cleaned and prepped for the next batch to enter.

Table II.70.2 Time taken for cooking

Activity	Time required
Lunch	1 hour
Time taken for serving	15 minutes
Serving time per batch	30 minutes
Time taken for cleaning	1 hour
Cleaning time	1 hour

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 70.2.7 Nutrition

Benjamin Franklin, a social worker from Lutheran, is responsible for monitoring the quality of food and ingredients, hygiene, and methods of cooking. Food is served keeping in mind its quality and nutrition. The programme serves nutritious food with cow ghee throughout the seasons.

#### 70.2.8 Human resources

The activities such as cleaning and cutting vegetables, cleaning the dining hall and utensils, serving children and elders, and managing the crowd are handled by contract workers. Volunteers are taken as cooking assistants to clean and cut the vegetables and other groceries; some oversee washing the utensils used for cooking and serving food; one person oversees cleaning the dining table and the hall. Volunteers/daily donors who donate money and groceries are also allowed to serve.

Table II.70.3 Human resources for quality control

<i>Paid staff</i>	<i>Manpower</i>
Quality control manager	1
Cooks	1
Cleaners	1

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 70.2.9 Management

The administration board was established in the year 1975 and takes care of all management issues. *Anna-daan* is supported by the financial committee and the administrative committee of the Salvation Army. All decisions relating to *anna-daan* are vested with a German, who is a non-Salvationist.

### 70.2.10 Finances

The work of the Salvation Army is funded by the interest earned on corpus and by donations from its members, the public, local authorities, and government grants. It also receives funds from aid agencies. Total cost of feeding the children, women, and the old through the Salvation Army initiative is Rs. 0.3 million. Funds are also provided by the parent organisation, the Salvation Army's national branch.

Major expenses include the salaries of the employees (including the contract workers), raw materials, other groceries, power, transportation, fuel cost (pellets and gas), house-keeping, and repairs and maintenance of kitchen equipment and the dining hall.

### 70.2.11 Financial accountability

Apart from the monthly audit carried out by the Salvation Army Trust Board, the annual audit of accounts is also done by internal and external auditors. The finances are monitored by external members who are appointed by the committee. Monitoring and training of auditors is officially done by the donor agency.

### 70.2.12 Quality of raw materials

The main quality inspection is done by the purchase manager before each transaction. Storage, handling, and preservation of raw materials through logistics are important elements. The schedule of delivery is given to the vendor, and it is monitored by the Salvation Army. Vegetables and other groceries are sanitised before cooking. Cleaning, washing, and drying are done before using groceries. Regular personal hygiene and food safety training for kitchen staff through workshops is an integral part of the Salvation Army's feeding programme. Employing quality officers in the kitchen to monitor the quality of cooked food is done in each school which has a feeding in charge. Caps and aprons are always used while preparing and serving the food. The cooking vessels and other utensils are sterilised before cooking. For hygiene, all the vessels and utensils are regularly washed with dishwashing bars. Regular personal hygiene and food safety



trainings are conducted by the head cook for the kitchen staff. The head cook is also responsible for employing quality officers in the kitchen to monitor the food quality.

#### 70.2.13 *Technology adopted in the kitchen*

Technology is extensively used while organising meals. All vendor payments, staff salaries, and other payments are done online. WhatsApp groups and sub-groups for various sections, monthly monitoring reports, and other tools are shared online, including photos and impact stories. A few schools have installed CCTV cameras for monitoring and surveillance purposes in the *anna-daan* halls. The other common method to ensure safety is appointing guards or watchmen in certain schools. Although some schools use steam boilers to prepare food, mostly coal, firewood, and *uppala* (dried cow dung cake) are used for cooking in an energy-saving oven.

#### 70.2.14 *Waste management*

Food waste is segregated as wet and dry in coloured buckets and disposed of in the designated areas/slots in the school. The garbage is also transported in trucks for disposal/treatment outside. The wet waste is used for composting.

#### 70.2.15 *Key issues*

Shortage of funds prevents the organisation of the *anna-daan* programme on a larger scale.

### **Temple website**

<https://www.salvationarmy.org/india/central> accessed on 10 March 2021

### **Note**

1088 Ceremony in which wicks soaked in ghee are lit and offered up to one or more deities.

## **Case study 71 St. Lawrence Minor Basilica, Udupi, Karnataka, India**

Rev. Fr. Ivan D'Souza\*

### **71.1 Introduction<sup>1089</sup>**

St. Lawrence Minor Basilica<sup>1090</sup> is a pilgrim centre and tourist destination belonging to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Udupi. It is situated on the foothills of the Parpale Hill of Attur Village, Karkala Taluk, Udupi District, Karnataka, South India. It was established

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in 1801. The place is known for the miraculous powers of St. Lawrence, Deacon, and martyr. St. Lawrence is popularly called the *Deity of Karkala (KarladaDever)* by the people of the Tulunadu region. It is a centre for communal harmony, prayers, favours, offerings, adoration, attraction, and admiration. The town of Karkala, where the St. Lawrence Basilica is located, has a multicultural and multilingual set-up.

The shrine was raised to the status of Minor Basilica on 26 April 2016. The shrine has a 13-inch-tall miraculous wooden statue of St. Lawrence and 40 feet tall *Maanastambha* pillar of honour. The devotees of different faiths and walks of life flock to the Basilica from every nook and corner of South Karnataka and from other places. They pay homage to the statue of St. Lawrence, pray for his favours, and offer their gifts. Lighting the candles is a prevalent custom of the place. During the holiday season, the shrine is visited by around 2,500 people.

Special occasions: The annual festivities known as *Jatre/Saantmari* (fair) attract over 1.5 million pilgrims. During the annual shrine feast, the devotees come by foot (*paadayaatre*) to the shrine, receive flowers with holy water (*teertha*) sprinkled over them, light candles, offer oil or ghee, pray in devotion, and visit the miracle pond called *Pushkarini*. This unique pond is built in an Indian architectural style.

### 71.1.1 Significance of the church

It is interesting to know that some people offer silver pieces and articles that are in the form of body parts like hands, fingers, legs, heads, etc., with the intention of healing that body part through the intercession of St. Lawrence. Eucharistic celebration and novena prayers are conducted for the faithful. The sacramental practice of confession is specially made use of by the Catholics during the annual feast of the shrine.

## 71.2 Anna-daan at St. Lawrence Basilica Church

Sharing the basic necessities of life – that is, food, clothing, and shelter – is believed to be the greatest value in human life. All religions advocate the practice of charity, sacrifice, almsgiving, feeding the hungry, and so on, for a meaningful and harmonious living. Indian tradition considers sharing food as a basic duty towards others and a way of worshipping the divine. The almighty is the source, sustainer and provider of everything. Hence, what is received from Earth has to be offered to the Cosmic Creator in gratitude and shared with others in love and concern. Thus, *anna-daan* is a religious practice where food is prepared, shared, distributed, and eaten together in places of worship in the name of bountiful divinity.

The *anna-daan* practice at St Lawrence Basilica, the Christian religious centre, is termed *prasaadabhojana* (food offering). It was started by a former parish priest Rev. Fr. Francis Cornelio in 2004. During the celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Communion is shared among the baptised people as spiritual food. But the devotees of different faiths who frequently visit the shrine look for some *prasaada* as a gift from God. Hence, food is given to them as an offering. Moreover, when adoration, mass, and novena are finished, it is already noon time. Hence, people are provided with food as they come from far-off places.

*Prasaadabhojana* takes place throughout the year and is practised every Thursday. From 1 to 10 of August every year, *anna-daan* is practised every day for the titular feast of the shrine, which falls on 10 August.

The number of devotees in attendance when *anna-daan* was started was around 250 to 300 people. Members of the parish used to help in the preparation and distribution of food ward-wise. But as the numbers increased, paid employees were appointed to cook and serve food.

### 71.2.1 *Spiritual components of anna-daan*

People of all religions participate in the practice of *anna-daan* at St. Lawrence Basilica. In general, *anna-daan* is considered as a good practice and a gesture of sharing. It is part of Indian culture and ethos. There is always joy in sharing and eating together. It teaches values such as patience, humility, etc. People find a sense of fulfillment. It helps to build unity and communitarian spirit by getting to know each other. As Jesus catered to both the spiritual and physical needs of the people, so also do the Eucharist, prayers, and *anna-daan* at the shrine quench both the spiritual thirst and physical hunger of the devotees. *Anna-daan* fosters fraternity and equality among the rich and poor who stand in the same queue to receive food. It is an opportunity for all to contribute their share for a noble reason.

### 71.2.2 *Number of people served*

At present, during the normal season, around 600–1,000 people receive food, and during holidays, around 2,000 people benefit from *anna-daan*. On the last day of the titular feast, nearly 5,000 people partake in the *prasaadabhojana*. There has been a steady growth in the number of people who partake in the tradition over time.

As the number increased over the years, a separate hall was built for the *prasaadabhojana* in 2009. The hall can accommodate 600 people at a time. People stand in queues and are served food on a plate and later sit on the chairs arranged in the hall and enjoy their meal.

### 71.2.3 *Quantity of food prepared and served*

Vegetarian food is served at two counters. Only lunch is provided for the devotees on a weekly basis. During the titular feast of the shrine, along with usual items, *paayasam*<sup>1091</sup> and sweets are given for ten days. Lunch is served from 12:10 pm, and a batch of 600 people have their meal within half an hour. The food is tasty and healthy, as it is cooked in the kitchen attached to the dining hall, maintaining cleanliness and neatness.

The items provided for the *prasaadabhojana* are rice, *sambhar*,<sup>1092</sup> *chana* (grams), and pickle. For *sambhar*, around seven to eight vegetables are added. There are two store-rooms to preserve rice and vegetables. The approximate quantity of ingredients used per meal is mentioned in Table II.71.1.

Table II.71.1 Weight of items used per meal

Food items	Normal season Weight (in kgs)	Peak season Weight (in kgs)
Plain rice	70	130
Peas/nuts/grams	25	35
Salt	5	10
Jaggery	1	2
Coconut	10	20
<b>Vegetables</b>		
Cucumber	12	20
Potato	8	15
Brinjal	8	15
Carrot	5	10
Cabbage	3	6
Pumpkin	12	20
Cauliflower	3	6
Coriander leaves	1	2
Tamarind	1	2

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 71.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

Usually, masala paste (spices ground into paste form) is used for cooking the main and the side dishes. The vegetables are cut the previous evening and kept ready. The cooking starts at 8:00 in the morning and finishes by noon. People wash their plates and place them on a rack. Subsequently, the plates are once again hygienically washed by the staff. The cleaning of all other vessels, chairs, hall, etc., is done by 4:30 pm.

#### 71.2.5 Human resources

There are six people to manage *anna-daan*, among whom four are cooks and assistants, and two others help with cleaning. They are paid a monthly salary. Besides them, there are eight to ten ward/unit members of the parish who volunteer to help in managing the crowd, serving, and cleaning. Even the participants serve when the need arises.

Table II.71.2 Human resources involved in *anna-daan*

Paid staff (Temple staff)	Manpower
Cooks	4
Cleaners	2
<b>Volunteers for specific purpose</b>	
Manage crowd, serving, and cleaning	8–10

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

The kitchen has two huge vessels which can contain food items up to 100 kgs. There are 2,000 plates, 100 drinking water tumblers, 1 *sambhar* tank, cutting boards, 8 sickles, and other vessels, cutlery, etc. The entire meal is cooked on fossil fuel or firewood. The shrine has plans to upgrade to steam cooking. The *anna-daan* hall is monitored by surveillance cameras.

### 71.2.6 Management

There is no separate administration board for *anna-daan*. The director of the shrine takes the responsibility of the financial matters.

### 71.2.7 Finances

The source of funds for *anna-daan* is the contributions made by the devotees in cash and in-kind. Every donation is acknowledged with a receipt, and those who donate 0.005 million and above are given a candle of honour during the prayer service. The shrine accounts are audited on a regular basis and a balance sheet is submitted to the government. The sponsoring of all the food for an entire day is not encouraged so that others, too, have an opportunity to participate. Contributions in-kind include rice, coconut, oil, *daal*,<sup>1093</sup> etc. Around 0.035 to 0.04 million are spent on each *prasaadabhojana*. Expenditure on vegetables is around 0.005 to 0.006 million. Groceries cost between 0.006 to 0.008 million. These are brought to the church from a distance of 10 km in shrine vehicles.

### 71.2.8 Waste management

In general, people are served as much as they need to avoid food wastage. Ten to 20 kg of wet waste in the form vegetable peels, etc., are generated every day. All the wet waste is stored in a container and is fed to the domestic animals. Dry waste is disposed of in a pit.

## Notes

1089 Baptist Menezes, *St Lawrence Basilica: Attur, Karkala* (Udupi: Rector, St Lawrence Basilica).

1090 The root meaning of the word basilica in Greek is royal house. Basilica is a church building that has been accorded special privileges by the Pope.

1091 Rice pudding.

1092 South Indian dish consisting of lentils and vegetables.

1093 A dish made with lentils or other split pulses.

## Case study 72 Nizamuddin Auliya: the Saint of Basti Nizamuddin, New Delhi, India

Farhat Naz\*

### 72.1 Introduction

The Dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin is the holy shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, who is ranked among the world's most renowned *Sufi* saints from the Indian subcontinent. Hazrat Nizamuddin was also known as *Mahboob-e-Ilahi*' (God's beloved). The entire

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area has come up around the mausoleum of the saint and is therefore called Basti Nizamuddin. It is located at the modern colony of Nizamuddin West in New Delhi, India. The mausoleum complex also houses the tomb of *Sufi* poet Amir Khusro, who was his most famous disciple; an 800-year-old mosque; tombs of Jahan Ara, daughter of Shah Jahan; and a large *baoli* (stepwell). The *dargah* is registered under the Gazetteer Act of 1972.

#### History and origin of the mausoleum

*Sufi* saint Syed Muhammad Nizamuddin was born in Badaun, Uttar Pradesh, in 1238. At the age of 21, Nizamuddin travelled to Ajodhan (now Pakpattan Sharif in Pakistan) to become the disciple of *Sufi* saint Fariduddin Ganjshakar, popularly known as Baba Farid. The training imparted there groomed the disciples in developing proximity to and love of God through service to humanity. Services rendered at his shrine included feeding the poor and providing access to water sources regardless of the faith or social category one belonged to. Stepwells were a great help in realising the concept. Syed Muhammad Nizamuddin died on 3 April 1325 and came to be popularly known as Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

Historical documents record the following: *Although large stores of food were needed to feed the stream of guests, the Shaikh (Nizamuddin) wished to cultivate an atmosphere of tawakkul (trust in God) and acceptance of God's will. Therefore, food was distributed as soon as it arrived and the stores were swept and cleared out every Friday morning.* He followed the principle of distributing every single farthing coming as an offering in the shrine among the poor or feeding them and seeing to it that nothing was left at the end of the day. He would then spread a mat and relax for the night.

People from different faiths, ethnicities, castes, creeds, races, cultural backgrounds, and nationalities visit this *dargah* of the *Sufi* saint every day to seek his blessings and offer respect at the ancient shrine. It is also one of the popular tourist attractions in Delhi. It is believed that the *Sufi* saint grants the wishes of his devotees.

The *dargah* is built in *Mughal* architectural style, and the tomb has lattice screens called *jalis*, marble arches, and courtyards. The devotees tie red threads to the screens as a mark of respect and to make a wish, hoping for the fulfillment of their prayers and wishes by the saint. Devotees offer prayers, shower rose petals, and light incense sticks before the shrine.

The *dargah* is quite famous for its evening *qawwali* (devotional *Sufi* song) and devotional music sessions, which are held within the courtyard of the *dargah*.

Many Islamic festivals are celebrated at the *dargah*, including *urs* (death anniversary of the saint). Death anniversaries in *Sufism* are celebrated with enthusiasm rather than mourned. Death is considered a mystical merging with the divine, the ultimate goal of the *Sufi* experience.

## **72.2 Food charity at the dargah**

Food charity has been organised at the *dargah* ever since its establishment. Importance and need for food charity in the form of feeding the poor and needy is the basic essence of Islamic faith. *Sufi* saints considered the feeding of the poor as an act of piety which brings the giver closer to God. It should be exercised in the spirit of total selflessness, without

expecting any reward in return. Feeding the poor is done throughout the year and a little more elaborately during the fasting month of *Ramzan* and on the eve of the saint's *urs*.

Serving of food was started in 1135 AD. It was initiated originally by Hazrat Nizamuddin himself. It was taken up as a practical demonstration of teachings of the Islamic faith. The *dargah* is humming with activity throughout the year with people of various faiths streaming in, milling around, and mixing together. The number of visitors and devotees may vary from time to time and according to the Islamic calendar.

