



Gender Audit Report (2021-2022)
Cochin University of Science and Technology

<https://cusat.ac.in/>



Prepared by

Women's Studies Centre
Cochin University of Science and Technology

Gender Policy

Cochin University of Science and Technology, striving for excellence in all that we do, recognizes the impact that our Gender Policies may have on the safety and contentment of our employees and students. Gender equality and equity will form an integral part of our planning and decision making.

We are committed to:

- Establishing Gender Justice by correcting gender imbalances in educational policies, institutional systems and everyday practices.
- Ensuring Zero Tolerance against gender based violence by continually investigating, analyzing and preventing sexist actions and practices.
- Promoting Gender Sensitization so as to ensure safety, security and to develop care and compassion among individuals in a comprehensive level.
- Complying with all applicable legal requirements and guidelines as proposed by the State.

Objectives

- To verify, confirm and improve the effectiveness of preventive systems to tackle gender based discriminations functioning within the institution.
- To analyze gender based issues prevalent in the University.
- To evaluate the participation of women and other sexual minorities of the university.
- To evaluate the participation of women and other sexual minorities in STEM field within the university.
- To gather innovative proposals and recommendations from our workforce and students so as to foster gender specific remedies and practices.

Introduction

A Gender Audit, according to the European Institute of Gender Equality, is a tool to access and check the institutionalization of gender equality into organizations, including in their policies, programs, projects and/or provisions of services, structures, proceedings and budgets. Drawing on the findings gathered in the audit, a gender action plan can be drafted with the aim to improve gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the organization. With the formation of gender committee involving internal staff and stakeholders the recommendations from the audit report can be taken forward for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the gender action plan.

Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), the Kerala state owned autonomous university was founded in 1971 as the University of Cochin through an act of the Kerala Legislature for setting up postgraduate education in the state. The motto of the university is *tejasvi nāvadhītamastu*, which is taken from the vedas and conveys “may the wisdom accrued deify us both the teacher and the taught- and prelocate to the universe in its totality.” The philosophy and goals of the university find eloquent expression in its quote emblazoning the motto and we strive to illuminate by promoting undergraduate, postgraduate and advanced research in Architecture, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Humanities, Law, Medical Sciences and Technology, Science, Social Sciences and Technology along with various centers and auxiliary institutions.

Considering the principles of Equality and Justice guaranteed by the constitution alongside with Samaagati Report (2015), Saksham Report (2014) which suggests measures for ensuring the safety of women and programs for gender sensitization on campus, Bodily Autonomy and Integrity enunciation in the Bill of Rights for Women in the Justice Verma Committee Report (2013), Cochin University of Science and Technology’s Women’s Studies Centre has been working for the empowerment of women combating cultures of silence and cultures of impunity that deter women empowerment.

Our organizational policies have transformed the gender neutrality of the university and have helped in inculcating gender sensitivity to the gender environment of the institution. By upholding the belief of equity and equality among all individuals, irrespective of the gender, the university is committed to advancing gender equality in its own workforce and students. The Internal Complaint Committee, constituted as per norms, has been working since 2001. A dedicated Women’s Studies Center (WSC), which was established in January 2010 has been

engaged in research, action and advocacy programs for the advancement of gender agenda in the university as well as the immediate social surroundings. The WSC has cooperated with various governmental and non-governmental agencies and institutions in its bid to create and further the awareness on various topics of interest to women such as safety, entrepreneurship, skill development, legal awareness, health, empowerment and many. The center has been engaged in conducting various researches and has a unique collective called the Cochin University Women’s Welfare Organization (CUWWO) which is working for all women associated with the university. The gender policy of the university, gender equity and equality, is evident while considering the number of women in science research as Principal Investigators and in leadership positions.

