INDICATOR 2.3.2 & 2.3.5: STUDENTS AND STAFF HUNGER INTERVENTIONS

Indicator Definition

This indicator evaluates whether HEIs provide specific interventions to prevent or alleviate hunger among students and staff. Such interventions may include food banks, food pantries, emergency meal support, food vouchers, or partnerships with community food assistance programs.

KAHE's Hunger Prevention and Alleviation Interventions

Karpagam Academy of Higher Education has implemented a comprehensive suite of interventions ensuring no student or staff member experiences hunger due to financial constraints or emergency circumstances. These interventions operate continuously and are integrated into the institution's student support infrastructure.

1. Subsidized Campus Dining Facilities for Universal Access

Rationale and Scope:

The most fundamental hunger prevention intervention is ensuring reliable access to nutritious, affordable meals throughout the academic year. KAHE operates multiple dining facilities across campus serving students and staff at subsidized prices significantly below market rates. Unlike commercial food establishments focused on profit maximization, institution-operated dining services prioritize accessibility, nutrition, and food security.

Food Service Infrastructure:

KAHE maintains five major food service facilities:

A. Hostel Mess and Dining Halls (Boys and Girls)

- **Capacity:** Serves 3,200 residential students
- **Service Model:** Fixed-menu meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and à la carte snacks
- **Operating Hours:** 6:30 AM – 9:30 PM daily, 365 days per year
- **Licensing:** FSSAI-licensed with regular inspections
- **Staffing:** Trained kitchen personnel, dietitian consultation, quality assurance supervisors
- **Menu and Nutrition:** Residential dining provides balanced meals meeting nutritional requirements for young adults engaged in intensive academic work. Daily menus rotate weekly, incorporating:
    - **Breakfast:** Idli, dosa, pongal, upma, bread, milk, tea, coffee
    - **Lunch:** Rice, sambar, rasam, two vegetable curries (poriyal, kootu), yogurt, pickle, appalam

- **Dinner:** Similar to lunch with menu variation; occasional special meals (biryani, variety rice)
- **Snacks:** Evening tea/coffee with savories (vadai, bajji, samosa, bonda)
- Hostel residents pay a semester-based meal plan fee (approximately ₹100-120 per day for three meals), representing exceptional value and preventing food insecurity among residential students.

Hostel mess offering wholesome meals to hostel residents

B. Bliss Catering Services

- **Location:** Central campus
- **Clientele:** Day-scholar students, faculty, staff, and visitors
- **Service Model:** Food court with multiple cuisine options
- **Operating Hours:** 8:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- **Licensing:** FSSAI-licensed with regular inspections
- Bliss Catering offers diverse food choices including South Indian, North Indian, Chinese, and Continental dishes, accommodating various dietary preferences and cultural backgrounds. Pricing is kept affordable for the student community:
  - **Full vegetarian meals:** ₹70-90
  - **Mini meals:** ₹60-75
  - **Tiffin items:** ₹40-70
  - **Snacks and beverages:** ₹15-60

C. Karpagam Canteen (Arts Canteen)

- **Location:** Arts and Science Faculty block
- **Clientele:** Primarily Arts and Science students; open to entire campus
- **Specialty:** Quick-service tiffin items, snacks, and beverages
- **Operating Hours:** 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- **Pricing:** Similar to Bliss Catering; emphasis on budget-friendly options

This centrally located canteen serves as the primary dining facility for day-scholar students who may have limited time between classes. The menu emphasizes quick, nutritious options that can be consumed during short breaks.

Students eating their meals in the Karpagam Canteen

D. Ganga Store and Food Stalls

- **Distribution:** Multiple small kiosks across campus
- **Service:** Grab-and-go snacks, packaged foods, beverages, fresh fruit juices
- **Operating Hours:** 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM
- **Pricing:** ₹15-60 per item

These distributed service points ensure students have access to snacks and beverages regardless of their location on campus, reducing the temptation to skip meals due to distance or time constraints.

2. Emergency Food Assistance and Discretionary Support

Student Welfare Fund for Food Security:

KAHE maintains a confidential Student Welfare Fund providing emergency financial assistance for students facing unexpected hardships affecting their ability to afford adequate nutrition. The fund operates under the following principles:

Eligibility:

- Any currently enrolled student experiencing financial emergency
- Situations may include: Family income loss, medical emergencies depleting savings, delayed scholarship disbursement, natural disasters affecting family

Application Process:

- Student approaches Student Welfare Officer or Faculty Advisor confidentially
- Brief description of circumstances (documentation if available but not mandatory)
- Assessment by Student Welfare Committee within 48 hours
- Assistance provided discreetly to avoid stigmatization

Forms of Assistance:

- Direct meal vouchers for campus dining facilities (₹500-2,000 per month as needed)
- Temporary hostel mess fee waiver or installment plan
- Grocery vouchers for students living off-campus
- Connection to government welfare schemes (SNAP equivalents, education fee waivers)

Annual Support Statistics (2023-2024):

- Students assisted: 68 individuals
- Total food assistance disbursed: ₹3,42,000 (~$4,100 USD)
- Average assistance duration: 2-3 months until student circumstances stabilized
- Follow-up: Academic advisors monitor student progress ensuring food security interventions enable continued education

Confidentiality and Dignity: All food assistance is provided with utmost discretion. Recipients receive standard meal vouchers or canteen credits indistinguishable from regular payment methods, ensuring no student faces stigma or embarrassment when accessing food support.

3. Faculty and Staff Meal Access

Subsidized Staff Dining:

KAHE recognizes that food security extends to all campus community members. Faculty and staff have access to the same dining facilities at subsidized rates comparable to students. This is particularly important for support staff (maintenance personnel, cleaning staff, security guards) who may have limited incomes.

Special Provisions:

- Night shift staff (security, hostel wardens) receive complimentary dinner and midnight refreshments
- Temporary/contractual workers provided subsidized meal access rather than excluded
- Faculty working late hours for research or student mentoring can access hostel mess dining

This inclusive approach ensures that employment at KAHE provides reliable food access as part of the compensation package, addressing food insecurity among staff.

4. Food Recovery and Sharing Initiatives

Surplus Food Redistribution:

KAHE has instituted protocols for redistributing safe, surplus food rather than discarding it:

"Share Table" Program:

- Students can place unopened packaged items or untouched whole foods on designated sharing tables in dining halls
- Other students can freely take items from share tables
- Reduces waste while ensuring no edible food goes uneaten when someone else may need it
- Daily volume: 150-200 items shared (packaged snacks, fruits, bread items)

Staff Meal Provision from Hostel Surplus:

- Edible surplus from hostel mess operations (prepared food that was not served) is offered to campus security and maintenance staff for evening meals
- Operates within food safety protocols (food held at safe temperatures, consumed within 4 hours)
- Prevents waste while providing nutritious meals to staff who might otherwise skip dinner due to late work schedules

Community Partnership (Planned Initiative): KAHE is developing partnerships with local charitable organizations to donate surplus packaged and sealed food items to community food banks serving

economically disadvantaged families in Coimbatore. This initiative, expected to launch in 2025, will extend the institution's food security impact beyond campus boundaries.

5. Nutrition Education and Food Literacy

Beyond Food Access – Building Capability:

Hunger prevention requires not only food availability but also knowledge about nutrition, budgeting, meal planning, and food preparation. KAHE conducts regular workshops and awareness programs:

Personal Finance and Meal Budgeting Workshops:

- Conducted by Student Counseling Center in collaboration with Department of Food Technology
- Topics: Creating food budgets, meal planning on limited income, low-cost nutritious recipes, avoiding predatory lending
- Target audience: First-year students transitioning to independent living

Cooking Skills Sessions:

- Practical demonstrations of simple, nutritious, budget-friendly recipes
- Emphasis on traditional, whole-food-based cooking requiring minimal equipment
- Particularly valuable for students living in off-campus accommodations with basic kitchen access

Nutrition Awareness Campaigns:

- Monthly seminars on topics: Balanced diet essentials, preventing malnutrition, reading food labels, healthy snacking
- Distribution of educational materials (posters, handouts, digital resources)
- Social media campaigns highlighting healthy eating on a budget

Regulatory Compliance and Food Safety

All KAHE dining facilities operate under current Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) licenses, ensuring:

- Regular inspections by food safety officers
- Adherence to hygiene and sanitation standards
- Safe food handling and storage practices
- Proper waste disposal and pest control
- Staff training in food safety protocols

Impact and Continuous Improvement

Student Satisfaction and Food Security Metrics:

Annual student satisfaction surveys include food security assessment questions:

- "Do you regularly have access to enough nutritious food?" – 96.3% responded "Yes" (2023-24)
- "Have you ever skipped meals due to lack of money?" – 3.7% responded "Sometimes" or "Often"
- "Are campus food prices affordable?" – 91.2% responded "Affordable" or "Very Affordable"

The small percentage reporting food insecurity (3.7%) are proactively identified and connected with Student Welfare Fund support, demonstrating the effectiveness of intervention mechanisms.

Continuous Quality Improvement:

- Monthly Food Committee meetings with student representatives providing feedback
- Menu modifications based on consumption patterns and preferences
- Pricing reviews ensuring affordability while maintaining financial sustainability
- Infrastructure upgrades (seating capacity, kitchen equipment, waste management systems)