### 72.2.1 *Spiritual components of food charity*

Food charity at the *dargah* takes varied forms, and those sponsoring it do it with various motivations. In the holy month of *Ramzan*, it takes the form of *iftar*, the meal immediately after sunset to break the fast. Feeding a fasting individual at the *iftar* is a very virtuous act. Traditions from the Prophet say a person who hosts a fasting person for *iftar* earns the virtue equivalent to one day of fasting. Fasting is prescribed for all able-bodied Muslims. The *Quran* lays down that this exercise is meant to create *taqwa* or consciousness and proximity to God. This also enables the people, even the well-to-do and the elite, to feel the pangs of hunger, which makes them aware of the misery of the poor and the ones without the means to get two square meals a day. As a result, they develop empathy towards the poor, which motivates them to do something for the not-so-fortunate. Grateful devotees whose prayers have been answered sincerely acknowledge God's benefaction by feeding the poor and the indigent.

It is also considered a measure to improve one's place in the life hereafter. On the Day of Judgement, the Almighty God will bestow His mercy on those who were kind towards other fellow humans. The best way to serve humankind is to feed the hungry. As mentioned earlier, devotees also do food charity when their vows are fulfilled. Food charity is also considered auspicious; devotees engage in food charity because it is believed to bring good luck, lead to access to food for the needy and downtrodden, and allow one to seek blessing from the people who are fed. Food charity reinforces fraternal bonds among people and leads to the creation of communal harmony as people from diverse faiths eat food at the *dargah*. It creates social cohesiveness and positivity among people. Finally, this act instills dedication and devotion towards the *Sufi* saint. Also, during *urs* and other *Sufi* festivals, food is served as *tabarruk* (blessing).

### 72.2.2 *Rituals and prayers*

There are some rituals associated with cooking and distribution of food. *Fatiha khwani* (recitation of the first chapter of the *Quran* containing seven verses) is performed before the cooking starts. Similarly, before the distribution of food, some ritual prayers are conducted, such as *Fatiha* of *Panjatan-e-Chisht* (reading of verses from the holy *Quran*), and flowers are placed at the tomb of the saint. Furthermore, certain rituals have to be conducted before the food is eaten: Muslim devotees are advised to have *wuzu* or ablution – that is, washing the face and arms, then wiping the head and the neck, and, finally, washing the feet. Normally, the conventional visitors are aware of these rituals and do them of their own volition and convey them orally to those who are accompanying them

on their maiden visit. The tradition of *langar* was celebrated even during the time of the *Sufi* saint. *Fatima khwani* of *Pak Panjatan* and his *shijra* (lineage) leading back to the household of the Prophet Muhammad is read to enlighten the general people. The blessings of the *Sufi* saint and Almighty God are sought on the food before its distribution by invocation of *barkat* (abundance of blessing) on the food.

### 72.2.3 Number of people served

Approximately, 1,000 to 1,500 people are served food daily. Occasionally, the number may go up to 8,000 or 10,000 during *urs* and *Ramzan*.

People generally partake of food while sitting or squatting on the floor of the *dargah* compound. Usually, mats are laid where people sit and eat. Food is generally served to the devotees on plates or in areca bowls, and all people share the space regardless of any privilege or position to emphasise humility and equality. However, a separate area is marked for women to sit in keeping with the Islamic principles of avoiding intermingling of men and women. A queue system is in force at the place where food is served to regulate the crowd. Cleaning of the floor is organised five times a day around the place where devotees partake of the food. The same food is served to all devotees, and even to those who are part of the management of the shrine.

Table II.72.1 Number of times, number of people, and volume of food served per day

Meals	Timing	Number of people served	
		Normal season	Peak season
Breakfast	After Fajr prayers (after sunrise)	500	5,000
Lunch	After Zuhr prayers (i.e., 2 to 4 pm)	1,500	5,000
Dinner	7 pm onwards (after sunset)	1,500	5,000

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2020).

Islam is very strict about avoiding wastage of food or foodstuffs. So, in case of leftovers, it is distributed among the poor and the beggars. Even the devotees are allowed to carry it in their own utensils.

### 72.2.4 Quantity of food prepared and served

The total volume of ingredients used per day varies according to the dish being cooked and served. For example, 500 kg of plain rice are used at one time, but if it is *biryani*, the quantum of rice comes down to 300 kg, which is cooked with vegetables, chicken, or mutton, etc., depending upon the recipe of the food item made for food charity and also depending on the occasion for which it is being cooked. During the normal and peak seasons, *daliya* (porridge) with bread and tea is served for breakfast. For lunch and dinner, it is mostly the same menu, as mentioned in Table II.72.2.



Table II.72.2 Total volume of food served per day

Food Items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	Yes	Yes
Rice item <sup>a</sup>	With <i>dal/rajma</i>	Yes
<i>Roti/chapati</i>	Only when gravy is served	Yes
<i>Dal</i>	Yes	Yes
Vegetable curry	Yes	Yes
Sweet buttermilk/ <i>rooh Afza</i>	Yes	Yes
Sweet	All kinds of sweets depending upon the availability of ingredients	Yes
Others (specify)	<i>Alu Gosht, Korma, Biryani, khichdi, Zarda</i> (sweet rice)	

Source: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

Notes:

<sup>a</sup> They are varieties of rice made using different spices and recipes with rice as the main ingredient

### 72.2.5 Time taken for preparing food

Normally, cooking, distributing food, and cleaning the premises for a batch take 2 hours.

Table II.72.3 Cooking and serving time

Time taken for cooking	5 to 6 hours
Breakfast	6 am
Lunch	2 pm
Dinner	7 pm
Time taken for serving	30 minutes
Serving time per batch	10 minutes
Time taken for cleaning	15 minutes
Cleaning time	10
Total time taken for serving, eating, and cleaning per batch	2 hours

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation.

### 72.2.6 Nutrition

In terms of the nutritional value of the food served, care is taken to offer a balanced diet by procuring fresh products (such as rice, flour, vegetables, fruits, milk, edible oils, and meats) of good quality.

### 72.2.7 Human resources

Apart from the regular, paid staff, people, such as religious leaders, political leaders, social leaders, volunteers, and individuals (who make donations for food charity), offer their services to ensure that the *anna-daan* activity is organised in an orderly fashion. Those involved in cooking, cleaning, and distributing food could be daily wage workers, salaried employees, or volunteers.

Table II.72.4 No. of people involved in food charity at the *dargah*

Regular paid staff ( <i>dargah</i> staff)	Number of people		Hours of work		Weekly off	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Senior kitchen manager	1	1	8	8	1	1
Quality control manager	1	1	8	8	1	1
Cooks	5	5	8	8	1	1
Cleaners	15	15	8	8	1	1
Servers	15	15	8	8	1	0
Watchmen	4	4	8	8	1	1
Volunteers for specific purpose						
Cleaning and cutting vegetables	2	5	4	6	1	1
Cleaning utensils						
Cleaning dining hall						
Servers	15	15	8	8	1	1
Managing the crowd	15	15	8	8	1	1

Sources: Primary survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 72.2.8 Management

The *dargah's* administration is overseen by *Anjuman Peerzadagan Nizami Khusravi*, which is like a general body with nearly 500 descendants as members. Day-to-day management is looked after by the *dargah's* administration board comprising 50 members, some of them women. Duties ranging from regulating the entry of visitors from gates and taking care of them till they leave are allotted to the members.

#### 72.2.9 Finances

Funds mainly come from generous donations from devotees. *Dargah* relies solely on individual funding for food charity. Accounts are maintained by the Anjuman Committee which manages the *dargah* and are audited by internal and external chartered accountants. The annual monitoring of income and expenses is done by the board.

#### 72.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Quality and hygiene protocols are strictly followed right from the selection of suppliers, to cooking and serving. Meat, rice, and vegetables are all washed, and cooking vessels are thoroughly cleaned. The personal hygiene of those involved in the cooking and distribution of food is regularly checked. There are CCTV cameras in the halls. Manual monitoring is done during cooking and distribution. Mostly wooden logs and coal are used as fuel for cooking purposes.

#### 72.2.11 Waste management

Wastes are segregated into wet and dry waste (80 and 150 kg per day, respectively) and put into plastic bags for disposal to the local municipal corporation.

### 72.2.12 Key issues and suggestions

- Sometimes the lack of adequate funds affects the operations of the *dargah*.
- Children tend to waste food, and people tend to talk loudly and often do not follow the queue system.
- At times, managing large crowds becomes a bit difficult when the number of devotees visiting the *dargah* jumps manifold, especially during the festival and *urs* seasons.
- The government should stop road encroachment so that passage to the *dargah* is easy and safe.
- Since *Dargah Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya* has no website, and it is not run by a trust; there is a need to inform the donors to make their donations directly to the *dargah*'s management.

## Case study 73 Athrout: the helping hands of Kashmir, Srinagar, India

Rana Hashmy\* and Adil Rashid Bhat†

### 73.1 Introduction

Athrout is a Srinagar-based NGO which is patterned after what is known as *baitulmaal* in Islamic lexicon. An English equivalent of the Kashmiri word, Athrout is helping hands. *Baitulmaal* means storage of valuables of which a government or a public body is the custodian.

Athrout is engaged in providing healthcare, assistance for education, and foodstuffs to vulnerable sections of people. It also holds medical camps in remote villages, dispenses medicine, and conducts Out Patient Department (OPD) services.

### 73.2 Anna-daan at Athrout

Athrout has its office near Bulbul Lankar in Srinagar. It is the old site where a community kitchen (*langar*) was set up in memory of Saint Bulbul Shah by the then ruler of Kashmir Sultan Malik Sadruddin Shah in the 14th century. Currently, *anna-daan* involves providing dry rations to poor families, and this scheme was introduced in 2008 by Mr. Bashir Ahmad Wani, a graduate from the *Nadwatul Ulema*, the renowned theological seminary in Lucknow.

#### 73.2.1 Number of people served

As for *anna-daan*, the organisation currently supports 120 households by providing each family rations worth Rs. 5,500 every month. The rations are distributed among the families on the first Sunday of every month. The recipient families are identified by field staff

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prior to their registration. Each food kit has rice, cooking oil, red chili, turmeric, salt, salt tea (locally known as *noon tea*), fennel powder, etc. The organisation has storage facilities for 300 kits.

Table II.73.1 Contents of the food package

Food items	Normal season	Peak season
Plain rice	25 kg	25 kg
Cooking oil	1–6 litre as per need	1–6 litre as per need
Red chili	200–600 g	200–600 g
Turmeric	1 kg	1 kg
Salt	1–3 kg	1–3 kg
Salt tea	200–600 g	200–600 g
Tea	300–500 g	300–500 g
Fennel powder	50 g	50 g

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 73.2.2 Human resources

The organisation employs eight employees (comprising a senior stocks manager, a quality control manager, four helpers and two workers) for procurement of food items and their distribution. Services of two or three more persons are requisitioned if the number of beneficiaries goes up. The staffers have a ten-hour workday and are allowed a day off weekly. Help of some volunteers and community leaders is also sought for various purposes. Individuals who donate Rs. 500 or more are enlisted for the purpose.

Table II.73.2 No. of people involved in *anna-daan*

Regular paid staff (mosque staff)	Number of people		Hours of work		One day off weekly	
	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season	Normal season	Peak season
Senior stocks manager	1	1	10	10	Yes	Yes
Quality control manager	1	2	6	6	Yes	Yes
Helpers	4	6	10	10	Yes	yes
Others	2	3	NA	NA	NA	NA

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

### 73.2.3 Finances

Total funds required for food kits varies between Rs. 0.3 million and Rs. 0.5 million annually, given the escalation of prices and varying numbers of beneficiaries. Even the size of the ration kit may vary in accordance with the number of family members and their actual needs. The operational staff routinely ascertains and updates the needs.

Donations mainly come as *zakat* and *sadqa*. *Zakat* is payable at the rate of 2.5% of the wealth one possesses above *nisab*. *Nisab*, which is equal to the value of three ounces of gold, is the minimum amount of wealth one must have before one is liable to pay *zakat*. *Sadqa* is a voluntary donation which a person can make any time of the year and in any measure.

Funds are managed by the Baitulmaal Administrative Board. The organisation thus spends around Rs. 0.8 million annually on distribution of food items alone. It incurs an additional cost of Rs. 0.03 to 0.05 million on transportation of food items and their storage.

#### 73.2.4 Management

The entire range of services is administered and coordinated through an eight-member Baitulmaal Administration Board which was set up in 2008. As for the *anna-daan* activity, the board first receives the request for assistance from the deserving family who may also approach through volunteers. Verification of the beneficiaries is done through at least two witnesses on oath (generally elders from the locality). Confidentiality of the family's identity is maintained all through. A unique identification number is allotted for each of the beneficiary family which needs to be cited for all future transactions. The ration kits are distributed on the first Sunday of each month.

#### 73.2.5 Quality maintenance

The food items are sourced in bulk from the local market after verification of rates and quality. These are packaged according to the family size and requirements within the Athrout premises. A final check is conducted prior to the distribution of the kits.

#### 73.2.6 Key issues and suggestions

Shortage of funds is a major concern, as demand is ever on the rise from deserving families. The organisation must manage the number of recipients in accordance with available funds.

## Case study 74 **Ajmer Dargah Sharif: Khawja Gharib Nawaz (benefactor of the poor), Ajmer, Rajasthan, India**

Kritika Mishra\* and Farhat Naz†

### 74.1 Introduction

Gharib Nawaz (benefactor of the poor), or Ajmer Dargah Sharif of Hazrat Sheikh Khwaja Syed Moinuddin Hasan Chishti, is in Ajmer, Rajasthan, India, hemmed on all sides by picturesque Aravalli hills.

The shrine was first constructed by Sultan Ghiyasuddin in 1464 and later completed by the Mughal emperor Humayun. Mosques in the complex were built by Emperors Akbar and Shah Jahan. Emperor Akbar was a great devotee of *Khwaja Sahib* and had visited the *dargah* several times. He had even travelled on foot to Ajmer when he was blessed with a son, Prince Salim. He remodelled the *dargah* in 1564 by constructing several buildings

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and also gifted the big cauldron (*deg*) besides cash and grants of land for the upkeep of the *dargah*. Similarly, Emperor Jahangir also presented the small cauldron and grants for the maintenance of land and the *dargah*.

## 74.2 About Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

Khwaja Sahib, born in 1136, was known for his magnanimity and generosity, which are characteristic of *Sufi* movements, particularly in South Asia. His teachings focus on redressing the misery of those in distress, fulfilling the needs of the helpless, and feeding the hungry. Devotees from all over the globe, regardless of their realm, caste, race, class, ethnicity, creed, or beliefs, visit the *dargah* and the abode of the *Sufi* Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti to pay their homage and respect to the divine soul and to acquire peace of mind.

### 74.2.1 Spiritual components of *anna-daan* (*langar*)

*Langar*, a Persian word meaning almshouse or “a place for the poor and needy”, reflects the custom of distribution of food among the devotees irrespective of caste, creed, or religion. The institution of *langar* was already popular in the 12th and 13th centuries among the *Sufis* of the Indian subcontinent and had its root in the realms of philanthropy and divine generosity. The significance behind this rich tradition is not only to serve food to the needy and poor people but also to feed everyone in the divine centre with dignity and respect. The sweetness in taste is considered a symbol of piety and communion with God, and salt represents purity and incorruptibility.

### 74.2.2 People's views on food charity impacts

The act of doing food charity represents generosity, calmness, peace, gratitude, and contented satisfaction of goodwill and prosperity. People make donations of food and cash for the welfare of the hungry and the poverty-stricken and also to improve harmony, friendliness, and strong bonding with God. In Islam, feeding the poor and needy is considered similar to serving Allah, so the blessing received from doing *niaz* (serving people) is considered a charm of good luck and auspicious. It is a great satisfaction to see that the Ajmer *dargah* has maintained the Godly duty of feeding the hungry for almost 800 years.

### 74.2.3 Rituals and prayers

There are no stringent rituals and prayers before the cooking and serving of the food. However, sweets and flowers are offered to the Khwaja Sahib daily to seek his blessings before the start of the day.

### 74.2.4 Quantity of food prepared

The quantity of food prepared for lunch and dinner varies largely based on the number of devotees present. Nonetheless, as per the custom started during the time of Khwaja Sahib, 100 kg of porridge of wheat and barley (oats) are prepared twice a day in the early morning and evening. Also, during festive occasions like *urs* or *Ramzan* (the holy Islamic month of fasting) or as per the request of devotees, the food is prepared in two cauldrons. Refer to Table II.74.1 for the quantity of food prepared.

Table II.74.1 Quantity of food prepared in two degs

Sr. no.	Material	Small cauldron	Big cauldron
		Kg	Kg
1	Rice	71	66
2	Sugar	71	66
3	Ghee (clarified butter)	75	24
4	Dry fruits	75	50
5	Zafran (type of kesar)	One big packet	Two big packets
6	Haldi (turmeric)	14	33
7	Wheat flour	18	30
8	Maida (all-purpose flour)	11	23
9	Flour of mash	18	37
10	Kewra	18	37
11	Arquegulab	18	34
12	Wood	15	37
17	Jaggery	2	4
18	Methi flour (fenugreek)	1.5	3
19	Zare chaharam	Rs. 10,000	Rs. 20,000
		cooking expenses	cooking expenses
20	Distribution charges	Rs. 1,600	Rs. 3,200

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

#### 74.2.5 About deg

A holy shrine of hope, where people from different castes, creeds, and cultures believe that their prayers will be answered. For centuries, Khawja Sahib was the benefactor of the poor, and following his teaching, the Dargah Committee still feeds everyone who visits the shrine. Besides the Nizam Darwaza, two cauldrons (one big and the other small) are installed for cooking *niaz*, which is purely a vegetarian food consisting of rice, ghee, dry fruits, and saffron, called *kesariabhat* (saffroned rice).

