

# Empowering Dignity Through Nutrition: Comparative Case Study of Hunger Relief NGOs in India, The USA and the UK

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**Abstract:** *This study undertakes a comparative examination of hunger relief NGOs operating in India and developed countries like the USA and UK, highlighting how cultural, economic, and policy contexts influence their strategies and effectiveness. While Indian NGOs such as Akshaya Patra focus on large-scale, school-based nutrition programs linked to empowerment through education, organizations in the West prioritize dignity through client-choice models and surplus redistribution. Despite India's high cost-efficiency, structural challenges limit its reach to a mere 1 percent of the undernourished population, whereas Western NGOs reach nearly all food-insecure individuals but grapple with scalability and dependency concerns. The article calls for hybrid frameworks that merge India's efficiency with the dignity-centric, redistributive systems of the West to strengthen global food security in line with SDG 2.*

**Keywords:** NGOs, Hunger Relief, Food Security, Empowerment Models, Sustainable Nutrition

## 1. Introduction

Though the world has achieved a lot in terms of agricultural production, economic growth, and technological advances, hunger remains a widespread problem affecting millions of people. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations approximates that over 820 million people worldwide have a condition of chronic undernourishment with large inequalities in the nature and level of hunger between the developing and the developed nations [18]. In developing countries like India, hunger is often attributed to systemic issues, such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure and unequal distribution of resources, whereas in developed countries, food insecurity mostly affects marginalised groups to such an extent that food wastage and food deserts amplify it. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) play a crucial role in addressing these challenges by complementing government efforts through novel and community-based solutions that are tailored to local conditions [11]. This introduction looks at the role, the practices, and the impact of hunger relief NGOs in India and industrialised countries, focusing on their peculiar ways to resolve the hunger problem showing a shared commitment to food provision and human dignity. [14].

## 2. Literature Review

Hunger and malnutrition are severe problems of social interest in India, the motherland of more than 1.4 billion people. According to the Global Hunger Index (2024), India is ranked as one of the countries with a serious hunger problem, and more than 14% of the population of the country (about 194 million people) is considered undernourished [4,16]. Children are most affected, with 35% under five years suffering from stunting and 19% from wasting, which is a result of chronic and acute nutritional deficit respectively [6]. These are compounded by rural poverty, limited availability of arable land, seasonal food shortages and social-economic inequalities. The access to food by the marginalized groups, such as women and children in the low-income households, is

often constrained due to the cultural beliefs of these groups, such as caste-based discrimination and gender inequality [20]. The Indian government has established schemes like the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme to tackle the problem of hunger; however, these schemes have shortcomings in terms of implementation, corruption and logistical challenges are hampering their effectiveness [12]. It is here that hunger relief NGOs come in to fill the critical gaps with specific efforts. Some of the prominent Indian non-governmental organizations, such as Akshaya Patra, Goonj, Annamrita Foundation and The Hunger Project, have also become important stakeholders in the fight against hunger. Akshaya Patra operates the largest school meal program run by an NGO in the world, feeding over 2 million children in 24,000 schools in 16 states every day. [5]. Through nutrition and education, it addresses hunger and the cycle of poverty since healthy children will be more likely to attend school and be successful in school. Goonj is a holistic approach, relating food security to livelihoods by giving out excess food and clothing and also encouraging rural development [17]. Influenced by the ISKCON, the Annamrita Foundation focuses on serving free meals to children and disadvantaged communities, delivering about 1.2 million meals every year [13]. These organisations also often operate in a resource constrained environment relying on grassroots mobilisation, volunteer networks and partnerships with local governments and corporations. They support sustainable methods such as the community kitchen and organic farming with the aim of enhancing food security in the long run. By enabling the rural communities particularly women through the establishment of self-help organisations and training them in sustainable agriculture, The Hunger Project addresses the root cause of hunger. The purpose of this study is to compare the operational models, outreach, funding strategies, and dignity frameworks of hunger relief NGOs in India and developed countries to evaluate their effectiveness and potential for cross-learning. In the industrialised countries, such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and the European countries, hunger manifests itself more in the form of food insecurity

