



SAINET

A PROJECT OF SRI SATHYA SAI NATIONAL TRUST
A National Community Project to save the people of Kenya from
Malaria

Hands that serve are Holier than lips that pray

New Year's Eve Brings Hope and Joy to the Poorest in Kenya

"If you do not feel the call at the sight of human distress, disease or deviation from the right, how can you muster the determination and dedication necessary to serve the unseen, inscrutable, mysterious God? When you do not love man, your heart will not love God. Despising brother man, you cannot, at the same time, worship God. If you do, God will not accept that hypocrisy. God is resident in every heart; so, if you serve any one, that service reaches the God within him: it brings to you the Grace of God."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The New Year Eve this year was unique and will remain etched in the memories of the Kenyan devotees who participated in the SAINET service in Bamba on Saturday, 31 December 2005. On this day, Kenyan devotees distributed 7,500 SAINETs and 18 tonnes of maize meal to the 50,000 population of Bamba, among the poorest and most vulnerable to malaria in Kenya.

Bamba is a remote, arid stretch of Kenya's coastal district Kilifi, which grows precious little but mosquitoes. Close to the top of the poverty index in Kenya, the Bamba division features prominently in the news whenever the country is threatened by a famine, as in this year. The 50,000 population of Bamba division have learned to survive on cassava and some greens at the best of times. This year, with failed rains, even that is proving to be difficult.

Thinly spread over a vast area, the people in Bamba have little access to primary health care facilities or to any other basic services. Malaria, the number one killer in the area, thrives on these poor people, who are weak with malnutrition and can seldom afford to walk the long distances to reach health care facilities of any kind. The best protection against malaria, the mosquito bed nets, remain mostly in statistics, not in the homes of the poor in Bamba, who can hardly access or afford a subsidized net.

For the Kenyan devotees of Sri Sathya Sai Baba what could offer a better opportunity or better occasion to celebrate the New Year Eve than serving these poorest and the most vulnerable among fellow brothers and sisters in Bamba?

Yes, obstacles had to be overcome, like organizing the formidable logistics of reaching the remote areas with supplies and volunteers at a time when most facilities were closed and people were away from work places, enjoying the Christmas and year-end holidays. But as preparations began, the enthusiasm became infectious – people canceling their holidays, others offering to join the service from their

holiday resorts and yet others offering to help in organizing the logistics.



Maizemeal and SAINET being given with love to Villager by deputy PC Coast Province.

Finally, as the day of service approached, Kenyan devotees were joined by two most welcome guests from overseas: Dr. Brahma Sharma and his son Gautam from the United States and Dr. K.H.Yeoh from Singapore, ardent devotees of Baba, who traveled all the distance to see and experience, first hand, the SAINET service in operation, leaving their families behind on the New Year's eve.

To bring climax to the preparations, barely a week before the service the Newspaper headlines carried the ominous message: *Starvation in Christmas*. Reporting from Bamba and elsewhere in the country the news highlighted the plight of the starving poor, who were living on roots and the like.

For the Devotees preparing for the service, it posed a major dilemma: How to take nets to hungry mouths? A decision had to be made urgently and the devotees reached out to their hearts. It was decided that irrespective of the cost and the logistical challenge, each family would receive, along with SAINETs, four kilogrammes of maize meal.



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What could be a better gift from SAI on the New Year's eve for the starving people in Kenya? The final test of Swami was yet to come though. As the convoys of trucks and vans carrying volunteers started arriving in Bamba in the morning of 31 December, a real surprise was waiting for them which would put all their meticulous plans into jeopardy. A crowd of thousands were waiting eagerly at the first mobilization point of the service, having come from villages all over Bamba division in search of government food relief, announced a day ago. This meant that all the prior plans of distributing vouchers to different villages and logistical arrangements were in vain and an emergency distribution plan had to be put in place.



Villagers queuing to receive SAI's token of love SAINET through his devotees.

With prayers in their hearts, the experienced SAINET core team immediately went into action and devised an improvised plan for reaching out to the people in their new locations. Soon they were joined by the district authorities, the area Member of the Parliament and the local chiefs.

The vast crowd that initially looked unmanageable, started regrouping themselves and soon the distribution of SAINETs and food were well underway.

As the distribution came to an end by the late afternoon, it was altogether a different sight. The hungry and impatient jostling crowd had given way to happy and contented families who had started meandering their way back to their distant homes, carrying the most precious food and SAINETs. Some of the faces beamed as they had experienced a rare

love shared by devotees and they knew that someone cared for them.

And for the returning devotees, the setting sun was a most beautiful sight, with their hearts full of Swami's love and assured in the knowledge that they had made their beloved Swami happy and proud through a day of self-less service. For the SAINET team, what a fulfilling way to bring a most eventful year to a glorious end!

With the service in Bamba, the SAINET project has distributed 64,400 SAINETs in Kenya over a period of six months in 2005. Yet, much more needs to be done to save the poor and the vulnerable in remote parts of Kenya for whom SAINET is the last hope to survive in the battle with malaria.

Kenyan devotees remain resolved to continue with SAINET distribution with equal vigour in 2006. The first distribution is now planned to be held on 11 March 2006 in Kisii, a district known for upsurges of malaria after every rain. Simultaneously, the re-treatment of nets distributed in 2005 will begin with Kitale on 18th February 2006. There is no holiday on the Sai path!

Postscript - The following lines are from a touching email the SAINET project received from Dr. P. Masaulo, District Medical Officer of Health of Kilifi, on 3 January 2006:

"Sai Ram, I have just discovered that you are truly a genuine brother, kind in heart and having the spirit to give and serve all with love. Let me take this opportunity to thank you and the SATHYA SAI ORGANIZATION for the kind gesture extended to the people of Kilifi, and specifically to Bamba, the poorest constituency in Kenya. Surely, you have reached the poorest of the poor. By giving a net you have given a life."

"Service is God. Why has God endowed man with a body, a mind and an intellect? Feel with the mind, plan with the intelligence and use the body to serve those who are in need of service. Offer that act of service to God."

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Contributions to the SAINET project could be made by sending sponsorship cheques drawn in favour of "SriSathya Sai National Trust – SAINET Project" and forwarded to Bro. Nimesh Shah, National Project Director, SAINET Project, P.O. Box 78310-00507, Nairobi, Kenya, Tel: 254-20-555846/7, Fax:254-20-555848, e-mail:wef@nbi.ispkenya.com



Planning and loading of SAINET and Maizemeal in Canters and waiting to leave for Mariakani the day before to enable good planning.