

Anna Daan – Food Charity in India

Preaching and Practice

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Context

- Food – SDG Goal 2 – Zero Hunger
- Food and Agriculture Organization
- World Food Programme
- Spirit and significance of philanthropic food-sharing practices and traditions across major religions
- Sustainability of food-sharing traditions
- Food charity systems



Objectives

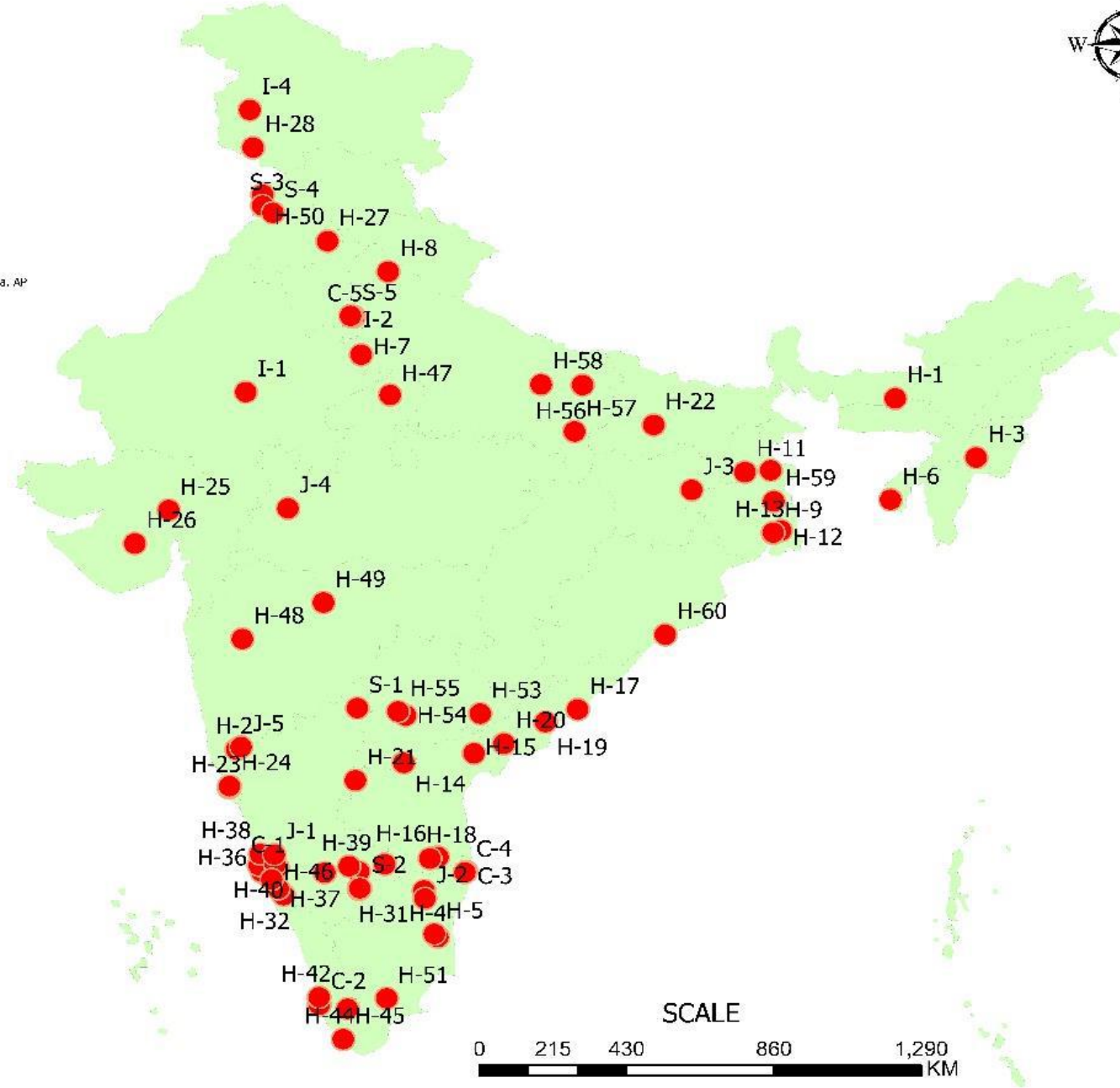
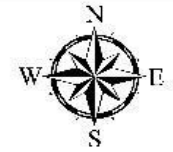
- How '*Anna daana*' is conceptualised over time across religions, culture and traditions
- Reasons for continuing *Anna daana* over centuries
- Document various initiatives, types and models of *Anna daana* across India and governance mechanisms
- Emerging issues and options for sustainable programs that ensures food security and nutrition in society



