



**LORETO COLLEGE,
KOLKATA**

Gender Audit Report

2024-25

Prepared By

**THE WOMEN AND GENDER
DEVELOPMENT CELL (WGDC)**

LORETO COLLEGE, KOLKATA

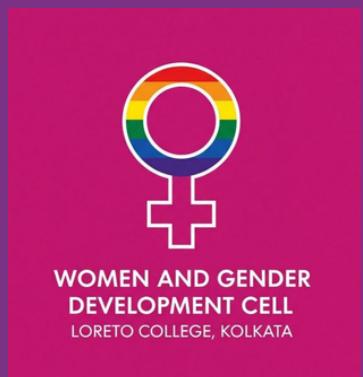




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1.1. ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

Loreto College, Kolkata was founded in 1912 by the Sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), a Catholic religious order established by Mary Ward in 1609. It is a Government-Aided Christian Minority College for Women and has a rich history marked by its pioneering role in women's education in India. This institution, which is centrally located at 7, Sir William Jones Sarani (formerly Middleton Row), Kolkata, is now 113 years old and has been awarded 'Heritage' status by the KMDA.

Loreto College is affiliated to the University of Calcutta. The college offers four-year degrees in B.A. and B.Sc. and a three-year multidisciplinary course offering a wide range of major, minor, and interdisciplinary subjects. In 2016, the college received sanction from the university to begin a Master's Course in English. A Master's Course in Psychology also commenced in 2024. Value Education forms an integral part of the curriculum alongside various Value-Added Programmes.

The college holds the honour of being the first in West Bengal to be assessed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), earning a five-star rating in 2000. It was re-accredited with an A grade in 2006, 2012, and 2021. The B.Ed. Department, established in 1913, received a B++ grade from NAAC in 2003 and was upgraded to an A grade in 2009. The UGC recognised the College as a "College with Potential for Excellence" in 2006, 2011, and 2014. The college has also been ranked by NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Loreto College has changed much since its founding in 1912, but an enduring factor throughout its history has been its commitment to providing the highest quality education to young women for their holistic development and empowerment. While the institution's basic curriculum of the humanities, arts, and sciences still flourishes, the college also responds to the needs of today's women by offering new courses and preparing students to fulfil their responsibilities to the local, national, and global communities through a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

1.2. WOMEN AND GENDER DEVELOPMENT CELL (WGDC)

The **Women and Gender Development Cell (WGDC)** is a mandated body as per Section 3.2 (15) of the University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2015. The WGDC of Loreto College, Kolkata, formerly known as the Women's Study Society (till 2024) and the Gender Studies Cell, aims to promote gender sensitivity, equality, and empowerment through academic programmes, research, and outreach activities. The cell seeks to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for students, faculty, and staff to explore and address gender-related issues.

The WGDC is convened by a faculty member appointed by the college administration. The members of the WGDC include the Head of the Institution, the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) Coordinator, and faculty of various departments and disciplines.

The objectives of the WGDC are:

1. To promote gender awareness and sensitivity by organising regular workshops, seminars, and lectures and inviting distinguished experts as resource persons
2. To support research and scholarship on gender-related topics, including feminist theory, gender and sexuality, and women's studies
3. To collaborate with external organisations such as NGOs and other institutions to promote scholarship and outreach pertaining to gender equality and empowerment
4. To facilitate the creation of a safe space for students and staff on campus through the promotion of inclusivity and gender justice initiatives
5. To create awareness on legal rights and provisions pertaining to gender issues

COMPOSITION OF THE WGDC FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-25

SERIAL NO.	NAME	ROLE/DEPARTMENT
1.	Sr. Dr. A. Nirmala	Teacher-in-Charge
2.	Dr. Amrita Dasgupta	IQAC Coordinator
3.	Dr. Anindita Bandyopadhyay	Convenor, Department of History
4.	Dr. Suparna Ghosh	Faculty, Department of History
5.	Dr. Krishnokoli Hazra	Faculty, Department of History
6.	Ms. Srijita Chakravarty	Faculty, Department of History
7.	Dr. Sayantani Chatterjee	Faculty, Department of Psychology
8.	Dr. Sanghita Sanyal	Faculty, Department of English
9.	Dr. Sulagna Chattopadhyay	Faculty, Department of English

1.3. GENDER AUDIT: INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Gender equity in education is not only a matter of social justice but also a fundamental driver of inclusive development. As institutions of higher learning play a critical role in shaping mindsets and preparing future leaders, it becomes imperative for them to uphold and promote gender-sensitive values across all dimensions of academic and institutional life. In this context, a Gender Audit serves as a vital diagnostic tool to examine how effectively an institution is fostering a culture of equality, empowerment, and inclusivity with respect to gender.

This report presents the findings of the **Gender Audit** conducted at **Loreto College, Kolkata**, a premier women's college that enshrines gender equity as a core institutional value. The gender audit seeks to evaluate how successfully the institution addresses gender within its structures, policies, practices, and culture, as well as how it supports the holistic development of its students as empowered individuals in a gender-diverse society.

The objectives of this Gender Audit are:

- To assess the level of gender sensitivity in academic and administrative policies, classroom interactions, and campus culture
- To evaluate the representation and participation of women in leadership, faculty, and decision-making roles within the institution
- To assess the availability and accessibility of gender-sensitive infrastructure and facilities
- To analyse the availability and effectiveness of support systems and grievance redressal mechanisms related to gender-based issues
- To identify gender-based disparities or biases, if any, in access to resources, opportunities, or institutional support services
- To promote awareness and sensitisation among all stakeholders—students, faculty, and staff—regarding gender equality and related rights and responsibilities
- To identify strengths and gaps and recommend measures that will help the institution move towards greater gender equity and inclusivity in all spheres

1.4. METHODOLOGY

The **Gender Audit of Loreto College, Kolkata** was carried out by internal members of the Women and Gender Development Cell (WGDC) in consultation with faculty members outside the WGDC, ensuring a collaborative, participatory, and interdisciplinary approach. It was also designed keeping in mind that Loreto College is a women's college with male members among the faculty and staff.

1. Structured questionnaires were developed to capture the perceptions, experiences, and observations of various stakeholders with regard to gender sensitivity, inclusivity, and awareness levels. The questionnaire was prepared in English and carefully framed to be clear and objective.
2. Students, faculty, librarians, and office staff received the questionnaire as a Google Form. For support staff, the questions were administered orally in Bengali and Hindi through face-to-face interactions conducted by a faculty member and a member of the office staff. The responses were recorded accurately to maintain the ethical integrity of the process.
3. All responses—both digital and manually recorded—were systematically collated and organised into relevant categories. The data was then analysed to identify key trends, strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement in gender-related practices and perceptions within the institution. Preliminary findings were also shared within the WGDC and with collaborating faculty members for review and validation, allowing for cross-verification.

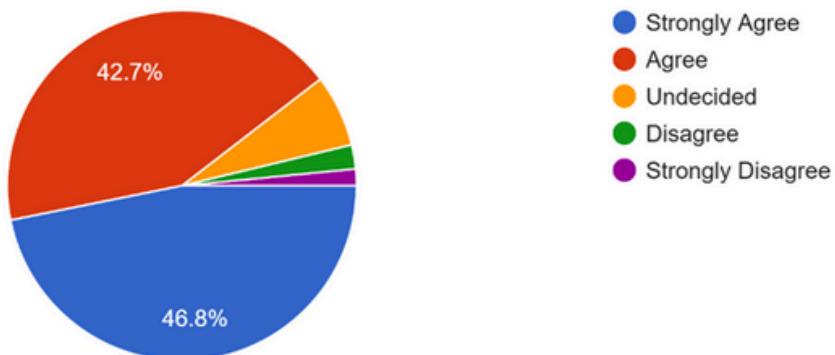
The faculty members outside the WGDC who participated in the preparation of the Gender Audit Report are:

SERIAL NO.	NAME	ROLE/DEPARTMENT
1.	Dr. Satyabrota Kundu	Faculty, Department of Mathematics
2.	Ms. Tania Mondal	Faculty, Department of Education

2.1. GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF STUDENTS

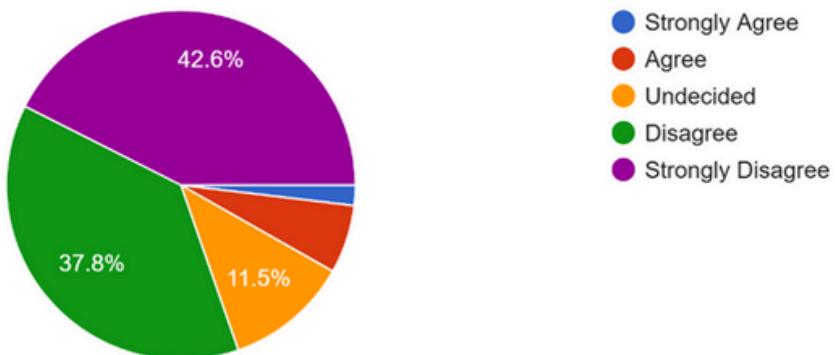
1. You feel comfortable asking questions and participating in class discussions with both male and female teachers.

585 responses



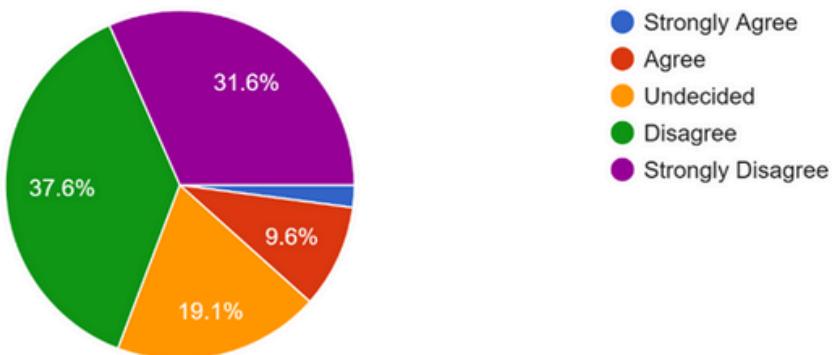
2. You have experienced or witnessed any form of bias or stereotyping from teachers based on gender.

