

# Role of 'Guru Ka Langar' in Pandemic Management During COVID-19: Guided by Religious Belief

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## Abstract

COVID-19 has impacted people worldwide irrespective of their economic and social status, but the most affected have been the poor and vulnerable. The migrant labourers deserted by their employers during the pandemic is one such example. The widespread challenge was to ensure the supply of food and other essential stuff. This study highlights the food-management skills in the form of gratis community kitchens (*langars*) that provided free food and other related stuff to millions during the pandemic. Purely guided by its religious beliefs, the Sikh community came forward to rescue the people in its neighbourhood. This paper is based on descriptive methodology. It uses content analysis as its primary tool, along with a literature review. News reports and articles published in the print media have been used to analyse the social and economic value attached to the *Sewa* (selfless service) and *langar* (free food) benefits. Analysis indicates that *Langar* run by the Sikh community as gratis guided by their religious beliefs ensured free food supply to the millions across the world. These free kitchens turned into professionally managed 'Free Food Management Centres' and ensured food supply to the people impacted by pandemic. Academic research has concentrated mainly on the role of NGOs and the government in relief measures during COVID-19. This study is an attempt to highlight the role of religious communities in managing Covid inflicted challenges. The discussion in this paper is limited to the part of the Sikh community in ensuring a free food supply during COVID-19.

**Keywords:** Covid, Free Food, Langar, Sikh, Supply

**JEL classification:** D64, H12, N35, Q54

## 1. Introduction

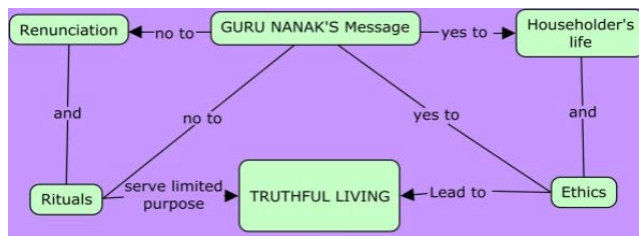
As reported by Sikhcoalition.org, a USA-based organisation, Sikhism is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest religion with more than 3 million followers worldwide. Sikhism refers to the faith practiced by people addressed as Sikhs (Disciples) who follow and revere the teachings of ten Gurus, the first being Guru Nanak and the tenth Guru Gobind Singh<sup>1</sup>. The Sikhs are the people who display their complete faith in the teachings of their Gurus, and the term Guru refers to the spiritual guides or masters who dispel ignorance

through spiritual enlightenment, where *gu* means the darkness and *ru* means the light<sup>2</sup>. The tenth Guru bestowed the Guru-Ship to the holy Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, revered by Sikhs as an eternal living Guru that continues to guide the Sikhs in both material and spiritual aspects of life, and his *diktat/sermon* is treated as final<sup>3</sup>. The Gurus spread the message of the oneness of God, who is merciful and benevolent. He abides in his creation, and to reach the higher realms of spirituality, it is a must to dwell on his name and perform the rightful action. Sikhism propagates a householder's life that

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exhibits moral character, discipline, divine knowledge, and most of all, the right action; Guru Nanak (The first Guru Says), “Devotion without virtues is impossible”<sup>4</sup>.

The three cardinal principles of Sikhism are earning a living by honest means (*Kirat Karni*), keeping oneself attuned to the almighty, feeling his presence everywhere (*Naam Japna*), and sharing one’s earnings with the people who are underprivileged and in need (*Wand Chakhna*). The ethics that form the core of Sikhism are work, worship, and charity; Sikh charitable work must support those who are vulnerable and contribute to the upliftment of society<sup>3</sup>. Jodh<sup>4</sup> in his article, ‘Ethics of Sikhs’, highlights those virtues in Sikhism are defined by Guru Nanak as, “Make your mind the farmer, good deeds the farm, modesty the water, and your body the field. Let the Lord’s Name be the seed, contentment the plow, and your humility is the fence. Doing good deeds, the seed shall sprout, and you shall see your home flourish. Cultivate Virtues as mentioned here are contentment, humility, and love.”



Source: Authors’ computation

Figure 1. Core Philosophy of Sikhism.