Review of literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious texts, folk literature, philosophical texts • Books, Academic reports, Papers • Web links, Newspaper clippings
Review available information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional processes and dynamics • Approaches/management practices and models • Documentation of best/popular practices • Key issues
Secondary Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile and analyse the existing data/information • Secondary data from institutions (Hinduism, Mujrai Commission) • Data from secondary sources • Extensive interviews and discussions – scholars/experts - respective religion
Sample Size and Primary Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot survey 5 religious places • Document 78 case studies of across religions • Checklist for discussions with scholars, institutions • Religious places - across various states of India • Sample covered - representative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popularity • Scale • Duration of Annadana practiced • Various models

Code Temple Names

H-1	Kamrup Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati, Assam
H-2	Shree Mahalakshmi Mandir, Kolhapur, MH
H-3	ISKCON Temple, Imphal, Manipur
H-4	Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, TN
H-5	Subya Guruna Subha (The Valluvar Temple), TV
H-6	Tippura Sundari Temple, Tippura
H-7	Kashir Ashram Raman Rezi Maheshan, Mathura, UP
H-8	Shanthi Kurni, Haldwari
H-9	Belur Math, West Bengal
H-10	Danapara Dham Temple, West Bengal
H-11	Tarapith Temple, West Bengal
H-12	Lokenath Babur Mandir, West Bengal
H-13	Adyaith Temple, West Bengal
H-14	Sri Bhramaramba Maikurguna Temple, AP
H-15	Sri Durga Villeswara Swamy Vaita Devasthanam, AP
H-16	Sri Kalahastheswara Temple, AP
H-17	Sri Varahalakshmi Narasimha Swamy Vaita Devasthanam, AP
H-18	Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaita Temple, Tirupar, AP
H-19	Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaita Devasthanam, Dwaraka, Himachal Pradesh
H-20	Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaita Devasthanam, Dwaraka, Himachal Pradesh
H-21	Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt, Mantralaya, AP
H-22	Mahavi Mandir, Patna, Bihar
H-23	Shree Ramnath Mandir, Goa
H-24	Sri Vijaya Durga Temple, Goa
H-25	Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Gujarat
H-26	Shree Kastabandan Hanuman Temple, Gujarat
H-27	Mata Mansa Devi Temple, Haryana
H-28	Sri Mata Vaishnudeviji Temple, Jammu
H-29	Sri Nimishamba Temple, Bengaluru
H-30	Sri Kalika Durga Parmeshwari Temple, Bengaluru
H-31	ISKCON, Bengaluru
H-32	Kukke Sri Subramanya Temple, Karnataka
H-33	Sri Adichunchunghi Mahasambhava Math, Karnataka
H-34	Sri Annapoorneshwari Temple, Karnataka
H-35	Sri Durgapurneshwari Temple, Karnataka
H-36	Sri Krishna Mutt, Udupi, Karnataka
H-37	Sri Marjunatha Swamy Temple, Dharmaswala, Karnataka
H-38	Sri Mookambika Temple, Kolur, Karnataka
H-39	Sri Siddaganga Math, Tumakuru, Karnataka
H-40	Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri, Karnataka
H-41	Chottanikkara Temple, Kochi, Kerala
H-42	Guruvayur Temple, Kerala
H-43	Sabarnamala Sree Ayyappa Temple, Kerala
H-44	Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Kerala
H-45	Thiruvarambadi Sri Krishna Temple, Kerala
H-46	Nityaranda Ashrama, Kerala
H-47	Sri Balaji Mandir, Gwalior, MP
H-48	Sri Sai Baba Temple, Shirdi, MH
H-49	Sri Shoggon Gajanan Maharaj Temple, MH
H-50	Sri Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple, Punjab
H-51	Annamigai Vairamuni Sundareswarar Temple, TN
H-52	Sri Lakshmi Narayani Golden Temple, TN
H-53	Sri Sita Ramachandraswamy Temple, Telangana
H-54	Yadagirigutta Temple, Telangana
H-55	Sri Vidya Saraswathi Shanmukheswara Temple, Telangana
H-56	Sri Gorakhnath Temple, UP
H-57	Kasi Annapurna Annakshetra, UP
H-58	Sri Janaki Mchal Trust, Ayodhya, UP
H-59	ISKCON Mayapur, West Bengal
H-60	Jagantha Temple, Puri, Odisha
I-1	Ajmer Dargah, Rajasthan
I-2	Nizamuddin Dargah, Delhi
I-3	Chinamoni Dargah, Karnataka
I-4	Amnour, Srinagar
J-1	Lord Parshwanath and Padmavathi Temple, Karnataka
J-2	Shree Kshetra Arhantnagar, TN
J-3	Jain Temple, Shikharji, Jharkhand
J-4	Mahavir Tapobhumi, MP
J-5	Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanath Temple, MH
S-1	Gurudwara Nankaji Sahib, Bidar, Karnataka
S-2	Gurudwara Sahib Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Bengaluru, Karnataka
S-3	Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab
S-4	Gurudwara (Paothi) Sahib, Gurudwara, Punjab
S-5	Gurudwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi
C-1	St Lawrence Minor Basilica, Udupi, Karnataka
C-2	Navejeevan Trust, Kerala
C-3	The Salvation Army Programme, Chennai, TN
C-4	CSI Victory Cross Church, Chennai, TN
C-5	Mary's Meals Broad, Noida



