REPORT ON

INTERNAL GENDER AUDIT 2024-25

Submitted by

INTERNAL GENDER AUDIT COMMITTEE

BIJNI COLLEGE, BIJNI

DIST-CHIRANG, (BTR), ASSAM, PIN 783390

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Introduction

Gender equality and inclusivity are crucial indicators of an institution's commitment to academic excellence and social justice. In higher education, ensuring equal opportunities for all genders transcends compliance with legal frameworks such as the *Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH)*; it reflects the institution's role in shaping a safe, supportive, and empowering learning environment.

Bijni College, located in the Chirang district of Assam under the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), is a leading centre of higher learning that serves students from varied ethnic, linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds. The college community, which includes students, teaching faculty, and non-teaching staff, reflects this diversity in its everyday life. In such a setting, it becomes important to understand how gender roles, opportunities, and perceptions are formed and experienced on campus. **An Academic Gender Audit** provides the institution with a means to carefully examine its practices, infrastructure, and policies in relation to gender sensitivity and inclusivity, and to identify areas where further improvement is needed

Through the gender audit, the college seeks to identify its strengths in promoting equity, as well as gaps that may hinder the full participation of students and employees across gender lines. The audit also provides a structured framework to guide future initiatives, ensuring that gender mainstreaming becomes a central component of academic and administrative functioning.

Objectives

The academic gender audit at Bijni College has been undertaken with the following objectives:

1. **To understand gender sensitivity and awareness:**
To examine how students, teaching faculty, and non-teaching staff of Bijni College engage with the idea of gender equality in their everyday campus life. This includes studying classroom interactions, participation in events, and workplace relationships within the college.

2. **To evaluate equal opportunities on campus:**
To assess whether students and staff across genders have fair access to academic participation, leadership positions, cultural programmes, and extracurricular activities, and to see how equality translates into practice.

3. **To review institutional mechanisms:**
To study the functioning, accessibility, and visibility of existing bodies such as the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), grievance redressal mechanisms, and awareness initiatives, and to understand whether these mechanisms are effective and trusted by the campus community.

4. **To identify infrastructural and safety-related needs:**
To explore gaps in infrastructure that affect inclusivity and safety—such as the availability of gender-neutral spaces, menstrual hygiene facilities, counselling services, and secure campus environments.

5. To generate practical recommendations:
To propose steps that will help Bijni College institutionalise gender equity, comply with national legal frameworks like the POSH Act (2013), and at the same time contribute to building a more just, inclusive, and socially progressive learning environment in the region.

Methodology

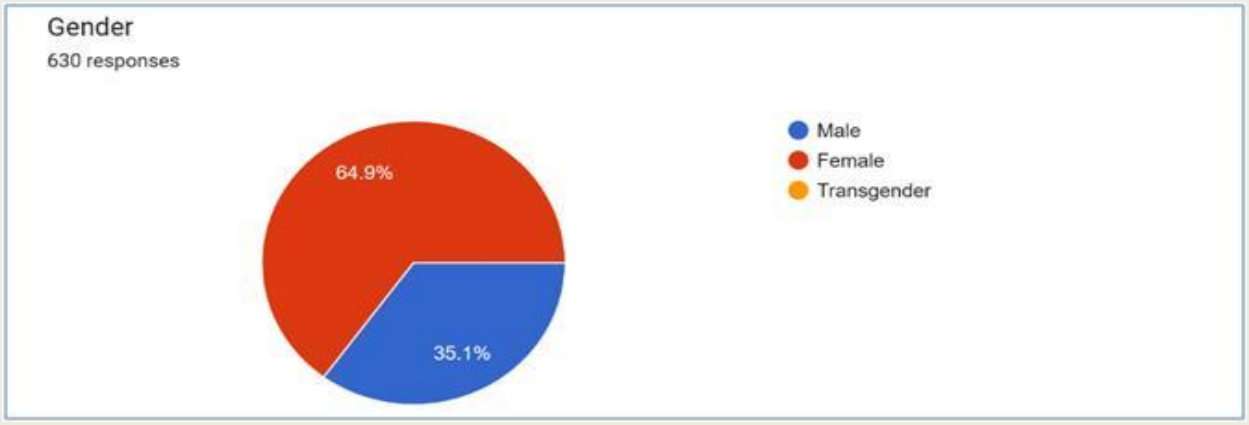
The present academic gender audit of Bijni College was carried out using a **questionnaire survey and participatory observation** as the primary methods of data collection. A structured questionnaire was prepared in the form of a **Google Form** to ensure wide accessibility and equal opportunity for participation. The questionnaire was **circulated among students (UG and PG), and employees (both teaching and non-teaching staff)** of the college to gather their perceptions and experiences regarding gender opportunities, inclusivity, safety, and institutional mechanisms.

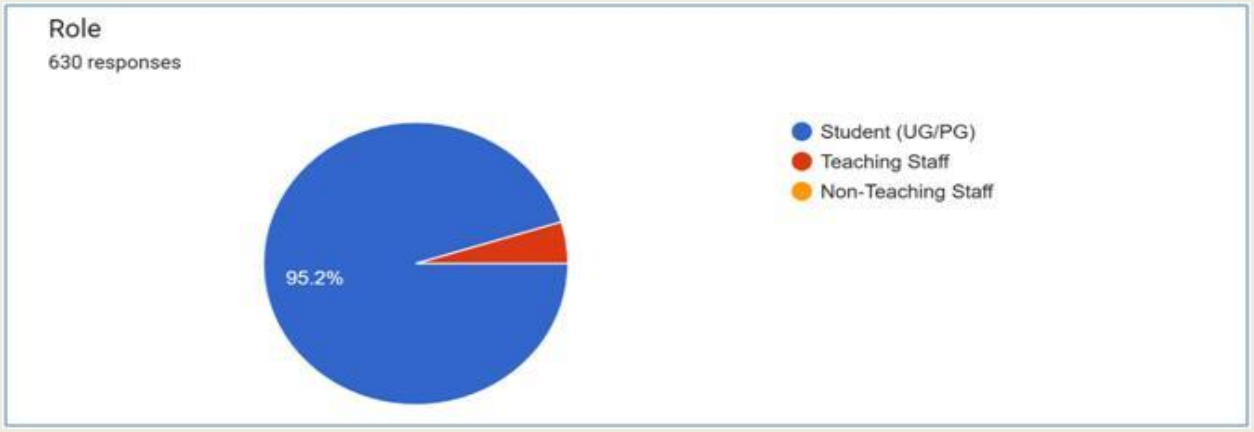
The responses collected through the Google Form provided the **primary dataset** for the audit. Alongside this, **participatory observation** was employed to understand the everyday gender dynamics, behavioural patterns, and infrastructural accessibility on campus. Together, the survey responses and field observations enabled a comprehensive assessment of gender opportunities and challenges within the institution.