The big cauldron (*badi deg*) was gifted by Emperor Akbar in 1568. It has the capacity to cook 4,800 kg of food at a time. The smaller cauldron (*chhoti deg*), with a capacity of 2,400 kg, was given by Jahangir 1605.

#### 74.2.6 Number of devotees served

Three meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) are served after the ritualistic prayers. Breakfast is distributed between 5 am and 6 am. Lunch starts at 2 pm and dinner after 5 pm (Table II.74.2). It is estimated that during normal days, 250–300 people partake of the food. On special occasions, this number may increase to 1,500 or more.

Table II.74.2 Time and serving duration

Meal	Time	Duration (minutes)
Breakfast	5:00 am	60–90
Lunch	2:00 pm	90–120
Dinner	5:00 pm	90–180

Sources: Primary Survey and author's compilation (2020).

A sitting pattern in parallel rows on the floor is followed to manage the devotees. During *urs* and *Ramzan*, food is served on a single big plate or *thali* or a plate which can be shared by four to five people. This kind of eating creates harmony and brotherhood. The sitting area is cleaned after every meal.

#### 74.2.7 Quantity of food prepared and served

To avoid food wastage, the quantity of food cooked is just sufficient for devotees present in the shrine. Lunch consists of *chapatis*, rice, mixed vegetables, *dal*, and porridge which is served at breakfast and dinner as well. During *Ramzan*, these *langars* take the form of *iftar* (meal eaten by Muslims after sunset), which is held every day after reciting the prayer to break the fast. The *daroga* of the *dargah* oversees proper cooking and distribution of food.

#### 74.2.8 Management

The Dargah Sharif is governed by a special act of Parliament known as the Dargah Khwaja Sahab Act 1955, with an aim to make provisions for the constructive functioning of the *dargah*. The act provides for the appointment of the Dargah Committee, which is responsible for the management of the *dargah* premises, except for the main crypt of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti. The committee will also look after the security measures of the *dargah*, and the main emphasis is on providing facilities to devotees visiting the site.

Members of the committee are important because they work for the development of the *dargah* and the welfare of devotees. The committee is also responsible for issuing licences and identity cards to *khadims* (attendants/servants), removing encroachment from *dargah* premises as well as from the properties of the Dargah Committee, and organising programmes for the welfare of women and children residing in the surrounding area.

#### 74.2.9 Services offered by the Dargah Committee

1. To make generous provisions for the education and maintenance of the descendants of *Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti* and their families and indigent *khadims* (caretakers/custodians of the shrine for centuries) and their families in India.
2. Arrangements of the festivals like *urs* of *Khwaja Sahib*, *Ramzan*, and his *Peer-o-Murshid* every year.
3. Provision of free *langar* in the morning and the evening.
4. Financial aid to widows and orphans and help to the impoverished people.
5. Supply of *Unani* and homeopathic and other medicines.
6. Maintenance of schools and scholarships for the welfare of needy and deserving students.
7. Burial of unclaimed bodies.

#### 74.2.10 Financial responsibilities of the Dargah Committee

1. Collection of endowment money.
2. To ensure that the endowment funds are spent in a manner desired by donors.
3. Payment of salaries, allowances, and perquisites and other revenue-related offices.



#### 74.2.11 *Technology adoption in the kitchen*

A retort packaging machine (sterile packaging of food in plastic and foil) has been installed to increase the shelf life of food from three hours to three months. Additionally, a big RO water filtration plant has been installed to provide clean drinking water within the premises of the holy shrine.

#### 74.2.12 *Waste management*

It is estimated that every day, some 7 tons of rose petals are collected and put through a compost waste converter donated by Hindustan Zinc under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. It has the capacity to prepare 25–100 kg of compost for plants.

#### 74.2.13 *2 Key issues*

Cleanliness and waste management are the major issues faced by the holy shrine. Lack of adequate clean drinking water and toilet facilities are major concerns.

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## Case study 75 **Ammajan, Bawajan Dargah, Chinthamani, Karnataka, India**

Maqbool Ahmed Siraj\*

### 75.1 *Introduction*

Chinthamani is a small town in Chikkaballapur district of Karnataka, South India. Eight kilometres away from this town is located the Murgamalla Dargah of Hazrath Syed Fakhi Shah Vali, a 15th-century saint, and his wife Syeda Bibi Amma Jan. They are popularly

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referred to as Amma Jan Bawa Jan, which is further shortened into an abbreviation AJBJ. Not much is found about these two people in the recorded history of that time. It is believed that they spent quite a few years in meditation in the nearby hills and would visit the villagers occasionally either to pray for them or administer them remedies from sickness.

The *dargah* attracts hundreds of people belonging to all faiths around the year. They come here to pray for resolution of their life problems or to show their gratitude for fulfilment of their wishes.

The *dargah* complex covers an area of close to 10 acres and has a small mosque where a hundred people can perform *namaz*.

The complex has the mausoleum, an 18-room *yatri niwas* (place of stay for visitors), a 15-room guesthouse, a graveyard covering three acres, a kitchen, and a *langar khana* (dining hall) that can accommodate 150 persons at a time.

The Murgamalla Dargah is a gazette notified institution under the Waqf Act and was registered in 1964.

#### Significance of the dargah

Many devotees place a bottle of water near the graves of saints and collect it the next morning. They do this out of the belief that if they drink this water, it will restore their health.

## **75.2 Anna-daan at the dargah**

The devotees and visitors keep streaming in on all days of the year. On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays the number of visitors is low. Around a thousand people who drop in on these days come for an hour or so and go back. On the other four days of the week, the number of visitors surges from 4,000 to 5,000. They come to pay their obeisance to the Chishti. The maximum collection of people is on *amavas* (moonless night) when around 10,000 people turn up.

### **75.2.1 Feeding without a langar**

Food charity takes varied forms at the Murgamallah Dargah. (1) The sponsors of the food can cook the food within the premises by hiring cooks, helpers, and vessels. They can bring their own groceries or buy them locally. (2) They can bring cooked food from outside and distribute it among the devotees. (3) They can collect food tokens from local restaurants. In which case, the devotees will have to go to the restaurants to receive their share of the food.

### **75.2.2 Dining hall**

The *langar khana* or dining room can seat 150 persons at a time. It is laid with stone benches and tables (*kadapa*). It takes about 25 to 30 minutes to serve food to a batch of 150 people. As a rule, only lunch and dinner are served, although during *amavas*, some devotees stay the night and approach the restaurants in the vicinity for breakfast.

### 75.2.3 Management

The *dargah* administration is headed by a caretaker who is appointed by the State Waqf Board. He looks after the operation and maintenance of various services related with the place.

### 75.2.4 Human resources

The *dargah* has a staff of around 30 people – including a supervisor, an electrician, a data entry operator, three watchmen, three attendees, an *imam* (one who leads prayers), a *muezzin* (the one who calls *azan*), and some cleaners and helpers who maintain the complex.

### 75.2.5 Finance

The *dargah* maintains a donation box where visitors can drop their donations. According to Mr. Syed Siraj Ahmed, caretaker of the *dargah*, on average, the annual donation is around Rs. 30 lakhs. The box is opened in the presence of the District Waqf officer and another officer from the local branch of the Canara Bank where the *dargah* has an account. The opening of the box and the counting of cash is done under CCTV. Upon completion of the process entire, the money is immediately deposited in the bank. A CD of the entire proceeding is made and sent to the State Waqf Board. The board spends the money to pay the electricity bill and to maintain and operate the various services, repairs, renovation, and salaries of the *imam* and the *muezzin*, cleaners, helpers, and security. No fund is allocated for the feeding of the poor or the devotees. In this matter, the *dargah* management merely acts as a facilitator and provides all essential help and helpers.

### 75.2.6 Role of the facilitator

The *dargah* management, as mentioned earlier, provides a facility for cooking food within its premises. There are local firms that undertake cooking of the food by hiring cooking and serving vessels and the personnel (cooks, helpers, cleaners, etc.). Normally, the sponsors opt for *khushka* and *dalcha* for lunch and dinner. *Khushka* is *pulao*, while *dalcha* is made of lentils with some fresh vegetables. Some donors offer mutton *korma* (mutton cooked with spices, onions, etc.) together with *khushka*. Occasionally, some sponsors even order *biryani* to be served. This special dish is the staple of the festivals and wedding banquets. However, the occasions when *biryani* is served are infrequent, maybe twice or thrice a month. Cooking is done on wood-fired *chulhas*. No rent is collected for using the kitchen. The sponsors need to pay for hiring vessels, cooks, and cleaners.

### 75.2.7 Waste management

Cleaning of the *langar khana* and the dormitory is undertaken after lunch and dinner. Leftover food, if any, is collected in a bin for composting.

## Case study 76 Adamyia Chetana, Bengaluru, India

N. Latha\*

### 76.1 Introduction

Adamyia Chetana is a voluntary organisation registered in 1998 with a mission to create sustainable, replicable models for social betterment of the underprivileged and to develop a sense of appreciation of the Indian culture and value system among the younger generations. The organisation is set up in the loving memory of Smt. Girija Shastry, mother of the organisation's patron the late Shri Ananth Kumar, Union cabinet minister and an MP from Bengaluru (South). She dedicated her life to social service. The organisation is run by Dr. Tejaswini Ananth Kumar. The organisation touches the lives of thousands of people through its various projects under *anna*, *akshara*, and *aarogya* (food, education, and health) initiatives. The words of Swami Vivekananda, *Each soul is potentially divine. The goal of humanity is to realise this divinity*, have been adopted as the organisation's vision.

The organisation works towards providing support to the poor and the underprivileged in the society. It reaches the targeted group through various philanthropic projects such as Arogya Chetana, Annapoorana, Aata-Paatha, Shikshaka Chetana, Raktadaana, and so on. The following are some very commendable initiatives of the organisation.

Arogya Chetana is one of the unique projects of Adamyia Chetana. It was conceived as a part of Adamyia Chetana's holistic approach to the development of children who are part of the mid-day meal programme and unable to access health facilities. With the help of this project, the underprivileged get access to healthcare which was otherwise unavailable to them due to lack of resources – knowledge, finance, confidence to approach health service providers, etc. Common ailments most children suffer from are malnutrition, infections on account of low resistance (especially upper respiratory infections), skin, dental, orthopaedic, eye, and ear, nose, throat infections. This programme covers the hospitalisation cost of up to Rs. 10,000 per child per year. It plays a facilitative role in helping these children access health service providers. Partner doctors and hospitals of the organisation provide treatment or interventions when required either free of cost or at a very minimal cost. The Arogya Chetana team facilitates by providing guidance to parents and teachers, raising funds from philanthropic organisations and individuals on a case-by-case basis, and supporting the family through the entire process when required. The organisation also facilitates insurance coverage for 10,000 underprivileged children at the launch through a special arrangement with New India Assurance Company Ltd. Contributions to the premium are made by donors, school management, and parents. This policy empowers parents to access good quality healthcare, especially primary healthcare, without burdening them financially.

#### 76.1.1 Aata-Paatha

Aata-Paath (play-learn), started in the year 2001, attempts to make learning a fun activity. The initiative focuses on children from class I to VII. Access to resources for children

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studying in government schools is low. Aata-Paatha, therefore, lets them paint colours, sketch with colourful pencils and crayons, play with modelling clay, and create images on a computer screen. The idea is to give their creativity full play. The children, therefore, learn their lessons in fun ways – singing, dancing, acting, storytelling, audio-visuals, and through learning aids.

## **76.2 Annapoorna**

The Project Annapoorna of Adamyia Chetana focuses on food charity. It was started on 29 June 2003 in collaboration with the central and state governments under the *Bisi Oota Yojane* of the Government of Karnataka. This project has been achieving major milestones along with its dedication to philanthropic work. The organisation has four kitchens, one each at Bengaluru, Hubballi, Kalaburgi in Karnataka, and Jodhpur in Rajasthan.

### **76.2.1 Reasons for anna-daan**

An observation made by Late Shri Ananth Kumar<sup>1094</sup> during his visit to government schools was that the children in government schools were generally hungry and malnourished due to their socio-economic background. Their parents worked as maids and labourers and just did not have adequate resources to cook meals for their children. This made these children disinterested in studies and other school activities. Therefore, the organisation persuaded the state government to provide mid-day meals at all government schools. It was assumed that with access to nutritious food, these children coming from the economically backward class would concentrate on their studies better. It also encouraged parents to send their children to schools. These assumptions proved right. Attendance in schools improved, enrollment increased, and nutritious food improved their overall health and learning capability. Adamyia Chetana encourages each child in these schools to write a page on their thoughts before meals to improve his/her imagination, thinking capacity, and writing skills.

The organisation has recently started another initiative to feed the needy every afternoon called *Nitya Anna-daan*. It is currently active at five centres of Adamyia Chetana in Bengaluru. Anyone in need of food can walk into Adamyia Chetana and have lunch between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm 365 days a year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, since all schools had closed, the organisation supplied food to Indira canteens.

### **76.2.2 Number of children fed per day**

The mid-day meal programme run by Adamyia Chetana reaches out to over 2 lakh children in thousands of schools through its Bengaluru, Hubballi-Dharawad, Kalaburagi, Ranebennur, and Jodhpur branches every day. This project provides food for 72,000 children in 324 schools in Bengaluru city alone per day. During the pandemic, the organisation, in accordance with the nutrition chart prepared per government guidelines, supplied rice, pulses, salt, and oil to respective schools. The organisation also supplied milk to children before the pandemic.

Children sit in playgrounds or under trees in the school premises and enjoy their hot and healthy meals on steel plates that are washed and cleaned by the children themselves. Food is provided once a day at noon during the weekdays.

The meals are prepared in well-equipped kitchens set up especially for this project. The meals are packed in 3,000 stainless steel containers which are transported in 30 customised vehicles to various schools. Once delivered, the food is distributed to children by the teachers and volunteers of that school.

### 76.2.3 Quantity of food prepared and served

The menu varies every day per the government's menu chart and usually consists of rice and *sambar*, curd rice, rice varieties – *bisibelebhat*, *pulao*, *pongal*, *dal*, *roti* (Indian bread), and *daliya*. The entire meal per the menu of that day is cooked in one kitchen and is then distributed to the respective schools.

Table II.76.1 Total volume of food prepared per day

Food items	Volume
Plain rice	10 tons
<i>Sambar</i>	4 tankers
Vegetable curry	2 tons

### 76.2.4 Time taken for preparing food

The kitchen is well equipped to handle large-scale cooking, and it does not take as much time as it would otherwise. On average, the entire process of cooking, including cleaning, cutting, loading, and unloading, takes around 1–2 hours.

Table II.76.2 Cooking and serving time

Time taken for	
Cooking	30–40 minutes
Cleaning	30 minutes
Total time for one batch to complete (which includes serving, cleaning, and letting people in to have food)	1–2 hours

Nearly eight tons of rice are cooked daily and four tankers of *sambar* are prepared using two tons of vegetables. Overall, daily cooking requires 250 kg of *masala* powder (spices) and 1,000 coconuts.

### 76.2.5 Storage

The storage area is spacious, and all dry items like rice, *dal*, and so on are stored here. Vegetables are not stored, as the entire quantity procured is cooked. Moreover, there is no cold storage facility in the kitchen.

### 76.2.6 Nutrition

The aim of this project is to provide food which is rich in nutrition, as well as tasty and hygienic, for the growth of young children. The dishes prepared are fortified with all kinds of nutrition (fat, protein, vitamins, carbohydrates, etc.) available in fresh ingredients like varieties of *dal*, green vegetables, green leaves, coconut, jaggery, and other condiments. In addition, hygiene is maintained during the cooking process.

### 76.2.7 Human resources

The Annapoorna project is supported by 120 staff and 150 volunteers. They work for 8 hours daily and are allowed a weekly day off on Sundays. The volunteers perform any task or work that is needed on the day of their visit. The details of the staff are given in Table II.76.3.

Table II.76.3 Number of people involved in Annapoorna

<i>Regular paid staff</i>	<i>Number of people</i>
Senior kitchen manager	15–18
Quality control manager	1
Cooks	40
Cleaners	12
Watchman	1

### 76.2.8 Management

Dr. Tejaswini Ananth Kumar is the chairperson of the organisation which was founded by Shri Ananth Kumar. A trust, consisting of 15 members, has been formed to take important decisions regarding the Annapoorna project. The trust meets every month to review the project and take important decisions designed to make the project more effective.

### 76.2.9 Finances

Funds for this project come from the state government, donors, and corporates. With their assistance, Adama Chetana has been able to reach thousands of school children day after day. For Adama Chetana, the huge numbers have been converted to the students' advantage. Economies of scale have brought down the costs, and voluntary participation has further reduced the costs. The cost per meal is less than Rs. 4.00 (excluding rice/wheat). The children, therefore, receive a variety of good quality meals. The delicate management of the budget and time management helps them achieve this and other projects.

