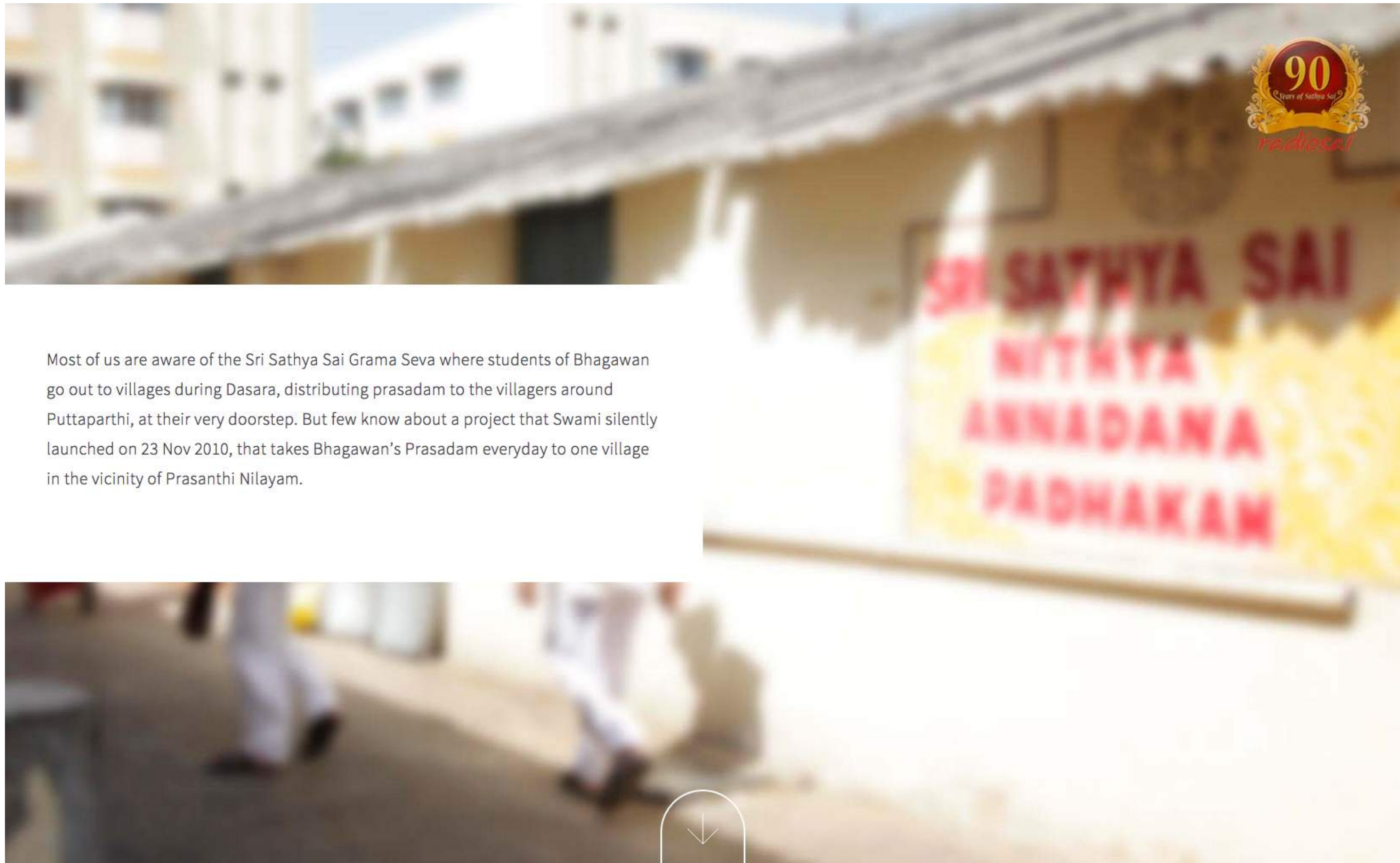


Sri Sathya Sai Nithya Annadana Padhakam

A Ceaseless Offering of Sai Prasadam







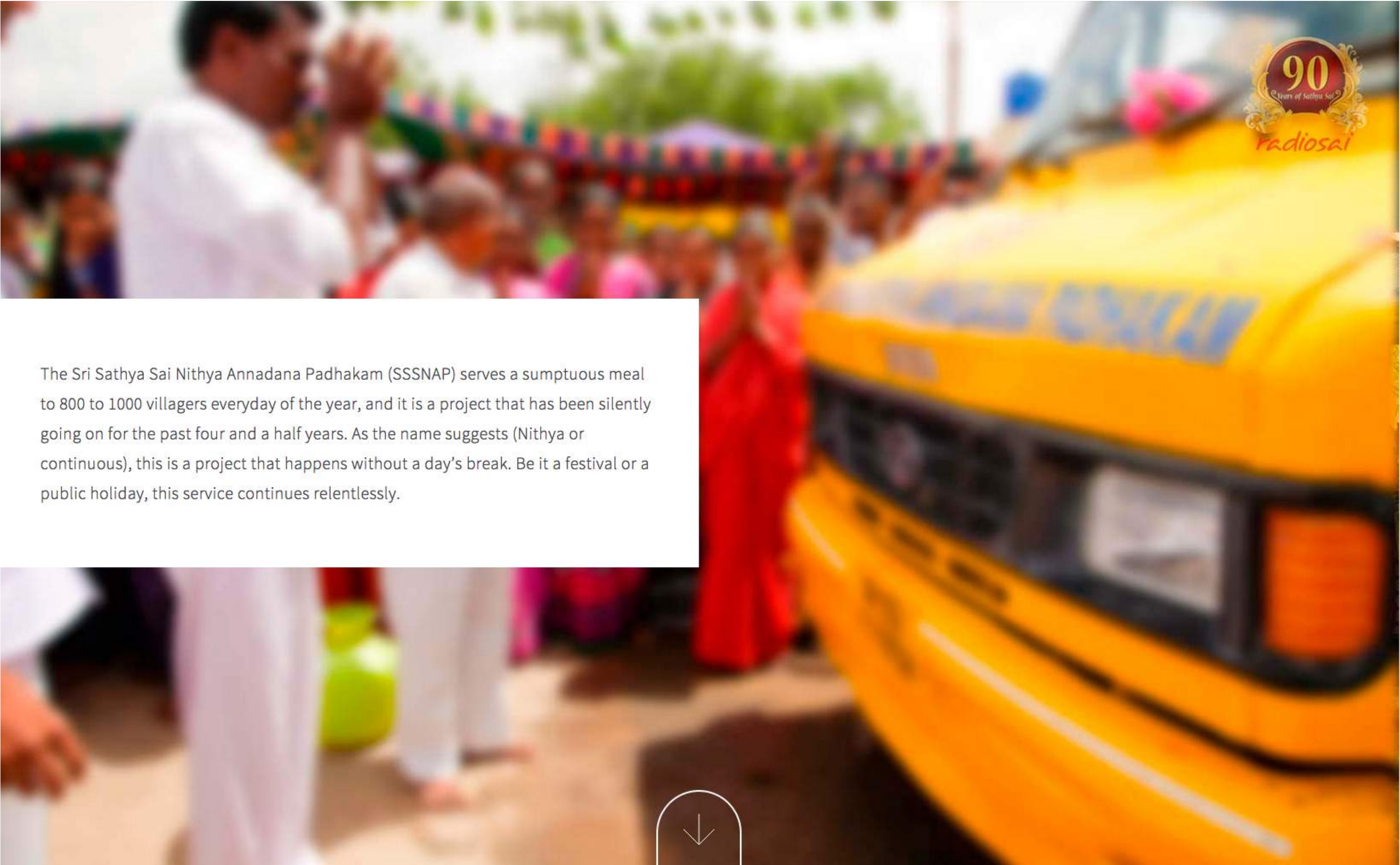
Most of us are aware of the Sri Sathya Sai Grama Seva where students of Bhagawan go out to villages during Dasara, distributing prasadam to the villagers around Puttaparthi, at their very doorstep. But few know about a project that Swami silently launched on 23 Nov 2010, that takes Bhagawan's Prasadam everyday to one village in the vicinity of Prasanthi Nilayam.