The collected data were carefully **compiled, thematically analysed, and interpreted** to identify recurring patterns, strengths, and gaps in Bijni College's gender environment. The analysis forms the basis of the findings, critical insights, and recommendations outlined in this report.

Detailed Findings and Interpretation

The academic gender audit of Bijni College is based on responses collected from a total of 630 participants, which included **undergraduate and postgraduate students, teaching faculty, and non-teaching staff**. Among them, **64.9% (409 respondents) were male** and **35.1% (221 respondents) were female**. In terms of roles, **95.2% (600 respondents) were students**, while **4.8% (30 respondents) were teaching staff**.





1. Campus Climate & Everyday Experience

What respondents said:

Among the 630 respondents, the majority described the college environment as "free" and "supportive," with faculty members offering encouragement and students reporting equal participation in academic and cultural activities. However, a smaller but significant proportion mentioned occasional gender-biased remarks, feelings of discomfort in poorly lit or isolated campus areas, and the absence of certain facilities, such as a boys' common room.

Interpretation:

The findings indicate that the overall climate is positive, but not uniform. While most of the 630 participants perceive Bijni College as respectful, the recurring reports of bias and infrastructural concerns highlight that micro-level issues persist. This demonstrates that the campus climate varies by space and situation, and requires systematic interventions.

(For the reference see the figure- 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 from the section Response Patterns by Questions)

2. Awareness, Training & Communication

What respondents asked for:

Many highlighted the need for regular gender-sensitivity workshops, induction sessions for freshers, and seminars on respectful behaviour, consent, and equality. They also called for more effective communication about existing committees and services.

Evidence of a problem:

A recurring pattern in the data was responses such as "I don't know" or "No opinion" when asked about institutional mechanisms like the ICC or grievance procedures. This indicates a lack of awareness, which directly reduces the effectiveness of existing support structures.

Why this matters:

Awareness is foundational—without it, even robust policies remain underutilised. For sustainable impact, gender-sensitivity training should be mandatory for all cohorts (new students, newly appointed teachers, and administrative staff) and repeated at regular intervals.

(For the reference see the figure- 8, 9, 10 & 11 from the section Response Patterns by Questions)

3. Policies, Grievance Redressal & Governance (ICC/POSH)

Respondent demands:

Participants recommended strengthening the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), ensuring confidentiality and time liness in case resolution, and increasing visibility of its members and functions. A strong call was made to establish a Gender Sensitisation Unit (GSU) and introduce accessible complaint channels (both online and offline).

Observed gaps:

Several respondents noted the lack of visible, trusted reporting mechanisms. A number of them recommended anonymous complaint options, pointing towards a trust deficit.

Implication:

Robust grievance redressal is not only a legal requirement under the POSH Act but also essential for building trust and ensuring accountability. Transparency in processes, along with protection for complainants, will encourage reporting and deter misconduct.

(For the reference see the figure- 1, 2, 3 & 4 from the section Response Patterns by Questions)

4. Curriculum, Pedagogy & Representation

Suggestions from respondents:

- Introduce gender studies as an elective or add-on course.
- Incorporate gender-sensitive readings and case studies into existing syllabi.
- Train faculty to use inclusive language and examples in teaching.

Why this is strategic:

Curriculum interventions shape long-term cultural change. They encourage students to critically reflect on gender dynamics. Even small steps—like guest lectures, modules in existing courses, or electives—can begin this shift and signal the institution's commitment to inclusivity.

(For the reference see the figure- 15, 16, & 17 from the section Response Patterns by Questions)

5. Infrastructure & Safety

Key requests:

- Menstrual hygiene facilities (dispensers and disposal units).
- Improved lighting and CCTV in vulnerable spaces.

Concrete complaints:

Some reported discomfort in specific campus areas due to poor lighting and the absence of safe gathering places. Others highlighted the lack of common rooms for boys. Several respondents requested menstrual hygiene facilities, such as dispensers or vending units, but no internal evidence confirms that such facilities currently exist on campus.

(For the reference see the figure- 12 13, & 14 from the section Response Patterns by Questions)

6. Support Services – Counselling, Mentorship & Peer Networks

What respondents want

Access to trained counsellors, mentorship programmes for first-generation learners, and peer-support groups.

Why it matters:

Counselling helps students cope with stress, report issues safely, and succeed academically. Mentorship and peer networks reduce isolation and foster belonging, especially for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

(For the reference see the figure- 18, 19, 20 & 21 from the section Response Patterns by Questions)

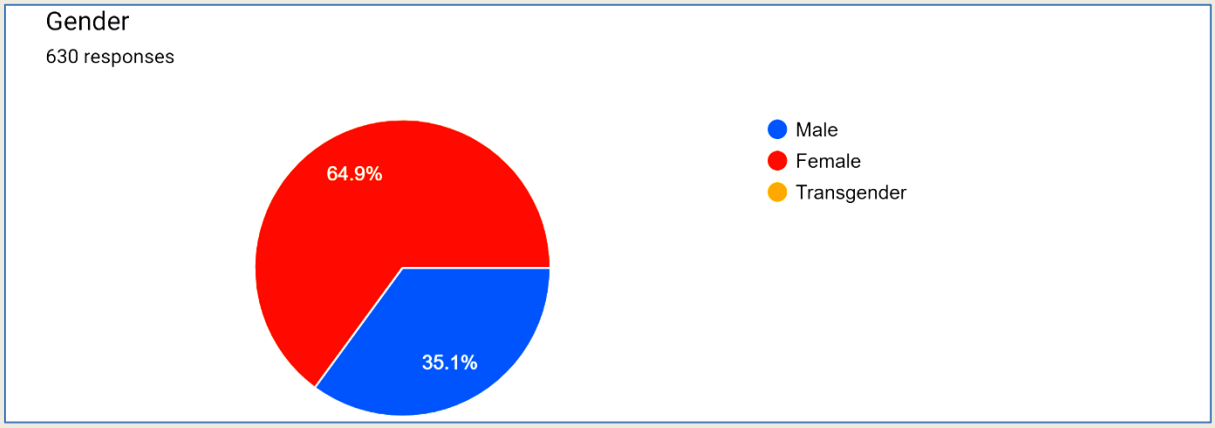
7. Participation & Leadership

Observations:

Respondents generally recognised that students of all genders participate equally in academic and cultural activities. However, they recommended more proactive steps to ensure balanced representation in leadership roles, sports teams, and college committee

(For the reference see the figure- 18, 19, 20 from the section Response Patterns by Questions)

Response Patterns by Questions



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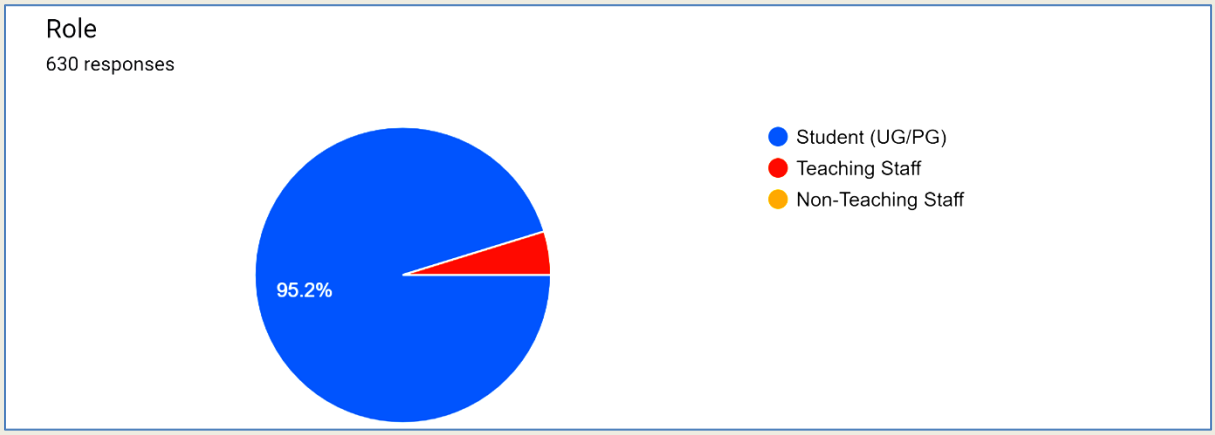

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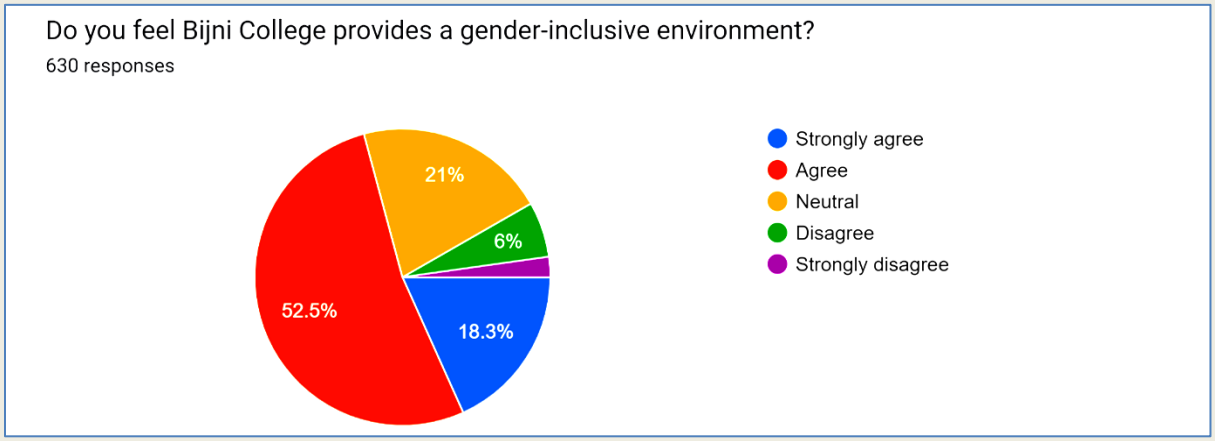

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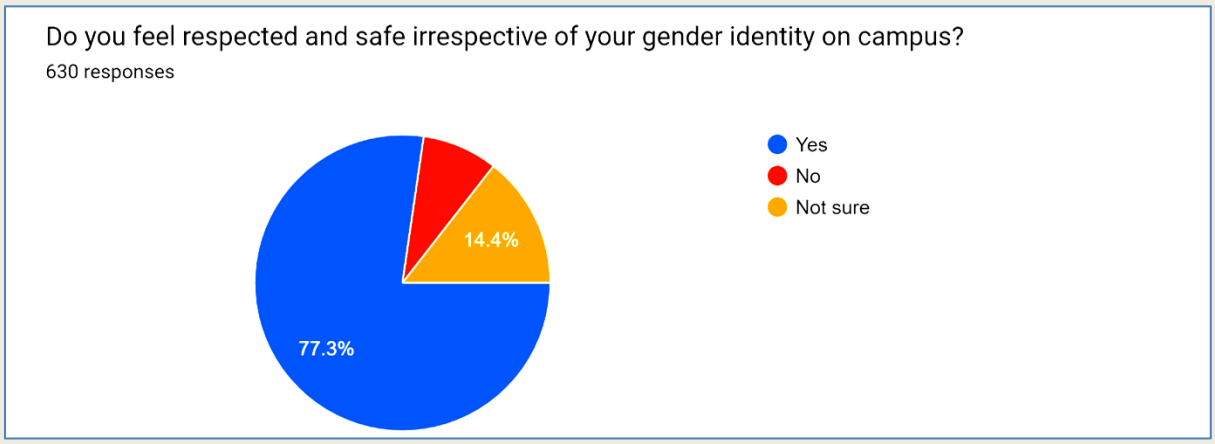