than actual famine. According to the FAO, food insecurity affects about 2-5 percent of the population in these regions and the rates are high in marginalised populations, including low-income families, racial minorities, and refugees, as well as homeless people [8]. Food insecurity was experienced by 13.5% of families (approximately 44 million individuals) in the United States in 2023, and 5.1% of families had very low food security[15]. Regardless of the adequacy in food production, unemployment, high cost of living, and inaccessibility to healthy food in the city's food deserts, are some of the factors that aggravate hunger. In addition, it is also a challenge of food waste in developed countries, whose production of food is estimated at 30-40 percent of being discarded, yet millions are hungry [21]. Under such circumstances, the focus of the NGOs concerned with hunger relief is redistribution of excess food, policy changes, and systemic inequalities.

The major NGOs in the industrialised countries are Feeding America, Food Banks Canada, FareShare (UK), and Les Restos du Coeur (France). Feeding America, the leading hunger relief group in the United States has a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 partner agencies that serves 46 million people annually [19]. It collects overproduction of food in retailers, manufacturers and farmers, and distributes it to food banks, shelters and soup kitchens. Food Banks Canada helps over 4,750 organisations, including 1.4 million people monthly, and enhances policies to fight poverty and joblessness[7]. In the United Kingdom, FareShare redistributes surplus food to 9,500 organisations, averting 50,000 tonnes of food being wasted annually [9]. To manage to distribute perishable and non-perishable food products, these NGOs employ advanced logistics, including cold-chain storage and online inventory software. They work with the corporations such as supermarkets and restaurants in salvaging the food that would go to waste. In France, 1.3 million people are served each year by Les restos du coeur, which combines food aid with social support services: job training and housing [3]. The hunger alleviation strategies of NGOs in India and industrialised countries reflect their different socioeconomic settings. In India, NGOs focus on widespread meal provision, village empowerment and rural development to fight widespread poverty and malnutrition [1]. On the other hand, NGOs in developed countries are focused on food recovery, equal distribution and advocacy in the legislature to tackle food insecurity in urban areas and reduce wastage. Despite these differences, the two organizations have similar goals: to ease access to nutritional food, promote dignity, and address institutional barriers to food security. Many NGOs align their activities with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of the United Nations Zero Hunger NO.0 that aims to make all countries hunger-free by the year 2030 [2]. They also emphasise sustainability, either through organic farming in India or the reduction of food waste in third-world countries.

Challenges persist in the two situations. In India, the NGOs face logistical difficulties, insufficient resources and the scale of the need, whereas in richer countries, stigma of food relief and bureaucracy might limit the reach [10]. Nonetheless, it is their flexibility and resourcefulness that make these organizations critical in the global battle against hunger through mobile food vans, community-centred agriculture, or

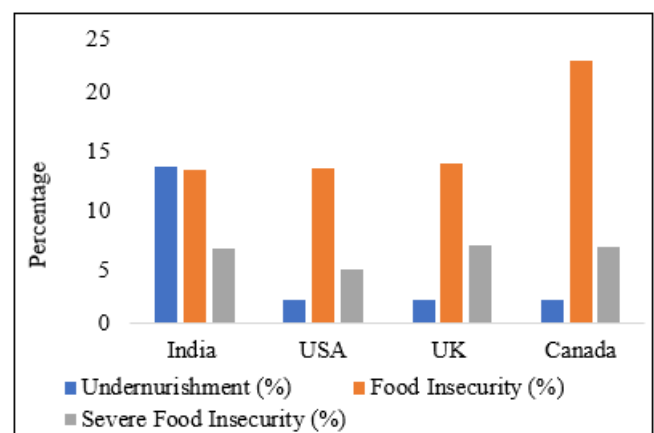
policy activism. The NGOs working in hunger relief can help reduce hunger worldwide by addressing the immediate needs of people, as well as addressing the long-term challenges of the institutions in both India and industrialised countries. This comparative insight is significant because it highlights context-specific successes and failures in combating hunger, allowing policy-makers and NGOs to adopt best practices globally and work towards SDG 2 with greater efficacy.