Charity across religions

- **Hinduism** - *Daana* - form of dharma (religious duty)
- **Islam** – *Zakat* (charity out of one's earnings and possessions)
- **Christians** - actions of mercy, kindness, or compassion
- **Jainism** - chaturvida dana – **ahara**, aushada, abhaya and shastra
- **Buddhism** –deeper emotion towards kindness – social, religious and spiritual
- **Sikhs** – Naam Japna, Kirat Karni (honest in living), **Vand Chakna (sharing with others)** Langars - popular
- Study - restricts to large scale feeding of food/long periods of time only

Anna Daana in Hinduism



- *Dharma* – several meanings - eternal law, duty, conduct, behavior, morality and righteousness
- Each person - *dharma* towards family, society, world, living things
- Wealth acquired is not for own - welfare of society
- Gurus emphasize – devote time to *seva* humanity
- 'Bhagavadgita' - act selflessly for welfare of the world
- *Daana* also includes physical, intellectual and spiritual service

- **State government has Hindu religious institutions and a Charitable Endowment Department responsible for functions of temples**
- **E.g., Venkateshwara Temple and Vaishno Devi have trusts , 50,000 to 100,000 pilgrims daily. On special occasions -500,000 per day**
- **Devotees - 200 and 160,000**
- **Dining halls 1-5, with a seating capacity 200 to 15,000.**
- **Rice quantity - 50 kg to 1,000 kg. Sambhar 50 L and to 10,000 L.**
- **Majority followed a queue system, few had token system.**
- **Funds – ranged from Rs. 20 lakhs to Rs 3.08 crores.**
- **Technology -Steam boilers and hot insulated vessels (41.1%) and roti-making machines (12.4%). RO plants had been installed in 79% - temples.**
- **Temple authorities purchased ingredients locally/tenders, strict standards were maintained to ensure the quality and safety of food**



Jainism

- Four kinds of *daan* - *Chathurvidhadaan* –
 - giving food to the hungry
 - saving lives of others
 - distribution of medicine
 - spreading knowledge
- 3 kinds of donees: *uttam* (monks, nuns, saints), *madhyam* (lay people practising vows), *Jaghanya* (needy persons with good faith).
- 7 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.



- ***Shwetambar*** sects *bhojanalayas* in places of worship in North India. (paid minimum price - concept of *daan* in Jainism is about giving, not receiving. Hence, most Jains do not like to have free food)
- In south India, ***Digambar*** *bhojanalayas* provide free food
- More than 50,000 Jain temples in India
- Most temples - 50 devotees/day –regular. special days, Mahamasthabhisheka at Shravanabelagola, 5,000–100,000.
- Modern kitchen equipment - steam boilers for cooking rice/ dishwashers - ensure hygiene



Buddhism

- *Daan* is integral to the Buddhist doctrine of *dhamma*.
- *Daan* - self-reflexive process – helps overcome greed and ego & attain spiritual wisdom.
- *Anna-daan* - 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.
- Teaches - sharing surplus and overcoming material attachment.
- Buddhist monasteries - an ideal mediator/distributor of surplus.



- *Anna-daan* happens within the monastery; monks are taken care of food and other needs.
- Monks -specific responsibilities and devotedly fulfil the core of Buddhism.
- People donate to monasteries, *anna-daan* is one aspect.
- Namgyal Monastery, Dharmasala, centre of Tibetan Buddhism in India. Official monastery of His Holiness Dalai Lama has 200+ monks.
- Gaden Namgyal Lhatse, Tawang, has 65 residences - 300+ Buddhist monks.
- Tergar Monastery, Gaya, houses 50 monks. Attracts thousands of monks and devotees every year- provided *anna-daan*.
- Dharma Chakra Centre, Rumtek, Sikkim, 500 Buddhist monks.