SRI SATHYA SAI
NITHYA
ANNADANA
PADHAKAM



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The Sri Sathya Sai Nithya Annadana Padhakam (SSSNAP) serves a sumptuous meal to 800 to 1000 villagers everyday of the year, and it is a project that has been silently going on for the past four and a half years. As the name suggests (Nithya or continuous), this is a project that happens without a day's break. Be it a festival or a public holiday, this service continues relentlessly.







Two trucks and a mini bus convey the food and seva dal to one of the 31 nodal villages everyday. All the villages are within the radius of about 30 km from Puttaparthi and are from the six taluks of Bukkapatnam, Kothacheruvu, Puttaparthi, Nallamada, O.D.Chervu and Chennakothapalli. Over the years, a schedule has been drawn out according to which the same village is visited on a particular date of any month.









Though SSSNAP is an initiative run under the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, the food for this project is cooked in a dedicated kitchen in the Ashram by cooks employed specially for the project. Apart from these staff, 42 members of the Seva Dal (21 men & 21 women) are allotted for this project.







The unique feature of this project is the complete Sadhana-Camp-like schedule that is in place for the participating Seva Dal. Their day begins at 4 a.m. with chanting of Omkaram, Suprabhatham and namasmarana.

At 4:30 the gents Seva Dal goes to the kitchen to assist the cooks and the women seva dal to cut vegetables. The cooking for the day begins at 4:30 and by 6 a.m. most of it is completed. There after the Seva dal refresh themselves and finish their breakfast and report back by 7 a.m. for loading one of the trucks with the utensils and water.













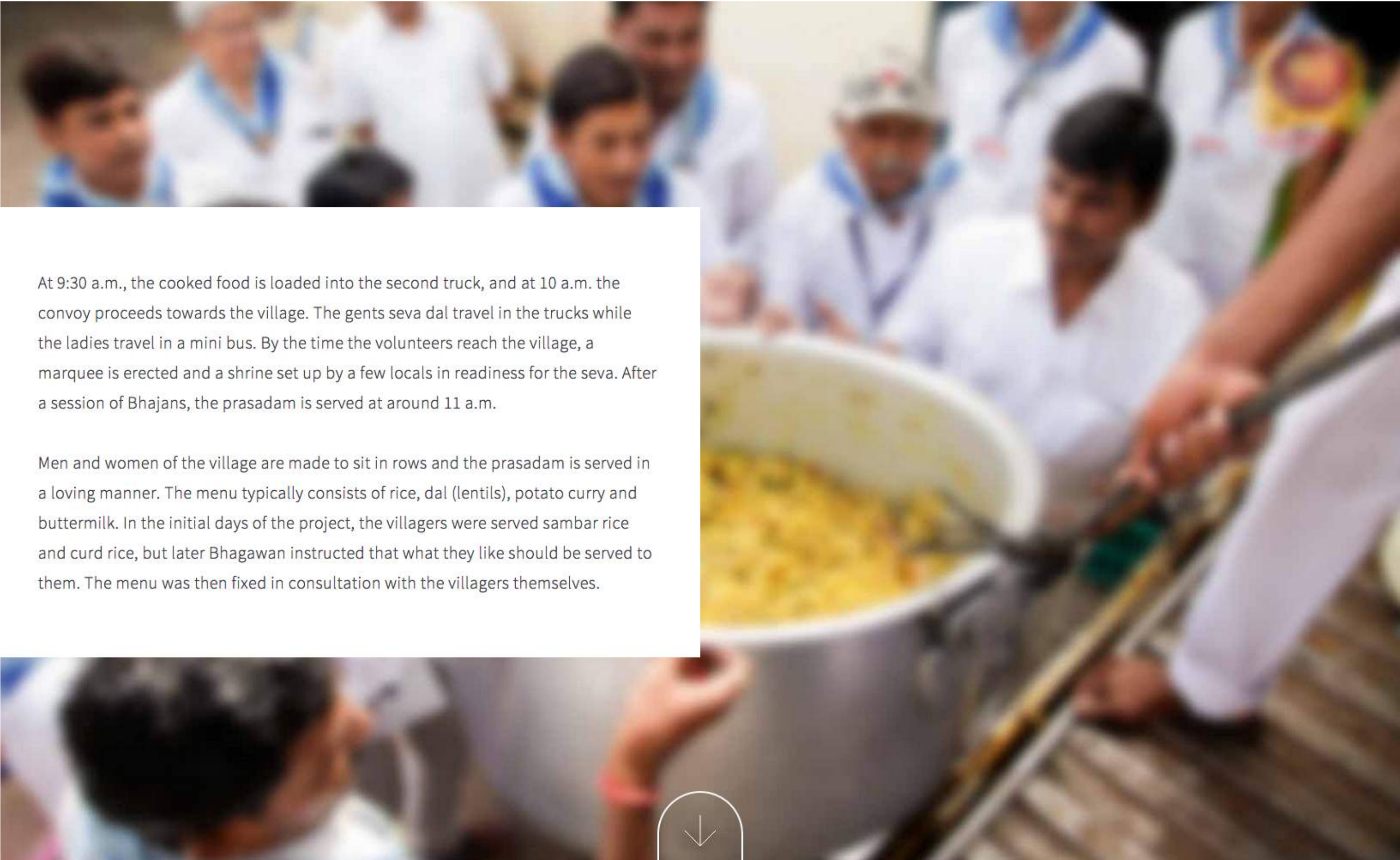
From 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. everyday the seva dal participate in an elaborate and interactive study circle. Various spiritual topic of interest are discussed and this also serves as a fine orientation programme to those who are new to Bhagawan's message. This is a well-received initiative as an increasing number of Seva dal are first timers to Prasanthi.