### 76.2.10 Quality of raw materials

Regular quality inspections are conducted to ensure that raw materials procured are of good quality. The organisation also meets the requirement of raw material specifications in FSSA 2006. Since young children are the beneficiaries, the organisation has set high

standards of safety and hygiene. All vegetables used in the meals are washed before cooking. Quality officers are appointed to monitor the quality of the cooked food. A quality lab assists in maintaining quality parameters which are critical to a mid-day meal programme. The organisation collects feedback on quality, quantity, taste, and time of delivery from every school, which makes Annapoorna a unique brand in the minds of the socially concerned. This process helps them in bringing about further improvements in the services delivered by Adamyia Chetana.

#### 76.2.11 Technology adoption in the kitchen

Recent initiatives of Adamyia Chetana have made Annapoorna a zero-garbage kitchen. Their search for alternate fuels has enabled them to effectively use biofuels (equivalent of 60 LPG cylinders or 300 L of diesel per day) derived from waste in place of fossil fuels like LPG or diesel per day.

In the initial years, LPG was used for cooking, which was replaced by diesel, which had a consumption of 400 L per day. Now, fossil fuel has been completely replaced by renewable non-petroleum based organic fuels. The organisation has been successful in using non-conventional, eco-friendly technologies like gasifiers for cooking, plastic-free packing material, and chemical-free ingredients in cooking which has created a good image of the project as being socially responsible. Insulated vessels are used for cooking. The cooking time of rice has been substantially reduced with the help of six steam boilers of 300 ml each. The cooked food is poured into huge vessels and moved with the help of trolleys where it is further transferred into vessels for delivery at various destinations. Hot water is used for washing vessels.

Table II.76.4 Kitchen equipment

Particulars	Number of units
Kitchen	1
Steam boilers	4
Huge vessels	200
Plates	10,000
Glasses	10,000
Bowls	10,000
Trolleys	6
Dal/sambar tanks	4
Cutting boards	10
Knives	10

#### 76.2.12 Waste management

The kitchen set up by Adamyia Chetana has been recognised as the first *Green Kitchen* with zero waste. All the waste generated is either reused or recycled. Also, waste produced in the kitchen such as tamarind seeds, peanut peels, sticks of curry leaves, and coconut shells, is sent to a factory which converts them into briquettes, which are used as fuel for boilers. The kitchen, which was earlier producing and dumping 300 kg of garbage every day, is now a zero-garbage kitchen. As of today, the Bengaluru Municipal Corporation garbage van does not even visit this kitchen.



Excess food, if any, is distributed to the nearby slums. The water used to wash vegetables, rice, etc., is supplied in tankers to Lalbagh or Anantha Vana or used for plantation drives every Sunday. The vegetable wastes are supplied to *gaushalas*.

## Reference

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## Note

1094 Politician, member of the Parliament.

## Case study 77 Youth for Seva, Bangalore, India

N. Latha\*

### 77.1 Introduction

Youth for Seva (YFS), founded in April 2007, is a nationwide volunteer movement established with the intention of empowering youth to serve the community. The main objective of the organisation is to provide opportunities and encourage youth to get involved voluntarily in serving the society. The mission of YFS is to inspire youth to volunteer, connect them to grassroots projects, and provide ongoing support and training to the volunteers and the NGOs.

The philosophy of YFS is rooted in the traditional Indian concepts of *runa* and *yagn*, the Sanskrit words meaning *debt* and *to worship*, respectively. The Indian scriptures say that whatever people achieve in their lives is not solely due to their individual efforts; it is due to the contribution of their parents, teachers, friends, and others. Since it is so, all of us are obligated to pay back this debt. This can be achieved by performing five types of *yagnas* – *pitru yagn* (taking care of parents), *rishi yagn* (paying teacher's debt by carrying forward the knowledge to the next generation), *deva yagn* (paying back by leading an eco-friendly life), *bhootayagn* (caring for animals), and *narayagn* (being compassionate, loving, and caring towards other human beings). Hence, the concept of service (*seva*) is centred on the idea of developing an attitude of giving back to the society what you have taken from it to do well in life. Encouraged by this concept, YFS works with the motive of serving the community.

YFS works mainly in the sectors of education, health, and environment. It operates in 13 states covering 45 locations across India. Since its inception, it has worked with 1,12,380 volunteers to reach 10,03,425 beneficiaries. YFS has designed several volunteer models for individuals to get involved in community service.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the country, YFS rose to the occasion and provided food, medicines, and other necessary items to the affected people. The details are discussed in the following sections.

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## 77.2 Anna-daan during COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic in India, the Government of India imposed a country-wide lockdown. YFS came forward to provide food and other essentials to stranded people. The motivation behind this move was that in *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says that from food all beings are evolved (*annad bhavanti bhutani*). Hence, at such crucial times, it was necessary to join hands in feeding the people who were in distress. With this spirit, YFS stepped up its efforts in providing food to thousands of needy people across the country.

Considering the safety and hygiene measures, YFS provided meals and packed grocery kits to the affected individuals and their families, including daily wage workers, migrant labourers, construction workers, and healthcare workers like doctors and nurses, etc. Many corporates and other NGOs like Adamyia Chetana supported YFS in its relief programme. In association with many donors, the organisation provided food relief in Karnataka, Telangana, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh. Adamyia Chetana was committed to cooking and distributing fresh meals daily during the lockdown period. Highly committed and dedicated volunteers of YFS were the backbone of this humungous movement.

From March 2020 to March 2021, a total of 4,301 volunteers provided relief to COVID-19-affected people in 31 cities in collaboration with 24 organisations. Around 6.87 lakh people were covered in this programme. Over 1.41 lakh hygienically cooked and packed food and snacks were distributed among the migrant workers, slum dwellers, daily wage labourers, underprivileged families, lorry drivers, policemen, and municipality workers. Contributions to this initiative came from individuals and partner organisations.

Over 1.67 lakh grocery kits of dry rations and other essentials were distributed to meet the basic requirements of slum dwellers, construction workers, sanitation workers, migrant labourers, etc. Around 1,000 volunteers and 19 full timers worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this happen. It is worth mentioning here that 2,500 animals like stray dogs were also fed during the lockdown.

In addition to free food distribution, YFS, in association with NASSCOM Foundation and Sewa International, distributed COVID-19 home-care kits across the country with the aim of equipping the needy to fight COVID-19. Presently, with the second wave of COVID-19 and lockdowns in place, accessing treatment is becoming increasingly difficult. To address this issue, YFS provided basic COVID-19-appropriate home-care kits for economically backward patients who have been advised to undergo home isolation. The process of identifying such patients was done in collaboration with YFS's on-ground partners and volunteers who were working with government hospitals, care providers, and designated COVID-19 helplines. Each COVID-19 home-care kit contained medicines prescribed for treatment, a pulse oximeter, a thermometer, three-layered cloth masks, and hand sanitiser.

*Anna-daan* was carried out at Bengaluru in association with Adamyia Chetana and Chefs-à-Porter. During the second wave of the pandemic, there were more than 20,000 new COVID cases every day in Bengaluru, and the number of cases was rising steadily every day. To help the health workers concentrate on the task at hand and not worry about arranging for their food, they took care of providing meals. In such a situation, with the aim of providing food at a scale of 5,000 meals a day, YFS required a dedicated

team of chefs, infrastructure, volunteers, and donors. Chefs-à-Porter, in partnership with YFS and Adama Chetana, agreed to cook and supply 5,000 meals daily during the lockdown.

### **77.3 Other COVID-19 relief activities**

#### **77.3.1 Educational help**

YFS, in association with Sewa International, aims to provide financial assistance for children who have lost their parent(s) due to the pandemic. To help these families rebuild their lives, YFS is providing overall emotional and spiritual support through Project Aalamban.

#### **77.3.2 COVID-19 isolation centres**

YFS partnered with Seva Bharati to provide free isolation centres for people with limited means. To reduce the burden on the already overstretched healthcare infrastructure, YFS set up eight isolation centres close to the rural areas in Hubballi, Belagavi, Raichur, Savadatti, Mudhol, Vijayapura, and Bellari (in association with Seva Bharati), and at Bengaluru (in association with Rashtrottana). These centres were well equipped to take care of 60–80 patients and were well stocked with medicines and oxygen cylinders. An ambulance was also made available.

#### **77.3.3 Funding**

A major part of the funds required for carrying out the various activities of YFS came from individual donors and companies under its CSR programmes. With sufficient funds at its disposal, YFS was able to reach out to thousands of people in dire need of food, medicines, and healthcare during the pandemic.

### **Website**

1 <https://www.youthforseva.org>

## **Case study 78 The Akshaya Patra Foundation (Tapf), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India**

N. Latha\*

### **78.1 Introduction**

The Akshaya Patra Foundation is an NGO working towards eliminating the hunger of school-going children by partnering in the implementation of the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) programme of the government of India. MDM has been introduced in government

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schools and government-aided schools. Headquartered in Bengaluru, the Akshaya Patra Foundation started its operations in 2000. The foundation aims to tackle the problem of malnutrition among school-going children by providing them with fresh and nutritious meals. The inspiration to feed the children comes from a UNESCO report on out-of-school children in India (2015). The report indicates that 17.7 million children in India are estimated to be out of school. By providing food to these hungry and dropped-out children, the organisation hopes that the promise of a free, wholesome meal a day will persuade the parents to start sending their children to school. The organisation, by means of this programme, aims to achieve the two most critical UN Sustainable Development Goals: Zero Hunger and Quality Education. The organisation has the vision of “No child in India shall be deprived of education because of hunger”. It plans to cover five million children by 2025 under its feeding programme.

The foundation works on public-private partnership (PPP) with the Government of India and various state governments. Initially, the organisation started with 1,500 children in 5 schools in Bengaluru, Karnataka in 2000. Today, it is the world’s largest (not-for-profit run) MDM Programme. As a result, the organisation is ranked 23rd among the top 100 NGOs in the world.

*According to the Akshaya Patra Foundation, classroom hunger affects children’s ability to learn and grow. To address this challenge, the organisation began the Food for Education initiative, covering children from over 13,000 schools in India.*

A National Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee (NSMC) is set up to monitor the programme, assess its impact, and provide policy advice to central and state governments. Central assistance in the form of subsidies is released upon submission of the committee’s Annual Work Plan by the Programme Approval Board.

Apart from providing mid-day meals, the organisation has also launched various other programmes: feeding the children at *anganwadi* centres and special schools, feeding inmates of old-age homes, feeding expecting and lactating mothers, feeding runaway children and the homeless, and providing subsidised lunch for the poor. Under its *anganwadi* feeding programme, meals are provided to 1.39 lakh children between the age of 3 and 6 years at 5,928 Anganwadi centres in ten locations in four Indian states. Also, more than 3,660 pregnant and lactating mothers across 323 centres in Jaipur are served with nutritious meals. Table II.78.1 gives the details of the *Anganwadi* feeding programme.

Table II.78.1 Anganwadi feeding programme

Location	Number of centres	Beneficiaries	Number of beneficiaries
Hyderabad	838	Children	26,303
Jaipur	323	Children	4,158
		Pregnant and lactating mothers	3,660
Baran	138	Children	1,949
Vadodara	203	Children	8,134
Surat	1,092	Children	32,582
Ahmedabad	486	Children	16,723
Gambhiram	1,162	Children	6,426
Gudivada	1,162	Children	1,878
Narsingi	52	Children	18,330
Warangal	795	Children	19,129
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,251</b>		<b>1,39,272</b>

## 78.2 Number of children fed

Akshaya Patra feeds more than over 1.8 million children from 19,039 schools across 12 states and 2 union territories in India

### 78.2.1 Quantity of food prepared and served

The menu served includes a variety of food items to make sure that the food served is nutritious. Rice, *sambar* (vegetable stew), and vegetable curry are the key food items served four days a week. There are different types of *sambars* using a variety of vegetables, and they are served in a cyclic manner over a month. Flavoured rice, such as *bisibelebhat*, *khichdi*, *pongal*, lemon rice, *puliogare*, etc., is served once a week. Also, a sweet dish is served thrice a week and curd twice a week.

### 78.2.2 Time taken for preparing food

At the Akshaya Patra kitchen located at ISKCON Bengaluru, the cooking starts at 4:30 am. A strict kitchen process is observed, which includes certain mandatory routines to be followed by each member of the kitchen staff.

The kitchen staff makes all the necessary preparation on the previous night to avoid delays in food preparation. It takes 4 hours and 30 minutes to complete the cooking process. The food is packed in batches and sent to the respective schools. Food is transported to far-off schools and is a little tricky. If food delivery is delayed due to traffic jams, the food may become inedible.

### 78.2.3 Nutrition

To ensure that every child benefits from the food served, Akshaya Patra prepares nutritious meals, keeping in mind the local preference. For example, in the northern states of India, *rotis* are served, whereas in the southern states, rice is the preferred food item. The organisation is trying to meet the nutrition standards prescribed by the central government, as indicated in Tables II.78.2 and II.78.3.

Table II.78.2 Required dietary norms as mandated by the Central MDM Scheme

Components	Primary	Upper primary
Calories	450 Kcal	700 Kcal
Protein	12 gm	20 gm
Micro-nutrients	Adequate quantities of micro-nutrients like iron, folic acid, and vitamin A, etc.	

Table II.78.3 Item-wise dietary norms as mandated by the Central MDM Scheme

Sr. no.	Items	Primary			Upper primary		
		Requirement under MDM (in gms)	Energy content (in grams)	Protein content in grams	Requirement under MDM (in gms)	Energy content (in grams)	Protein content in grams
1	Food grains (rice/wheat)	100	340	8	150	510	14
2	Pulses	20	70	5	30	105	6.6
3	Vegetables	50	25		75	37	
4	Oil and fats	5	45		7.5	68	
5	Salt and condiments	As per need			As per need		
Total			480	13		720	20.6

To ensure that the food supplied to various schools is of high quality, feedback is taken daily from schools. In addition, the organisation is implementing *Kaizen*, CI Projects, and Six Sigma methodologies to ensure quality at all levels.

#### 78.2.4 Management

The Akshaya Patra Foundation is a registered charitable trust. The foundation's board comprises seven trustees and six advisors. The trustees comprise missionaries of ISKCON Bengaluru, corporate professionals, and entrepreneurs, and they play a primary role in ensuring good governance and functioning of the foundation.

#### 78.2.5 Finances

Funds are mostly provided by the government of India and the various state governments since the organisation is an implementing partner of the MDM Scheme. In 2018–19, the government's contribution to Akshaya Patra's programme was Rs. 2,173.274 million, and the total income was Rs. 5,211.833 million. Apart from this, the organisation also receives financial support from corporates and individuals. The organisation's operations and utilisation of funds are transparent and are available in the public domain. With respect to the flow of funds, the Ministry of Human Resource Development is the nodal agency for sanctioning funds and supply of food grains (central assistance) to the states on behalf of the Government of India. The following figure depicts the flow of funds from the Ministry of Human Resource Development through various stages.

#### 78.2.6 Quality of raw material

Utmost importance is given to the quality and safety aspect of food provided by Akshaya Patra. Standardisation of recipes has been done across various kitchens to ensure that food is of good quality. Also, advanced projects like *Kaizen* and 5S have been started in different locations to improve quality standards.

The organisation follows various quality checks to ensure that the raw materials procured are of the best quality. There is SQMS (Supplier Quality Management System), through which the foundation selects suppliers based on their rating and so on. Then it has a quality control process in place to inspect raw materials in accordance with the specifications adapted from FSSA 2006.

Vegetables are procured on a daily basis. All the vegetables are cleaned with potable water and sanitised before the cutting. Cold storage is used to store ready-to-cook vegetables to retain their freshness. Rice is supplied by the Food Corporation of India (FCI). Before the cooking process, the rice is machine-cleaned and washed thoroughly. In order to ensure all the raw materials are fresh, all the kitchens follow the FIFO (First In, First Out) and FEFO (First Expiry, First Out) methods.

Thirteen of the centralised kitchens are ISO certified, and the remaining are in the process of being certified. As mentioned earlier, standardisation of recipes has been carried out to achieve high levels of nutrition. Also, a well-structured quality assurance programme is implemented at all stages of operations, such as pre-production, production, and post-production.

### **78.2.7 Food safety and hygiene**

Kitchens have well-trained cooks and production supervisors to manage and supervise the production. Before the cooking starts, every kitchen staff follows a routine hygiene chart. Before entering the kitchen, every staff is required to take a shower and wear a clean uniform. They should also wear caps face masks, gloves, gumboots, and other protective gear. Personal hygiene and food safety awareness programmes are held regularly for the kitchen staff. The kitchens also adhere to Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) to ensure the safe handling, preparation, and delivery of the food.

Once the food is cooked, it is packed in sterilised vessels and transported in specially designed, customised, and sterilised vehicles to respective schools. These vehicles use a puffed body to reduce the temperature loss and a honeycomb structure to hold the vessels upright and keep the freshness of the cooked meal intact till it is served to the children. These vehicles can be tracked using GPRS for safety and on-time delivery.