### 3. Methodology

The study employs secondary data in the form of annual reports of nongovernmental organisations, the Internet and global indicators of hunger including the global Hunger Index (GHI). The selection of the NGOs in each category was made based on prominence and availability of data, which is Akshaya Patra and Rise Against Hunger India (India), Feeding America and Meals on Wheels America (USA), and Trussell Trust and FareShare (UK). The statistics are based on last annual reports with the majority of them based on the latest data of 2023-24 or 2024 annual reports (as of August 2025). Measurements have also been updated in cases where new values were available and calculations of efficiency (meals per USD = total meals / total revenue in USD) and cost per meal (total expenses / total meals). To convert conversions 1 USD 83 INR, 1 USD 1.3 GBP. The sampled NGOs are aggregates; there are inconsistencies in reporting (i.e., some reports are global, others country-specific). Contextual data from the 2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI) and 2025 Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) highlights broader hunger landscapes, revealing India's "serious" hunger level (GHI 27.3) versus low levels in the USA/UK (GHI <9.9, though data gaps exist), influencing NGO priorities.

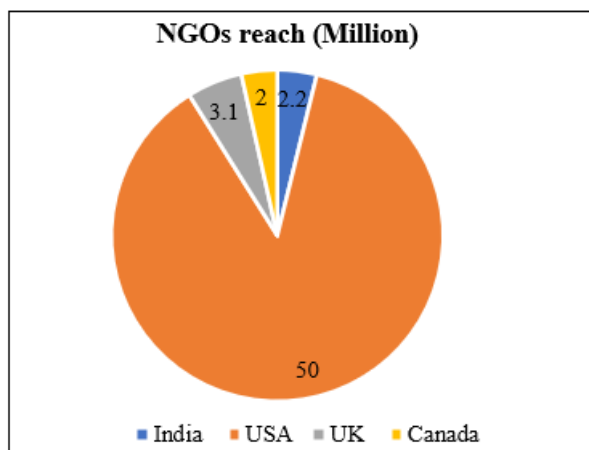
### 4. Result and Discussion

Figure 1 represents the comparative overview of India and developed countries NGOs regarding undernourishment, food insecurity, and severe food insecurity. The undernourished population is very large in India compared to developed countries, while food insecurity is almost the same in all countries, but severe food insecurity is high in India compared to developed countries.

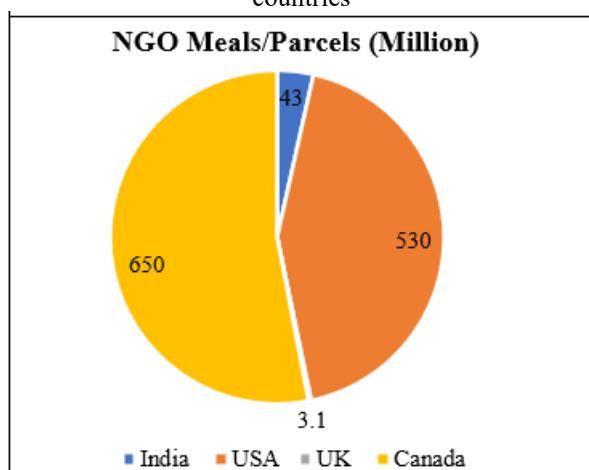


**Figure 1:** The comparative overview of India and developed countries NGOs regarding undernourishment, food insecurity, and severe food insecurity

Figure 2 suggests that NGO reach is maximum in developed countries, especially in the USA, where about 50 million people get help from NGOs, while in India, the reach of NGO is about only 2.2 million people. Figure 3 suggests that NGO meals/parcels (in millions) in India are approximately 4.3 million, which is the highest in India, Canada, and the USA. This indicates that NGO work may be more effective in developed countries compared to India.