585 responses

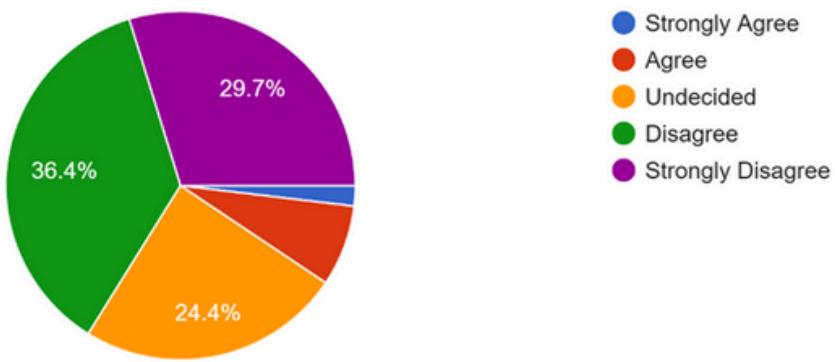


3. You find differences in the way male and female teachers interact with you or provide feedback on your work.

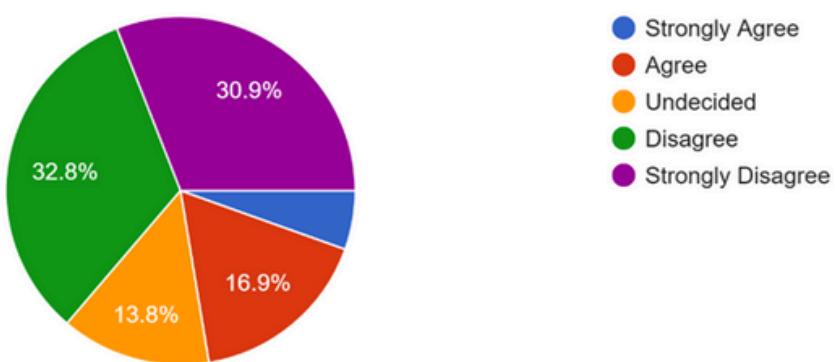
585 responses



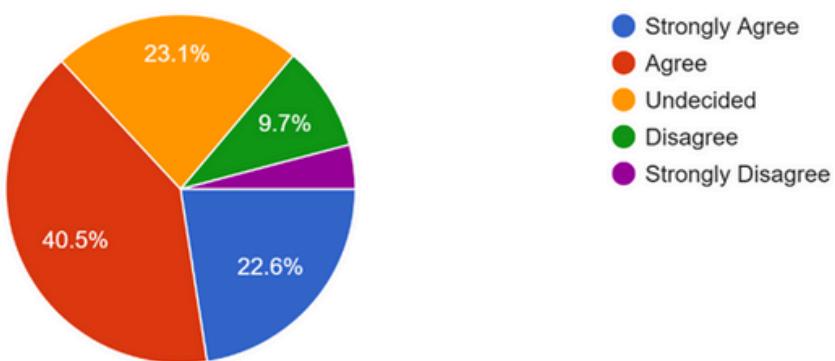
4. You feel that your male and female teachers have different expectations or standards for you.
585 responses



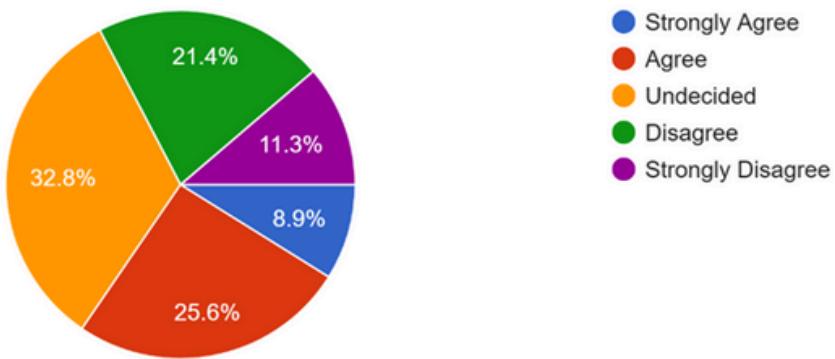
5. You have felt uncomfortable or intimidated by a teacher's behavior or comments.
585 responses



6. There are opportunities for you to provide feedback on your teachers' performance or teaching styles.
585 responses

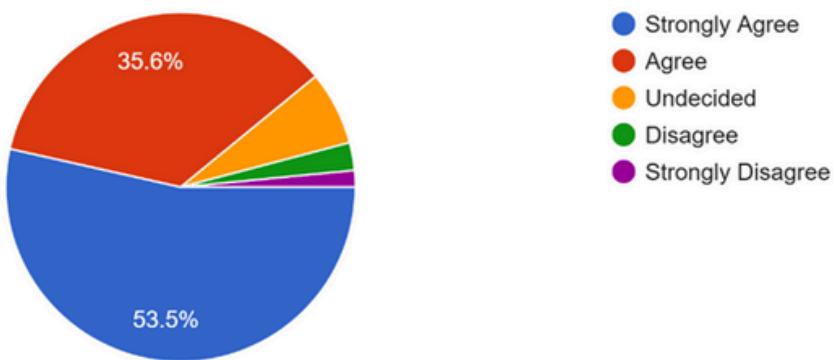


7. There are gaps or biases in the curriculum that you think should be addressed.
585 responses



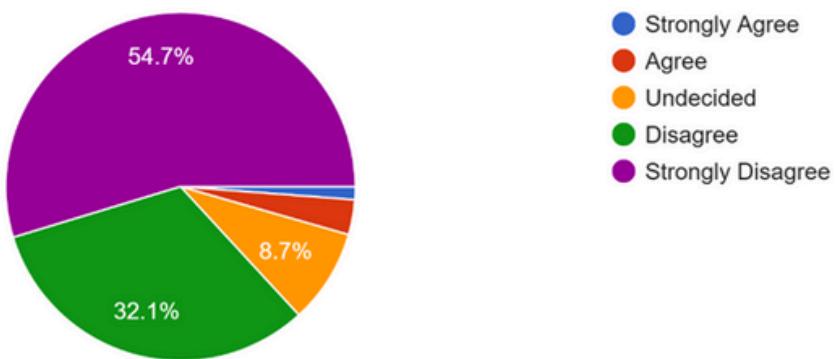
8. You feel safe and comfortable on campus, particularly in areas where male teachers or staff may be present.

585 responses



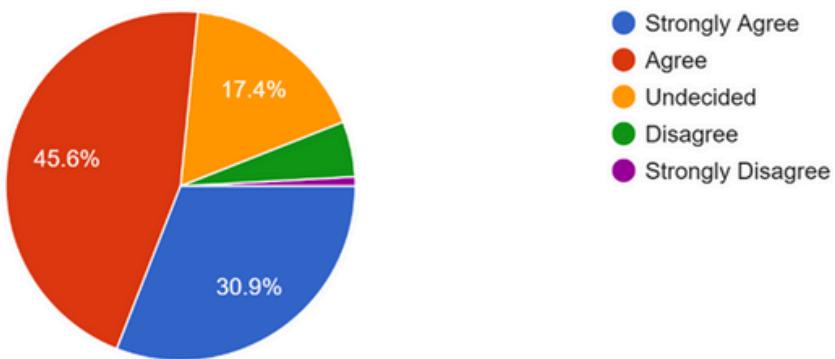
9. You have experienced or witnessed any form of harassment or discrimination on campus.

585 responses



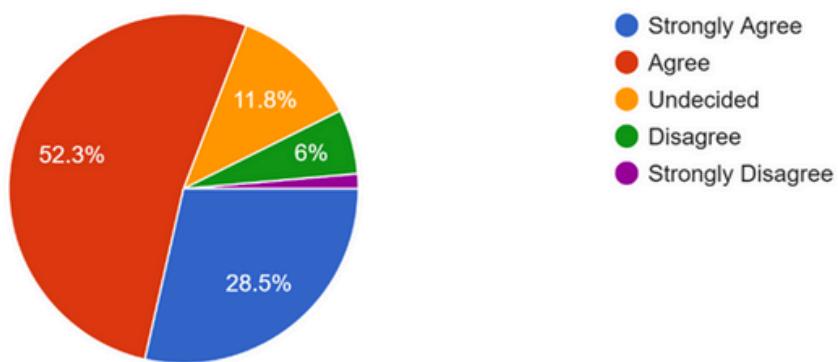
10. There are adequate support services and resources available to help you deal with any issues or concerns related to gender.

585 responses



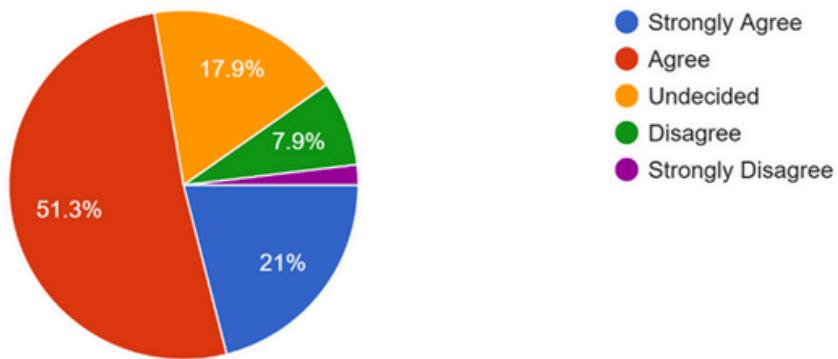
11. There are opportunities for you to take on leadership roles or participate in decision-making processes on campus.

585 responses



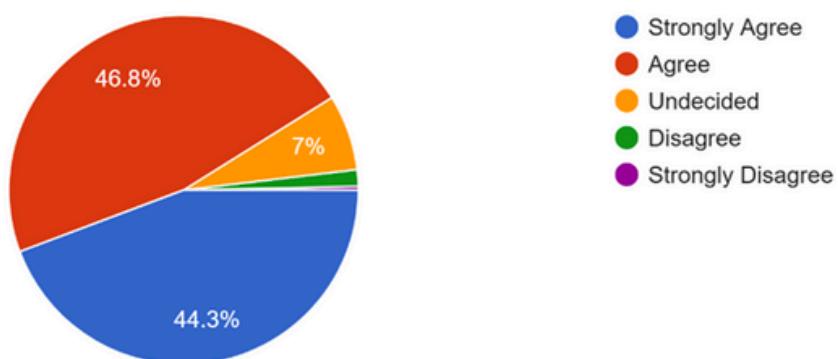
12. You feel that your voices and perspectives are represented and valued by the college administration.