### **78.2.8 Quality of prepared food**

To maintain the quality of food, critical control points (CCPs) in cooking like cooking temperature are checked and recorded at periodic intervals. Also, a quality check is carried out by the quality officers in each kitchen. In addition, feedback is taken from the school on a daily basis to maintain and improve the quality of food. This feedback is monitored by the quality officers and, if necessary, initiatives are taken accordingly. The organisation also circulates do's and don'ts pamphlets to the schools on a regular basis for creating awareness of food safety and hygiene.

### **78.2.9 Technology adoption in the kitchen**

There are currently 52 kitchens located across 12 states and 2 union territories in India. A list of kitchens is provided in Table II.78.4

Table II.78.4 List of kitchens 13

State/location	Year started	Number of children	Number of schools	Type of kitchen
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>		<b>125,340</b>	<b>1,433</b>	
Visakhapatnam	October 2008	19,481	155	Centralised kitchen
Kakinada	December 2015	10,667	204	Centralised kitchen
Mangalagiri	June 2016	12,244	204	Centralised kitchen
Nellore	July 2017	14,524	232	Centralised kitchen
Ghambiram	May 2019	17,614	50	Centralised kitchen
Gudivada	November 2018	7,663	83	Centralised kitchen
Srikakulam	July 2019	19,741	307	Centralised kitchen
Kuppam	January 2019	23,405	315	Centralised kitchen
Ongole	November 2019			Centralised kitchen
<b>Assam</b>		<b>23,861</b>	<b>546</b>	
Guwahati	February 2010	23,861	546	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>		<b>18,181</b>	<b>130</b>	
Bhilai	January 2009	18,181	130	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
<b>Daman and DNH</b>		<b>42,213</b>	<b>348</b>	
Silvassa	July 2019	42,213	348	Centralised kitchen
<b>Delhi</b>		<b>38,538</b>	<b>169</b>	
DMC	January 2019	15,267	27	Centralised kitchen
Jahangirpuri	January 2020	11,170	83	Centralised kitchen
Badli	January 2020	12,101	59	Centralised kitchen
<b>Gujarat</b>		<b>414,496</b>	<b>2,169</b>	
Ahmedabad	August 2014	99,135	518	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Bhavnagar	June 2017	13,897	56	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Vadodara	November 2009	84,907	620	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Surat	June 2012	127,508	357	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Kalol	March 2018	26,143	91	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Bhuj	January 2019	20,694	179	Centralised kitchen
Jamnagar	January 2021			
<b>Karnataka</b>		<b>393,962</b>	<b>3,008</b>	
Bengaluru – HK Hill	June 2000	65,877	555	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Bengaluru –Vasanthapura	July 2006	65,372	607	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Ballari	July 2004	83,670	577	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001)
Hubballi	December 2004	105,769	811	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001)
Mangaluru	August 2004	12,795	135	Centralised kitchen

(Continued)



Table II.78.4 (Continued)

State/location	Year started	Number of children	Number of schools	Type of kitchen
Mysuru	July 2007	14,384	142	Centralised kitchen
Jigani	November 2017	46,094	181	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Jalahalli	August 2021			
<b>Odisha</b>		<b>158,095</b>	<b>2,050</b>	
Bhubaneswar	July 2014	62,489	729	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Puri	March 2007	43,555	654	Centralised kitchen
Nayagarh	June 2006	17,536	319	Decentralised kitchen
Rourkela	November 2013	34,515	348	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
<b>Rajasthan</b>		<b>231,187</b>	<b>4,428</b>	
Jaipur	February 2004	108,802	1,859	Centralised kitchen(ISO 22000:2005)
Jodhpur	August 2013	8,992	209	Centralised kitchen
Nathdwara	June 2006	35,141	899	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Ajmer	August 2016	12,735	189	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Baran	April 2005	8,894	161	Decentralised kitchen
Bhilwara	April 2018	9,026	127	Centralised kitchen
Jhalawar	May 2018	9,793	220	Centralised kitchen
Bikaner	January 2019	14,568	291	Centralised kitchen
Udaipur	October 2019	15,146	318	Centralised kitchen
Chittorgarh	August 2019	8,090	155	Centralised kitchen
<b>Maharashtra</b>		<b>21,892</b>	<b>398</b>	
Nagpur	August 2016	10,487	245	Centralised kitchen
Thane	August 2017	11,405	153	Centralised kitchen ((ISO 22000:2018))
Pune	December 2019			
<b>Tamil Nadu</b>		<b>5,627</b>	<b>18</b>	
Chennai	July 2011	5,627	18	Centralised kitchen
<b>Telangana</b>		<b>145,593</b>	<b>1,198</b>	
Kandi	March 2018	83,951	677	Centralised kitchen
Narsingi	September 2017	23,345	201	Centralised kitchen
Nawabpet	July 2019	17,710	280	Centralised kitchen
Warangal	August 2017	20,586	40	Centralised kitchen
<b>Tripura</b>		<b>527</b>	<b>02</b>	
Kashirampara	April 2017	527	02	Centralised kitchen
<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>		<b>223,608</b>	<b>3,490</b>	
Lucknow	March 2015	97,366	1,354	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Vrindavan	August 2004	116,642	2,032	Centralised kitchen (ISO 22000:2005)
Gorakhpur	August 2019	9,600	104	Centralised kitchen
<b>West Bengal</b>				
Mant	October 2018			
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,800,907</b>	<b>19,039</b>	

The kitchens are well maintained. There are two models on which kitchens operate: centralised and decentralised. The centralised kitchens are huge with the capacity of cooking up to 1 lakh meals a day. They are semi-automated and serve a set of schools located around them. The centralised kitchens manage operations (such as receiving, storage, preparation, delivery, and maintenance, etc.) from a single point of control. Decentralised kitchens are located where there is a lack of proper road connectivity. These are run by women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the guidance and supervision of the organisation. These women are trained in the kitchen process and operations and are monitored by a representative of the organisation to ensure the preparation of nutritious food under safe and hygienic conditions. By involving women in the decentralised kitchen, the organisation indirectly helps to empower the SHGs with a sustainable income.

Centralised kitchens are equipped with the latest equipment like cauldrons, trolleys, rice chutes, *dal/sambar* tanks, etc. This equipment is sanitised before usage. All vessels are of food grade. The capacity of each rice cauldron is at least 500 L; a *dal* cauldron has a capacity of 1,200 L to 3,000 L. The kitchens in North India have *roti*-making machines (capacity: 200,000 *rotis*).

#### **78.2.10 Waste management**

Usually, there is no food waste, as no excess food is cooked. Data is collected from each school on the average number of students attending the schools every day, and the food is cooked accordingly. Excess food, if any, is sent to children's homes or distributed among the poor living near schools. Vegetable waste such as peels, seeds, etc., is sent to poultry farms to be used as animal feed.

#### **78.2.11 Key issues**

One of the major issues facing the organisation is the sudden closure of schools during protests and *bandhs*. As a result, a large quantity of food needs to be quickly redirected to orphanages, old-age homes, and slums before it becomes unfit for consumption.



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# Annexes

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# Annex 1

## Case studies across religions

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*Table A1.1 Case studies across Hindu temples*

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<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Names of the case studies</i>
1	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Temple
2	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam
3	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Kalahasthiswara Temple
4	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt Mantralaya
5	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Varahalakshmi Narasimha Swamy Vari Devasthanam
6	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaari Temple, Tirupati
7	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Veera Venkata Sathyanarayana Swamy Temple
8	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Venkateswara Swami Vari Devasthanam, Dwaraka Tirumala
9	Assam	Kamrup Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati
10	Bihar	Mahavir Mandir, Patna
11	Goa	Shri Ramnath Mandir
12	Goa	Shri Vijaya Durga Temple
13	Gujarat	Shree Kastabandan Hanumanji Temple
14	Gujarat	Shree Swaminarayan Temple
15	Haryana	Mata Mansa Devi Temple
16	Jammu	Sri Mata Vaishnodevi Temple
17	Karnataka	Kukke Sri Subramanya Temple
18	Karnataka	Sri Adichunchungiri Mahasamsthana Math
19	Karnataka	Sri Annapoorneshwari Temple
20	Karnataka	Sri Durgaparameshwari Temple, Kateel
21	Karnataka	Sri Kalika Durga Parmeshwari Temple, Bengaluru
22	Karnataka	Sri Krishna Mutt Udupi
23	Karnataka	Sri Kshetra Manjunatha Swamy Temple Dharmasthala
24	Karnataka	Sri Mookambika Temple, Kollur
25	Karnataka	Sri Nimishamba Temple, Bengaluru
26	Karnataka	Sri Siddaganga Math
27	Karnataka	Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri
28	Kerala	Chottanikkara Temple, Kochi
29	Kerala	Guruvayur Temple
30	Kerala	NityanandaAshrama
31	Kerala	Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa Temple
32	Kerala	Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple
33	Kerala	Thiruvambadi Sri Krishna Temple
34	Madhya Pradesh	Balaji Mandir, Gwalior
35	Maharashtra	Sri Sai Baba Temple, Shirdi
36	Manipur	ISKCON Temple Imphal

Sr. No.	State	Names of the case studies
37	Punjab	Sri Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple
38	Tamil Nadu	Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareshwarar Temple
39	Tamil Nadu	Satya Ganana Sabha (the Vallalar Temple)
40	Tamil Nadu	Sri Lakshmi Narayani Golden Temple
41	Tamil Nadu	Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram
42	Telangana	Sri Gnana Saraswathi Shaneeshwara Temples
43	Telangana	Sri Sita Ramachandraswamy Temple
44	Telangana	Yadagirigutta Temple
45	Tripura	Tripura Sundari Temple
46	Uttar Pradesh	Karshni Ashram, Raman Reti Mahaban
47	Uttar Pradesh	Kasi Annapurna Annakshetra
48	Uttar Pradesh	Sri Gorakhnath Temple
49	Uttar Pradesh	Sri Janaki Mahal Trust, Ayodhya
50	Uttarakhand	Shanthi Kunj
51	West Bengal	Adyapith Temple
52	West Bengal	Belur Math, Belur
53	West Bengal	Dahapara Dham Temple
54	West Bengal	ISKCON Mayapur
55	West Bengal	Lokenath Baba (??) Mandir
56	West Bengal	Tarapith Temple

### Jainism

- 1 Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
- 2 Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand
- 3 Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Maharashtra
- 4 Mahavir Tapobhumi, Madhya Pradesh
- 5 Shree KshētraArihanthagiri, Tamil Nadu

### Sikhism

- 1 Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar
- 2 Goindwal (Baoli) Sahib Gurudwara, Tarn Taran, Punjab
- 3 Gurudwara Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib, Bidar
- 4 Gurudwara Sahib Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bengaluru
- 5 Gurudwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi

### Christainity

- 1 CSI Ashoknagar, Chennai
- 2 BREAD, Noida, UP
- 3 Navajeevan Trust, Kerala
- 4 Salvation Army Purasavakkam, Chennai
- 5 St Lawrence Church, Udupi, Karnataka

### Islam

- 1 Atrout, Srinagar, Jammu
- 2 Ajmer Dargah, Rajasthan
- 3 Chintamani Dargah, Karnataka
- 4 Nizamuddin Dargah, New Delhi

Table A1.2 Anna-daan during the COVID-19 pandemic – an indicative list

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
<b>I. NGOs</b>				
1	MCKS Food For The Hungry Foundation	New Delhi	The NGO scaled up overnight by setting up a satellite kitchen, hiring more utensils, transportation, and manpower, and is working with the help of the government authorities and the police who identify localities where people don't have food and are hungry.	During the lockdown, the NGO delivered 400,000+ cooked meals, which included meals in the form of dry rations to those who don't have access to the feeding points.
2	Akshaya Patra Foundation	Rajasthan, Gujarat, NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Haryana, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Odisha	Since the COVID-19 crisis, The Akshaya Patra Foundation, in close coordination with State Governments and District Administration, has stepped in to provide relief by providing food to thousands of people across the country.	As of July 2020, 56,953,828 cumulative meals were served consisting of 26,755,422 cooked meals and 722,663 grocery kits.
3	Youth Feed India – SAFA	Feeding the hungry across Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai, and North Karnataka	– Youth Feed India is a movement started by a group of young citizens from the private sector in partnership with the SAFA organisation. – SAFA and other NGOs, including Child Relief and You (CRY), BGIF, and 15 others are helping us distribute food across cities.	– In Phase I of the programme, 280,000 meal equivalents were distributed across Chennai, Hyderabad, North Karnataka, and Bangalore with a budget of 25 Lacs. – In Phase II, the programme distributed 560,000 meal equivalents across Chennai, Hyderabad, North Karnataka, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi & Gurgaon with a budget of 50 Lacs. – In Phase III, the programme targeted the distribution of over 2,520,000 meal equivalents across the country with a budget of over Rs. 3 crore.

(Continued)



Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
4	Zomato Feeding India	<p>Across 38 cities in India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ludhiana, Sonipat, Jaipur, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kota, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Dehradun, Delhi NCR, Kanpur, Lucknow, Gwalior, Agra, Patna, Guwahati, Jorhat, Indore, Jhansi, Nashik, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Karjat, Pune, Kolhapur, Pollachi, Bengaluru, Bhavaneshwar, Chennai, Pondicherry, Madurai, Thoothukudi, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Akola, and Nagpur</li> </ul>	<p>Zomato Feeding India has initiated the 'Feed the Daily Wager' project to provide food support to a large number of families surviving on daily wages and to help them have a reliable supply of meals in the absence of employment opportunities.</p>	<p>As of 17 April 2020, Zomato Feeding India had distributed ration kits to almost 4 lakh families in 38 cities in India.</p>
5	GiveIndia		<p>The NGO started a campaign 'India fights Corona' to raise funds for two COVID-19 programmes: donations for food parcels for daily wage earners and hygiene kits for those in high-risk areas.</p>	
6	Kashtakari Panchayat	<p>Pune and the neighbouring Pimpri-Chinchwad</p>	<p>– The organisation has distributed a one-month supply of essentials like grains, pulses, oil, sugar, and tea.</p>	<p>– As of March 2020, the organisation had raised Rs. 8.5 lakhs out of a target of Rs. 2.5 crore.</p>
7	The Khushiyaan Foundation	<p>Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Orissa, Mumbai, Thane, Airoli, and Bhiwandi areas</p>	<p>Through its 'Roti Ghar' initiative, the NGO provided meals to security guards, labourers, and daily wage earners.</p>	

8	Rise Against Hunger India (RAHI)	Bengaluru	Serving of meals was implemented within five days of the launching its initiative during COVID-19.	RAHI has served nearly 200,000 meals to 22,500 people. As of 28 March 2020, the NGO had organised two million or even more meals.
9	Acid Survivors & Women Welfare Foundation	Chennai	– Under the project 'Feeding Chennai', the NGO provided essential supplies and relief materials, such as hygiene kits and food packages to daily wage workers and low-income groups.	Over 10,000 families living in the slums of Chennai Central and in other prominent areas of the city were provided food packages.
10	The Network for Youth Development & Healthy Environment (NYDHEE)	Odisha	In the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Odisha, NYDHEE served the lowest strata of the society (such as daily wage workers, construction workers, contract labourers, street vendors, etc.) through the supply of rations.	
11	Chikka Federation of India	Muzaffarpur, Bihar	Carried out COVID-19 relief work through the distribution of rations, masks, and soaps amongst the resourceless communities of Muzaffarpur in Bihar and providing meals to some daily wage workers and domestic help.	
12	Yein Udaan	Chennai	The NGO provided grocery kits with essential food items.	Five hundred trans women and 900 daily wage earners along with their families were provided food items in the first week of lockdown and additionally acquired 20,000 kits to benefit 80,000 people over the next four weeks.
13	Uday Foundation	Delhi	Distributed ration kits and proper meals to the underprivileged.	