As per the census of 2011, 20.8 million Sikhs live in India, and 16 million of these live in Punjab province. Though they represent only 1.7% of the total population of India, in Punjab, they are in the majority and constitute 57.69% of the population. Though Sikhs are spread worldwide, they represent a sizeable minority group in countries like the USA, Canada, the U.K, Australia, New Zealand, etc. Though there are several aspects of the Sikh way of life which impact society in one or the other way. The current paper analyses the work done by the Sikh community for humanity during the recent pandemic ushered by the deadly COVID-19 virus, keeping alive the spirit taught by the teachings of ten great masters (Gurus) and the eternal Guru Granth Sahib, their present spiritual guide. The significant impact of the pandemic was felt on food supply chain management around the world. Food

shortage impacted people from all walks of life, but the significant impact was felt by the poor and vulnerable.

This paper determines how the Sikh community in India and other countries responded to the pandemic; guided by one of the three cardinal principles, *Wand Chakhna* and ensured the distribution of free food and other essential services to the people in need. The objective is also to initiate the discussion on how Government effort and relief work by NGOs can be synchronised with the food supply management undertaken by the community, guided by religious beliefs.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Core Philosophy of Sikhism

Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak (born in 1469 AD) and succeeded by nine additional living Gurus. Guruship was ceremoniously conferred onto ‘Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS)’ by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 AD, and since then, the SGGS has been worshipped as the living Guru in the form of scripture/word (Shabad Guru)<sup>5</sup>.

Sikhism is a comparatively new religion, but it has a sizeable presence in India and worldwide. In India and the Indian diaspora, Sikhism has millions of adherents. It is a relatively new religion, yet it offers distinct, generally overlooked viewpoints. Guru Granth Sahib, the final and eternal Guru (Spiritual Guide), and Gurbaani (his text) serve as a guide to the Sikh way of life<sup>3</sup>. Sikhism emphasises living a householder’s life, full of values and rightful actions leading to the betterment of society. Sikhism, a monotheistic religion founded in Northwest India at the beginning of the sixteenth century AD, sends a spiritual message beyond individual spiritual elevation and places equal emphasis on societal regeneration<sup>6</sup>. One of the core tenets of Sikh Values was established by Gurus and followed by Sikhs by their hearts is *Sewa* (Selfless service), which leads to the upliftment of the poor, vulnerable, and the people in need. The Sikh community is associated with selfless service toward society, the philosophy that defines their religious ritual of *Sewa*<sup>7</sup>.

The driving force behind this remains the core belief, i.e., God’s oneness, who is omnipotent, omnipresent, and full of compassion. He loves his entire creation equally, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, and religion. There are many verses in the ‘Guru Granth Sahib’ that discuss the

Unity of God: “Without Him, nobody else is there; He was in the first place, He is in the centre, and He will be at last”<sup>8</sup>. Sikhism proclaims that the Almighty, the creator of this entire creation himself abides in it. Sikhism promotes active and full participation in the life, combining physical strength with spiritual faith. The Sikh Gurus’ way of living between 1469 and 1708 A.D. represented that the world is God’s creation and home and must be respected and graciously lived in<sup>5</sup>. Sikhs as a community have always been at the forefront of extending help to society, especially the poor, by free distribution of *langar as gratis* through their community kitchens established in Gurudwaras and otherwise.

## 2.2 Review of the Recent Humanitarian Assistance by Sikh Individuals and Organisations

Guided by their religious belief Sikh community has always been at the forefront to help the society overcome its grief in India and around the world. The contribution has been immense both individually and in organised manner since the inception of Sikhism. The focus of this review remains on the recent contribution by the community to disaster management in India and around the world.

During the Kashmir floods in 2014 local Gurudwaras opened their doors to the majority Muslim community of Kashmir and provided them food and shelter without any discrimination. DSGMC (Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee) and SGPC (Shiromani Gurudwara Parbhandak Committee) set up various 24-hour free langar at various locations across Sri Nagar city. The flood victims, the bulk of whom were Muslims, expressed gratitude to the Sikh community and stated that they will always be obliged to them for their assistance because they did not discriminate based on faith<sup>9</sup>. Keeping the same vigour Sikh community remained at the forefront to rescue the people of the United Kingdom during floods in 2014. In Somerset and southwest England, where floods have been dubbed “biblical” by Prime Minister David Cameron, a group of Sikhs from Berkshire and the West Midlands have won hearts by volunteering to bring crucial supplies and aid relief efforts<sup>10</sup>.