**Figure 2:** Represents the NGO reach in India and developed countries



**Figure 3:** Represents the NGO meals/parcels (in millions) in India and developed countries

Table 1 indicates that U.S. NGOs predominate in absolute terms, with Feeding America giving 5.9 billion meals, reaching virtually all 47 million food-insecure Americans via an extensive network. Meals on Wheels primarily targets elders, delivering over 250 million meals to 2.2 million individuals. In the UK, FareShare provides 135 million meals and Trussell delivers 28.1 million parcels, catering to around 9-10 million individuals experiencing food insecurity; however, coverage remains limited at around 20-30%, mostly targeting crises and surplus food distribution. Indian NGOs function on a more modest yet focused scale. Akshaya Patra provides 483 million meals to 2.2 million children, representing 1% of India's 195 million undernourished population, with a focus on school nutrition; Rise Against Hunger India delivers 7.2 million meals to 182,000 individuals through specialised programs such as tuberculosis assistance and disaster relief. Aggregate: Developed countries feed their populations an average of more than 6.2 billion meals annually, and India feeds its population a mere 490 million meals annually; however, the targeted approach of India per beneficiary has a notable proportional impact on the high-risk groups.

**Table 1:** Represents the scale and reach of various NGOs in India and developed countries

Metric	India (Akshaya Patra, 2023-24)	India (Rise Against Hunger India, 2024)	USA (Feeding America, FY2024)	USA (Meals on Wheels America, 2023)	UK (Trussell Trust, 2023-24)	UK (FareShare, 2024)
Annual Meals Served (or Equivalent)	482.98 million	~1.2 million daily (annual est. 438 million via programs, but global 54.3 million packaged)	1.96 million (from 2.35 million lbs donated, est. at 1.2 lbs/meal)	250 million	~27.9 million (est. from prior; new data insufficient)	140.48 million (from 59,000 tonnes, est. at 0.42 kg/meal)
Beneficiaries Served	2.2 million children	1,200 women/children daily (annual est. 438,000)	Not specified	2.2 million seniors	~1.2 million (est. from prior)	Not specified (nearly 1 million est.)
Network Size	23,000+ schools/Anganwadi, 72 locations	52 community health centers	200+ food banks	5,000+ local programs	1,400+ centers	8,357 charities/groups

According to Table 2, Developed NGOs rely on in-kind donations (90% with Feeding America, 81% with FareShare), which help minimize waste and manage fluctuations in supply. (e.g., the volumes of retail with FareShare declined

by 8%). Corporate partnerships, including the collaboration of Subaru and Meals on Wheels and a Grant of up to \$194 million by Feeding America, are also used by the USA and UK. There is a hybridisation of Indian models. A 52 percent

government subsidy by Akshaya Patra is stable and gives policy dependence; 93 percent donations by Rise allow it to be flexible in times of emergency. Expenses often exceed

earnings (e.g., Rise \$20M vs. \$12.59; FareShare \$35.36 vs. \$30M), highlighting losses that were offset by reserves or more intense buying (Trussell food spending was up by 33%).

**Table 2:** Represents the funding and revenue of various NGOs in india and developed countries

Metric	India (Akshaya Patra)	India (Rise Against Hunger India)	USA (Feeding America)	USA (Meals on Wheels America)	UK (Trussell Trust)	UK (FareShare)
Total Revenue (USD)	\$93.23 million	\$94.6 million (global; India-specific N/A)	\$5.25 billion	Not specified (distributed \$6.9M grants)	~\$97.8 million est. (from prior; new insufficient)	\$25.85 million
Funding Breakdown	Govt: 52% (\$48.5M), Donations: 56% (\$42.7M + other)	Donations are dominant (e.g., corporations like FedEx, Pfizer)	In-kind: 90% (\$4.72B), Cash: 10% (\$0.53B)	Federal (OAA): 37%, Subaru: \$1M+	Fundraising: 61% est.	Donations: 94% (\$24.3M), Investments: 3% (\$0.8M)
Total Expenses (USD)	\$93.75 million	\$88.3 million (global)	\$5.31 billion	Not specified	~\$97.8 million est.	\$35.35 million

Table 3 shows that Indian NGOs are more cost-effective due to lower labour and material costs, and mass operations. Akshaya Patra, with 5.18 meals/ USD, is superior to its counterparts, which is 0.19 meals/ USD. The rise is diminished (0.57 meals/USD, \$2.78/meal) as a result of specialised initiatives. In industrialised nations, overall efficiency seems limited (Feeding America 1.13 meals/USD, \$0.90/meal; Trussell 0.29, \$3.48) due to income encompassing valued in-kind contributions; cash-only

metrics are significantly higher (e.g., Feeding about 11.3 meals/USD). FareShare provides 4.5 meals per USD (\$0.26 each meal) utilising spare resources. Illustrative calculation for Akshaya Patra: Meals per USD =  $482,976,000 / 93,230,000 \approx 5.18$  (total meals divided by revenue); cost per meal indicates economies of scale in India compared to elevated logistics and volunteer valuation in affluent countries