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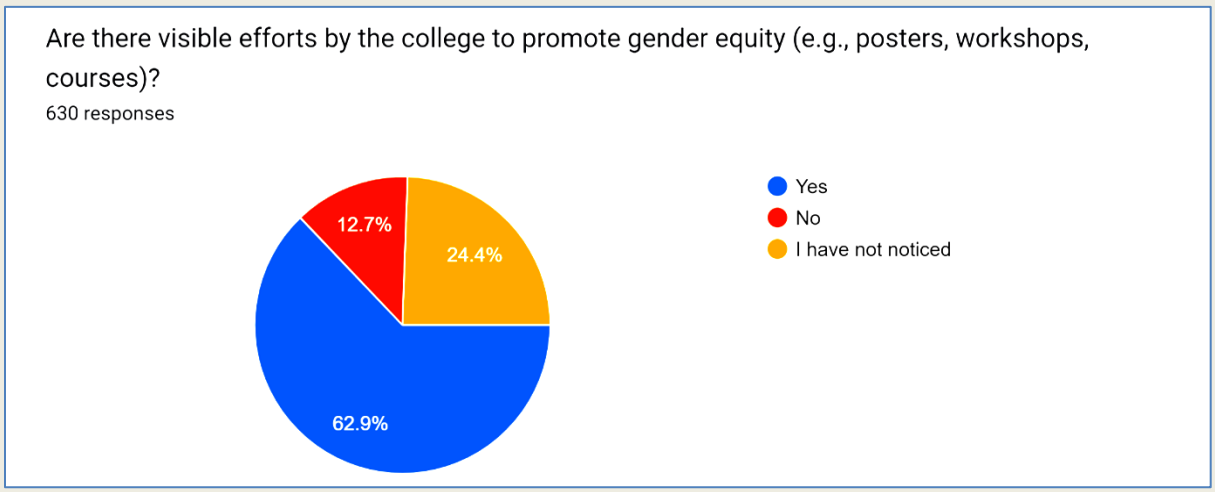

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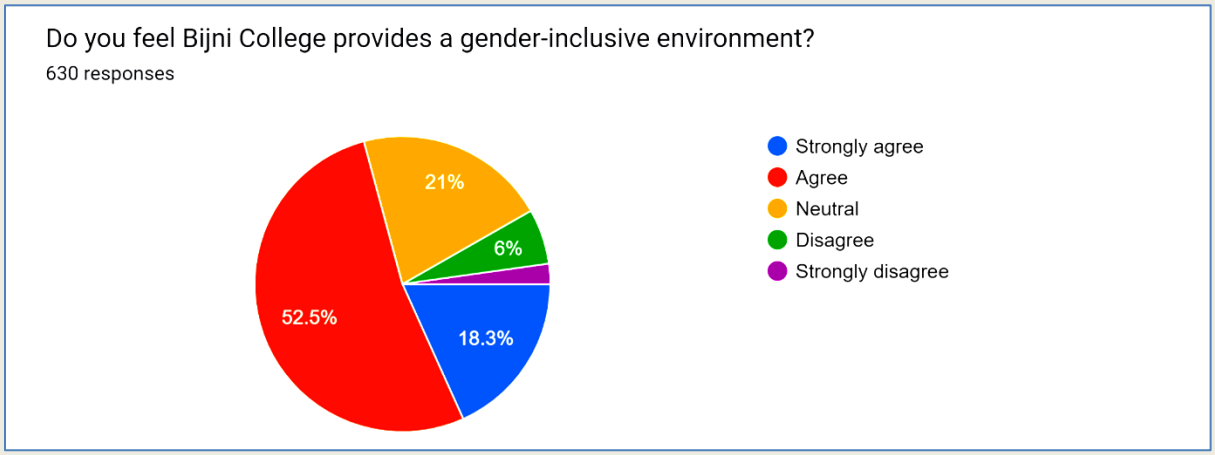

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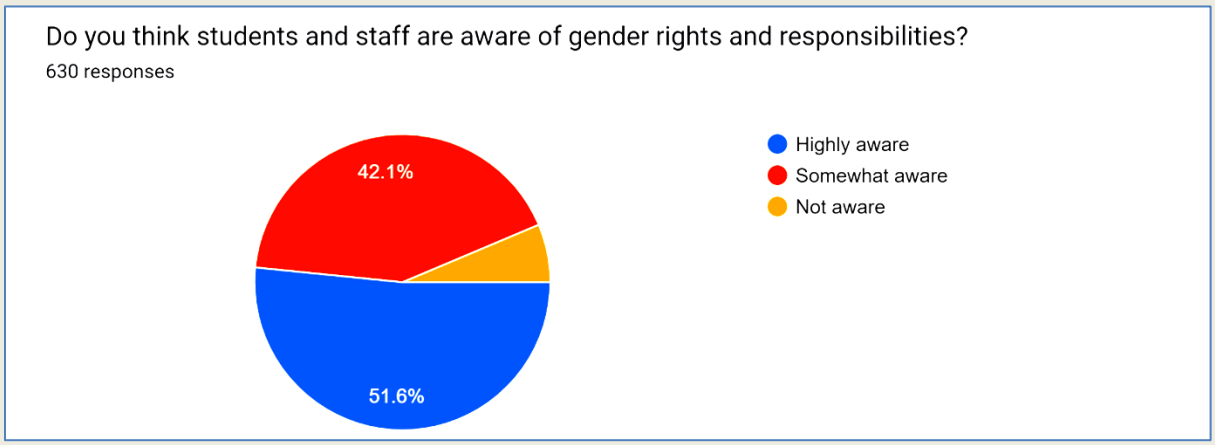

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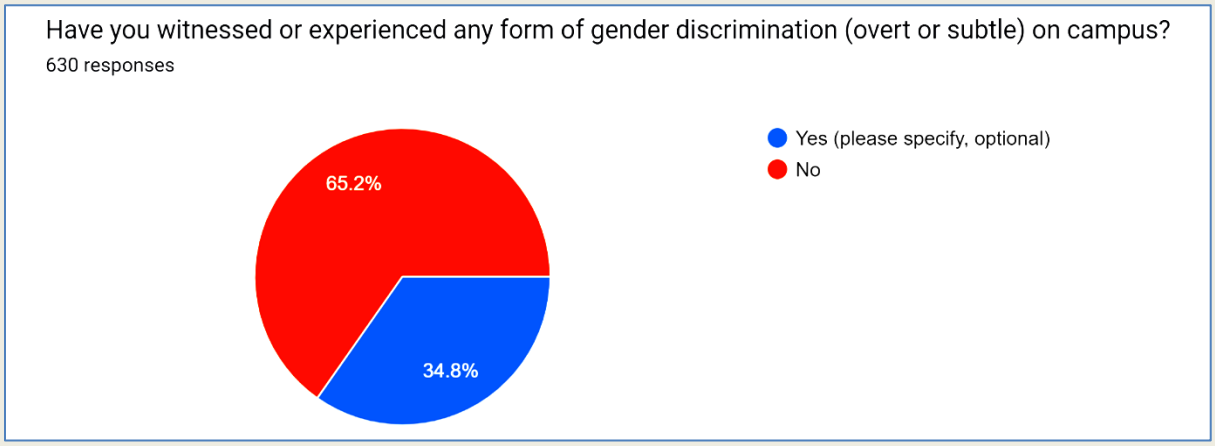

