

# Feeding The Needy – A Case Study On ‘No Food Waste Campaign’

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## Abstract

Food is the necessary and essential substance required for every living organism. India produces 10% of globe's food, out of 100% of production nearly 40% food is being wasted and thrown in bins. To reduce this a social entrepreneur, Padmanaban Gopalan a young activist in India took the initiative to start No Food Waste campaign initially at Coimbatore where the excess food from wedding halls, schools were distributed to the needy. Normally corporate entrepreneurship, individual entrepreneurship which aims at profit-making has been well recognized. This paper focuses on highlighting the social entrepreneurship which is non-profit making but a voluntary contribution to the society. If today, we particularly talk about No Food Waste campaigns it was created by Padmanaban Gopalan on whom this case study is based. This study mainly comments on how a young entrepreneur starts a campaign individually without any basic needs at the initial stage later grew successfully by expanding this campaign at various locations and to extent of receiving an international award. The study also talks about the extent of contribution to the society by this campaign with respect to the reduction of food waste by the public.

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship basically means the capacity to develop a new idea, organize it and set up a business venture bearing all risks associated with business in order to make profits. It is an act of being an entrepreneur. This has been well recognized by the present society. There is something called social entrepreneurship which is a voluntary association and has not got much significance in the society. Social entrepreneurs are those who do not aim for profits rather serve people and generate positive returns to the society. This study focuses on the journey of a young social entrepreneur, A.G. Padmanaban Gopalan who strongly believes in, "Dump yards are not only for wastes, there are many

empty stomachs and let's feed them". Initially, he individually started No Food Waste campaign in Coimbatore. This campaign started with its activities in the year 2014. This campaign has spread across India with the number of volunteers and more than 5 lakhs hungry people are being fed presently. This study highlights the significance of No Food Waste, zero hunger in India and the impact of all these on social entrepreneurship.

## 2. Early Life

Padmanaban Gopalan was born in Salem on 13th April 1993, presently settled in Coimbatore. He is the son of Gopalan who is the Foreman of Indian Oil Corporation and his mother is a housewife, Baghyalakshmi. He did his schooling till 10th in St. John's matriculation in Salem and 12th in Sri Vidhya Mandir Uthangari. Padmanaban Gopalan has done his graduation in Bachelor of Production Engineering, Government College of Technology, Coimbatore and Post-Graduation in MBA, Pondicherry University. Padmanaban was very different from his young age and Dr. Abdul Kalam was his inspiration. From his childhood, he had a passion towards serving society but he didn't know that it was social entrepreneurship. In his later life, his teachers encouraged his passion for doing something for the society. He chose production engineering which thought him the required skills of entrepreneur and it became an added advantage for his dream of being a social entrepreneur.

## 3. Startup Journey and Growth Of "No Food Waste" Campaign

Padmanaban Gopalan says that out of 100% food produced 40% will be wasted and will be in bins and this hurts Padmanaban. He says there are 97 out of 118 people who suffer from hunger and this pinched him and so he felt this is the area on which something has to be done. After the interaction with few school children, Padmanaban Gopalan felt to do something to stop this food waste. On 15th October around 2.00am Padmanaban Gopalan created a domain called No Food Waste.in and uploaded with a helpline number on Facebook by announcing to contact this number whenever leftover food is found and that food will be distributed to the needy people across the city. Initially, when Padmanaban Gopalan arose with this idea of No Food Waste campaign he didn't have anything in his hands except a small penny of Rs.12 and 2 shopper bags. By the announcement on Facebook he got a call from a marriage hall to take away the leftover food and by looking at that food he felt that Rs.12 can feed 52 hungry people across the city and that moment he decided to take this journey throughout his life. After this, his friends joined hands when they looked at his posts on Facebook. Padmanaban Gopalan and his friends jointly bought a vehicle (Activa) and named it as 'Foodiva' which was used to collect the leftover food across the city. They prepared a report on the same and shared it on social media and WhatsApp through which many people got awareness about this mission and the contact increased this lead to the need of basic needs like vessels and infrastructure. A person contacts and provides the vessels, secondly the team was nominated for a "Pollination Project Visionary Award" by which they got recognition