585 responses



13. There are initiatives or programs in place to promote women's empowerment and leadership on campus.

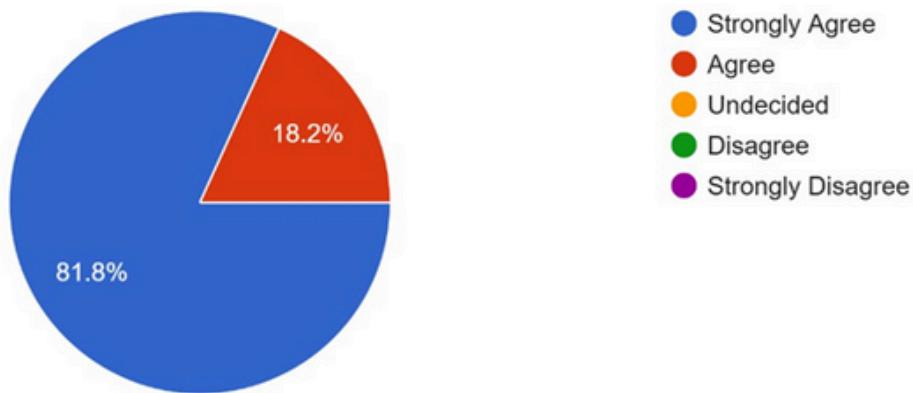
585 responses



2.2. GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF TEACHING AND LIBRARY STAFF

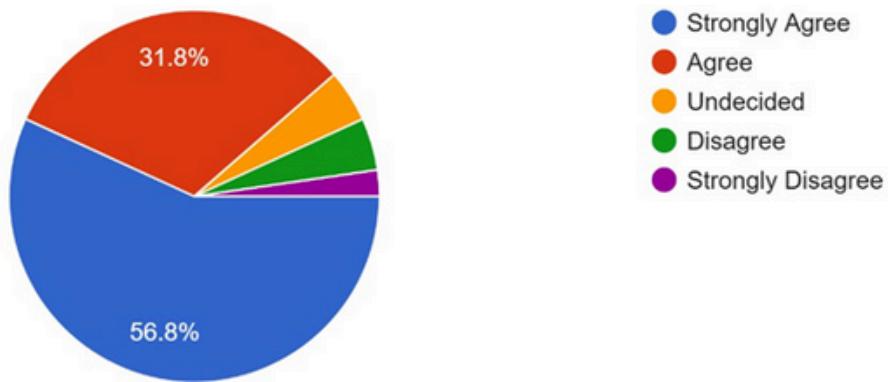
1. You promote gender equality and challenge gender stereotypes in your teaching practices.

44 responses



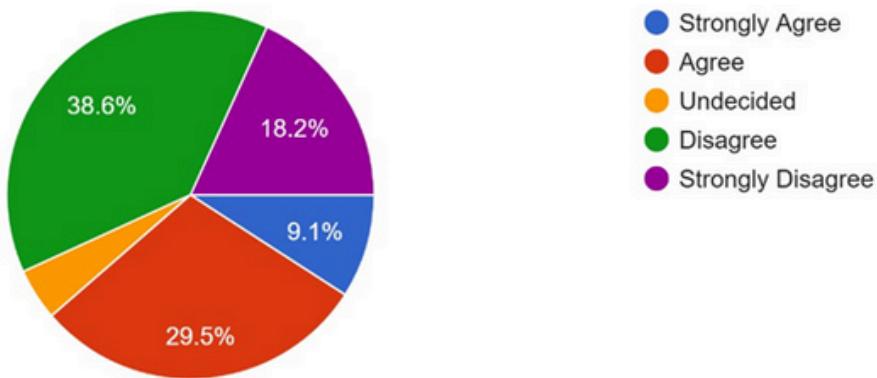
2. You feel that the institution provides a safe and supportive work environment for all teachers, regardless of gender.

44 responses



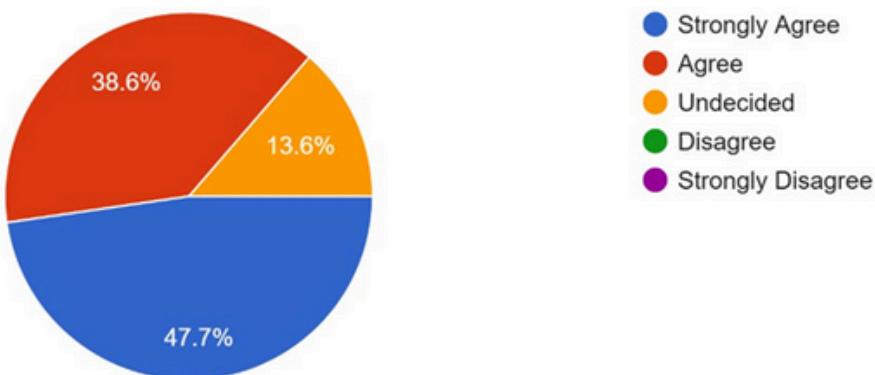
3. You have experienced or witnessed any form of harassment or discrimination in the workplace.

44 responses



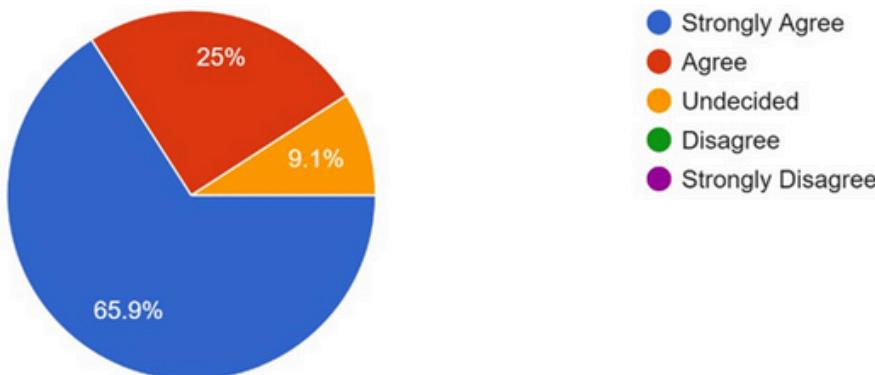
4. There are adequate opportunities for professional development and career advancement for both male and female teachers.

44 responses



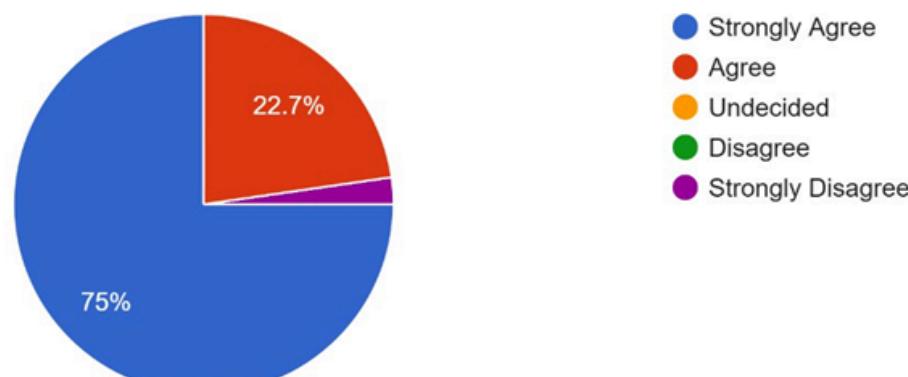
5. You feel that the institution values and recognizes the contributions of both male and female teachers.

44 responses



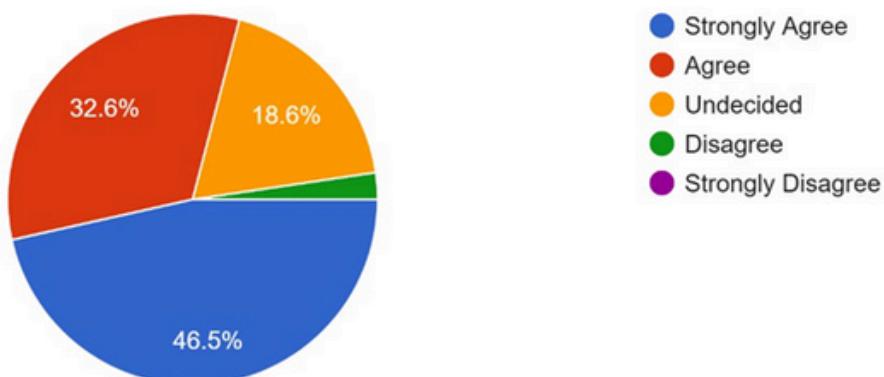
6. There are opportunities for both male and female teachers to take on leadership roles and participate in decision-making processes.

44 responses



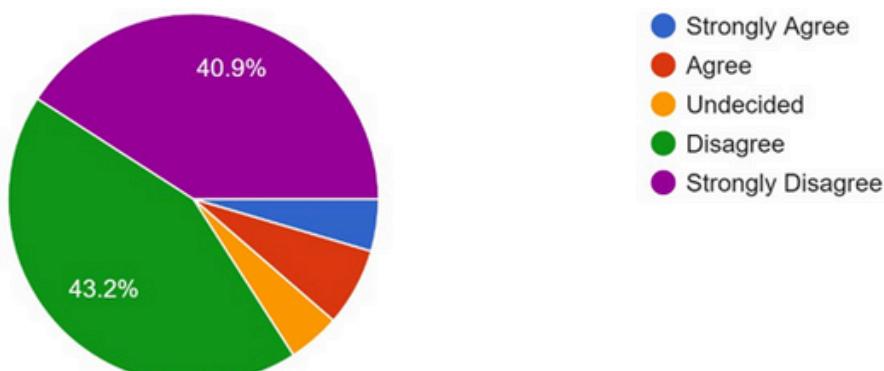
7. You feel that the institution's leadership is representative of the diversity of its teaching staff.

43 responses



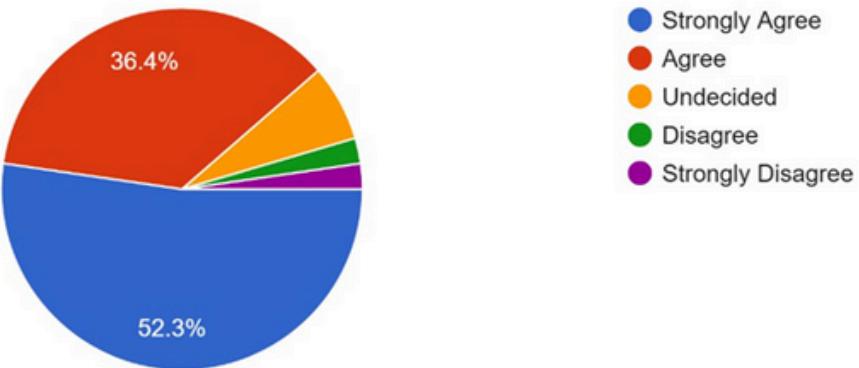
8. There are barriers or challenges that prevent male and female teachers from participating in leadership and decision-making.

44 responses



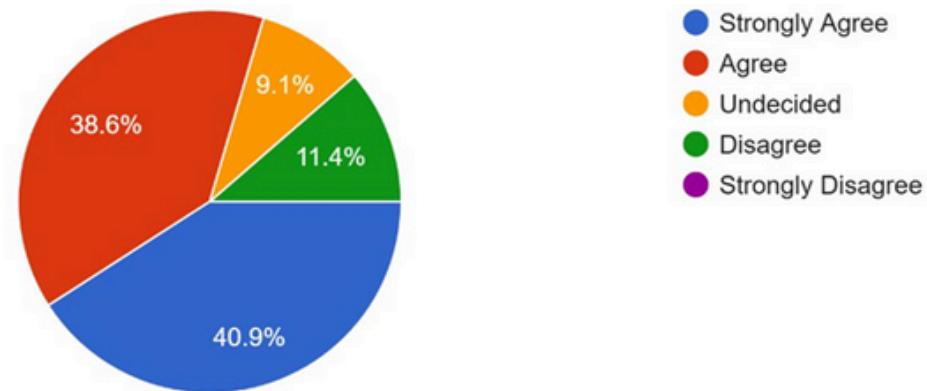
9. You feel that the institution's policies and decisions are inclusive and equitable for all teachers.