(Continued)

Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
14	The Swades Foundation	Raigad district in Maharashtra	During the COVID-19 crisis, the Swades Foundation's work include the provision of "food and essentials" kits, cooked meals, and medical equipment. So far, the organisation has distributed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 17,245 grocery and daily essentials kits to Adivasi villages within Raigad in three phases.</li> <li>- 3.3 lakh meals distributed to homeless and migrant workers for 51 days in Mumbai.</li> <li>- 57,503 meals to healthcare workers – doctors and nurses across Mumbai.</li> </ul>
15	Humanity First	Kerala; Karnataka; Telangana, AP; Tamil Nadu; Himachal Pradesh; Coimbatore; Orissa; Kolkata; Delhi; Punjab; Gujarat, UP; and Kashmir		<p>A total of 384,429 meals were provided till June 2020. Also distributed over 415,500 L of drinking water across Kerala state for 11,478 people.</p>
16	The National Hawker Federation (NHF)	Kolkata and further extended to other cities	Starting of relief camps by NHF during the lockdown to supply dry rations to the daily wage earners during the pandemic.	<p>As part of this initiative, 500 packets of dry rations were distributed each day. More than 20,000 food packets were distributed and 10,000 cooked meals were provided via community kitchens.</p>
17	Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD)	Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, and Vikarabad Districts in Telangana	FSD initiated relief/disaster management work during COVID-19 distributed provisions of rice, dal, oil, salt, sugar, and vegetables to weaker sections.	<p>FSD was able to reach over 1,790 families; among them, 70% were marginalised workers and 30% were migrant labourers across Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, and Vikarabad Districts in Telangana.</p>

18	Spreading Happiness	Hyderabad	<p>“Spreading Happiness” and “No Food Waste Hyderabad” with around 30 volunteers have fed by providing dry rations and essentials to people affected in Hyderabad, Telangana, during the lockdown.</p>	<p>As of 20 May 2020, the organisation had served more than 2 lakhs people with freshly cooked food apart from distributing around 1,000 ration kits, over 1.80 lakh water bottles, and water packs.</p>
19	Paras India	Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh	<p>Under the project Samarpan COVID-19, PARAS distributed food packets and fruits to the most vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>YUVA identified over 1,500 low-income and vulnerable families in dire need of support, in the wake of COVID-19 and reached 688 families comprising 3,440+ individuals.</p>
20	Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA)	Mumbai	<p>YUVA launched its campaign <i>Together We Can</i> to raise funds to offer emergency relief in the form of food kits to marginalised families.</p>	<p>Roti Bank distributed over 8.28 lakh meals in Mumbai alone. In Nagpur, 82,000 meals were distributed in over a month. On May 1, a record 6,500 meals prepared in six kitchens in the city were distributed.</p>
21	Roti Bank Foundation	Mumbai and Nagpur	<p>At Mumbai, the Roti Bank has partnered with several restaurants, providing them with raw materials to cook several thousand meals.</p>	<p>Nagpur Roti Bank under Chaudhary has been steadily serving about 5,000 meals every day.</p>
22	Being Social	Bengaluru	<p>The NGO actively helped the underprivileged with essential food items to survive the coronavirus pandemic. It reached the remotest parts of Bengaluru to provide relief materials to the deprived. The grocery kit has five kilograms of rice, two kilograms of dal, a cooking oil packet, and spices.</p>	

(Continued)

Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
23	Parikrma Humanity Foundation	Bengaluru	The NGO reached 1,800 children from 99 slum communities and four orphanages in Bengaluru for food distribution.	
24	Goonj	Delhi	It has initiated the "Rahat COVID-19" programme to ensure comprehensive family kits of essentials, including dry rations and personal care material to 2 lakh areas known for migration.	
25	Adhikar Foundation	Jamia Nagar, Okhla	The foundation reached out to daily wage earners, rickshaw pullers, and drivers during the COVID-19 crisis and delivered cooked food packets.	The food distribution drive continued until 31 March 2020 and provided meals twice a day to 400 people.
26	Namma Bengaluru Foundation	Bengaluru	Namma Bengaluru Foundation led by Karnataka's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Chandrasekhar reached out to the four slums of Amar Jyothi, Domlur, Vyalikaval slum (near Chowdaiah Memorial Hall) and Sanyasikunte in Hanumanthnagar.	The organisation has helped 1,430 people with the distribution of food.
27	Hasiru Daala	Bengaluru	provided care kits that consist of 5 kg rice/wheat and 2 kg lentils across towns of Karnataka like Bengaluru, Mysuru, Tumakuru, Davanagere, Hubli, and Dharwad.	
28	Adama Chetana	Bengaluru	Total meals supplied for coronavirus curfew affected.	As of 22 April 2020 365,500 meals and 11,200 grocery kits were distributed.

29	The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)	Bengaluru	Distributed food kits to daily wage workers in the city to help them during the lockdown. The kit contains 5 kg of rice, 1 kg of toor dal, half a litre of cooking oil, 500 gm of salt, and 1 kg each of onion and potato.
30	Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP)	Over 2,500 places across the country	VHP has distributed 7 lakh food packets to people and served dry food to more than 1 lakh families as of 2 April 2020 and separately served dry food to more than 1 lakh families.
31	Gautam Gambhir Foundation	Delhi NCR	The Gautam Gambhir Foundation is extending support to the marginalised people by distributing ration relief kits, cooked meals, personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, N-95 masks, nourishment supplements, bedding kits, etc.
32	Mazdoor Kitchen	Delhi (North)	Mazdoor Kitchen is a citizen-run voluntary initiative working to provide meals and subsistence to daily wage workers in North Delhi. Run by a dedicated team of volunteers comprising professors, students, artists, and people from the community itself, it has been providing meals and ration kits to hundreds of people across North Delhi.
33	Access Foundation	Hyderabad	Access Foundation has been working since the beginning of the pandemic to provide free ambulance services and free oxygen concentrators. Rations were distributed to about 3,500 afflicted families during the past year.

(Continued)

Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
34	Enrich Lives Foundation	Mumbai	<p>Enrich Lives Foundation (formerly Annapurna Movement) is a non-profit organisation focused on hunger alleviation, education, women's empowerment, poverty alleviation, and public health. The organisation was involved in the distribution of food grains and meals to the people worst affected.</p>	
35	Khaana Chahiye	Mumbai	<p>Khaana Chahiye Foundation provides food for the homeless, migrant workers, daily wage labourers, and other vulnerable populations in Mumbai.</p>	<p>With over 200 volunteers, the organisation served 46 lakh meals and has distributed more than 20,000 grocery kits since March 2020.</p>
36	Feeding from Far	Mumbai, Govandi	<p>Feeding From Far is an initiative that has been feeding the poor and unemployed who are struggling to feed themselves during the lockdown.</p>	<p>They have managed to distribute over 10 lakh meals to the needy since the first lockdown hit through cooked meals and ration kits.</p>
37	Making the Difference	Mumbai, Varanasi, and Mira Bhayander	<p>They are providing medical equipment all over Mumbai, masks and kits PPE in Varanasi, tiffin service to home quarantine patients in Mira bhayander, and ration distribution for local communities all over Mumbai.</p>	

38	Uttishtha Foundation	Sitapur, Delhi NCR, Lucknow, Villages across UP	Uttishtha Foundation has distributed family survival kits which include basic ration along with coronavirus protective gear like masks, bathing and washing soaps, for disadvantaged elders and their family of five. Free meals to the homeless in night shelters, on roads, elders in old age homes, slums, and migrant daily wage labours who have nowhere and no one to turn to. A crowd-funded, non-profit initiative that is delivering food packets to crematorium staff workers in India. Provides free thalis from its community kitchen and free ambulance services.	Helped more than 60 families across the nation.
39	The Good Food Project	Lucknow		
40	Dr Akhilesh Das Foundation	Lucknow		During the pandemic, distributed rations among the poor, and masks and sanitisers to police personnel.
<b>II. Trusts</b>				
1	D Shivanandhan's Foundation	Mumbai	Initiated Roti Bank and provided food. The trust served hot and nutritious meals every day to the frontline workers of Mumbai, which included police officers, solid waste management workers of the Bombay Municipal Corporation BMC, hospital staff, and daily wage workers.	As of 26 March 2020, around 1,000 people were provided food.
2	Ratna Nidhi Charitable Trust	Mumbai		
3	Rotary Bangalore Indiranagar	Bengaluru	The organisation has raised funds to provide 21-day food packs to daily wage labourers across Bangalore.	

(Continued)



Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
<b>III. Restaurants</b>				
1	Roti Ghar, Mumbai	Mumbai	<p>The restaurant opened its kitchen to cook food for daily wage earners – security guards, labourers, and rag pickers in Mumbai, Thane, Airoli, and Bhiwandi. The food was distributed in packets using vans.</p> <p>IHCL started a food distribution initiative on March 23, and it was spearheaded by the Taj Public Service Welfare Trust (TPSWT)</p>	<p>IHCL distributed over one million meals to healthcare providers and migrant workers affected by the outbreak of COVID-19. IHCL has partnered with BMC in Mumbai to offer over 330,000 meals to the medical fraternity at seven key hospitals/COVID-19 centres.</p>
2	Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL)	Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Coimbatore, and Agra		<p>In Bengaluru, the company has provided over 9,500 meals to the staff at Victoria Hospital and Epidemic Diseases Hospital in partnership with the Taj West End.</p> <p>While in New Delhi, IHCL served over 85,000 meals to eight hospitals.</p> <p>Since March 31, 2020, in partnership with Tata Son's – TPSWT provided over 575,000 meals to migrant workers in Mumbai.</p>

4 The Pride Group of Hotels Pune, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, and Nagpur

5 Janta Rasoi Gurgaon

The hotel distributed 1,000 food parcels every day until 17 April 2020 (lockdown period) in the cities of Pune, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, and Nagpur. From 150 meals a day, they have reached 300 meals a day and plan to grow to 3,000 meals a day.

The kitchens of Shanghai Surprise, a cloud kitchen based in DLF 3 in Gurgaon, converted as the centre of the community-led initiative 'Janta Rasoi' which is offering food to the daily wagers who are out of work due to the lockdown.

#### IV. Social activities/Individuals

- 1 Chinu Kwatra's Roti Ghar Mumbai
- 2 Teesta Setalvad's Iyer's organisation collaborated with Citizens for Justice and Peace, run by civil rights activist Teesta Setalvad, and provided a month of food supplies for over 200 families of sex workers at Kamathipura.
- 3 Lynette D'Souza Palghar, Maharashtra
- 4 Marwari community kitchen run by the Agarwal Samaj Maharaja Agrasen Public School, Lucknow

Lynette D'Souza is a wildlife rescuer, and during the COVID-19 crisis, she supported daily wage workers and helped 30 people so far with food kits. The food kits comprise rice, dal, oil, and basic cooking spices.

Provided food to COVID-19-infected people and their attendants.

(Continued)

Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
<b>V. Government organisations</b>				
1	Indian Railways	New Delhi, Bangalore, Hubli, Mumbai Central, Ahmedabad, Bhusaval, Howrah, Patna, Gaya, Ranchi, Katihar, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Nagar, Balasore, Vijaywada, Khurda, Katpadi, Tiruchirapalli, Dhanbad, Guwahati, Samastipur, Prayagraj, Itarsi, Vishakhapatnam, Chengalpatu, Pune, Hajipur, Raipur, and Tatanagar	The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has played a major role in the food distribution to needy people prepared by IRCTC, other Railway departments, and NGOs.	About 50,000 persons were provided meals daily by RPF in approximately 300 locations across the country. More than 30 lakhs meals were distributed until 30 April; about 17.17 lakhs cooked meals were provided by IRCTC; about 5.18 lakhs meals were provided by RPF from its own resources; about 2.53 lakhs meals were provided by commercial and other departments of Railways, and nearly 5.60 lakhs meals were donated by NGOs working with the Railway organisations.
2	Indira Canteen, The Government of Karnataka	Bengaluru		The Government of Karnataka through Indira Canteens, TVS company, Corporator Jaggi Marwadi, Suresh NGO, Jain Samaj KMYF, and others served more than 200,000 meals, and as many as 75,000 people were served breakfast while 100,000 people were served dinner. Nearly 1,300 packets of food were supplied to labourers working at Gina Engineering Company; 400 packets were distributed at Dairy Circle, 200 at Halasuru Gate police station, and 400 at Mahadevapura slum.

3	Labour Commissioner's Office, Government of Karnataka	Bengaluru – at the Yeshwantpur Railway Station, Elmala Station, and Reva Union College, and several other locations across the city	Nearly 12,000 food packets were distributed to needy people.
4	The Labour Department, Government of Karnataka	Across Karnataka	The government has made dry rations available to 1 lakh citizens in the city of Bangalore.
<b>VI. Education institutions</b>			
1	Jain International Trade Organisation (JITO)	Bengaluru	The dry ration kit for each individual would last for about 21 days; the kit also had long-lasting vegetables. Before the ration kits, they were providing cooked meals.  JITO helped the NGO to reach out to hundreds of people with food during the lockdown. Additionally, the JITO is collaborating with Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to feed contract and migrant labourers.
<b>VII. Business groups</b>			
1	The Atria Foundation	Bengaluru	So far, 60,21,000 free meals were served in and around 255 locations in Bengaluru.
<b>VIII. Communities</b>			
1	The Jain communities	Bengaluru	In Bengaluru, the community delivered 51,000 food packets to the poor on the occasion of Mahaveer Jayanti. They have distributed 342,000 meals in Bengaluru.

(Continued)

Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
2	Arhan Yuva Seva Group (AYSG)	Rajkot	Some of the food is also sent to other community kitchens that require resources. This initiative was inspired by Gurudev Namramuni Maharaj of the Jain community.	AYSG serves and prepares over 30,000 chapatis daily to serve the needy and destitute. As of April 2020, the community had supplied 4 lakh rotis and has plans to continue until the nationwide lockdown is lifted. Distributed around 1,000 food packets to people during the COVID-19 crisis.
3	The Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Students' Islamic Organisation of India	Mumbai – Madanpura, Jogeshwari, Andheri, Oshiwara, Kurla, and Vikhroli areas of Mumbai and Thane and Kalyan in Thane		
4	Sikh community members	Mumbai	Organised “langar” (free kitchen) at a gurudwara in suburban Mumbai during the lockdown.	
<b>IX. Corporate enterprises</b>				
1	Hindustan Unilever Limited	Across 12 cities in India	Through Project Prabhat, Hindustan Unilever Limited has supported migrant labour families by donating food kits and essential hygiene products. These are being distributed through ten government centres and shared as part of rations to BPL families.	Also donated Horlicks biscuits and sachets to 5 lakh vulnerable children in the age group of 3 years to 10 years in New Delhi, in addition to donating 1.5 lakh packs of Horlicks for healthcare workers to all main hospitals in 12 key cities in India treating COVID-19.
2	Vedanta Limited	Odisha	Vedanta Limited has donated up to a month's supply of rations to nearly 5,000 daily wage earners, slum dwellers, needy families, and marginal households across Odisha.	Over 11,000 workers were provided meals along with other essentials.

3	Hexaware Technologies Pvt Ltd	Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra	Under the CSR initiative, Hexaware Technologies Pvt Ltd distributed dry rations (18,000 meals) to migrant workers in Pune and to 3,415 families from 429 villages in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra in India. Also donated 42,000 masks to Chennai hospitals, police, and sanitary workers.
4	Manali Petrochemicals	Chennai	Donated daily food provisions for the physically challenged around the Manali industrial area, Chennai.
5	REC and TajSATS	Delhi	REC ties up with TajSATS to provide meals to frontline healthcare workers in Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi during COVID-19. Also REC, in collaboration with various district authorities, NGOs, and electricity distribution companies, has provided cooked meals and rations to the needy across the nation.
6	Hershey India Pvt Ltd	Mumbai, Bhopal, and 20 other cities	The company has distributed 120,000 fortified beverages and cookies across 20 cities.

(Continued)

Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
7	Hikal Ltd	Mumbai	<p>The company has provided 3,000 kgs of rice and 500 kgs of pulses to be used by the local District Commissioner of Police DCP office for the underprivileged villagers as well as the poor and needy in the vicinity. Hikal has contributed 12,500 kgs of wheat to three villages – Umarwada, Panoli, and Sanjali.</p>	<p>Hikal Ltd distributed groceries to over 450 families in the slum areas of CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai. Also, 400 families in Talaja have been provided with grocery kits in and around the Talaja MIDC area.</p>
8	Rallis India Ltd	Gujarat and Telangana	<p>It has distributed dry food packets of rice, flour, pulses, spices, oil, sugar, etc., to community members around Ankleshwar and Dahej (Crop Care) in Gujarat and GP Pally and Kokkonda plant (seeds division) in Telangana.</p>	
9	Jakson Group		<p>Jakson Group partnered with an NGO, Niveda Foundation, to distribute groceries and other essential items to daily wage workers who are either labourers, migrant workers, rickshaw pullers, or domestic help.</p>	
10	Central Coalfields Ltd.		<p>The company is working in coordination with the district administration, and it is supplying relief materials like food grain packets, masks, and sanitisers to the administration for distribution among the needy.</p>	<p>It has provided about 350 quintal of food grains to the district administration for distribution among the beneficiaries.</p>

- 11 Cargill Group  
Cargill provides an essential service to the world: delivering the food, feed, and ingredients that nourish people and animals.  
Working with non-profit partners, we are supporting local food banks and developing emergency food boxes to address these nutrition needs.  
CEAT Tyres initiated the voluntary distribution of food packets across India.
- 12 CEAT Tyres Ltd. Mumbai, Nashik, Chennai, Vadodara, Jaipur, and Jabalpur  
So far, more than 68,500 food packets have been distributed in Mumbai, Nashik, Chennai, Vadodara, Jaipur, and Jabalpur with an average of 5,800 freshly cooked food packets distributed on a daily basis during this critical time.
- 13 AkzoNobel India Gurgaon, Gwalior, and Navi Mumbai  
AkzoNobel India launched several initiatives to help communities cope with food and healthcare challenges. Dry food material was supplied to tribal communities.  
Three hundred underprivileged children have been provided with regular meals. Essential food items have been provided to 6,000 people who are mostly daily wage earners in Gurgaon, Gwalior, and Navi Mumbai, including underprivileged children.
- 14 Elkem South Asia Pvt. Ltd. Mumbai  
One hundred families were served with one-week ration kits for daily wage earners in Mumbai Western Suburb and served 100 slum dwellers and daily wage earner families.