Sikhism

- Strong tradition of *daan* - believes in *vand chhako* (share with others). Spirit of giving and sharing.
- Every Sikh is expected to contribute 10% of income, called *dasvandh*.
- Sikhism stresses that a Sikh should **balance work, worship, and charity**.
- The *langar* reflects the aspect of charity in 3 ways.
 - Welcomes hungry persons.
 - Functions as a symbol for charity.
 - Collect leftover food for distribution among the poor.
- Gurdwaras attract visitors in thousands which are attached to *langars*.



- Vegetarian meals – free, 3 times/day.
- Food served - imbued with spirituality when eaten with *sangat* (holy congregation) and *pangat* (row)
- *Gurus* are entrusted management of *langar* -competent and service-minded.
- e.g, Golden Temple runs the world's biggest *langar*, serves 70,000+ people.
- Modernised kitchens. *Roti*-making machines (200,000 *rotis* on normal days and up to 800,000 *rotis* on special days), rice boilers, and grinders.
- In addition to staff, volunteers manage.
- Organic waste –composting nearby farms/ farmers to feed the livestock.
- Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi -a biogas plant to provide fuel to the kitchen.



Christianity

- Central religious practice is a ritual meal known as Eucharist (Mass or Communion Service), which commemorates the last supper, the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples.
- 3 types of feeding the hungry : *agape* meal, charity meal, and the feeding programmes of Christian organisations.
- *Agape* meal (communal meal) programme – regularly/occasionally, such meals are cooked, served, and shared.
- Christianity has different types of theological beliefs and indigenous or local practices associated.
 - Feeding hungry is like feeding Jesus himself.
 - Feeding poor helps destroy their sins.
 - Effective means of good life on behalf of the souls of the dead.



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BREAD**

- Food charity - daily event with few exceptions. Organises both near praying places and outside.
- Indian culinary menu - maintained a balance between vegetarian and non-vegetarian items.
- Paid staff /volunteers/religious leaders - pivotal role in organising charities.
- Funds - donations cash/kind and even equipments.
- Food served - dining halls on plates. Queue - token system



Islam

- Charity is denoted mainly by the word *khair* or welfare in Arabic - constitutes a fundamental human value.
- *Quran* - "Good men" are those who feed the poor, the orphan, and the captive for the love of God" .
- Portion of their earnings towards the welfare of the poor, orphans, distressed.
- Advice from Prophet "*Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and set free the captives*".



- Food charity organised at *dargahs*.
- *Sufi* saints feed the poor - act of piety - earning proximity to God - spirit of selflessness without accepting anything in return.
- Serving food to people is equivalent to serving to *Allah*.
- For instance, the people served ranged from
 - 120 to 1,500 at Athrout, Kashmir
 - *Ammajan Bawajan Dargah* provides food only during special occasions, 10,000 devotees.
- Funding - *zakat* (mandatory 2.5% of annual savings) and *sadqa* (*voluntary donation*).
- Raw materials were procured from local markets.
- Hygiene – regular hygiene and food safety followed.



Lessons Learned

- Culture of feeding is part of all religions and has philosophical and spiritual support.
- Magnitude is striking – up to 160,000 meals/day
- Nutrition for nourishment & unlimited
- Good governance with institutional arrangements
- Funding – mostly voluntary contributions
- Maintaining quality standards
- Safety is paramount
- Technology adoption
- Effective waste management
- Socio-emotional understanding
- Builds up “we the people”, “togetherness”.



Policy options

- Educate people on the spirit behind the tradition of *anna-daan*
- Introduce more protein-based diets and micronutrients
- Financial support to institutions that need help
- Support during a pandemic or unprecedented situations
- Awareness on avoiding food wastage, hygiene behaviour
- Maintain sanctity -talking softly, decorum in queues
- Strengthen waste management
- More technology innovation efficient management