44 responses



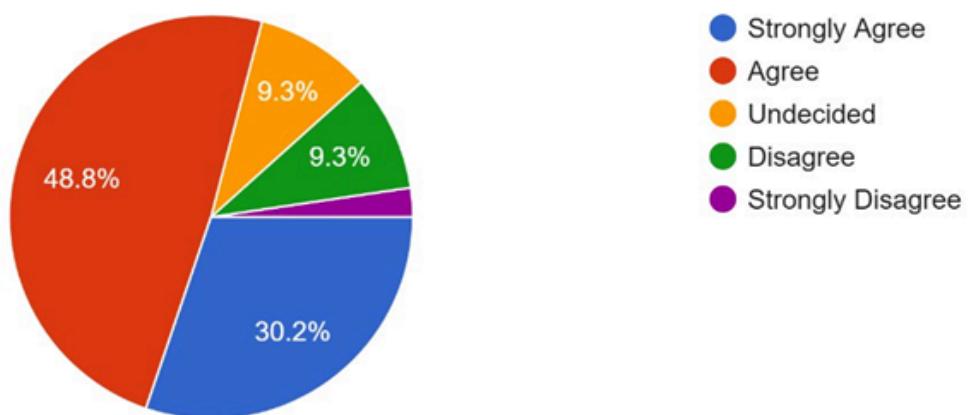
10. There are adequate support services and resources available for both male and female teachers, such as mentoring, coaching, and counseling.

44 responses



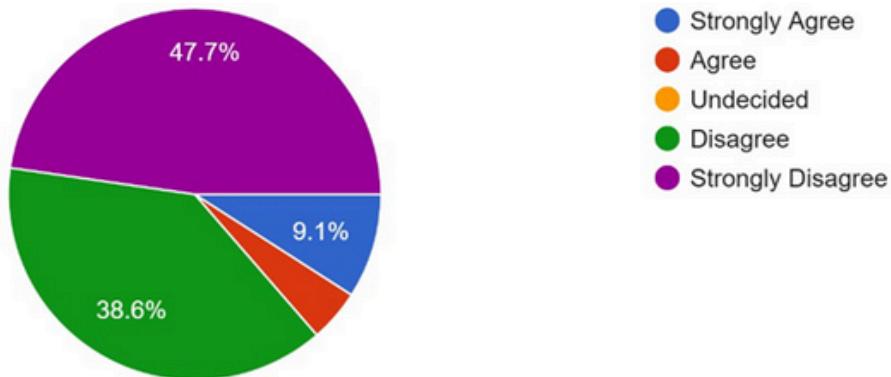
11. You feel that the institution provides adequate support for teachers with caregiving responsibilities or other family obligations.

43 responses



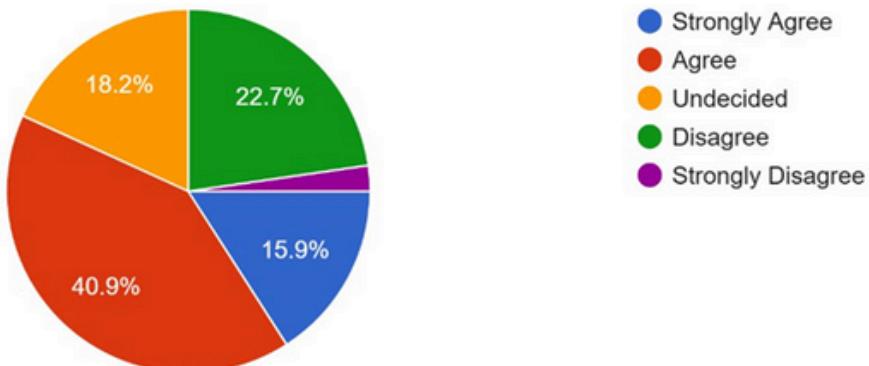
12. There are differences in the way support services and resources are provided to male and female teachers.

44 responses



13. You feel that the institution values and recognizes the importance of work-life balance for all teachers.

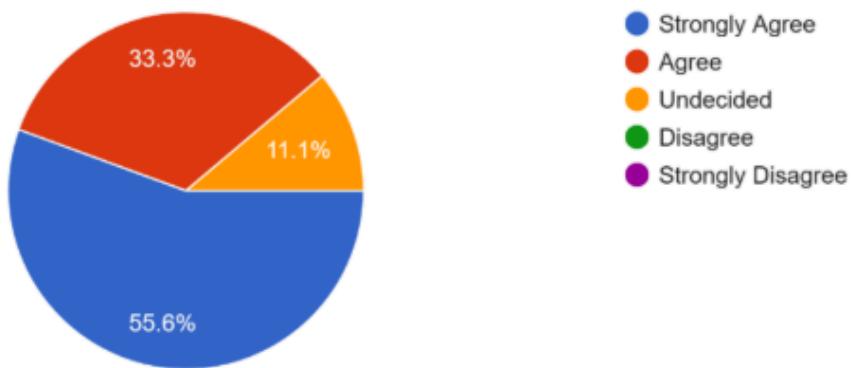
44 responses



2.3. GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF OFFICE STAFF

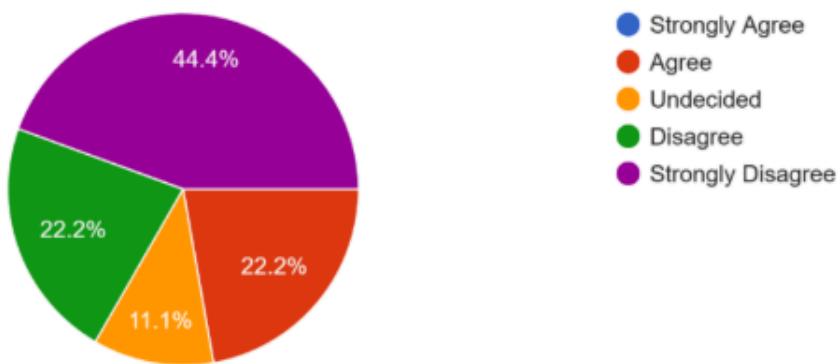
1. You feel comfortable and safe in your workplace.

9 responses



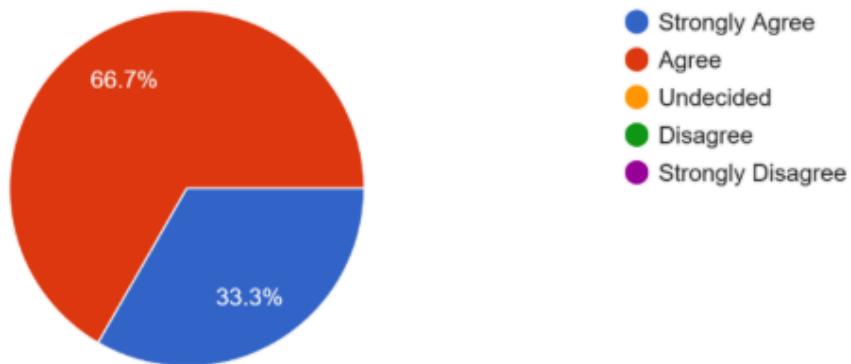
2. You have experienced or witnessed any form of harassment or discrimination in the workplace.

9 responses



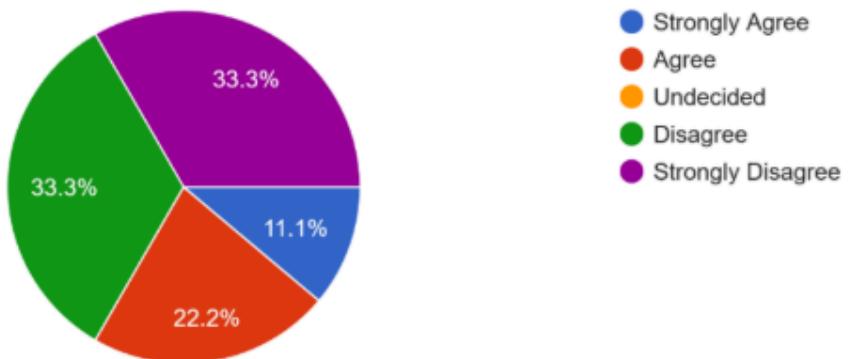
3. You feel that your work is valued and recognized by the college administration.

9 responses



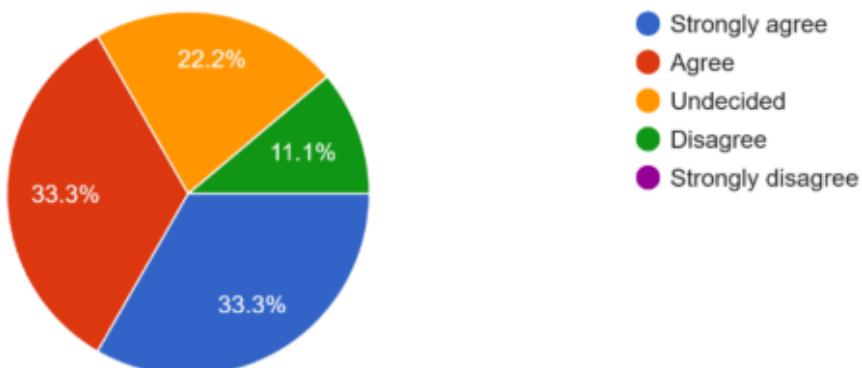
4. There are adequate facilities and resources available for non-teaching staff, such as break rooms, restrooms, and training opportunities.

9 responses



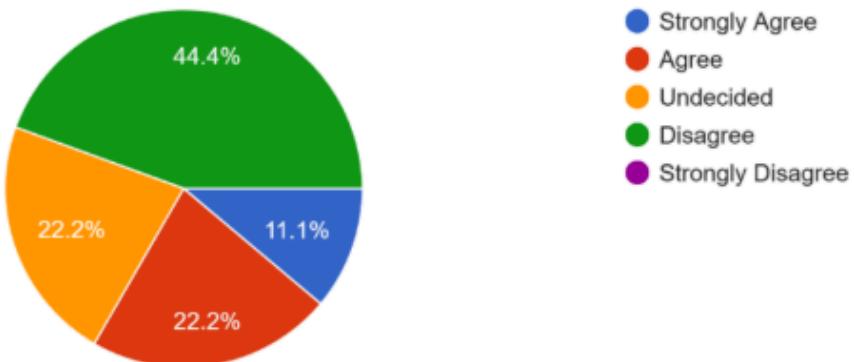
5. Your job responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined and communicated.