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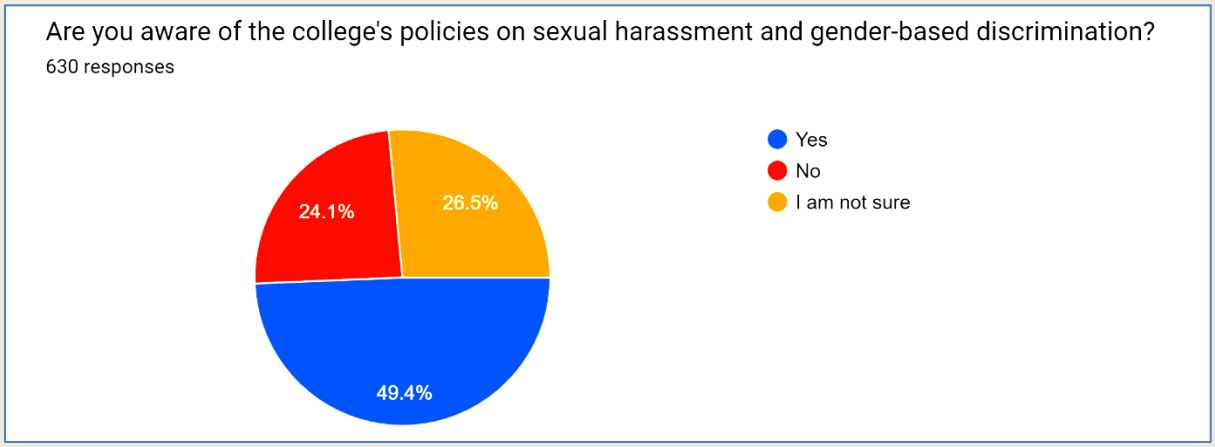

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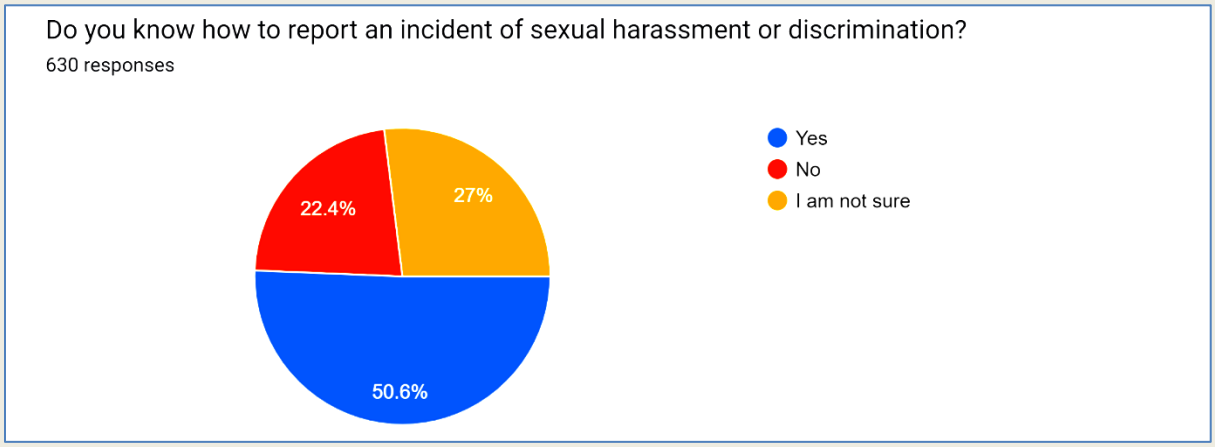

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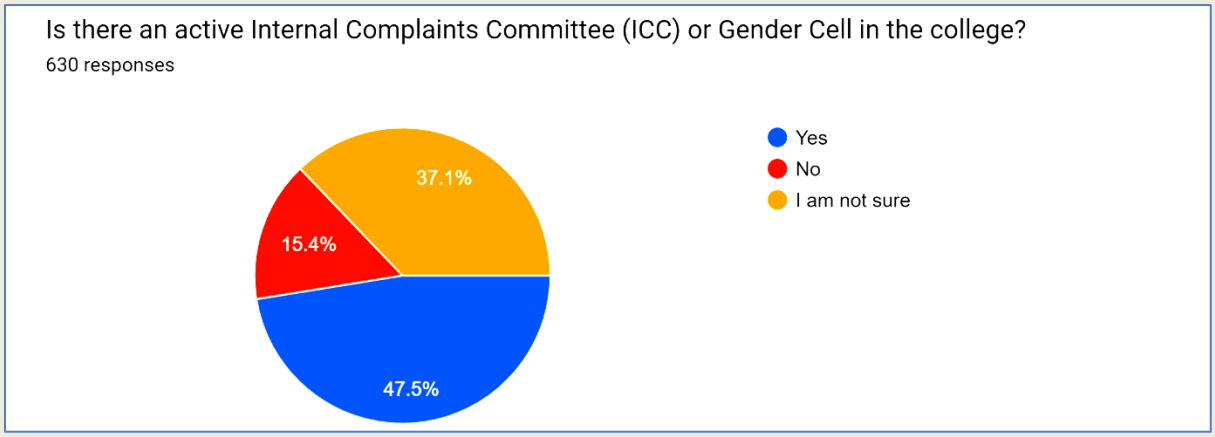

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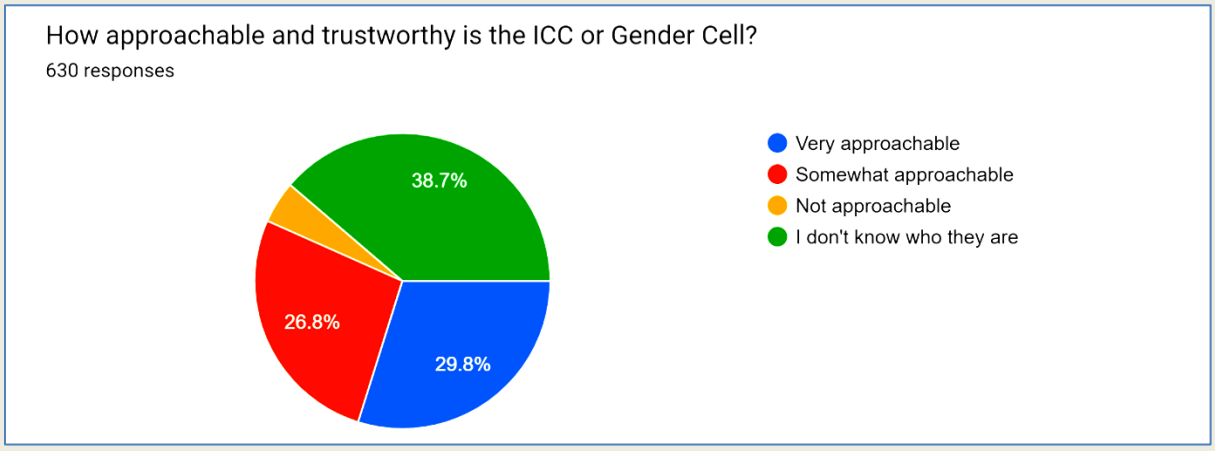