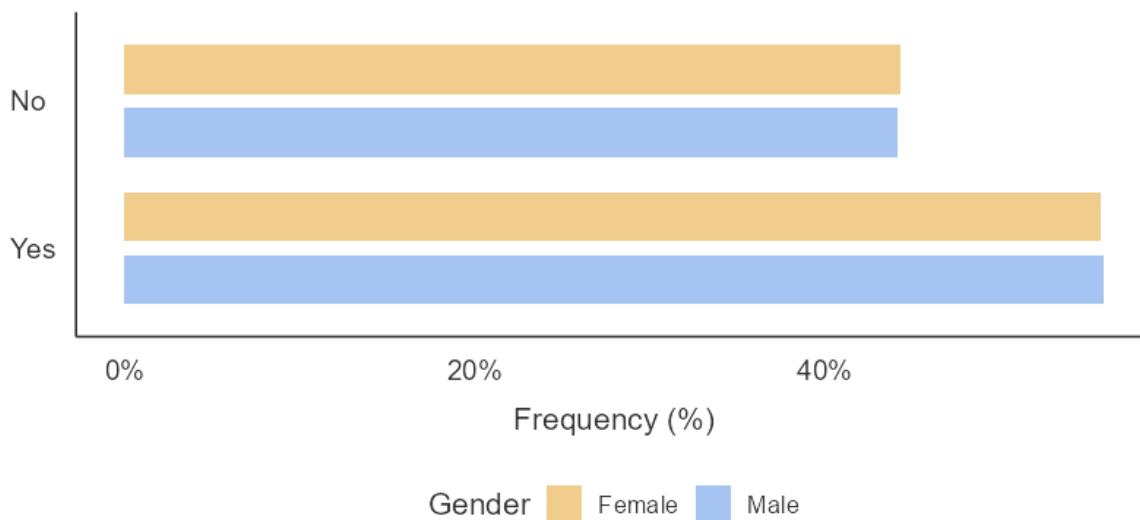
Data Analyses

In order to achieve the objectives of the Gender Audit, an online survey was carried out among students/research scholars and teaching/non-teaching staff of the university. The form was prepared with both closed-ended multiple choice items and open-ended descriptive items. The survey questions covered various aspects such as views on security, glass ceiling, career progression, awareness remedies regarding sexual misconduct, internal complaints redressal mechanism etc. and also asked for views on how to make the University more gender-inclusive and safe. The data obtained through the survey were analysed using free and open source data analysis software, and the major results are presented below.

Survey among Students and Research Scholars

On The Adequacy of Gender Sensitization Programmes

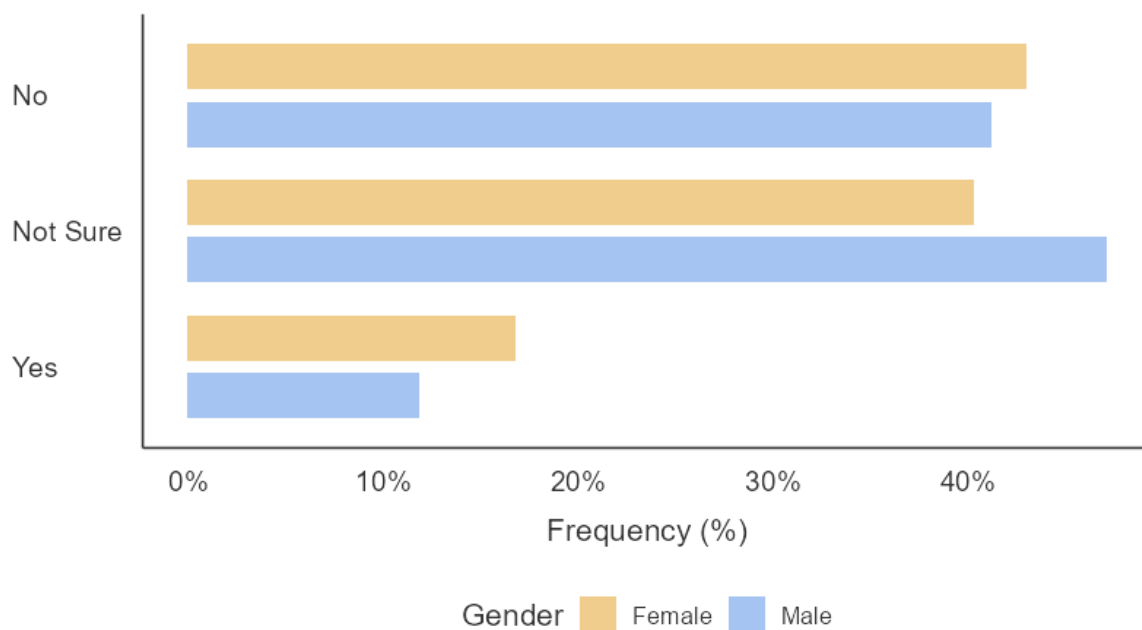
Gender	Are enough gender sensitization programmes being conducted in the university?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	66 44.3 %	83 55.7 %	149 100.0 %
Male	15 44.1 %	19 55.9 %	34 100.0 %
Total	81 44.3 %	102 55.7 %	183 100.0 %