**Table 3:** Represents the efficiency and costs of various NGOs in India and developed countries

Metric	India (Akshaya Patra)	India (Rise Against Hunger India)	USA (Feeding America)	USA (Meals on Wheels America)	UK (Trussell Trust)	UK (FareShare)
Meals per USD (Overall)	5.18 (482.98M / \$93.23M)	~0.57 global (54.3M / \$94.6M); India N/A	0.37 (1.96M / \$5.25B); cash-only ~3.72	N/A (data insufficient)	~0.29 est.	5.43 (140.48M / \$25.85M)
Cost per Meal (USD)	\$0.19	~\$1.63 global	\$2.71; cash-only ~\$0.27	N/A	~\$3.50 est.	\$0.25

Table 4 indicates that all utilise volunteers extensively (about 16,000 to 281,000), contributing unquantified value (for instance, FareShare's £8.5 million equivalent). Impacts differ: India emphasises long-term development (e.g., Akshaya's reduction of dropouts, Rise's gardens benefiting 2,226 children); the USA prioritises systemic assistance (Feeding's \$1B policy successes, Meals on Wheels' efforts against isolation); the UK concentrates on sustainability and emergencies (FareShare's 106K tonnes of CO2 mitigated, Trussell's crisis prevention for 655K newcomers). Volunteer-driven methods enhance outreach, with the USA and UK prioritising media (Feeding's 133,000 narratives) and

advocacy. Prevalent themes concerning issues encompass inflation (19.1% in the UK food sector, record levels in the USA) and escalating demand (86% of UK charities, a 27% increase among pensioners reported by Trussell). India confronts challenges in rural and disaster scalability due to riots and floods, while wealthy nations contend with financing concerns from U.S. government shutdowns and reductions in global USAID, impacting Rise, as well as capacity constraints from Trussell's referral limitations. Climate disasters in the USA have doubled, exerting pressure on resources.

**Table 4:** Represents the additional metrics (volunteers, impacts, challenges) of various NGOs in India and developed countries.

Metric	India (Akshaya Patra)	India (Rise Against Hunger India)	USA (Feeding America)	USA (Meals on Wheels America)	UK (Trussell Trust)	UK (FareShare)
Volunteers	16,255	281,125 global	Not specified	Hundreds of thousands	28,000+ est.	26,600 (626K hours)
Key Impacts	Reduced dropouts; supported SDG 2/4; health via nutrition (e.g., energy for studies)	9.4M lives impacted globally; India: 52 health centers, antenatal care	Awareness via \$96.9M media; 2.35M lbs food donated	Combated loneliness; home mods for 2K veterans; medically tailored meals	Crisis prevention; policy advocacy	106K tonnes CO2 avoided; 141B liters water saved
Challenges	Family financial crunches; rural scalability	USAID cuts; global hunger rises (733M affected)	Liquidity issues (net assets - \$40.9M)	Inflation; funding threats (govt shutdowns)	Benefits of delays: rising demand	Retail volumes down 8%; inflation; sector fragmentation

Table 5 indicates that the Indian NGO Akshaya Patra supplies mid-day meals to schools, categorizing them as "students" to

amalgamate nutrition with education, hence promoting empowerment. Goonj underscores community agency via



initiatives such as "Cloth for Work," regarding recipients as "community members" and prioritizing sustainable development. Both aim to assist vulnerable populations, diminishing the stigma associated with charity by associating aid with long-term objectives such as education and self-sufficiency. In the United States, NGOs like West Valley Community Services and Feeding America portray beneficiaries as "clients" or "customers" to uphold dignity, employing client-choice pantries to provide autonomy in food choosing. They combine a sense of philanthropy (food aid) with empowerment (e.g. vocational training, financial literacy) and ensure inclusiveness by providing culturally

sensitive services. Nevertheless, the elements of charity persist due to the emphasis on immediate food provision. India uses participatory methods to empower individuals either through employment or education thus making them active participants. The United States and the United Kingdom use client-choice models, where beneficiaries are treated as clients or customers in order to promote dignity through autonomy, the United States being more developed and the United Kingdom being at pilot stages. Every area shifts to subsidies to empowerment and cooperation, and includes the underprivileged groups to receive comprehensive services.