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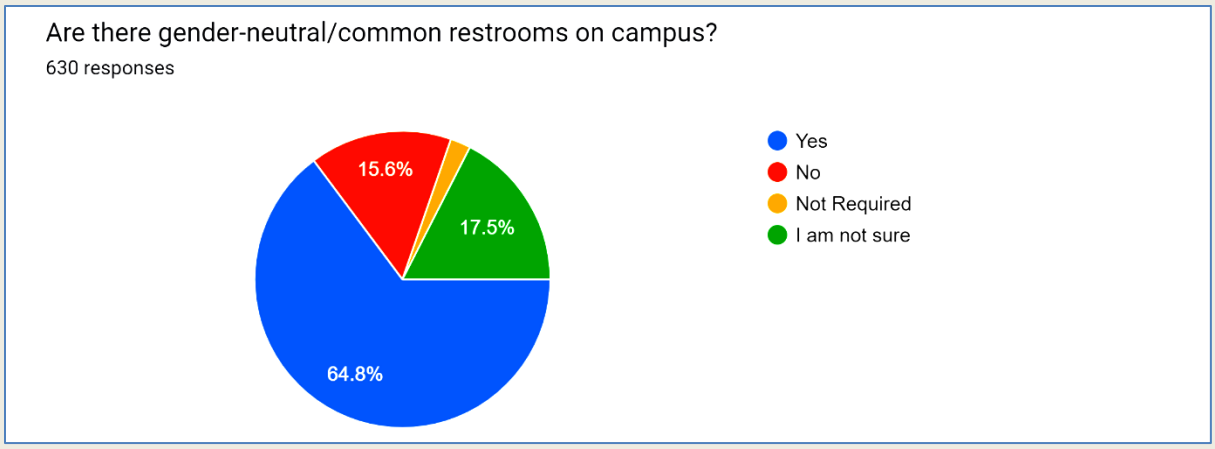

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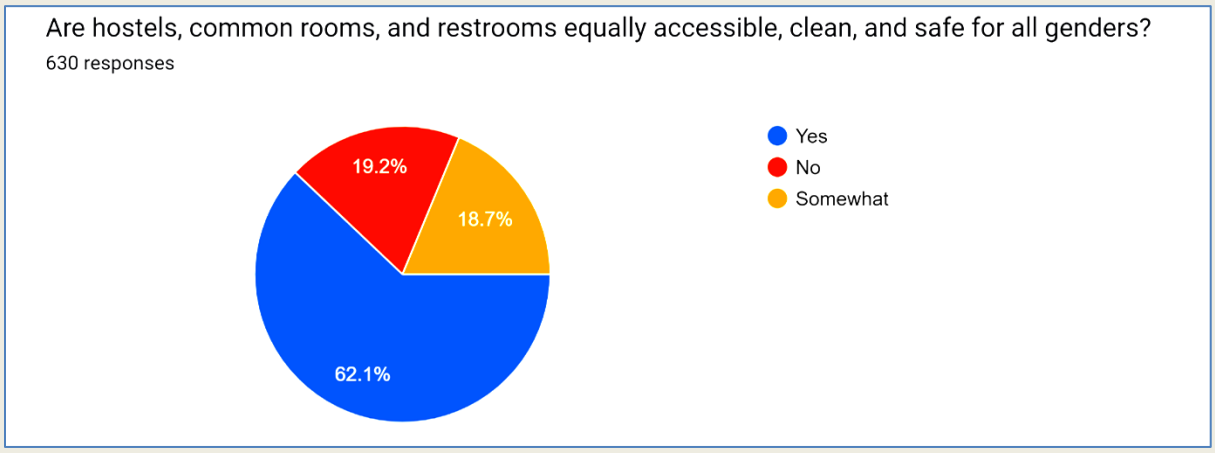

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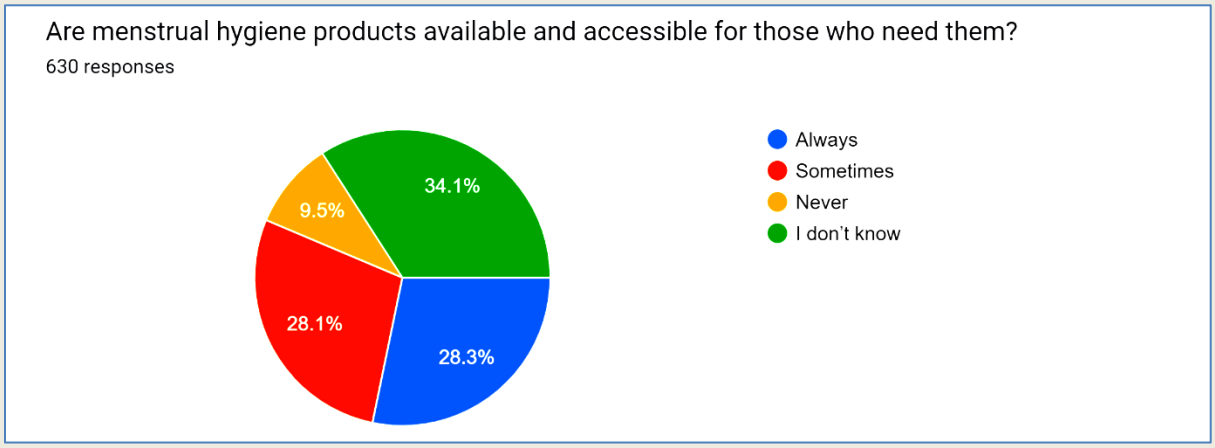