*(Continued)*



Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
15	India Expo Centre and Mart and Gautam Budha Society	Gautam Budh Nagar District	<p>India Expo Centre and Mart and Gautam Budha Society distribute Food Packets to Needy People in Gautam Budh Nagar District. Under the CSR initiative, the Gautam Budha Society for Social Welfare has joined hands with Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) by distributing food packets to needy people in the district of Gautam Budh Nagar.</p>	Every day the society delivered around 500 packets.
16	The Adani Group	Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra	<p>The Adani Group partnered with Iskcon Dwarka through a donation of Rs. 50 lakh, aiming to provide daily meals to 400,000 beneficiaries. The Adani Foundation fed daily wage and migrant workers and economically weaker sections of the society through community kitchens and canteens being run in various sites across the country. The Adani Foundation is also providing ration supplies to community kitchens that are running in full force to feed the communities.</p>	More than 65,000 packets of food and rations have been distributed at Mundra (Gujarat), Godda (Jharkhand), Kawai (Rajasthan), Dhamra (Odisha), and Vizhinjam (Kerala) every day. More than 20,000 labourers and people in rural communities are given meals each day.
14	Greaves Cotton	Mumbai and Delhi NCR regions	<p>The company has partnered with CRY to provide dry rations to kids and families for a month across Mumbai and Delhi NCR regions. P&amp;G, Baddi plant under its efforts to fight against hunger during COVID-19 distributed ration kits.</p>	One-month ration kits were distributed to 800 migrant workers' families.
15	Procter and Gamble India			

16	Jindal Steel & Power Ltd.		Under its Mission Zero Hunger programme meals have been provided to old age homes, childcare centre, shelter homes.	More than 60,000 meals have been provided to needy people.
17	Nestle S A		Offered free meals and transport for staff. Also donated to food banks and food delivery organisations to support people in need.	
18	Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited (DCBL)	Biswali and Rajgangpur	As part of relief activities, the company has distributed dry food packets that were delivered to families in villages near Biswali. DCBL has also stepped up to help the stranded truck drivers, helpers, and homeless.	Food packets were distributed to over 900 needy families in villages near Biswali. Similarly, seven days' worth of groceries have been provided to 650 needy families in and around Rajgangpur. Cooked food has been served to over 3,000 truck drivers, helpers, and homeless. Furthermore, the company has teamed up with the local MLA of Rajgangpur to feed 8,800 local needy people.
19	Reliance Industries Limited	Mumbai	The company's foundation, in partnership with local NGOs, has started providing free meals to people across various cities to offer necessary livelihood relief.	
20	The Bajaj Group		The group has been working with over 200 NGO partners in multiple geographies to extend support to the most affected – daily wage workers, the homeless, and street children – by supporting initiatives on food supply, shelter, and access to sanitation and healthcare.	

(Continued)

Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
21	Escorts Limited	Faridabad	Escorts Limited provided free food to the poor and needy. The company's employee canteens at its headquarters in Faridabad provided fresh and hygienically cooked food packets to the destitute and needy on a daily basis.	The Escorts team cooked over 4,000 meals every day and handed them over to the district administration for distribution.
22	KEC International Ltd.	Jabalpur, Nagpur, and Jaipur	Has extended its kitchen facilities in Jabalpur, Nagpur, and Jaipur.	Provided over 10,000 hot meals per week to migrant workers, daily wage earners, and the local community affected by the COVID-19 lockdown.
23	Standard Chartered Bank		The bank through its NGO partners covered the need for rations, meals, and essentials.	Almost 70,000 beneficiaries across several parts of the country received distributions.
24	The DLF Foundation	Manesar, Gurugram, Noida, and Delhi.	Distributed cooked meals and dry rations to slum dwellers and stranded migrant workers in Manesar, Gurugram, Noida, and Delhi.	Served cooked meals to 280,750 persons and dry rations equivalent to 2,424,800 meals.
25	JK Tyre		JK Tyre plants in Gwalior, Rajasthan, Mysore, Chennai, and Utrakhand donated rations to the community kitchen Deendayal Rasoi for serving food to poor and marginal people.	
26	Nestlé India		Nestlé India is committed to supporting feeding programmes for less privileged sections of society through participation in leading credible NGOs engaged in this task. Also worked with NGOs on the distribution of essential groceries to the needy.	

- 27 Dalmia Bharat Group  
The group has been addressing the daily needs of their contractual labour by providing rations, groceries, and accommodations. The canteens of the Dalmia Bharat factories across India prepared food for local distribution in the regions. Distributed healthy packed meals every day through government agencies, NGOs, and local authorities.
- 28 Oberoi Hotels and Resorts  
LG India partnered with Akshaya Patra Foundation to serve meals to underprivileged and migrant workers across India.
- 29 LG Electronics India Pvt. Ltd.  
ISWP Ltd provided essential food items to Cheshire Home and Hind Ashram Hospital (Leprosoy Centre) in Jamshedpur. Food items are also being provided to the children of the orphanage, Sangam Vihar, Jamshedpur. ISWP Ltd has also started a community kitchen. Essar has provided meals to vulnerable sections of the society, including the homeless, daily wage earners, transgenders, and women with a background of domestic violence.
- 30 Indian Steel and Wire Products Ltd.  
Essential food items are being provided to 136 families who belong to the lowest-income strata. Through the community kitchen, more than 6,000 needy persons were fed at various Bastis in and around Jamshedpur daily. Essar has provided nearly 8 lakh meals.
- 31 Essar Group

*(Continued)*

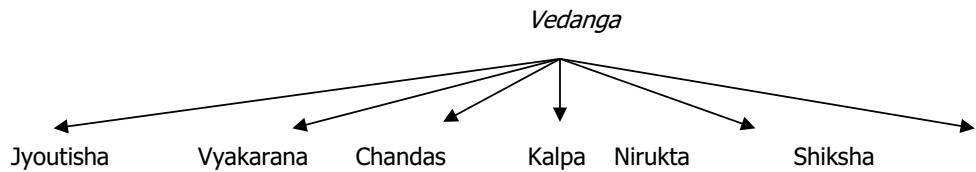
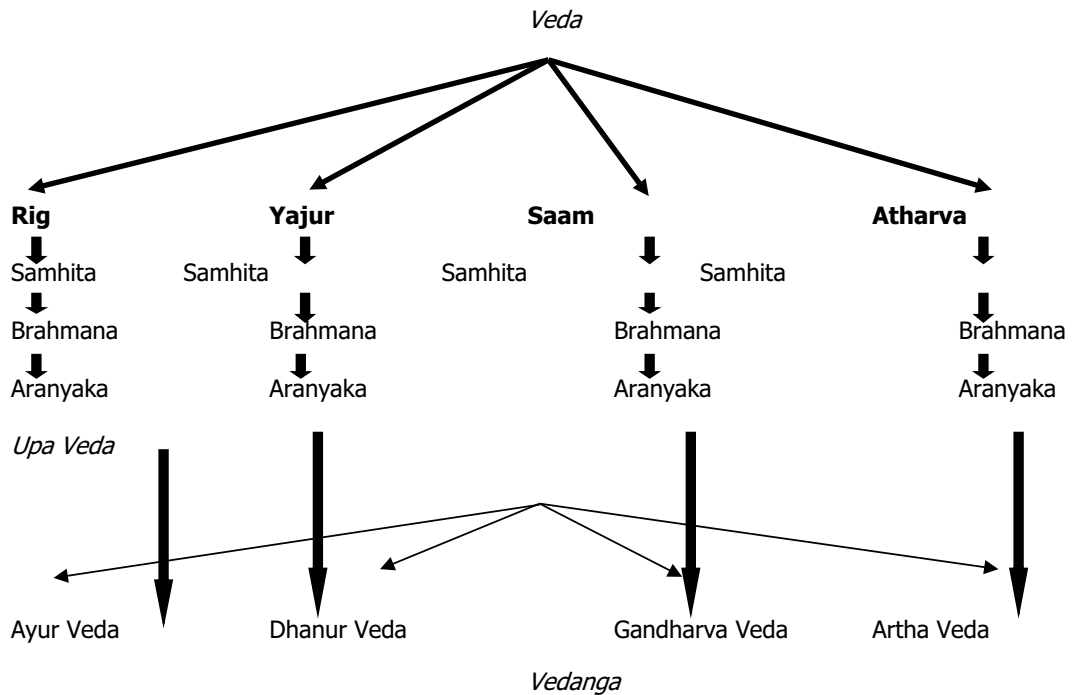
Table A1.2 (Continued)

Sr. No.	Organisation	Location	Details of the work	Number of people served
32	Shell India		Distributed grocery kits to vulnerable communities and daily wage workers around Shell-branded retail sites and their operations in 11 cities and six towns in India. These care kits contain food and hygiene essentials for the needy. Through their CSR arms, Ambuja Cement Foundation and ACC TRUST have distributed thousands of bags of food and ration kits to migrant labour and the marginalised.	Distributed around 17,000 grocery kits.
33	Ambuja Cement		To support the community, the company has taken initiatives such as distributing daily meals. The Caterpillar Foundation is supporting local communities by engaging and providing millions of meals for people in need. Arranged free food distribution.	
34	Motherson Sumi Systems Ltd.			
35	Caterpillar Foundation			
36	NHPC Ltd.	Nepalese citizens stranded in Dharchula, District-Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand)		
<b>X. Political parties</b>				
1	BJP	Delhi	Under the “Feed the Needy” programme, BJP workers have distributed food to more than 1 crore people in Delhi. The BJP has distributed to 30 lakh poor families in West Bengal daily.	BJP workers provided one-time meals to more than 11 crore people during the pandemic (as of 8 June 2020).

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## Annex 2

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*Upanishad (10 cardinals)*

(Can these be put alphabetically?)

1. Isha
2. Kena
3. Katha
4. Munda
5. Mandukya
6. Prashna
7. Taittiriya
8. Aitareya
9. Chandogya
10. Bruhadaranyaka

*Puranas (18)* Matsya, Markandeya, Bhavishya, Bhagavatha, Brahma, Bharmavaivarta, Brahmada, Varaha, Vamana, Vayu, Vishnu, Skanda, Kurma, Padma, Narada, Agni, Garuda, Linga (Can these be put alphabetically?)

*Upapuranas (13)* Adya, Narasimha, Shivadharm, Durvasa, Kapila, Aushanasa, Varuna, Kalika, Mahesvara, Samba, Saura, Maricha, Bhargava (Can these be put alphabetically?)

Figure A2.1 Glossary.

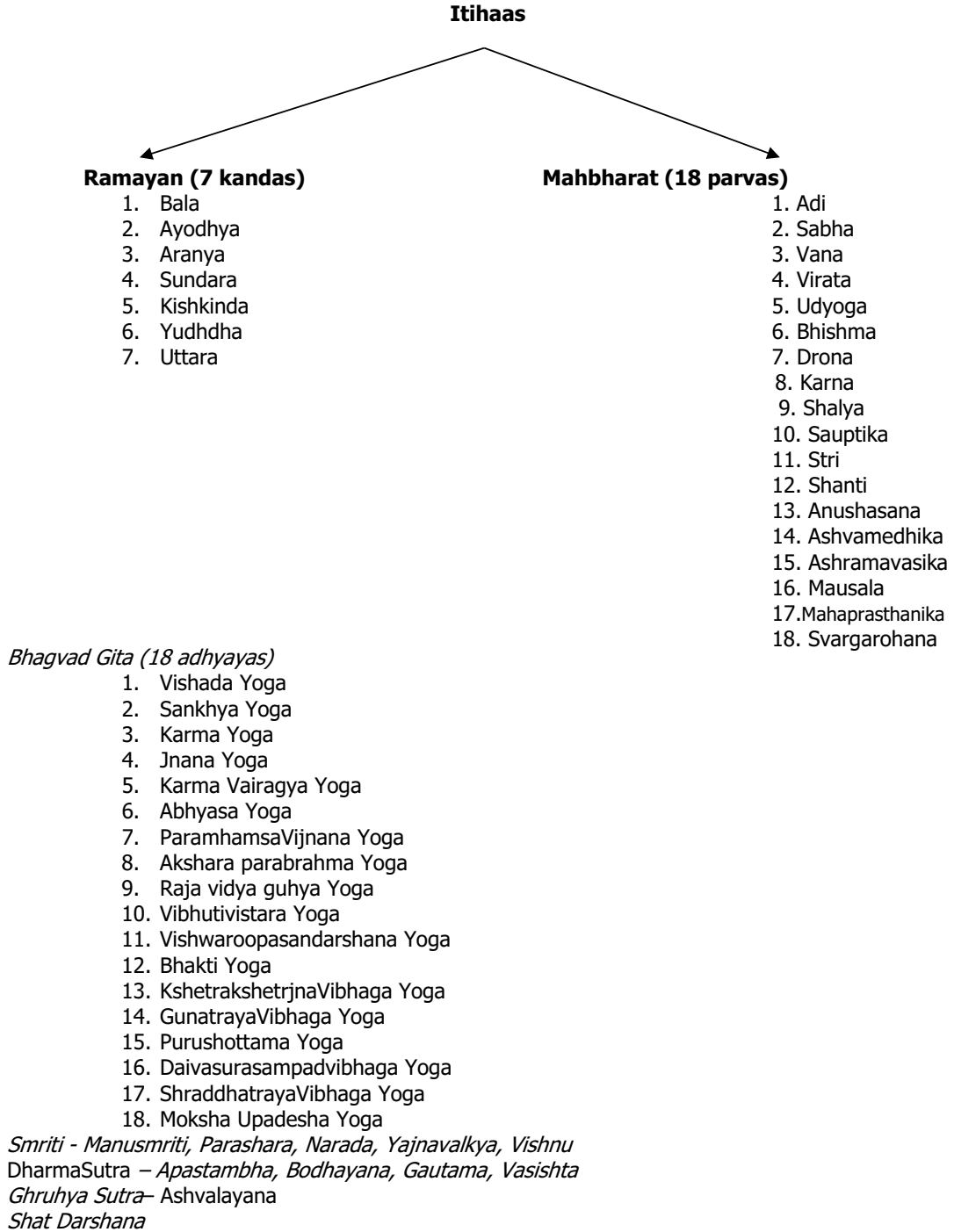


Figure A2.1 (Continued)



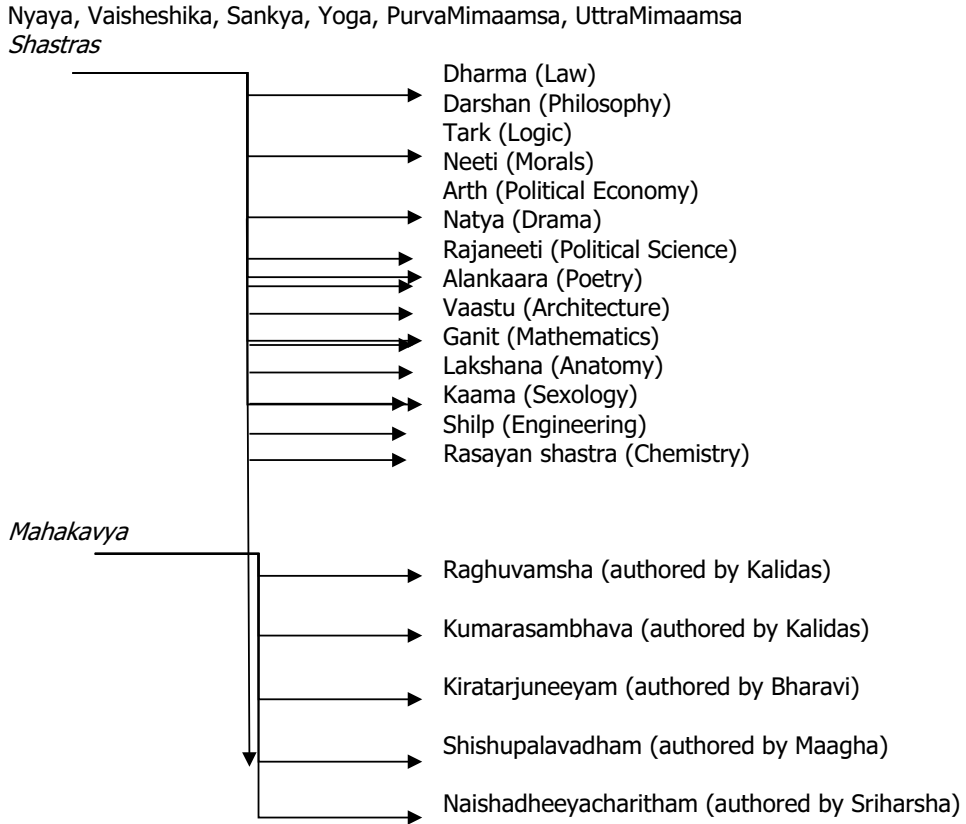


Figure A2.1 (Continued)