internationally. The government provided with the infrastructure to store the collected food, vessels and all other stuff related to this mission. As the days passed this mission started growing where many college students and volunteers started joining this mission and Padmanaban Gopalan's call center was also looked after by the college students. This is the glimpse of the start of the journey. Once in a public event at Coimbatore 1100 plates of excess food, 700 plates from a marriage in which each drum had around 200 plates of food that could be fed to the needy people. This food was served mainly to the orphanages in the city, Government hospitals, Dump-yards and Rack pickers' community who were neglected by the society. This mission also helped homeless people and slums where the malnourishment and hunger plays a key role. During this transformation of food, Padmanaban Gopalan had an amazing reflection from Government hospitals which became a turning point for the growth of this mission. While Padmanaban Gopalan was traveling, two patients with hand bandaged were having a conversation that they were admitted in the hospital for more than a week and if their family members had to buy the food from the hotel it would have cost around Rs.600-700. But the patients expressed their happiness by stating that the food was availed by a person's initiative and the cost of that food got saved and was helpful to buy lots of fruits to the patients in the hospital. This conversation made him more divine and the passion for his mission got strengthened. Padmanaban Gopalan expressed that 447 hungry people at Coimbatore were fed by this campaign, but still the scope of 71% of food again was wasted and getting into the bin which made him worry. Due to this the team mapped the locations of hungry people and came up with a good model, that is as they are getting free storage space by the government, they have a vehicle and few vessels they decided for Jio tagging hunger at different locations and ask people to log on whenever they have to transform excess food to any spot this hunger mapping shows the nearest spot and the food will be transformed. After advertising this hunger mapping project on all public forums it is operating in more than 8 cities presently. There is two sustainable goals of this No Food Waste Campaign; they are 1) Zero Hunger, 2) Responsible Consumption. The objective of this campaign is to "Feed the people, Not the Landfills". To strengthen this model and improvise this campaign training was provided to the youngsters above 18years who were left out from the orphanages, driving was taught to them and they all started working as cab aggregators to build this model and also worked towards expanding this campaign. This step became advantageous as the number of members in this campaign increased and wherever there is excess of food any of the members from this campaign come to collect that food and deliver it to the needy people. Padmanaban also started the Pollination Project in the year 2015 and became an inspiring visionary grassroots leader, this project provides micro-grants for social change projects worldwide. Initially, this No Food Waste mission was started only in Coimbatore by Padmanaban Gopalan but now its growth is successful by operating for many cities with more number of volunteers. Padmanaban suggests people form small groups, join together and start such campaigns in different regions so that the aim of No Food Waste can be reached the earliest and also a large number of needy people will be served. The main goal of Padmanaban is to

stop food waste completely and make India both 'Hunger free' and 'Food waste free'. Padmanaban says "Feed the hunger, not the Landfills".

#### 4. Quick-Benefit Facilities In No Food Waste Campaign

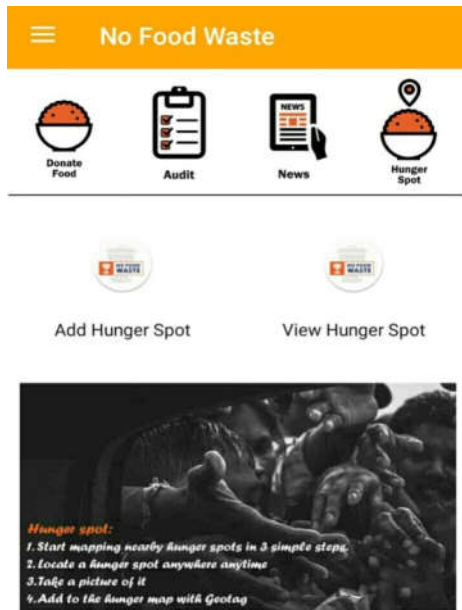


Figure: 1



Figure: 2

**Figure 1: No Food Waste app** - By this app, the location where there is excess food can be mapped and the volunteers in that region reach the spot, collect the excess food and deliver it to the needy people.