According to the survey, more students are of the opinion that adequate gender sensitization programmes are being conducted. More than half of the female participants opine that there are adequate sensitization programs being conducted in the university. However around 44% of male participants are of the opinion that the university should conduct more programs for gender sensitization. There are no marked gender differences in the opinion on adequacy of gender sensitization programmes. The Women's Studies Centre had conducted induction programme for all freshly admitted students during the present academic year. Though not the majority opinion, the view of around 44 % respondents that not enough gender sensitization programmes are being conducted needs to be considered seriously.

Perceptions on The existence of Glass Ceiling

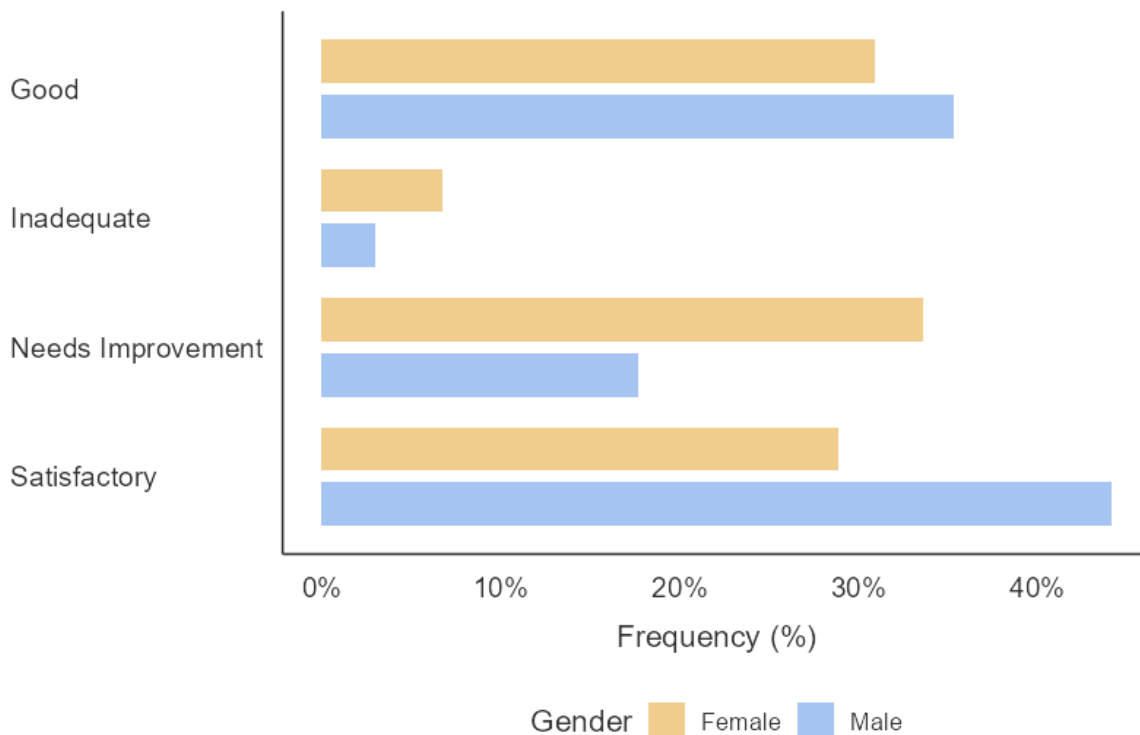
Gender	Are there 'invisible barriers' for women in their studies or career progression within the University?			Total
	No	Not Sure	Yes	
Female	64 43.0 %	60 40.3 %	25 16.8 %	149 100.0 %
Male	14 41.2 %	16 47.1 %	4 11.8 %	34 100.0 %
Total	78 42.6 %	76 41.5 %	29 15.8 %	183 100.0 %



Around 12% of male and 17% of female participants believe that there are invisible barriers for women in studies or career progression. These glass ceilings have been shown to exist in almost all social institutions in patriarchal societies. Awareness regarding glass ceiling has been found generally low, and this seems to have reflected in the responses of 41.5% who were not sure about the existence of such invisible barriers.