**Table 5:** Represents the dignity model, dignity approach, beneficiary framing, and charity vs empowerment among NGOs in India, the US, and the UK

Region	Dignity Model	Beneficiary Framing	Dignity Approach	Charity vs. Empowerment	Inclusion
India	Participatory/work-based (e.g., Goonj's "Cloth for Work," Akshaya Patra's school meals).	"Community members" or "students," reducing charity stigma.	Promotes dignity via active participation and education-linked aid.	Shifts from handouts to empowerment through community contributions and education.	Targets marginalized groups (rural communities, children, disaster victims).
U.S.	Client-choice/service models (e.g., Feeding America's pantries, point-based systems).	"Clients" or "customers," emphasizing autonomy.	Enhances dignity through grocery choice and simulated shopping.	Moves from handouts to empowerment via choice and wraparound services, but retains charity elements.	Serves diverse, underserved groups with culturally responsive options.
U.K.	Client-choice pilots (e.g., Trussell Trust pantries).	"Clients" in pilots, shifting from charity recipients.	Fosters dignity through food selection in pilots, reducing shame.	Transitions from handouts to partnerships in pilots, though traditional parcels persist.	Addresses diverse dietary needs in pilots, still developing broadly.

According to Table 6, Akshaya Patra has a large, systematic school-meal program, which promotes dignity because of the large number of beneficiaries who are students. Smaller, less structured ration distributions that continue to perpetuate charity and stigma are a common practice in other NGOs,

including Hamari Pahchan. The smaller but still emerging work-for-dignity strategies encourage empowerment since they require contributions by the community and switch from handouts to participatory help.

**Table 6:** Represents the Indian ngo's models – scale & structured delivery

Aspect	Akshaya Patra	Other NGOs (e.g., Hamari Pahchan, Ration Drives)	Work-for-Dignity Models
Scale	Large-scale: Serves 2.25M+ children daily across 24,000+ schools.	Smaller, localized: Serves hundreds/thousands via ad-hoc distributions.	Small, community-level: Involves dozens to hundreds per project.
Structured Delivery	Highly structured: Centralized kitchens, uniform meals in schools.	Less structured: Ad-hoc ration/kit distributions, often in queues.	Moderately structured: Community-based, participation-driven delivery.
Dignity Approach	Universal access: All students get the same meal, reducing stigma.	Charity-focused: Visible aid distributions may highlight neediness.	Participation-based: Work contributions (e.g., community kitchens) enhance dignity.
Beneficiary Framing	"Students," tied to education, avoid charity stigma.	"Needy" or "recipients," reinforcing the charity model.	"Contributors" or "participants," emphasizing agency.
Charity vs. Empowerment	Empowerment: Meals linked to education, fostering self-sufficiency.	Charity-heavy: Focus on immediate relief, risking dependency.	Empowerment: Work-based models shift from helplessness to agency.
Examples	Mid-day meals, AVSAR scholarships.	Ration kits, crisis food drives.	Community kitchens, work-for-meal tasks.

Table 7 demonstrates that developed nations put emphasis on choice, privacy, and respect with client-choice pantries, which provide power to the beneficiaries yet they fail to grow by scale. India focuses on scale, universality and efficiency through such programs as Akshaya Patra school meals, Goonj models of work-for-dignity, which have been widely

accessed, but may lead to passivity in centralized models. Examples of ethically problematic trade-offs are the logistical difficulties of choice compared to the possible agency-restricting nature of universal models, but both seek to empower rather than charity.