9 responses



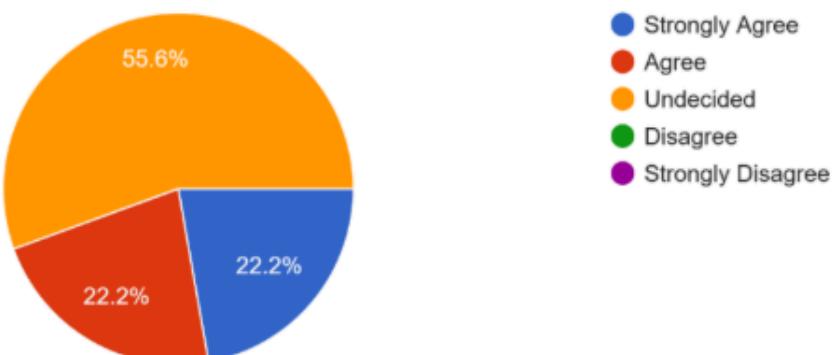
6. There are adequate support services and resources available for non-teaching staff, such as counseling, mentoring, and employee assistance programs.

9 responses



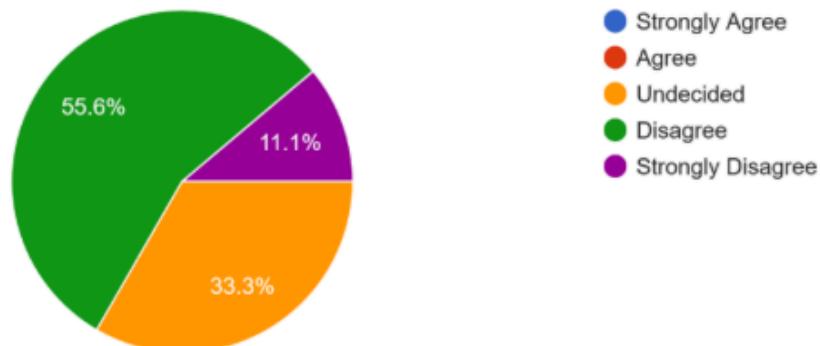
7. You feel that the college provides adequate support for staff with caregiving responsibilities or other family obligations.

9 responses



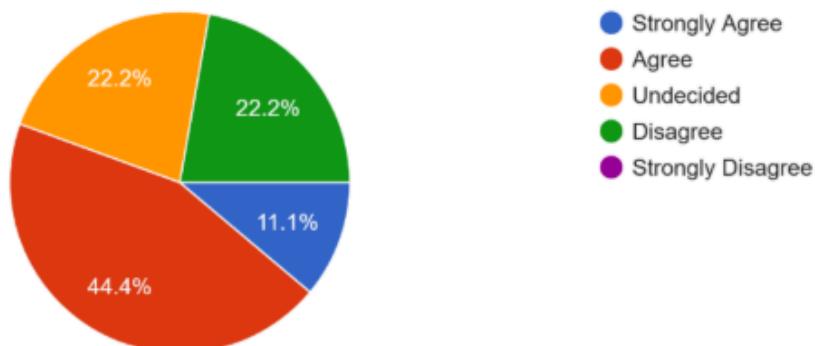
8. There are differences in the way support services and resources are provided to male and female non-teaching staff.

9 responses



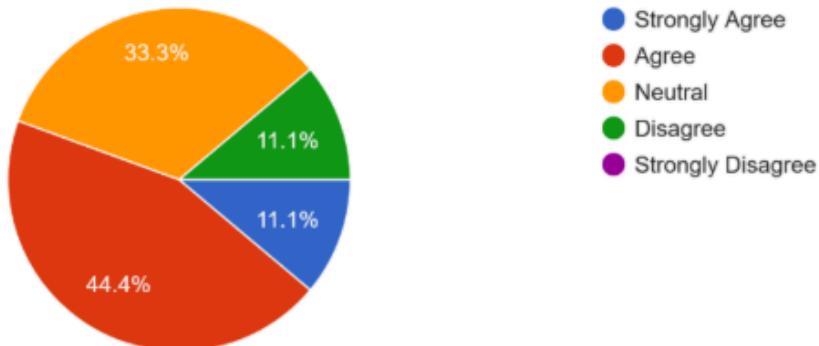
9. You feel that non-teaching staff are included in decision-making processes and communication about college policies and initiative.

9 responses



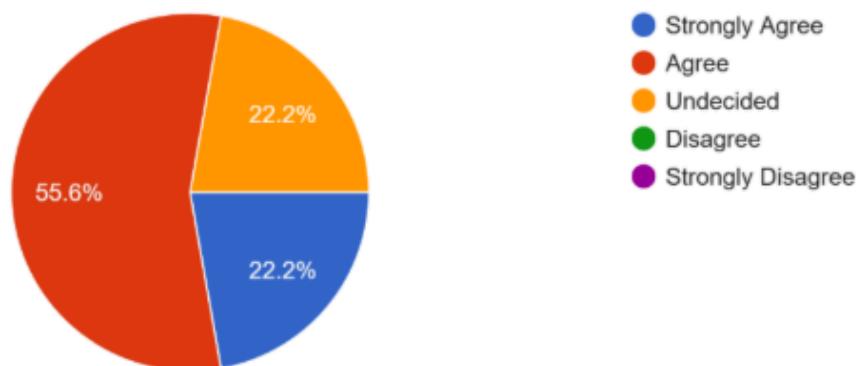
10. There are opportunities for non-teaching staff to provide feedback and suggestions on college policies and initiatives.

9 responses



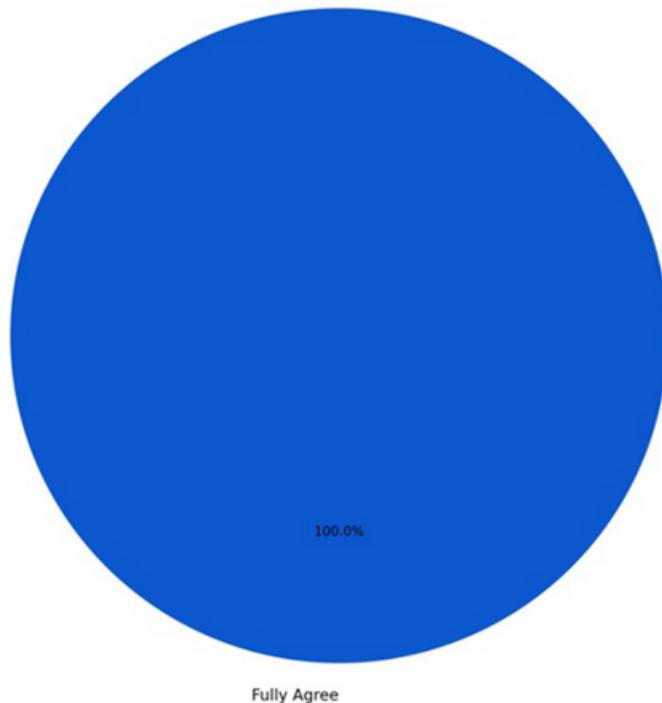
11. You feel that the college administration values and recognizes the importance of work-life balance for all non-teaching staff.

9 responses

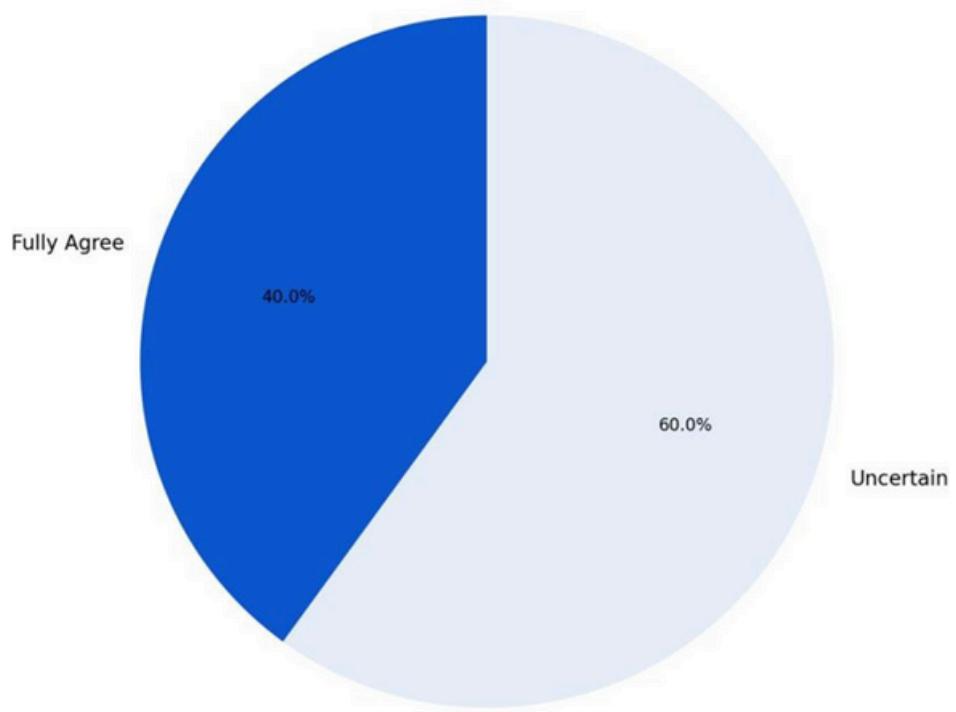


2.4. GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF SUPPORT STAFF

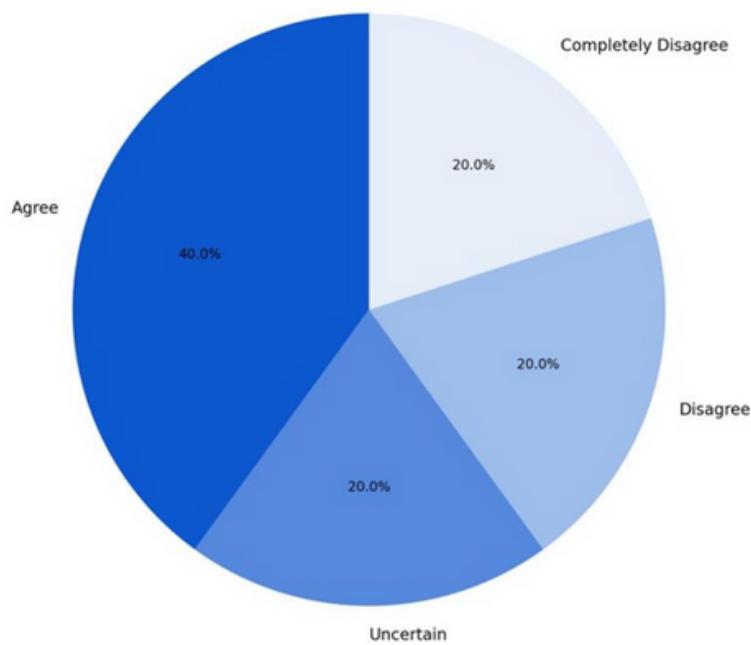
1. Do you feel safe and comfortable in your workplace?