The 7.6-magnitude Gorkha Earthquake in Nepal struck on April 25, 2015, and resulted in widespread destruction. India based Sikh organisation; DSGMC

extended its help to the people of Nepal. DSGMC during the Nepal floods decided to send 25000 food packets on daily basis to help the victims of the Nepal earthquake<sup>11</sup>. Khalsa-Aid a team of Sikh volunteers headed by Ravi Singh Khalsa was among the first to assist the people of Kerala affected by floods. During the 2018 Kerala floods, Khalsa Aid was the leading organisation in providing aid to more than a million individuals who had lost their homes, utilizing its Indian volunteer network, it ensured that individuals received freshly prepared meals, potable water, mosquito nets, medications, and clothing to prevent the spread of water-borne illnesses<sup>12</sup>.

The selfless service exhibited by the Sikh community during the COVID-19 pandemic to help the affected people who were in dire need of essentials has garnered appreciation from all quarters of the world, including their home country India. Irrespective of being a minority community, the quantum of help extended and contribution to the relief made by them to the society during all waves of COVID-19 has been immense. To build new and modern methods of volunteerism and other-focused humanitarian activities during the Covid-19 crisis, Sikhs used the fundamental ethics of humanism, service, and community-based action ingrained in the Sikh worldview<sup>13</sup>.

The support extended by the community members of groups and even in individual capacity has been of great value in ensuring regular food supplies to the people affected by the pandemic and receiving comprehensive coverage in national and international media. A brief reference to this has been made in academic and research literature, but it has not been able to portray the size of the effort put in by the community to help the world when it needed it most. This study addresses this gap by highlighting the quantum of selfless service extended by the community worldwide in ensuring regular food and other supplies in a fight against the sorrows inflicted by the pandemic.

Moreover, such selfless activities guided by religious beliefs can supplement the efforts of Governments and NGOs at a time when there is a severe resource crunch. The moderating role of religious beliefs in donor attitude suggests that governments and non-profit organisations should recognise the significant impact of religious beliefs in motivating people to participate in pandemic fundraising efforts. These findings may lead to greater understanding and policies that will help relief and donation efforts in various ways<sup>14</sup>.

### 3. Methodology

This is a descriptive paper primarily based on the information available through the various articles published in the print media and literature review. The study involves content analysis of news reports and related articles highlighting the selfless service provided by the Sikh community across the world. The purposive sampling method has been used to select the national daily newspapers of the respective countries included in the study, which covers relevant socio-economic aspects. Moreover, reports from the newspapers with over 0.5 million readerships have only been included covering both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of Covid-19.

### 4. Free Kitchen (Langar): A Saviour for Migrant Labour during the Pandemic in India

Most workers in India work in the informal sector, and a sizeable number of migrant labourers work in urban cities with their roots in rural India. According to the Economic Survey of 2018–2019, 93% of the Indian labour force is employed in the informal economy, and as per the 2011 census, India's internal migrants are estimated to number 450 million<sup>15</sup>. In India, the total lockdown was announced on March 25 that continued till 7<sup>th</sup> June, and unlocked one kicked in on 8<sup>th</sup> June with some relaxation. The initial days of this sudden lockdown left millions of migrant workers stranded with minimal means to survive. The pandemic resulted in human disaster for the millions of workers who came from eastern and central states to Delhi, Maharashtra, and Gujrat to fuel labour supply in the urban informal economy and were suddenly abandoned, left with only option to reach safely back to their villages, resulting in the highest displacement in the Indian Subcontinent since India-Pakistan partition in 1947<sup>16</sup>.

The plight of these workers was heard by the management of Gurudwaras, the Sikh temples, and they were provided *langar* (free food) en route, Gurudwaras, or Sikh temples, have long been known for their hospitality and community kitchens, known as langars<sup>17</sup>. The coverage of these benevolent acts by several Indian newspapers reflects the economic and social value attached to these acts of selfless service during the crisis. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 05, 2020, Indian Express, in the article titled,

'COVID-19: Sikh outfit to provide food for homebound migrants in Delhi,' reports the efforts of the DSGMC to provide nutritious *langar* to homebound laborers<sup>18</sup>. Kamal Narang, in his article, 'Give us today our daily bread published in The Hindu Business Line on May 29, 2020, reports how Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, a prominent Sikh temple in the heart of Delhi that operates *langar* all year, had been feeding at least 75,000 people every day in and around Delhi, the food was being supplied to migrant labourers, police officers, and other law enforcement employees<sup>19</sup>.