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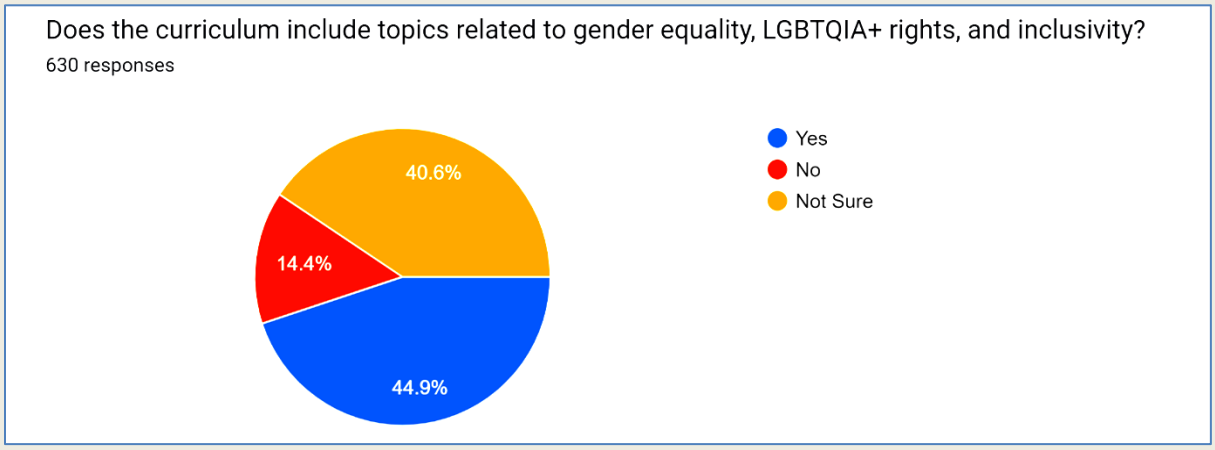

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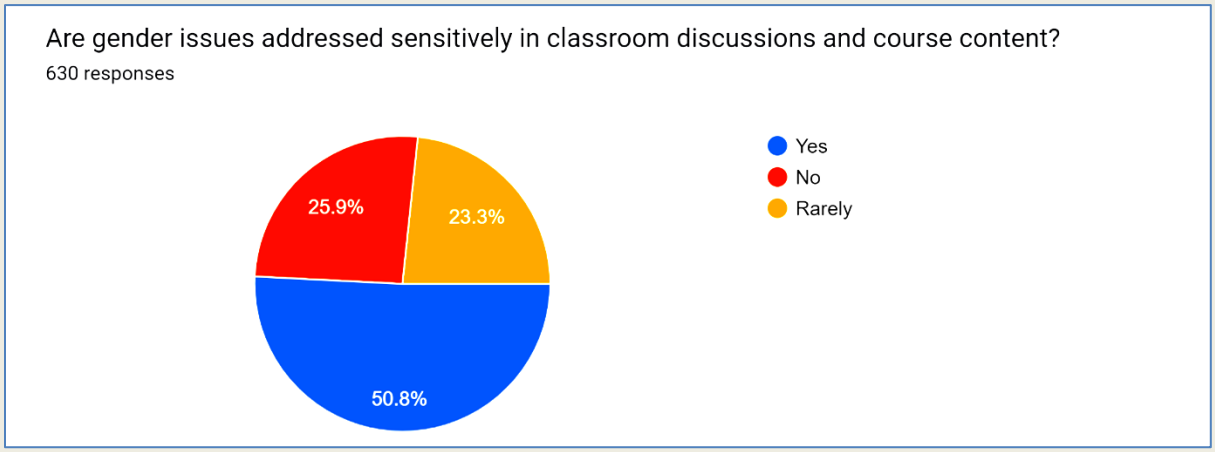

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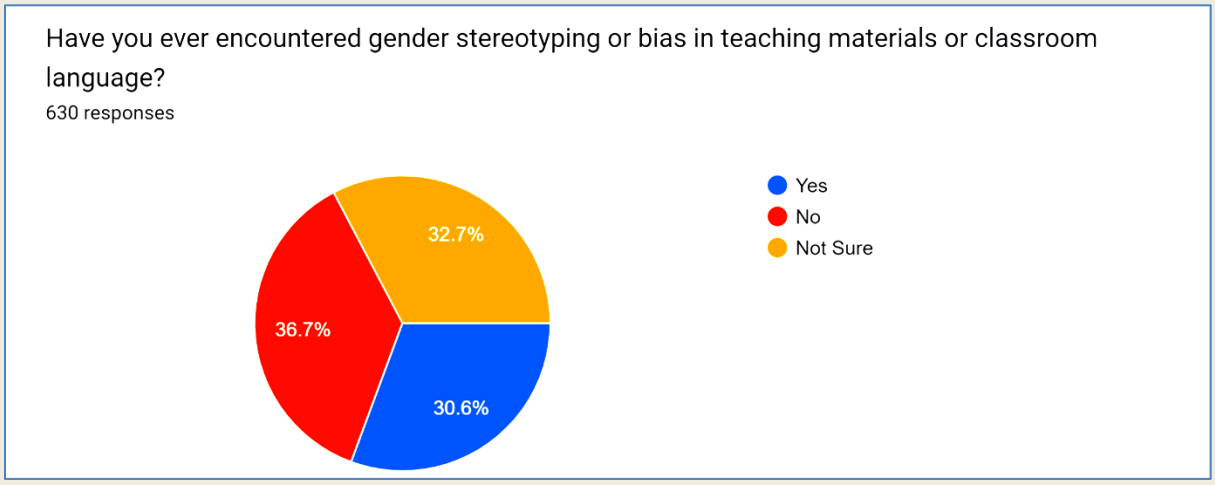