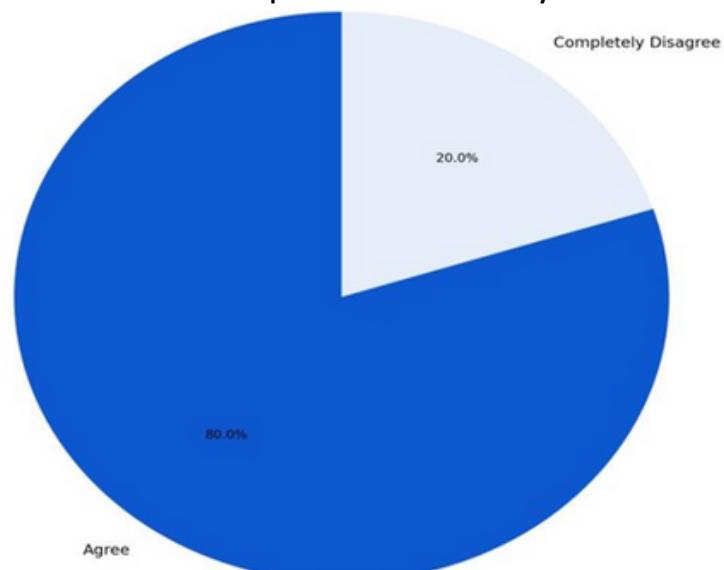
2. Are the facilities and resources available to you sufficient (e.g., toilets, break rooms, equipment)?



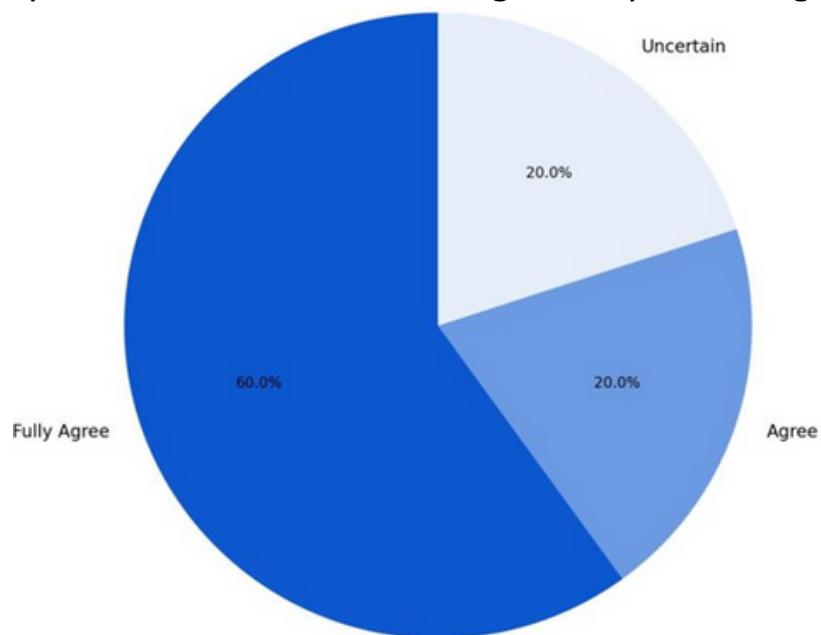
3. Have you experienced or witnessed any form of harassment or discrimination in the workplace?



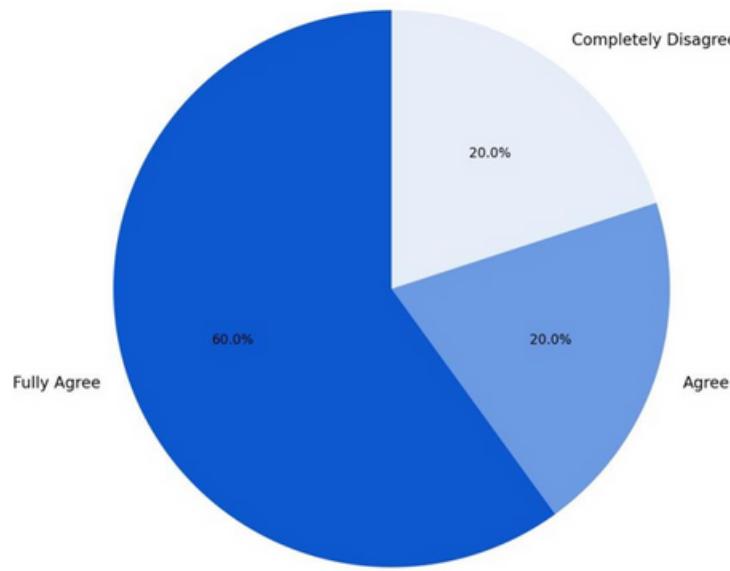
4. Are your job responsibilities and expectations clearly defined and communicated?



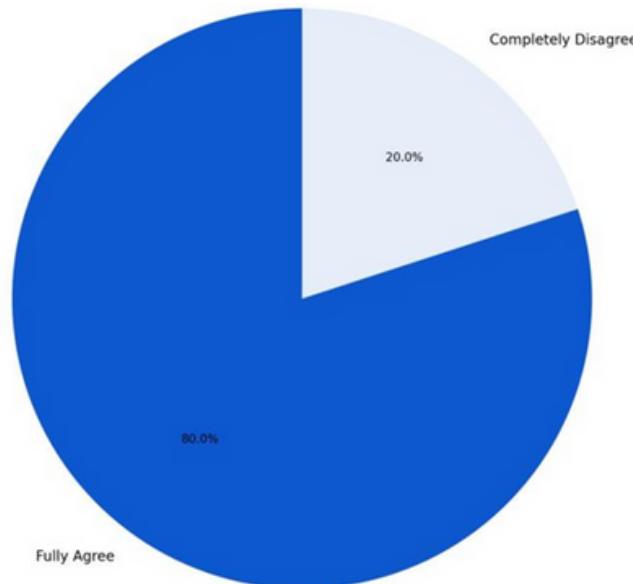
5. Do you feel that your work is valued and recognized by the college administration?



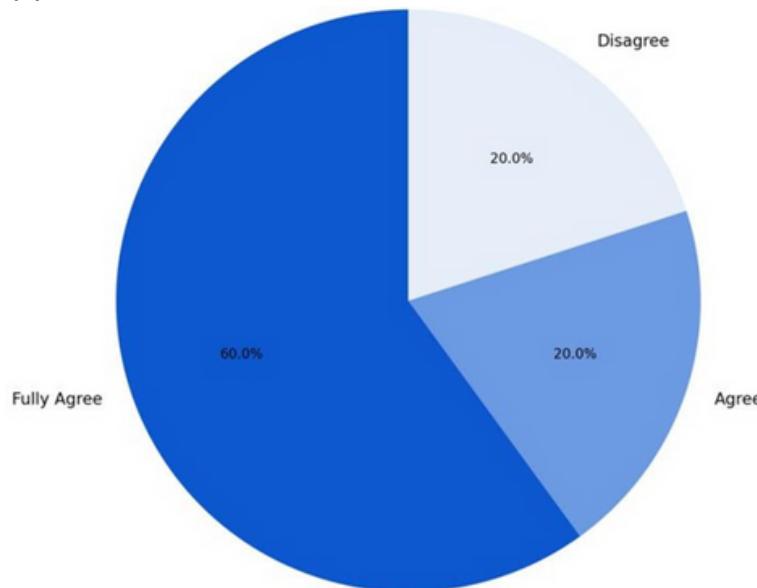
6. Are adequate support services and resources available to you, such as counseling, mentoring, or employee assistance programs?



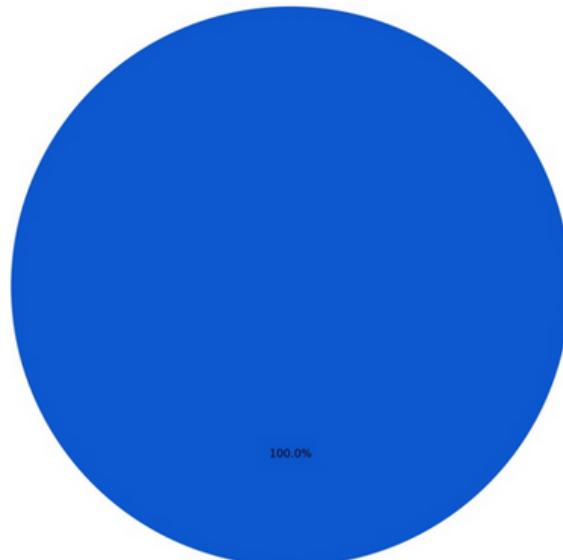
7. Do you feel that the college provides sufficient support for staff with caring responsibilities or other family responsibilities?



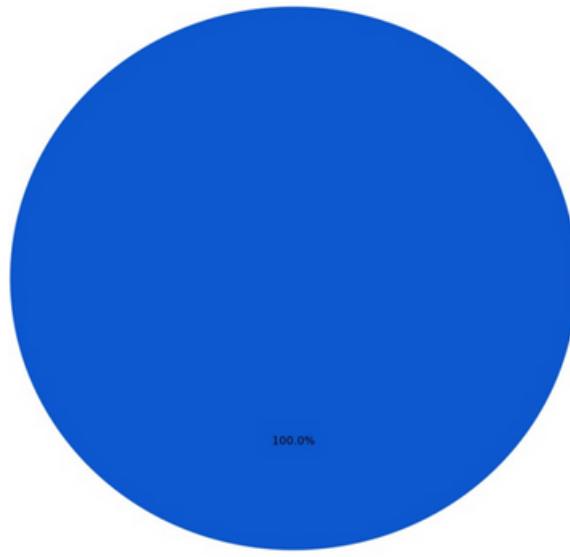
8. Is there a difference in the way support services and resources are provided to male and female support staff?



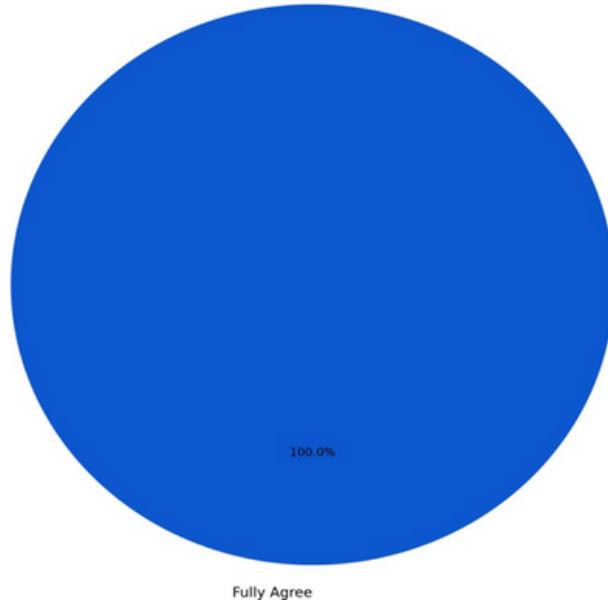
9. Do you feel that the college administration values and appreciates the contributions of support staff?