The convener of the project, Col. Sundar attends and steers these sessions, discussing various topics of spiritual interest and also encouraging the participants to freely share their views and doubts. By the end of the tenure, the seva dal leave satisfied having attended a sadhana camp, where they not only studied but also had the opportunity to practise Bhagawan's message.









At 9:30 a.m., the cooked food is loaded into the second truck, and at 10 a.m. the convoy proceeds towards the village. The gents seva dal travel in the trucks while the ladies travel in a mini bus. By the time the volunteers reach the village, a marquee is erected and a shrine set up by a few locals in readiness for the seva. After a session of Bhajans, the prasadam is served at around 11 a.m.

Men and women of the village are made to sit in rows and the prasadam is served in a loving manner. The menu typically consists of rice, dal (lentils), potato curry and buttermilk. In the initial days of the project, the villagers were served sambar rice and curd rice, but later Bhagawan instructed that what they like should be served to them. The menu was then fixed in consultation with the villagers themselves.











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On an average 800 people are fed everyday. Some times the number goes upto 1200. The Seva dal are instructed to serve the villagers as much as they want. After the serving, the seva dal too partake of the same prasadam and leave. If a good quantity of food is left over (to serve 100 or more) the team heads to a nearby village and the food is distributed to those who wish to take it home in their own utensils.

After this the team returns to Prasanthi Nilayam. On reaching, they unload the trucks, clean the vessels used, offers Arati to Bhagawan and disperse for the day by 4:30 - 5 p.m. They then report again at 4 a.m. the next day for the prayer session.









On innumerable occasions Bhagawan has shown His presence and blessings for this project through the shower of Vibhuti, kumkum or amritham at the shed in Prasanthi Nilayam and in the altars set up in the villages. An interesting incident the volunteers recall is when one of the cooks added 6 kgs of salt to 20 kgs of cooked dal (lentils) by mistake. It was too late to cook again and the dal prepared was definitely unpalatable. The nervous team made a humble prayer to Bhagawan and added little vibhuti to the dal, and that was enough to miraculously offset all the salt, and make the dal as tasty as it is everyday!









There are many Social welfare programmes such as the SSSNAP. Yet this programme that is running its 5th year now has some unique qualities to it. Firstly the approach to make this a Sadhana Camp for the visiting seva dal; and secondly, men and women from different parts of the country and strata of society come to Puttaparthi and take part in this project. Thereby they also get to learn from observing a stable, well thought-out working programme which has enabled the replication of this model in many other states – a purpose that was meant to be served by every project initiated by Bhagawan Baba.







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