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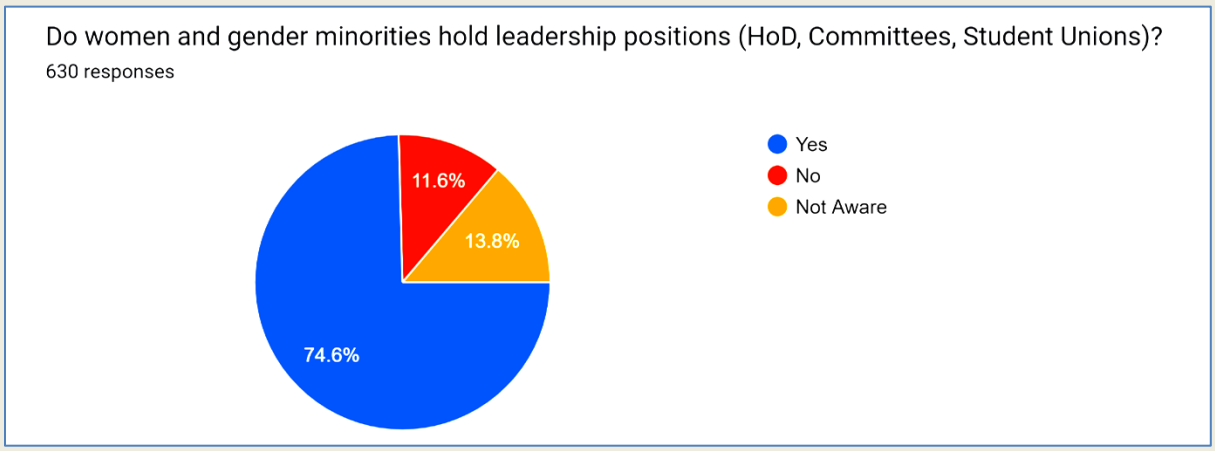

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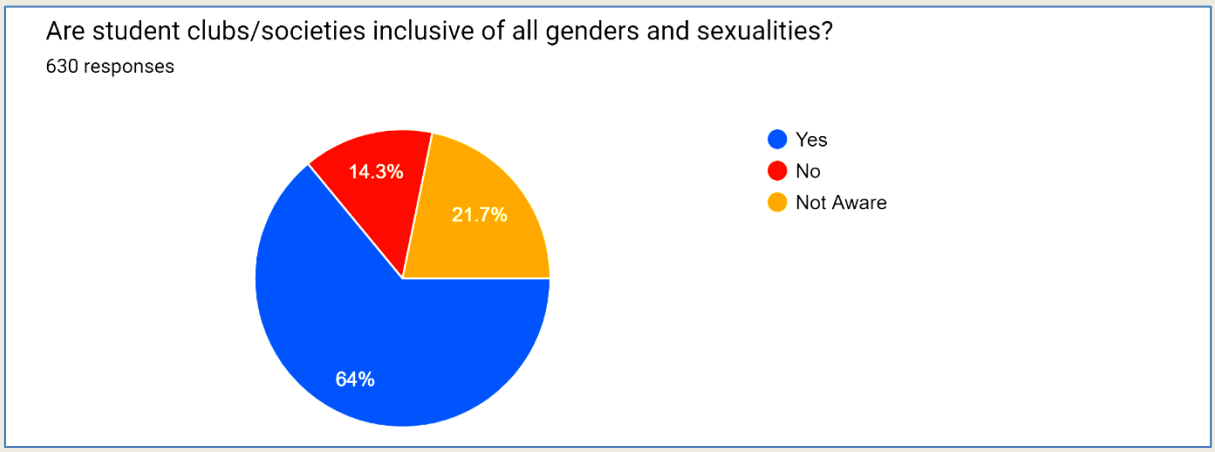

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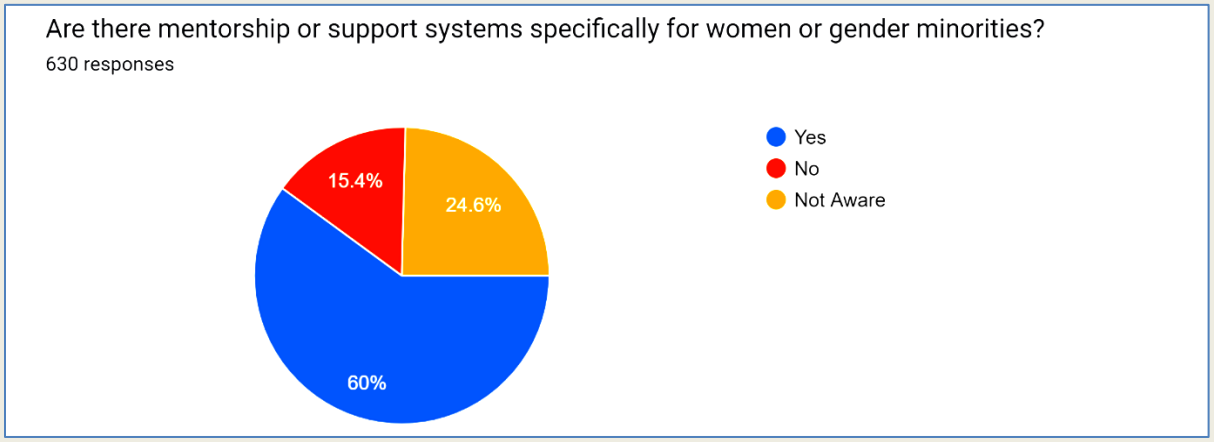

Figure- 21

Thematic Synthesis

From the responses, several clear patterns emerge:

1. Strong demand for institutional structures: The community wants a Gender Sensitisation Unit (GSU) and a stronger Internal Complaints Committee (ICC). This indicates that they are seeking permanent and visible groups to address these issues.
2. Awareness vs. action gap: While the campus is generally viewed as "free" and "good," frequent responses of "No idea" and complaints about infrastructure indicate that goodwill alone cannot replace systematic awareness and action.
3. Balance of preventive and remedial measures: Respondents call for both preventive strategies (training, curriculum) and remedial mechanisms (grievance redressal, counselling). A dual approach is essential.
4. Emerging intersectionality: Though few responses explicitly mention caste, class, or disability, there are hints of concern for inclusive admissions and support for marginalised genders. Future audits should probe this dimension more deeply.

Suggestions

1. Strengthen ICC and establish a Gender Sensitisation Unit (GSU) with visible contact details.
2. Create confidential and anonymous reporting channels (Google Form + drop box system).
3. Conduct regular gender-sensitisation workshops for students, faculty, and staff; include them in orientation programmes.
4. Increase staff participation: Ensure active involvement of office/non-teaching staff in awareness programmes, since there was no response from them in this audit. Separate sessions may be needed to encourage their participation.
5. Ensure issues raised in past audits are addressed systematically, not carried over year after year and ensure timely action.

6. Ensure proper installation and maintenance of menstrual hygiene vending and disposal units across campus and girls' hostel.
7. Install flood lights in dark or vulnerable areas.
8. Introduce gender studies elements (certificate course/ Add-On Course)
9. Establish a boys' common room and ensure the availability of well-maintained toilets for male students.
10. Establish a dedicated sick room equipped with basic first-aid facilities and a provision for immediate medical attention in case of emergencies.

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