10. Are sufficient facilities and resources available for cleaning and maintenance?



11. Are sufficient resources and training available to ensure your safety and the safety of students and staff?



2.5. GENDER-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF

SERIAL NO.	POST	FEMALE	MALE
1.	TEACHING: GOVERNMENT POST	36	4
2.	TEACHING: MANAGEMENT POST	3	0
3.	GUEST TEACHERS	13	0
4.	NON-TEACHING (OFFICE): GOVERNMENT POST	2	3
5.	NON-TEACHING (OFFICE AND LIBRARY): MANAGEMENT POST	4	0
6.	SUPPORT STAFF: GOVERNMENT POST	0	2
7.	SUPPORT STAFF: MANAGEMENT POST	1	6
8.	AGENCY STAFF	2	4
9.	COUNSELLOR	1	-
10.	SOCIAL WORKER	1	-

3.1. GENDER EQUITY FACILITIES AND INITIATIVES

The following facilities and initiatives are available in Loreto College, Kolkata for the overall development of its students:

EQUITY INITIATIVES

- The college has a **Women and Gender Development Cell (WGDC)** as mandated by the UGC that regularly conducts gender sensitisation programmes and workshops and that has taken on the responsibility of conducting the Annual Gender Audit.
- The college has an **Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC)** as mandated by the UGC that ensures equitable access to female students from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

- The college has a **Career Counselling Cell** that provides guidance, training, and support to help students make informed career choices, develop professional skills, and connect with opportunities in higher education and the job market.
- The **Placement Cell** facilitates campus recruitment by equipping students with relevant employability skills, connecting them with reputable organisations, and supporting them in securing job placements.
- The college has a robust **Internship Committee** comprising department-specific faculty members and a Nodal Officer who collectively play an active role in facilitating internship opportunities and fostering industry exposure and skill development among students.
- The **Loreto College Incubation Centre** empowers students with entrepreneurial skills and helps them to develop socially impactful and sustainable business models by offering advisory services, infrastructural support, and basic financial assistance.
- The **Research and Development Cell** is focused on creating a robust research culture within the institution, promoting interdisciplinary research, and providing support to students and faculty engaged in various research initiatives.

GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISMS

- The college has a fully functional **Internal Complaints Committee** (ICC) as mandated by the UGC that regularly holds awareness programmes regarding sexual harassment at the workplace and that is prepared to deal with cases of sexual harassment (if any) in accordance with the Vishaka Guidelines.
- There is an **Anti-Ragging Committee** established as per UGC Guidelines that works to spread awareness among students about ragging and its consequences, establish strict deterrents against ragging, and provide a transparent and effective complaint redressal mechanism.
- The college has established a **Students' Grievance Redressal Committee** in accordance with UGC Guidelines to ensure a fair and transparent process for addressing student concerns and complaints.
- A **Staff Grievance Redressal Committee** has also been established to provide a structured and confidential platform for faculty and staff to voice their concerns, ensuring timely resolution.

CO-CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

- The college has a diverse range of **Student-Led Societies** that foster co-curricular development through cultural, creative, social, and leadership training activities. Events organised by these societies are often focused on gender discourse.
- **Value-Added Programmes** on Basic Python, Web Designing, Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, and Data Analytics are offered to expose students to fields where women have traditionally been under-represented.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS FACILITIES

- Every floor has **Clean Washrooms** with ample water supply, including **Accessible Washrooms** for women with disabilities.
- **Sanitary Napkin Vending Machines** have been installed on every floor to provide access to affordable menstrual hygiene products.
- There is a **Games Society** that works actively to promote a sporting culture on campus through indoor and outdoor activities such as table tennis, throwball, and basketball as well as through the organisation of the annual Sports Day.

- The **Wellness Cell** is dedicated to promoting the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of students and staff through activities, workshops, and awareness programmes that encourage holistic health and self-care.
- Personalised guidance and emotional support are offered to students through one-on-one **Counselling Sessions** with a trained professional and structured **Mentoring** by faculty members.

SAFETY MEASURES

- There is **24-hour CCTV surveillance**, with 73 active cameras covering different areas of the college premises. The campus is also well-lit and equipped with emergency response systems.
- **Security Guards** are posted at the front and back entrances for the safety of the students.

COLLABORATIONS AND OUTREACH

- The college has a dedicated **National Service Scheme (NSS) Unit** that regularly undertakes community outreach activities for the development and upliftment of women residing in villages adopted by the college.
- The college has signed **Memoranda of Understanding** with organisations focused on gender rights and equity, such as Soroptimist International of Calcutta and Kolkata Nivedita Shakti.

ALUMNAE ENGAGEMENT

- The college has a vibrant and illustrious **Network of Alumnae** from various fields who provide infrastructural support to the institution and mentorship to students through the sharing of success stories.
- The **Lakshmi Chatterji Memorial Award for Lifetime Contribution to the Empowerment of Women** was instituted by the family of the Late Mrs. Lakshmi Chatterji, alumna and former teacher of Loreto College. It is awarded annually on the occasion of International Women's Day to an alumna of the college with notable contributions in the fields of women empowerment and social welfare.

3.2. GENDER SENSITISATION PROGRAMMES

The WGDC and the ICC, in collaboration with the IQAC, organised a special talk on **Gender Sensitisation and Right to Safety**, delivered by Dr. Palak Mittal on **August 2, 2024**. It was an interactive session during which issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination were lucidly explained. Dr. Mittal also highlighted the role of the ICC in the prevention and redressal of harassment faced by women or men at the institutional level.

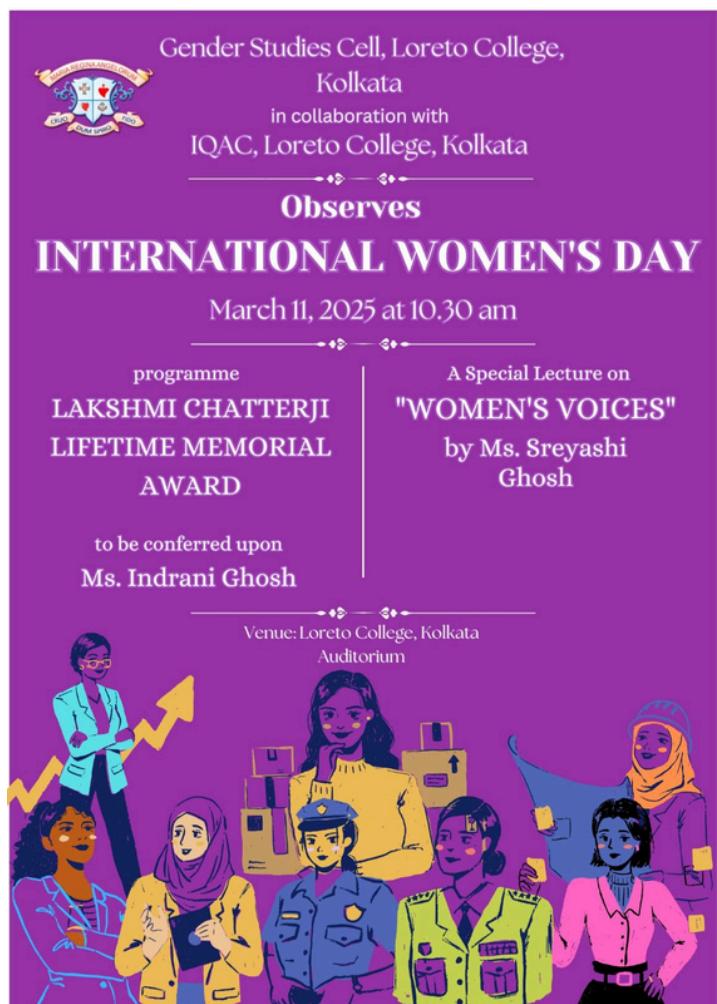
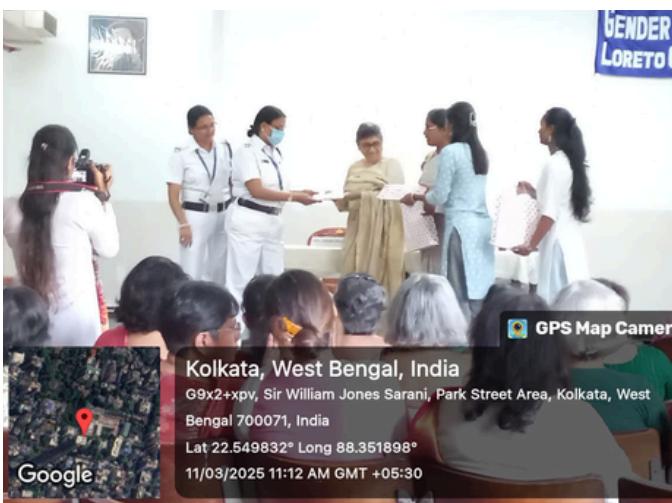
On **November 25, 2024**, **UN Orange Day** was commemorated at Loreto College by the WGDC in collaboration with Soroptimist International of Calcutta. The event marked the beginning of 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Badges were distributed to students and faculty members, after which Mrs. Shukla Ghoshal, Secretary of Soroptimist International of Calcutta, delivered a thought-provoking address emphasising the significance of the campaign.

On **February 28, 2025**, Professor Geraldine Forbes, a renowned scholar in the field of visual culture and memory studies, delivered a presentation on the significance of photographs as vessels of memory and tools for the construction of feminist history. The event was organised by the Department of History in collaboration with the WGDC, and Prof. Forbes' presentation was titled **Researching Women's Lives: History and Photography in Colonial India**.



Loreto College, Kolkata observed **International Women's Day** on **March 11, 2025** through an event organised by the WGDC in collaboration with the IQAC. The programme was based on the UN theme of International Women's Day 2025—"Accelerate Action."

1. The event featured the felicitation of two policewomen from the Shakespeare Sarani Branch, who spoke to students about contemporary harassment cases, women's rights, and the importance of self-defense. The female support staff of Loreto College were also felicitated for their tireless contributions.
2. The highlight of the event was the Lakshmi Chatterji Memorial Award, which was conferred upon Ms. Indrani Ghosh for her commendable work focused on promoting the education of economically disadvantaged slum children and children with disabilities through her institution, Anandan.
3. The final segment of the programme was a special lecture on "Women's Voices" by Ms. Sreyashi Ghosh, writer, documentary film maker, and social activist, who has worked on sex workers, genocide survivors, HIV-AIDS survivors, and vulnerable children.