Adequacy of Amenities Available for Women

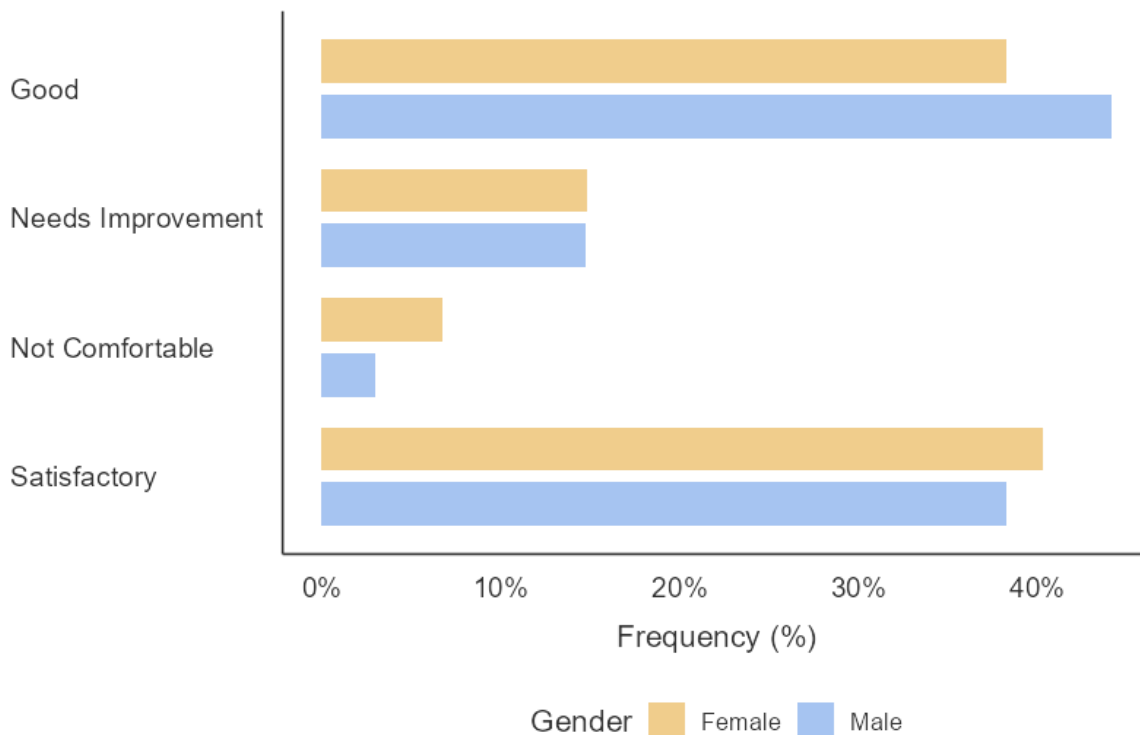
Are the amenities available for female students and research scholars in the university adequate?					
Gender	Good	Inadequate	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Total
Female	46 30.9 %	10 6.7 %	50 33.6 %	43 28.9 %	149 100.0 %
Male	12 35.3 %	1 2.9 %	6 17.6 %	15 44.1 %	34 100.0 %
Total	58 31.7 %	11 6.0 %	56 30.6 %	58 31.7 %	183 100.0 %



A significant gender difference was seen in the responses regarding adequacy of amenities available for women students and research scholars. More females felt that the amenities needed improvement. While 44.1% of men felt that the amenities were satisfactory, 33.6% of women felt that the amenities needed improvement. Such differences in perception also reflect the need for further sensitization regarding the issues faced by women in academic spaces.