**Table 7:** Represents the comparative insight among Indian and developed countries NGOs

Aspect	Developed Countries (e.g., U.S., U.K.)	India	Ethical Trade-Offs
Core Emphasis	Choice, privacy, respect: Client-choice pantries and discreet services promote autonomy.	Scale, universality, efficiency: Large-scale programs ensure broad access.	Choice is resource-intensive, limiting scale; universal models ensure coverage but may reduce agency.
Dignity Approach	Autonomy via client-choice pantries and private delivery reduces stigma.	Universal access (e.g., same meals for all students) and work-for-dignity models promote inclusion.	Choice excludes some (e.g., non-tech-savvy); standardized delivery may overlook diverse needs.
Beneficiary Framing	"Clients" or "customers," emphasizing respect and agency.	"Students" or "community members," tying aid to education or roles, reducing charity stigma.	Client framing empowers but is hard to scale; universal framing risks passivity.
Scale and Delivery	Smaller-scale, decentralized: Tailored but limited by resources.	Large-scale, centralized: Efficient, broad reach via standardized systems.	Small-scale limits reach; centralized models may lack flexibility.
Charity vs. Empowerment	Empowerment via choice and services, though some charity elements remain.	Empowerment via universal access and participation, but centralized models may foster passivity.	Choice is empowering but unscalable for billions; universal models ensure access but risk passivity.
Examples	U.S.: Feeding America client-choice pantries. U.K.: Trussell Trust pilots.	Akshaya Patra: 2.25M+ school meals. Goonj: "Cloth for Work."	Choice reduces stigma but is complex; universal meals cover all but limit personalization.

Table 8 reveals that NGOs in India operate in a country with high hunger rates, as they focus on preventive nutrition among children and are growing due to their partnerships with governments. However, they also face barriers such as budget shortages and logistical problems in rural areas. In more developed countries, efforts are directed at episodic food insecurity, and advocacy and efficiency in food distribution are emphasized, although rising pressure puts pressure on

resources. The gap in the budgets depicts different economic conditions; however, Indian NGOs achieve significant effects through cost-effective methods. The comparative analysis shows that whereas the role of hunger relief NGOs in India and developed nations is to eradicate hunger, their approach is localised to the needs, preventive in India, and responsive and advocacy-oriented in developed countries.

**Table 8:** Represents the comparative overview of Indian and developed countries NGOs.

Aspect	India NGOs	Developed Countries NGOs
Scale of Operations	Smaller budgets (\$1-93M); millions of daily beneficiaries	Larger budgets (\$13M-\$4B); tens of millions annually
Focus Areas	Child nutrition, malnutrition, and education linkage	Food insecurity, poverty advocacy, and emergency aid
Challenges	High undernourishment rates, rural access	Economic inequality, policy gaps, and inflation
Impact Efficiency	High per-dollar impact on vulnerable groups	Broad network reach, food waste reduction

Table 9 reflects the idea of NGOs in India fostering dignity by accessing and engaging everyone in the process, because beneficiaries can be empowered by participating in promoting the process, but centralized models can restrict personalization. Developed nations focus on choice and privacy, where beneficiaries are clients to maximize agency, whereas the complexity of logistics excludes certain groups. Both move towards the shift between charity and empowerment, India aims at fixing the systemic problems, and the developed countries aim at immediate relief and advocacy, which is the balance between coverage and individual agency. Therefore, the hunger relief NGOs in the developed nations (USA/UK) demonstrate a mastery of both scale and integration into food systems that redistribute surplus in order to reduce waste (e.g. the 4.1 billion pounds of food recovered by Feeding America) and cover small food-insecure groups almost completely (approximately 47 million in the USA, 9 in the UK). But their efficiency measures are disguised with in-kind valuations, and the fact that they carry a lot of cash leverage remains hidden, which supports the argument that donation-dependent businesses are sustainable but fragile when the economy is in shocks. Indian NGOs, on the other hand, focus on nutrition to address systemic issues such as child stunting (35.5% in India), with greater efficiency (5+ meals/USD) through both governmental and low-cost relationships; but due to the sheer number of beneficiaries, achieve only 1% of the 195 million