4.1. SURVEY ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF STUDENTS:

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Empowerment and Leadership:** A strong majority of students feel that initiatives promoting gender empowerment and leadership on campus are effective.
- **Bias/Stereotyping from Teachers:** A notable number of students have either experienced or witnessed bias or stereotyping from teachers based on gender, or are undecided about it, indicating a concerning issue that warrants attention.
- **Differences in Teacher Interaction/Feedback:** There are students who perceive differences in how male and female teachers interact or provide feedback, highlighting potential areas for concern.
- **Different Teacher Expectations/Standards:** Students also report varying expectations or standards from male and female teachers, further supporting the need to examine potential gender-based disparities in teacher behaviour.
- **Uncomfortable/Intimidated by Teacher Behaviour:** A considerable number of students have felt uncomfortable or intimidated by a teacher's behaviour or comments. This is a serious finding that requires immediate action.
- **Opportunities for Teacher Feedback:** While many students feel that there are opportunities to provide feedback on teachers, a substantial minority are undecided or disagree, suggesting there is room for improvement in communication channels.
- **Gaps/Biases in Curriculum:** A significant number of students believe there are gaps or biases in the curriculum that need to be addressed.
- **Safety and Comfort on Campus:** The vast majority of students feel safe and comfortable on campus, even in areas where male teachers or staff may be present. This is a positive finding.
- **Harassment or Discrimination on Campus:** While the vast majority of students have not experienced or witnessed harassment or discrimination on campus, a noticeable minority are undecided, suggesting that continued vigilance is necessary.
- **Adequate Support Services:** A large portion of students feel that adequate support services and resources are available for gender-related issues. However, a significant group is undecided, indicating a need to ensure awareness and accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Mandatory Gender Sensitivity Training for Educators:** Regular training programmes may be implemented for all teachers, focusing on gender sensitivity, recognising unconscious biases, and promoting inclusive classroom environments. This would directly address the concerns about bias, differing interactions, expectations, and discomfort originating from teachers.
- **Establish Clear Conduct Guidelines and Reporting Channels:** Explicit guidelines may be developed for appropriate teacher behaviour and comments, in addition to the guidelines that already exist. Students may be made fully aware of these guidelines and appropriate reporting procedures. It is crucial that all reported concerns are taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- **Comprehensive Curriculum Review for Inclusivity:** Although the syllabi followed for the various courses in Loreto College are decided by the University of Calcutta, the broader curriculum and pedagogical strategies may be reviewed to pinpoint and rectify any existing gender gaps or biases. Teachers may be provided with resources to facilitate the implementation of a genuinely gender-inclusive curriculum.
- **Enhanced Student Feedback Mechanisms:** While opportunities for student feedback on teachers exist in the form of an online Teacher Assessment Questionnaire (TAQ) and multiple suggestion boxes, feedback channels may be strengthened and diversified. Structured feedback sessions may be introduced on a consistent basis. It is also vital that student feedback is not only collected but also demonstrably considered so that tangible improvements in teaching practices may take place.
- **Awareness of Gender-Related Support Services:** Student awareness regarding the availability and scope of existing support services and resources designed to address gender-related issues may be increased. Multiple communication platforms, such as orientation programmes, campus posters, the institutional website, and social media campaigns, may be used to ensure that all students are well-informed about where and how to access help for any gender-related concerns.
- **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** The data collected from regular audits should be used to inform and guide policy adjustments, track progress, assess the effectiveness of all implemented initiatives, and ensure that resources are allocated effectively to foster a more gender-equitable and inclusive campus environment.

GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF TEACHING AND LIBRARY STAFF:

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Gender Representation:** The ratio of male to female teachers across departments and leadership positions shows a higher number of female members, primarily because it is a women's college. Both male and female teachers are, nevertheless, represented in administrative roles and decision-making bodies, ensuring a degree of gender diversity in institutional governance.
- **Workplace Policies:** Anti-harassment policies are available, and efforts are made to raise awareness among staff to ensure a safe and respectful working environment. Maternity leave provisions based on government regulations are in place to support female employees. Support and flexibility are offered to help staff balance professional and personal responsibilities.
- **Professional Development:** All staff members have equal access to training programmes, workshops, and opportunities for career advancement, regardless of gender.
- **Infrastructure and Facilities:** The institution provides safe and inclusive working spaces, including designated staff rooms, clean washrooms, and accessible grievance redressal mechanisms. However, there are no washrooms specifically designated for male staff.
- **Perception and Inclusion:** Staff generally display positive attitudes toward gender sensitivity and inclusivity in the workplace. However, some staff members have reported experiences of gender bias or discrimination, highlighting the need for continued awareness and policy enforcement. Faculty regularly participate in gender sensitisation programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Capacity Building:** Regular gender sensitisation workshops must continue to be organised for faculty. Gender equity topics may be integrated into faculty development programmes.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** A feedback and audit cycle may be instituted to track measurable improvements. Gender-based indicators may be included in performance appraisals and institution reports.
- **Support Mechanisms:** Mentorship programmes may be developed for younger faculty to encourage leadership. Work-life balance may be facilitated by streamlining responsibilities and offering mental health support. Confidential grievance redressal channels for faculty may also be strengthened.

- **Gender Equity Action Plan:** A small, diverse team of faculty members (ideally with gender balance) may be constituted to review the audit, suggest priorities, and oversee implementation. A time-bound action plan (1–3 years) may be developed to address key concerns identified in the audit.
- **Awareness and Sensitisation Drives:** Interactive sessions on gender sensitivity, unconscious bias, and respectful workplace behaviour may be organised on a more frequent basis. The college may invite external experts or use UGC-recommended resources to maintain neutrality and impact.
- **Infrastructural Improvements:** Childcare facilities for working parents and separate washrooms for male staff should ideally be introduced.

GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF OFFICE STAFF:

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Workplace Comfort and Safety:** The overwhelming majority of office staff feel comfortable and safe in their workplace. They also feel that their work is recognised and valued by the college administration.
- **Experience of Harassment or Discrimination:** While a significant portion of respondents strongly denied experiencing or witnessing harassment or discrimination, a notable number did report experiencing or witnessing it. This suggests that while not pervasive, instances of harassment or discrimination may exist and require attention.
- **Clarity of Job Responsibilities and Expectations:** A majority of staff find their job responsibilities and expectations to be clearly defined. However, a notable portion is either unsure or finds a lack of clarity, indicating room for improved communication.
- **Adequacy of Support Services and Resources:** The majority of office staff perceive support services, such as counselling, mentoring, and employee assistance programmes, as inadequate. They also feel the need for more programmes on gender sensitisation.
- **Support for Caregiving Responsibilities:** A large number of respondents were undecided regarding the adequacy of college support for staff with caregiving responsibilities. This suggests either a lack of awareness about existing support or a perception that it is not consistently provided.

- **Differences in Support Services by Gender:** Most office staff do not perceive differences in how support services are provided to male and female staff. However, a significant portion remained undecided, suggesting a need for continued vigilance and clarity to ensure equity.
- **Inclusion in Decision-Making and Communication:** While more than half of the staff feel included in decision-making processes and communication about college policies and initiatives, a notable segment feels excluded or is unsure. This indicates a need to enhance inclusive practices and communication strategies.
- **Opportunities for Feedback and Suggestions:** While opportunities for providing feedback and suggestions exist for a majority of staff, a considerable number are neutral on this point. This suggests that while avenues may be present, they may be made more consistent and effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Support Services:** Support services such as counselling and mentorship may be reviewed and expanded, and awareness on gender issues may be actively promoted.
- **Anti-Harassment Policies:** This may be done by reviewing existing policies, ensuring clear communication and transparent reporting mechanisms, and providing training on gender-based workplace conduct.
- **Clarity of Job Responsibilities:** Regular reviews of job descriptions may be conducted, and open dialogue between supervisors and staff may be encouraged irrespective of their gender for mutual understanding.
- **Inclusion in Decision-Making:** The administration may actively seek input from office staff on relevant policies and initiatives related to gender and expand channels for their representation in discussions or committees.
- **Equitable Support Services:** The college must proactively ensure and demonstrate that all support services and resources, including support for parents and caregivers, are provided equitably to all office staff, regardless of gender.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Diverse and accessible channels for feedback may be implemented, such as anonymous suggestion boxes or online platforms, and the feedback received must be acknowledged and acted upon.

GENDER AUDIT SURVEY OF SUPPORT STAFF:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Awareness and Grievance Redressal:** A robust and confidential grievance redressal mechanism is required for support staff, with clearly accessible contact information. Workshops on anti-discrimination and harassment awareness may also be conducted.
- **Facilities and Infrastructure:** Basic amenities such as toilets, rest areas, and break rooms for support staff may be enhanced, and the support staff may be engaged in periodic reviews of infrastructure.
- **Job Clarity:** Written job descriptions may be provided and regular meetings may be conducted to clarify roles and expectations.
- **Recognition and Motivation:** Staff recognition programmes (e.g., “Employee of the Month”) may be introduced, and their contributions/achievements may be highlighted in the college newsletter and other platforms.
- **Family Support and Work-Life Balance:** Flexible work schedules or leave options may be offered to those with caregiving responsibilities. Awareness about existing support systems may also be raised through regular communication.
- **Gender Equity:** All welfare and support services must be made accessible and equally available to all genders.
- **Maintenance and Hygiene:** Specific budgets and staff members may be allocated for maintaining the high standards of hygiene that the college is reputed for.
- **Support Staff Welfare Committee:** A committee dedicated to the welfare of support staff may be created, with representatives from among the support staff to give them a voice in policy-making.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** The support staff may be offered skill development and upskilling programmes for personal and professional growth. Continued investment in safety-related protocols and training is also recommended for the welfare of all parties.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Suggestion boxes may be installed for anonymous input on workplace conditions. Follow-up audits can also play an important role in tracking progress and evaluating satisfaction levels.

4.2. CONCLUSION

In the context of Loreto College, Kolkata and its future-oriented educational landscape, conducting a Gender Audit has been deemed to be both a necessity and a strategic initiative to promote gender equity, inclusivity, and social justice.

In the wider context, in India, despite legislative frameworks such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, and the National Education Policy, gender disparities and biases persist within academic and institutional environments.

A regularly conducted Gender Audit must therefore be perceived as a tool to address Gender Disparities. The significant gaps in enrollment, retention, and leadership opportunities for women and marginalised genders within any institution can be tested through a Gender Audit that helps to identify systemic barriers and biases.

On the other hand, an institution committed to gender equity can foster a safer, more inclusive environment, attracting diverse students and faculty and thereby improving academic excellence and social reputation. Such an audit also ensures cultural transformation, policy compliance, and accountability towards all stakeholders.

A well-conducted gender audit can go a long way towards assessing the quality of curriculum content and pedagogy, campus environment, and the equitable representation and participation of all stakeholders. It also enhances research and outreach possibilities to a large extent.

Thus, a comprehensive Gender Audit is crucial for institutional introspection, policy refinement, and fostering an equitable academic environment. It is hoped that this Audit will lay the foundation for future evaluations of a similar nature and thereby bring about a positive transformation in the overall gender-based, equitable learning environment in Loreto College, Kolkata. It is also hoped that this Audit will become a catalyst for gender justice and social transformation in the larger environment constituted by all the stakeholders of the institution.

This is to declare that Loreto College, Kolkata has successfully conducted the Gender Audit for the institution for the academic year 2024-25.

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