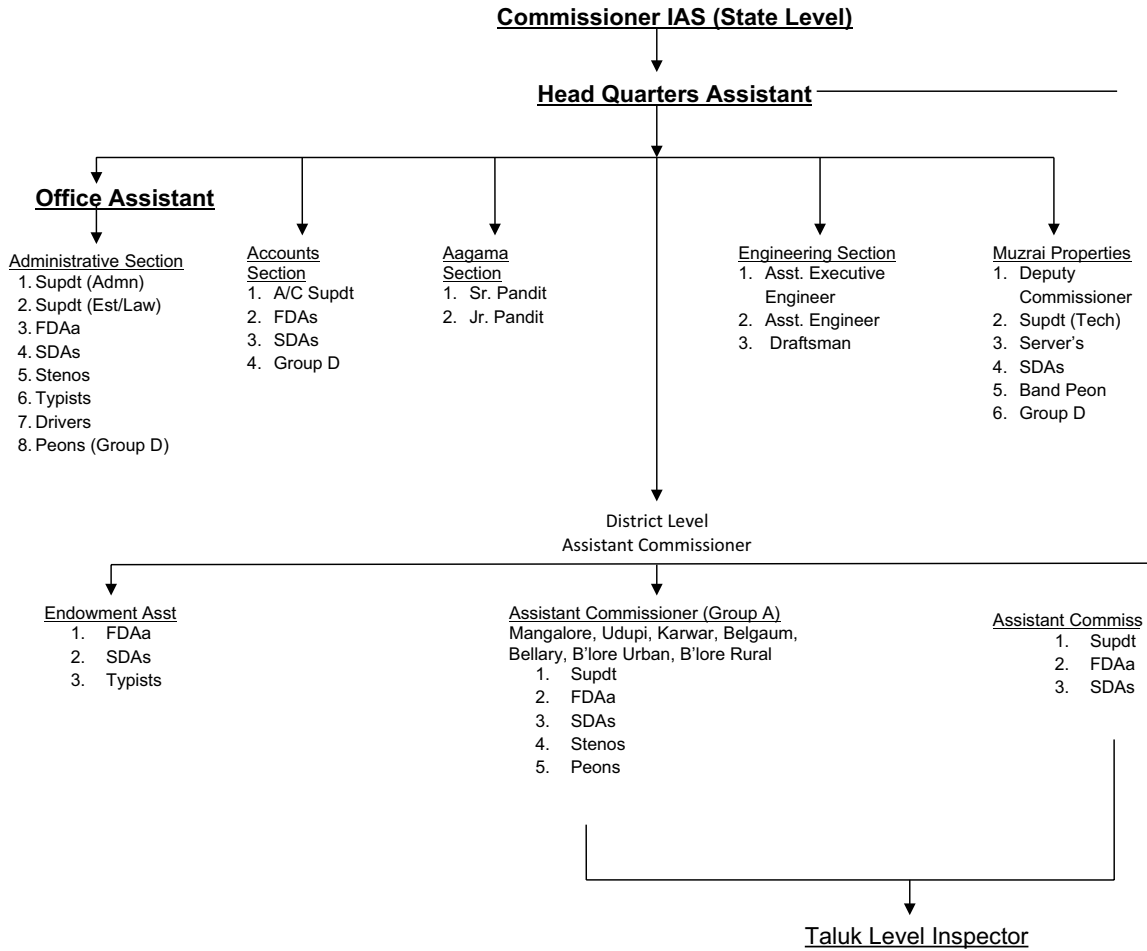


Figure A2.2 Organisation chart: Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowment Department.

Source: <https://temples.karnataka.gov.in/info-1/Organization+Structure/en> Source: Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowment Department Source: Puranas.

Table A2.1 Stories on *anna-daan*

1	Story of Lord Shiva and Parvati	Message
	<p>This story reveals the importance of food, respect for food, and need for food in an interesting way. Lord Shiva and Parvati play a game wherein Shiva with the help of Lord Vishnu plays foul with Goddess Parvati to win the game. Parvati gets upset, and Lord Vishnu tries to convince her to let go through the concept of <i>maya</i> (illusion) and that she needs to calm down. To teach them a lesson, she literally vanishes, signifying the importance of food since Lord Shiva suffers pangs of hunger with her disappearance. Seeing her beloved suffer, she incarnates herself into Annapoorneshwari (goddess of food) and resides in Kashi/ Varanasi where Shiva comes in search of food.</p>	<p>Importance of food Respect for food Need for food, irrespective of one's position Food sharing</p>

(Continued)

Table A2.1 (Continued)

2	<p><b>Karma and the cycle of rebirth</b></p> <p>In Hinduism, attaining <i>moksha</i> – that is, to end the cycle of rebirth and attain salvation, is the main aim of existence. This is narrated through a story of a character <i>Karna</i> who on his death bed asks Lord Krishna to fulfil his wish. One of the wishes was to be born into a rich family so that he would be able to do <i>anna-daan</i>. He made this wish realising that he would not attain salvation until he had done <i>anna-daana</i> during his lifetime. Thus, this story depicts the importance of <i>anna-daan</i> to achieve salvation, thereby inculcating the culture of helping the needy, poor, and the hungry.</p>	Feeding the poor and needy gives one salvation
3	<p><b>Sudama and Sri Krishna</b></p> <p>Sudama and Sri Krishna were best friends in their childhood. But when they grew up, Sri Krishna became a king, and Sudama became a poor Brahmin. One day, Sudama decided to go to Sri Krishna to ask for help in improving his state of life. He carried a small bag containing a handful of beaten rice. When he reached Sri Krishna's palace, he was warmly invited. Sudama could not bring himself to ask his friend for help. So, after spending some time with Sri Krishna, he decided to return. It was then that Sri Krishna spotted the little bag of beaten rice. On Sri Krishna's insistence, Sudama hesitantly handed over the bag of beaten rice to Sri Krishna who was delighted and ate two handfuls of beaten rice and gave the rest to his wife, Rukmini. It is said that as a result of this <i>daana</i>, all of Sudama's problems melted away. On his return, he was greeted by a palatial house, in place of his old hut. And the house was overflowing with money.</p>	<p><i>Anna-daan</i> irrespective of the quantity makes a person attain prosperity The spirit behind <i>daan</i> is most important</p>
4	<p><b>Rantideva – the generous king</b></p> <p><i>Daana</i> includes selfless service or <i>seva</i> to those in need. One would know the behaviour of people during times of crisis. One such occasion was when Rantideva's kingdom was struck by a destructive famine. He fasted for 48 days until all of the affected people were fed to share the anguish of his subjects. Finally, when he was on the verge of breaking the fast with a glass of water, he heard a thirsty man cry for water, and he gave away the water to him. Again, when he was about to eat some food, a hungry guest came, and he gave away the food to him. The empathetic king told his ministers, who were worried about him: "I do not desire from God the great state attended by divine powers or even deliverance from rebirth. Establishing myself in the hearts of all beings, I take on myself their suffering to rid them of their misery" (<i>Srimad Bhagavatam</i>, 9).</p>	<p>A leader should do <i>anna-daan</i> for the needy in the face of all difficulties</p>
5	<p><b>Story of King Janasruti Pautrayana and the cart puller</b></p> <p>He was knowledgeable, pious, and charitable, and he cooked food for all in his kingdom. He believed that he was the greatest patron and that there was no one else like him. He used to measure his merit by the amount of gifts and money he distributed. He had also mastered the languages of birds and beasts.</p>	

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Table A2.1 (Continued)

	<p>One night he lay in the upper storey of his palace. He observed two swans flying past, conversing with each other. One of them said, "You must know that today there is none as famous as he for abundant charities". The other swan said, "You speak as if this Janashruti was greater than Raikva the cart puller! The king is but mad after name and fame. It is these that drive him to action". The first swan was taken aback and asked, "Who is this Raikva who is just a cart puller yet is greater than the great Janashruti?" Thus the king overheard the two swans as they flew out of sight, and night closed in on the city. But the king was restless. Raikva's name began to haunt him. "I must find this man little known to fame but one who is at peace with himself and with the world", he said with determination.</p>	<p>Service should be done with the spirit of serving and with other intentions or expectations or even with the desire of achieving moksha or salvation as it puts a person under stress of achieving it The pure spirit behind the doings will fetch the deserving results which is the law of the almighty</p>
	<p>Janashruti made elaborate preparations and went to Raikva with 600 cows, a chain of gold, and a mule-driven carriage. He offered them all at the feet of Raikva and said, "Sir, be pleased to accept all this and teach me spiritual knowledge". Raikva refused to take the gifts, as they were of no use to him. Raikva told him "All things in the universe are supported by the spirit and all belong to the spirit. Mere giving of gifts without this spiritual wisdom would not bring peace" (source: <i>Chadogya Upanishad</i>, 4.1–2).</p>	
6	<p><b>The story of Sveta</b> Sveta, the righteous king who lived and ruled according to the dictates of <i>dharma</i>, who performed great yagns, who gave away great riches in charity but failed to offer food or water to anyone, and who was therefore reduced to eating the flesh of his own corporeal body to assuage the pangs of hunger and thirst that kept tormenting him even in the heavens.</p>	<p>What is not given cannot be enjoyed One who has not assuaged the hunger and thirst of others during his life is bound to remain hungry and thirsty ever after</p>
7	<p><b>Story of Aputran</b> Aputran, a resident of Madurai, was living his life in the courtyard of Cintadevi by begging for alms, which he shared with the differently abled, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the sick. The leftovers after serving them were what he would consume. One day, late at night, a few travellers arrived, hungry and exhausted from a difficult journey. However, Aputran had nothing to feed his guests at that odd hour and was greatly distressed. And seeing him in such distress, the goddess Cintadevi appeared and gave him an inexhaustible food bowl. Aputran happily fed the travellers and began to use the bowl to eliminate the hunger of all men, animals, and birds. God Indra after some time blessed the earth with a great plenty so that there might be none anywhere in want of food, and thus no one was available to receive food from Aputran. Aputran took his bowl and went from town to town in search of hungry people, but he could find none. One day, some sailors told him that rains had failed in the land of Savaka, and people there</p>	

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Table A2.1 (Continued)

	<p>were on the ship going to Savaka. On the way, the weather turned bad, and the ship dropped anchor at the island of Manipallavam. Aputran got off the ship and began to wander around on the island. Later, in the dark of the night, the sailors, assuming that he had already boarded the ship, sailed away. Aputran was left alone on that uninhabited island. He had his inexhaustible bowl with him, but there was none with whom he could share his food, and without first giving food to others, he could not eat from that divine bowl. He said to himself, "This bowl was meant to nourish people; I cannot possibly nourish myself alone from it. The fruits of my <i>tapas</i> are indeed exhausted. What then is the good of carrying this bowl?"<sup>4</sup> He dropped the bowl into the pure waters of a lake and taking up the vow of fasting, gave up his life on the island of Manipallavam (<i>Manimekalai</i>, 14.87–90).</p>	<p>Sharing food Caring for the differently abled One should value sharing of food with others Irrespective of his status as a beggar, he still had the noble quality of sharing</p>
8	<p><b>Mahabharat – Yudhisthir’s regret in exile</b> The ideal king of the Mahabharata, Yudhisthir, is well-known and had little attachment to the power and perquisites of kingship. The detached and reluctant King Yudhisthira, too, however, cannot overlook his <i>grhast</i> responsibilities of looking after and feeding others, especially his dependents. At the beginning of his exile, we find him worrying about the complete lack of material resources to which he has been reduced. He says so in so many words to Rishi Saunaka and the other brahmans who choose to accompany him in exile and who advise him about the inconsequentiality of mere material wealth. As he puts it: And then he goes on to define the duties of the king as a <i>grhast</i> (head of the household), Yudhisthir says: <i>There is a share of all spirits all beings, in everything. Therefore, a grhast must give a proper share of food to all those who do not cook for themselves.</i> (Mahabharatha. Vanaparva, 2.52) <i>A stretch of earth to lie down, a bed of straw, a bowl of water, and pleasing speech-these four are never lacking in the house of a virtuous person.</i> (Mahabharat.Vanaparva, 2.54) <i>To the sick a bed to lie down, to the tired a place to sit, to the thirsty water to drink, and to the hungry a proper meal, must always be given.</i> (Mahabharatha.Vanaparva, 2.55) Yudhisthira continues in the same vein, recalling the responsibility of the <i>grhast</i> towards others and especially towards the <i>atithis</i> (guests) and <i>abhyagatas</i> (???)</p>	<p>Duty of head of the household to nurture the family, guests, and the needy Importance of food Sharing of food with all beings</p>
9	<p><b>Story of unchavritti brahmana</b> In Kuruksetra, there lived a brahman whose livelihood was by <i>unchavrtti</i> – that is, by gathering the leftover grains in harvested fields and marketplaces. This brahman’s family was engaged in great austerities, pure in thoughts and actions. They had subdued their worldly desires and they ate only once in six mealtimes. It so happened that the</p>	<p>Guest must be served with selflessness and devotion Food charity is an important and noble act</p>

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Table A2.1 (Continued)

land was visited upon by a famine. Crops failed and families had no stock of food and starved. Then, after a while, the brahman's family went out in search of leftover grains and gathered one measure of barley and prepared their long-awaited meal. But just before eating, there appeared a guest. Hungry though they were, the sight of a guest arriving at mealtime pleased them no end. They warmly welcomed him and respectfully invited him to partake of the food. The guest ate a quarter measure of grains. But this could hardly satisfy his appetite. So the wife suggested that her quarter-share of grains might be offered to the guest. The husband knew his old wife had been suffering pangs of hunger and had weakened, felt hesitant but she insisted, reminding him that she was an equal partner in his *dharma* and *artha*, his duties, and his seekings. The brahman then offered her share to the guest. But even this did not fully satisfy the guest, so the son offered his quarter-share, although the father was reluctant, the son insisted. But, the guest was still hungry. So, the daughter-in-law urged the father-in-law to accept her share, although hesitant, and her share was offered to the guest. The guest was finally satisfied. The guest was none other than Lord Dharma, and he had appeared in the human form to test the depth of the brahman's commitment to *dharma*. He and all his dependents had offered justly and painstakingly collected food to a guest, even though they themselves were almost dying of hunger. Even the gods in the heavens were struck with wonder at the tenacity with which the brahman and his family held on to the *dharma* of *anna-daan* – to the discipline of satisfying the hungry before eating oneself.

This story was narrated by a mongoose to the gathering of the great *Ashvamedh Yagn* of Yudhisthir. The mongoose is said to have witnessed the whole sequence of events from his hole in the ground nearby. He has attended many *yagns* and visited many a forest where the *tapasvins* perform their great austerities, but to no avail. He came to the *yagn* of Yudhisthir with great expectation. The grand *anna-daan* of Yudhisthir's *ashvamedha* has failed to compare with the gift of one measure of roasted and pounded grain made by that austere brahman of Kuruksetra. A few grains fell from the hands of the giver, and the receiver of that insignificant gift of food turned half his body golden, but the unending *anna-daan* and other gifts of the *Ashvamedh Yagn* could not repeat that miracle. That is why, says the mongoose, he is convinced that this great *ashvamedh* has not equalled the giving of that single measure of justly and painstakingly obtained grains. Everyone declared that no great *yagna* is symmetrical/proportional to the one performed by the unchvritti brahmana who served the guest with the coarsely ground grain, which was painstakingly collected by him (*saktuprasthenayajno'yamsammitonetisarvaiha*).

The duties of everyone in the family is highlighted and value systems associated with it

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The mongoose goes on to say that the kings and the rich, of course, must keep performing great *yagns* and distributing *anna* and other precious gifts. Such distribution of food and wealth is a part of their responsibilities as repositories of power and riches in society. It is for them to so organise the affairs of society that nobody is left in hunger or want. It is for them to organise great *yagns* so that the wealth accumulated in the treasuries may begin to flow through the society again, and the diverse skills emerging among the people may find opportunities for concerted expression. Such formulation of the responsibility of the kings and the rich, especially of their responsibility to ensure the eradication of hunger and destitution, is part of the essential doctrine of political organisation in India.

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## Annex 3

Table A3.1 Food types served at religious places and their approximate calories

<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Calories per serving</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Calories per serving</i>
<b>North Indian religious places</b>			
Tea	110	<i>Roti</i>	71
<i>Poha</i>	180	<i>Poori</i>	101
<i>Upma</i>	190	<i>Kadi</i>	151
<i>Puri</i>	101	Rice	136
<i>Channa</i>	150	Vegetable curry	165
<i>Halva</i>	285	<i>Laddoo</i>	204
		<i>Dhokla</i>	81
		<i>Mohantal Boondi</i>	115
		<i>Khichdi</i>	120
		Fried vegetables	87
		Mixed vegetable curry	165
<b>South Indian temples</b>			
<i>Upma</i>	190	Plain rice	136
<i>Poha</i>	180	Rice item	270
Any rice item	270	<i>Sambar</i>	165
<i>Ganji</i>	96	<i>Rasam</i>	70
<i>Pongal</i>	212	<i>Payasam</i>	280
Vermicelli	123	Vegetable curry	165
Curry	165	Buttermilk	41
<i>Idli</i>	35		
<i>Sambar</i>	139		
Dosa	133		