beneficiated. This contrast highlights how different socioeconomic realities shape NGO strategies.: the Indian emphasis on fresh meals enhances the pay-off on investment in education and health whereas the traditional framework is crisis management and environment pay-offs. Existing trends evolve negative changes: 733 million people worldwide are unemployed, the number of first-time aid beneficiaries in the UK is increasing, the number of disasters in the USA has increased twice compared to the pre-pandemic indicators. Such problems are compounded by the reduction of the budget, which is manifested by a reduction of global humanitarian aid by 45 percent, and inflation, which is threatening to significantly surpass the existing capabilities, as Trussell expresses his concern with deficits. Politically controversial but supported: The actions of NGOs like Trussell are said to encourage dependency by addressing symptoms (e.g. 71% referrals caused by financial inadequacies), rather than underlying causes such as inadequate benefits; though the net benefits are shown in data (e.g. PS\$5.72 in social value created per PS1 at FareShare). Interdisciplinary learning opportunities: Deploy India's nutritional technologies for American seniors; leverage the UK's surplus model to tackle India's waste issue (4 million tonnes in the UK, exceeding that in India). Prospective outlook: Forecasts for 2025 suggest that 295 million individuals would face acute insecurity; hence, hybrid funding and policy advocacy are crucial for resilience.

**Table 9:** Represents the human-centred insight among India and developed countries NGOs

Aspect	Human-Centered Insights
Dignity Approach	India: Universal and participatory models (e.g., school meals, work-for-dignity) foster inclusion but may limit personalization. Developed: Client-choice pantries and discreet delivery enhance agency but may exclude vulnerable groups.
Beneficiary Framing	India: “Students” or “community members” boost self-worth via purpose-driven roles but lack flexibility. Developed: “Clients” or “customers” are empowered through service-oriented respect but require infrastructure.
Charity vs. Empowerment	India: Education and work-based models tackle root causes (e.g., stunting) but centralized systems risk passivity. Developed: Choice and services reduce stigma, though crisis relief retains charity elements, and systemic change is slower.
Community Engagement	India: School and community projects (e.g., Goonj, Hunger Project) build resilience but are limited by scale. Developed: Volunteer-driven systems (e.g., Feeding America’s 281K volunteers) focus on distribution over deep community development.
Ethical Trade-Offs	India: Broad reach (e.g., 2.25M children) vs. personalization. Developed: Individual dignity via choice vs. systemic gaps and scalability challenges for 47M (U.S.), 9M (U.K.).
Examples	India: Akshaya Patra’s school meals, Goonj’s community kitchens, and Hunger Project’s women-led agriculture prioritize long-term development. Developed: Feeding America’s client-choice, Trussell Trust’s crisis support, and FareShare’s surplus redistribution focus on relief and advocacy.

## 5. Conclusion

Hunger relief NGOs in India and developed nations exhibit context-specific ways to address hunger, emphasizing beneficiary dignity and empowerment. In India, NGOs such as Akshaya Patra and Goonj utilize extensive, universal meal initiatives and participatory frameworks (e.g., “Cloth for Work”) to combat systemic malnutrition and poverty, designating beneficiaries as “students” or “community members” to mitigate stigma. These approaches yield a substantial impact (483 million meals yearly); however, they are limited by India’s extensive population (1.3 billion) and logistical obstacles, serving merely 1% of the 195 million undernourished individuals. Conversely, NGOs in wealthy nations, like as Feeding America and FareShare, prioritize client-choice pantries, confidentiality, and advocacy, referring to beneficiaries as “clients” to promote autonomy and addressing practically all food-insecure demographics (47 million in the U.S., 9 million in the U.K.). However, these approaches have problems with scaling and institutional barriers like poverty and food deserts. The issue of ethical trade-offs highlights the dilemma between the universal, efficient Indian institutions, which can narrow the personalization of people, and the choice-driven models of the industrialized countries, which can render the disadvantaged groups of people marginalized. Current trends—such as escalating global hunger, a growing number of aid recipients, and climate-induced resource strain—highlight the urgency for interdisciplinary solutions. Integrating India’s low-cost, nutritious models with Western redistribution systems could bridge resource and access gaps. Hybrid funding and policy engagement are vital to achieving Zero Hunger by 2030.

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