Opinions about Class Timings and Academic Schedules

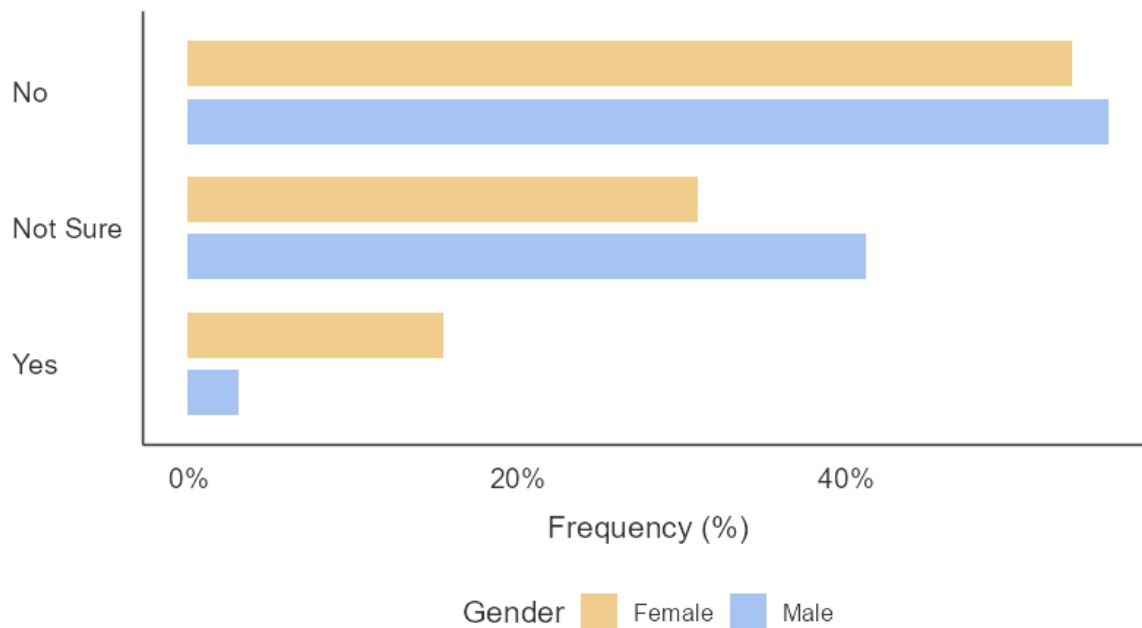
Are class timings and other schedules comfortable for female students and research scholars?					
Gender	Good	Needs Improvement	Not Comfortable	Satisfactory	Total
Female	57	22	10	60	149
	38.3 %	14.8 %	6.7 %	40.3 %	100.0 %
Male	15	5	1	13	34
	44.1 %	14.7 %	2.9 %	38.2 %	100.0 %
Total	72	27	11	73	183
	39.3 %	14.8 %	6.0 %	39.9 %	100.0 %



Responses regarding the suitability of class timings and academic schedules reflected a secular trend, with not much differences between the genders. Overall, around 80% respondents said either the schedules were good or satisfactory.

Views about Gender Based Discrimination

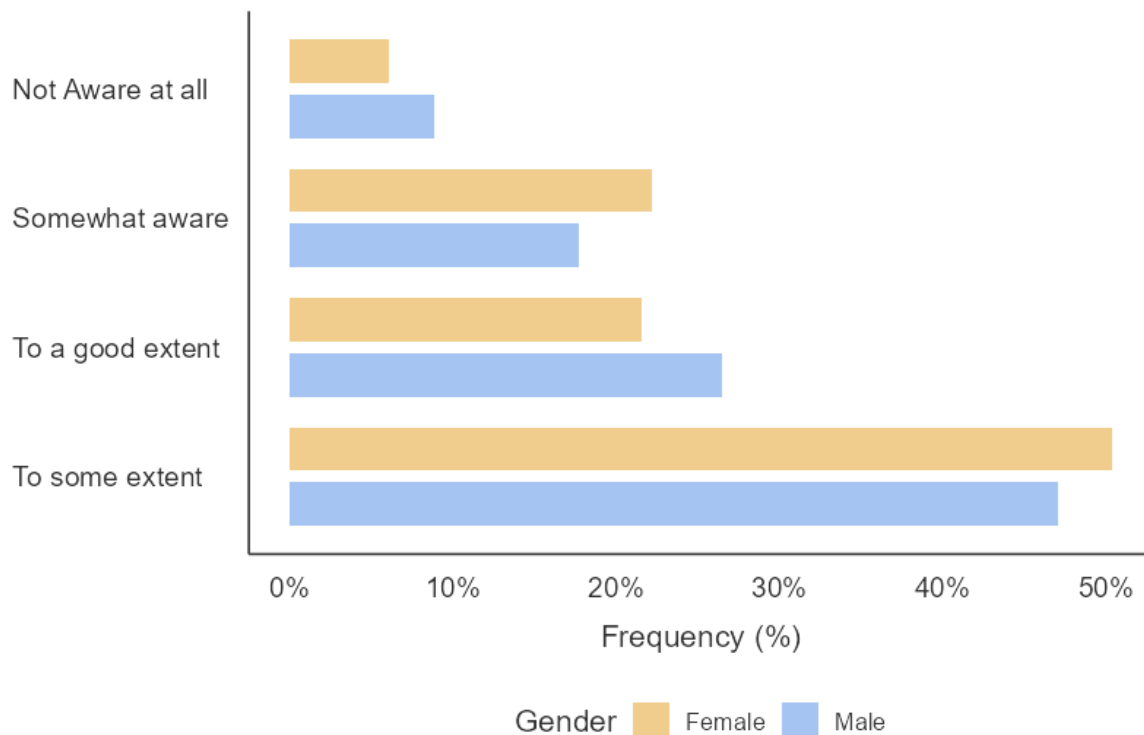
Do you believe that gender based discrimination exists in the University?				
Gender	No	Not Sure	Yes	Total
Female	80 53.7 %	46 30.9 %	23 15.4 %	149 100.0 %
Male	19 55.9 %	14 41.2 %	1 2.9 %	34 100.0 %
Total	99 54.1 %	60 32.8 %	24 13.1 %	183 100.0 %