On 02<sup>nd</sup> June 2020, The Quint, in its article titled, Delhi Gurudwara Sets up 'Langar on Wheels to Feed the Needy', reports how the Sikh community has come in large numbers to help the underprivileged. It highlights the concept of the langar on wheel facility started by the DSGMC to add mobility to food supply and transport food distribution to the doors of the needy. It was decided to station these langar vans at public places like bus stops and railroad stations to ensure food supplies to migrant laborers<sup>20</sup>. On the same day, Hindustan Times, a premier English Newspaper under the caption, 'Langar on Wheels' is dishing out thousands of meals daily in Delhi' reported that DSGMC had planned the distribution of langar through its 15 mobile langar vans as even when lockdown limitations had been eased, individuals were still in a condition of severe sadness and suffering due to lack of income and depleting money. To guarantee that no one goes to bed hungry, it decided to supply food to an estimated 15,000 individuals living in slum clusters, railroad stations, bus stops, rain shelters, and pavements daily, and the target was achieved. This decision was taken given the fact that several NGOs and institutions that



Source: Indian Asian News Service (IANS).

**Image 1.** Food distribution under the langar on wheels program by DSGMC volunteers.

were distributing meals to the poor halted their services after easing out of lockdown restrictions<sup>21</sup>.

On May 30, 2021, in the article captioned. 'At 82, Khaira Babaji turns legend feeding 3M on the Maharashtra highway' reports a remarkable increase in *langar* distribution at 'Guru Ka Langar' (Guru's free kitchen), near Karanji village on NH-7 in Maharashtra during the pandemic. Baba Karnail Singh Khaira, respectfully addressed as Khaira Babaji, 82 years of age, submitted based on throw-away plate counts that more than 3 million people had been fed in the last 15 months, with 2 million in the first 75 days and the rest in the subsequent 12 months (June 1, 2020-May 31, 2021), plus over 600,000 'takeaway meals,' and counting<sup>22</sup>.

This selfless service did not only remain limited to free food distribution during the pandemic. United Sikhs, United Nations-affiliated human rights and advocacy organisation also helped the people in distress to bury or cremate their loved ones with dignity in Delhi. Sunalini Mathew, in her article published on May 29, 2021, in The Hindu, records how Mr. Pritam Singh, who heads United Sikhs with his team of 7 members, provided free assistance to around 400 families attempting to execute the final rites of relatives who had died with COVID-19 during the past year. These families felt deserted by their near ones at the time of need and could not even get any help from the Government either, due to the complete breakdown of administration during such a crisis<sup>23</sup>. Shaheed Bhagat Singh Sewa Dal, an organisation founded in 1995 with over 25 volunteers, extended exemplary help by picking up bodies from homes and hospitals for cremation and facilitated the cremation of around 4000 victims.

#### 4.1 Oxygen Langar during Second Wave of Pandemic

During the second wave, India, like many other regions of the world, mainly Europe, has seen a significant increase in COVID-19 cases and deaths. It stood as the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest country with identified cases of COVID-19 as of 10, 2021<sup>24</sup>. As the second wave of the pandemic caused severe oxygen scarcity, Gurudwaras worked out the new idea of 'oxygen langar' where patients in need were supplied with oxygen beds and other basic amenities. In Delhi NCR (National Capital Region), there was an acute shortage of beds and oxygen due to the unprecedented demand and insufficient infrastructure to cope with the situation. As a result, hospital executives and front-line medical

personnel took to social media to plead for oxygen to save lives. At the same time, in Indirapuram, near New Delhi, a Gurudwara put up an oxygen langar for patients in need<sup>25</sup>. This life saving facility at Indirapuram extended its help to 80 to 90 patients daily whereas the Covid facility at Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib situated in front of the Parliament House of India arranged 400 oxygen beds for the patients<sup>26,27</sup>.

The shortage of oxygen led to the heavy loss of lives in India, including Delhi. Hospitals throughout India ran short of beds and vital supplies during the deadly second wave of COVID-19, causing the deaths of thousands of patients and amplifying an already dreadful outbreak. According to one estimate, oxygen shortages have killed at least 600 individuals in 2 months<sup>28</sup>. The Sikh Gurudwaras and the community organised oxygen langars and even set up temporary makeshift hospitals to ensure the timely treatment of patients in need. To help India grapple with the shortage of oxygen, one of the Khalsa Aid's volunteers, Jas Singh, flew a flight full of oxygen concentrators from the United Kingdom<sup>29</sup>.