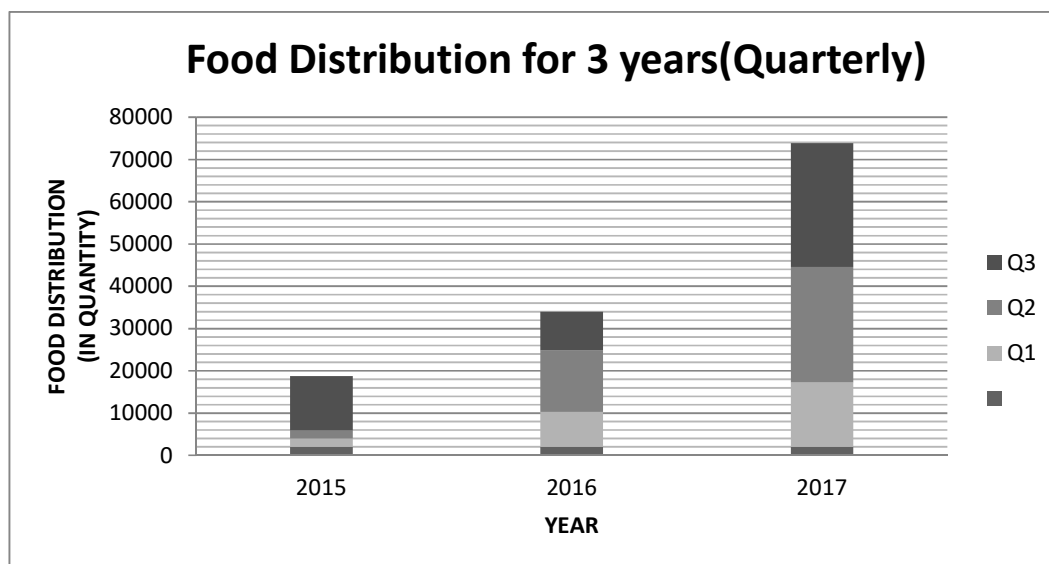
**Figure 2: Food and beverages (F&B) ATM** - This is an innovative alternative solution to feed the hunger. This is a refrigerator kept in the restaurants wherein the restaurant and the shops around can keep the excess food in that refrigerator. The customers who come to dine will receive the F&B coupons and they can give that to the hungry needy people whom they find.

### 5. Table Showing Food Distribution For Three Years

(Quarterly From 2015 – 2017)

Year	March	June	September	December
2015	2000	1930	12795	4490
2016	8240	14525	9195	13655
2017	15246	27301	29310	27260

### 6. Graph On Food Distribution Through ‘No Food Waste Campaign’



### 7. Latest Food Distribution Record



### 8. Methodology

The primary sources for collecting the information are through Personal Interview, WhatsApp conversation, Facebook messenger.

Secondary sources are Padmanaban Gopalan's "No Food Waste" app, website, web page, blogs, newspaper articles, TED-EX video of Padmanaban.

### 9. Social Media Presence

Personal Profile (Facebook)	Official Pages
Username: Padmanaban Gopalan Posts : 1,921 Videos : 9 Followers: 2,217	www.nofoodwaste.com Facebook : Padmanaban Gopalan Linked In : <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/agpadmanaban">linkedin.com/in/agpadmanaban</a> Edudharma.com

## 10.Future Plans and Goals

Future plan of this campaign is to develop the 360-degree approach towards all kinds of food waste by ensuring nothing reaches landfills or dustbins. Secondly to work on 4 objectives that is Annadaana, Auditing, Awareness, Alternative solutions. The goal is to bring the social change in every individual and to increase concern in the minds of individual towards food and needy people. For this purpose, more and more youths have to volunteer to fight against food waste in hyper-local level and No Food Waste has to become hyper-local people movement in each of the cities. The success of No Food Waste is when the operations in this campaign get closed. Padmanaban says the main aim is to end up hunger and food waste at the earliest.

## 11.Conclusion

"Hunger kills more people than AIDS" is the saying that speaks about the condition of hungry lives. Padmanaban Gopalan is few among the million Indians, who heartily felt the sufferings of needy hungry people and had the dream of serving the society from his school days and became a successful entrepreneur at the very young age and initiated No Food Waste campaign which had fed lakhs of hungry lives in a span of 3-4 years from the time of establishment. By thanking and appreciating the wonderful initiative by Padmanaban Gopalan, it is necessary to say that such entrepreneurs have to evolve for the betterment of the society. Such social entrepreneurs help to spread the awareness about the neglected section of the people in the society and provoke concern towards them in the minds of the general public. These social entrepreneurs also provide the shadow for the lives of neglected people in the society without expecting anything in return. Positive change can be brought to the society if each individual self-volunteer and contribute naturally to the society than depending on any social service support.

## 12. Table Showing Awards and Recognitions of 'No Food Waste Campaign'

### Awards and Recognitions

#### Awards:

- The International Visionary Award 2015 for pollination project
- Levis & Co with Pollination Project-Winner of 1000\$ grand by Levis & Co in association with The Pollination Project as the seed fund for the initiative
- Swachh Bharat Award 2017 for "Best Innovative Practices"
- Outstanding Youth Award 2017 – State Govt. of Tamilnadu
- Award for SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- Global Student Entrepreneur Awards
- SEVA RATNA Award
- ICCI Award

#### Recognition:

- Recognition for TN Flood Relief
- Rashtriya Swayamsiddh Samman
- Recognition by HCL and SNS Group
- LYONS
- Food and Agricultural Organization
- The Guardian – Recognised by "The Guardian" in as one of the top 10 mobile applications in the World fighting against food waste.
- ReFED-Recognised by ReFED as one of the innovative organisations working to reduce



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