SI No	States	Name of the Temple	SI No	States	Name of the Temple
1	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Temple, Srisailam, AP	27	Madhya Pradesh	Balaji Mandir, Gwalior, MP
2		Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy varla Devasthanam, AP	28	Maharashtra	Prati Balaji Temple Shree Venkateshwara Balaji Temple, Kapurhol
3		Sri Kalahasthi	29		Sai Baba Temple, Shirdi
4		Sri Varahalakshmi Narasimha Swamy Vari Devasthanam, Simhachalam	30		Shegaon Gajanan Maharaj Temple
5		Sri Venkateswara Swamy Vaari Temple, Tirupati, AP	31		Shri Vitthal Rukmini Mandir, Chouphala, Pandharpur
6	Assam	Kamakya Shakthi peeta, Guwahati	32		Shree Mahalaxmi Mandir, Kolhapur
7	Bihar	Mahavir Mandir, Patna	33	Odisha	Pokharni Shri Narasimha Temple
8	Goa	Shree Ramnath Mandir, Ponda, Goa	34		Shri Jagannatha Temple, Puri
9	Gujarat	Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Ahmadabad, Gujarat	35	Punjab	Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple,
10	Haryana	Mata Mansa Devi Temple, Haryana	36	Tamil Nadu	Kamakshi Amman Temple, Kanchipuram
11	Jammu	Sri Mata Vaishnodevi Temple, Jammu	37		Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai
12	Karnataka	ISKCON temple, Bengaluru	38		Palani Murugan Temple, Palani, TN
13		Kukke Sri Subramanya Temple	39		Rameshwaram Temple, TN
14		Sri Adichunchungiri Mahasamsthana Math	40		Sri Bhagavathy Amman Temple, Kanyakumari
15		Sri Adhishakthyathmaka Annapoorneshwari Temple Horanadu	41		Sri Lakshmi Narayani Golden Temple, Vellore
16		Sri Durgaparameshwari temple, Kateel	42	Telangana	Sai Baba Temple Dilshuknagar, Telangana
17		Sri Krishna Temple, Udupi	43		Sri Sita Ramachandraswamy temple, Bhadrachalam, Telangana
18		Sri Kshethra Dharmasthala Sri Manjunatha Swamy Temple	44	Uttar Pradesh	Ayodhya Sri Ram Mandir, Ayodhya
19		Sri Mookambika Temple, Kollur	45		Gorakhnath Mandir, Gorakhpur
20		Sri Siddaganga Math	46		Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Varanasi
21		Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri	47		Shiva Temple, Kushi Nagar
22	Kerala	Chottanikkara Temple, Kochi	48		Sri Krishna Mandir, Mathura
23		Guruvayur temple, Kerala	49	West Bengal	ISKCON, Silguri
24		Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa temple	50		Lord Shiva temple, Salt Lake City, Kolkata
25		Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple			
26		Thiruvambadi Sri Krishna Temple			

SI No	Religion	Name of the Religious Place	SI No	Religion	Name of the Religious Place
1	Islam	Ajmer Dargah, Rajasthan	14	Buddhism	Buddha Vihar, Bhubaneswar
2		Nizamudding Dargah New Delhi	15		Buddha Stupa, Udayagiri, Jaipur.
3	Christian	Infant Jesus Shrine, Thurka Emjala, Rangareddy District, Telangana.	16		Dhauli Santustupa, Bhubaneswar
4		Mary's Meals. Bread Noida, Noida, UP	17		Lalitha giri, Jiapur, Odisha
5		Navajeevan Trust, A Body of Christian Love, Kottayam, Kerala, India.	18		Ratnagiri, Jaipur
6		St Lawrence Minor Basilica, Attur Village, Karkala Taluk, Udupi District, Karnataka.	19		Tarapur Excavated Buddhist Site, Dharmasala, Odisha
7		The Salvation Army Programme, Territorial Headquarters, Purasavakkam, Chennai	20	Sikhism	Sri Harmandir Sahib(Golden Temple), Amritsar
8		Victory Cross Church, Ashok Nagar, Chennai	21		Gurudwara Sri Ber Sahib, Sultanpur Lodhi, Punjab
9	Jainism	Jaina Tirtha or Siddhakshetra, Giridih, Jharkhand	22		Gurudwara Bouli Sahib, Goindwal Sahib, Punjab
10		Lord Bahubali and Lord Parshwanatha Temple, Kolhapur, Maharashtra	23		Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Sri Anandpur Sahib, Punjab,
11		Lord Neminatha, Lord Parshwanatha and Kushmandini Devi Temple, Thiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu	24		Gurudwara Sri Bangla Sahib, Delhi
12		Lord Parshwanatha Temple and total 41 Jain temples, Chhatarpur, Madhya pradesh	25		Langar of Golden temple, Amritsar, Punjab
13		Lord Parshwanatha and Padmavathi Temple, Shimogga, Karnataka	26		Langar Mata Khewi ji at Gurdwara Khadoor Sahib Punjab.