

Chapter 15

Supply Chain Management for NGOs: Case Study of Akshaya Patra Foundation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter documents the supply chain management practices at The Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF), a not-for-profit organization, which began operations in June 2000 by feeding 1500 children in 5 schools in Bangalore (Massachusetts Medical Society, n.d.). On November 28, 2001 the Supreme Court of India passed an order which mandated that: “A cooked mid-day meal is to be provided in all the government and government-aided primary schools in all the states.” Akshaya Patra was called in to give testimonies to the Supreme Court in order to implement the mandate. With the partnership of the Government of India and various State Governments as well as the generosity of thousands of supporters, it has grown from a small endeavor to a mammoth force that stretches across the country. Now Akshaya Patra is the world’s largest Non-Governmental Organization, providing a free midday meal to 1.2 million underprivileged children in India (Akshaya Patra India, n.d.). It houses one of the finest technologies, and its kitchen operations are

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exemplary. The case specifically discusses its operations in Bhilai (Chhattisgarh State), India's Steel City, where it provides free meals to around 31,768 children in about 156 schools around Bhilai.

INTRODUCTION

This study is done using case study method (Woodside, 2010) and provides a real-life picture of the working of an NGO. The idea of mid-day meal was initiated by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. K. Kamaraj. When he saw a boy near the town of Cheranmahadevi herding livestock he asked him, "What are you doing with these cows? Why didn't you go to school?" The child immediately retorted, "If I go to school, will you give me food to eat? I can learn only if I eat." Unknowingly, this young boy had touched on a critical problem facing the nation's children: they cannot learn on a hungry stomach. His simple response sparked a series of events which gave rise to the Mid-day Meal Scheme as it is known today. Started in the 1960s in Tamil Nadu, the program was set up to reduce hunger and encourage universal primary education. The major objectives of this program are to avoid low-attention span due to hunger, improve school enrollment and attendance, increase socialization among castes, address malnutrition and empower women through employment. Prior to receiving midday meals, many impoverished children performed poorly in school due to short attention spans associated with extreme hunger. Children either did not enroll in school, or dropped out at a young age choosing to seek work during the school day to earn money to feed themselves and their families (SepticPen, 2011).

Although 50 percent of India's children were malnourished, the provision of midday meals was sporadic and in many places non-existent. Responding to pressure from the Indian people, the

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In November 28, 2001 the Supreme Court of India passed an order stating, "Cooked mid-day meal is to be provided in all the government and government-aided primary schools in all the states." Inconsistent food quality, occasional food poisoning, poor hygiene, and operational concerns were among the complications to the provision of government-sponsored midday meals. The meals were prepared by teachers, who cooked the same meal every day: ghoogri, gruel made of boiled wheat. Children reported that that they grew tired of eating the same food daily, they did not like the taste, and it often made them feel sick. In 2004, a fire accidentally started by a teacher cooking the midday meal killed 90 children in Tamil Nadu, an

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