Source: (AP Photo/Altaf Qadri).

**Image 2.** A patient suffering from COVID-19 receiving oxygen from a Sikh place of Worship

#### 4.2 Langar Ensuring the Food Supplies to a Neighbourhood in the USA

Sikhs have been in the USA for the past 125 years. As per an estimate, their population stands out to be around 700000, with several Gurudwaras across the country. Since 9/11, they have been subject to hate crimes due to misconception. On August 5, 2012, an assailant killed six worshippers in the deadliest attack at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Despite such acts of hate inflicted on the community without any reason, the spirit to help the society could not be admonished, and the community stood high with helping hands at the time help was needed

most. In this section, Seva performed by the community in the USA neighbourhood is highlighted using the account of the information available in print media.

On June 8, 2020, as reported in the New York Times under the headline, 'How to Feed Crowds in a Protest or Pandemic? The Sikhs Know', Priya Krishna highlighted that a group of 30 volunteers cooked and served more than 145000 free meals in merely ten weeks. These vegetarian meals were meant for medical care workers of New York City Hospital or anyone else in need or in search of a hot meal<sup>30</sup>. The report in HUFFPOST by Carol Kuruvilla dated July 4, 2020, under the heading, 'Sikh Volunteers Are Delivering Thousands of Meals During the Pandemic', records how Sikh volunteers through Gurudwaras are quickly and efficiently producing and serving food to numerous people across New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, and other cities and even delivered groceries on request to the people in need<sup>31</sup>. Evan Simko Bednarski, in his report titled, 'US Sikhs tirelessly travel to their communities to feed hungry Americans' published on 9th July 2020 in CNN, talks of an organised effort by the Sikh community in Riverside, California, to initiate food assistance in the early phase of coronavirus pandemic and as reported by a volunteer Gurpreet Singh, the line of the vehicles of the food assistance seekers at times used to stretch 2 to 3 miles and thus sensing the gravity of problem the food service was extended for a whole week<sup>32</sup>.

The Sikh Coalition, founded as a volunteer organisation in response to 9/11 hate crimes against Sikhs in the USA, reports the various programs undertaken by Sikh Volunteers across the USA. Free Kitchen at the Gurdwara in Detroit, Michigan, served food to school children and vulnerable senior citizens. Another Gurudwara in Memphis, Tennessee, provided free meals to international students at the University of Memphis campus. A group of young Sikh volunteers in St. Louis, Missouri, distributed masks, essential supplies, and food to the homeless and the ones in need. On similar lines, a gurdwara in Glen Rock, New Jersey, cooked and provided hundreds of meals per week to the needy. In Stockton, California, Sikh community members were engaged in delivering orders of dry foods, cleaning supplies, and other essential stuff required by the families in that area. The volunteers ensured continuous and uninterrupted supply to the neighbourhood. The aim was to ensure people do not suffer due to the scarcity and inaccessibility of goods<sup>33</sup>.



Source: Ryan Christopher Jones for the New York Times.

**Image 3.** The Sikh centre of New York in Queens Village distributed more than 145,000 free meals as part of their spiritual practice of feeding anybody in need for over two months.

### 4.3 Australian Sikh Volunteers ensure their Neighbourhood doesn't go Hungry

As per the Australian Census 2011, the Sikh population rose by 174%, from 26,000 in 2006 to 72,000 in 2011 and was recorded as the fastest-growing religion. The estimated population of Sikhs at present in Australia is 125000. This constitutes merely 0.5% of the entire population of Australia. Despite being a fraction of the whole population, the stories about their quest to keep their Australian neighbourhoods served with ample food supplies during the pandemic outweigh their size. Australian reporter Matilda Boseley, in her article 'If you want anything done, get the Sikhs': community wins admirers for bushfire and Covid aid' dated Sat Jun 13, 2020, in The Guardian talks of Sikh volunteers from the organisation United Sikhs, a global aid organisation associated with the UN who drove to Bairnsdale, Australia, people there were facing the worst bushfire crisis in decades. The group cooked langar (free hot vegetarian meals) for those who lost their homes in January's Gippsland fires. She further adds that the United Sikh has become a prominent member of Australia's emergency response and has played a vital role in providing food assistance in vulnerable areas of Victoria's and Wyndham Park community centre in Melbourne<sup>34</sup>.

Jewel Topsfield, in her editorial, 'Meet the Sikhs who keep coming to the rescue for vulnerable Victorians' dated July 18, 2020, in The Age, talks of the essential Sikh tenet Sewa (selfless service) that motivates Sikh volunteers

in Australia, to run the food assistance program for the people poorly impacted by the pandemic out of their large kitchen at the Sikh Community Gurdwara centre in Devon Meadows. The service has been open to international students, senior citizens, single mothers, the homeless, self-isolating, or anyone else facing hardships during this pandemic. It could be availed by texting their orders by noon each day. An army of 170 masked volunteers worked in staggered shifts in the Devon Meadows kitchen. The routine of these volunteers starts with the chopping of vegetables chopping at 8 p.m., meal preparation between 12 and 3 pm, packing by 4 pm, and food delivered between 5 pm and 7 pm<sup>35</sup>.



Source: Simon Shluter.

**Image 4.** Manpreet Singh helps serve meals at a centre in Devon Meadows

#### 4.4 Auckland in Gratitude - Food Assistance provided by the Supreme Sikh Society

As reported by Amanda Saxton, on October 4, 2019, Sikhs have doubled their population since 2013 and quadrupled since 2006 and are one of the fastest-growing religions in New Zealand; as per the latest census, the population is estimated to be 41000, is around 1% of the entire population of the country. Despite its minuscule minority, New Zealand is grateful for its services during the pandemic.

Kirsty Wynn reported in her article, 'COVID-19 coronavirus Delta outbreak: Sikh community feed thousands over lockdown' published in The New Zealand Herald on 30 Aug, 2021 that Daljit Singh, the New Zealand president of the Supreme Sikh Society, received 370 text messages and 200 emails over just one night as a thanks giving for the food assistance provided by society to the people in need. As per an estimate the society distributed over 120,000 food parcels to the people of Auckland during the first lockdown. Society gives credit for this



Source: www.nzherald.co.nz

**Image 5.** Takani Gurdwara became a drive-in drive-out centre for food parcel collection

uninterrupted food supply service at such a large scale to their religious belief system, generous farmers, suppliers, and last but not least members of the Sikh community. As quoted by the president of the society, "We have suppliers who are very generous, giving fruit and vegetables, but we also have 260 people on the WhatsApp group, and they donate. Someone will say I will buy 200 loaves of bread this time, or 200 bottles of milk"<sup>26</sup>.

#### 4.5 A Brief Account of Sewa by the Sikh Community in their Second Home-Canada

Canada is referred to as the second home of the Sikhs, with thousands of Sikhs taking an opportunity to migrate to the country. The contribution of the Sikh Community toward the progress of Canada is immense in all walks of life. The community also commands a sizeable political influence in its second home too.

Guided by their belief system that evolved from the teachings of their great Gurus, during pandemic the community has been at the forefront in ensuring a continuous supply of food and other essential items to the needy in their second home too. Salmaan Farooqui in his article, 'Sikhs expand their community kitchens in response to COVID-19 hardships' published in THE GLOBE AND MAIL on January 03, 2021, and later updated on January 21, 2021, reports about the Dashmesh Culture center that has been operating as a free Sikh community kitchen, since 1980 and distributing free hot vegetarian meals to the people who need it. He quotes Mr. Raj Sidhu, director of operations at the center, "Langar is a very pivotal aspect of our religion. Nobody should go hungry"<sup>37</sup>.

The Gurudwara has reportedly distributed over 80000 meals in the Calgary area since the start of the pandemic and the demography of recipients has grown from South Asia to all communities for whom vegetarian curries became part of their diet first time. The most benefitted are elderly people, students, and single mothers.

## 5. Conclusion

Religious beliefs if imbibed well in the followers of a religion are carried forward by their generations to come and aid society at large to overcome its sufferings. The perfect example is the Sikh community which has always achieved milestones in extending a helping hand to the people in need irrespective of their caste colour, creed, and religion. The free community kitchens that form an indispensable part of their religious place Gurudwara, have become professionally managed and established 'Free Food Management Centres' across the world. During the pandemic, Guru's langar ensured food and other required supplies to the poor, vulnerable, and everyone in need. These services were and continue to be provided worldwide, where ever community resides irrespective of number. Pandemic has taught us a lesson to stand with one another during a crisis. Civil and religious society if stands united, the impact of such adversaries can be mitigated if not eliminated. There is a need to explore the opportunity to involve religious communities with social service as part of their belief system, a part of formal disaster management set up by the Governments and NGOs.

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