More than half of the participants (54.1%) felt there was no gender based discrimination in the University without much gender differences. This probably means that the efforts towards ending discrimination may be effective. While around one-third (32.8%) of all respondents said they were not sure about the existence of gender based discrimination, the only significant gender difference was found among those who said there was gender based discrimination. Only 2.9% males felt that there was gender based discrimination, whereas 15.4% females felt there was indeed discrimination on the basis of gender.

Awareness About Guidelines on Prevention of Sexual Harassment

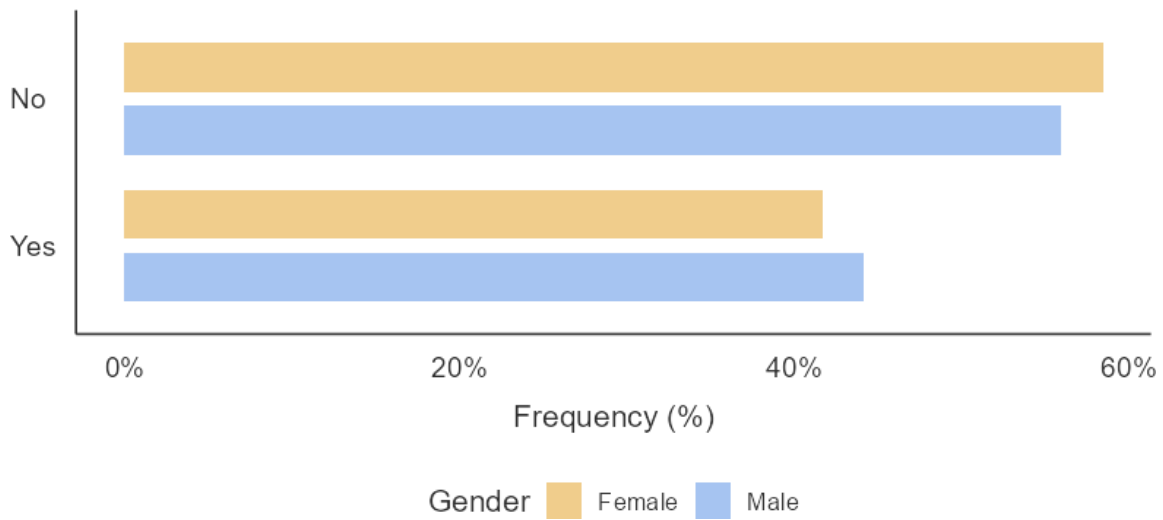
How much are you aware about the existing guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment at workplaces?					
Gender	Not Aware at all	Somewhat aware	To a good extent	To some extent	Total
Female	9 6.0 %	33 22.1 %	32 21.5 %	75 50.3 %	149 100.0 %
Male	3 8.8 %	6 17.6 %	9 26.5 %	16 47.1 %	34 100.0 %
Total	12 6.6 %	39 21.3 %	41 22.4 %	91 49.7 %	183 100.0 %



Almost half of the respondents (49.7%) had some awareness about guidelines regarding sexual harassment at the workplace. There was not much gender differences among this group. Almost a quarter (22.4%) of the participants also said that they had awareness to a good extent, which is a satisfactory level of awareness. Only a small amount of participants (6.6%) were not at all aware about the guidelines.

Awareness about Internal Complaints Committee

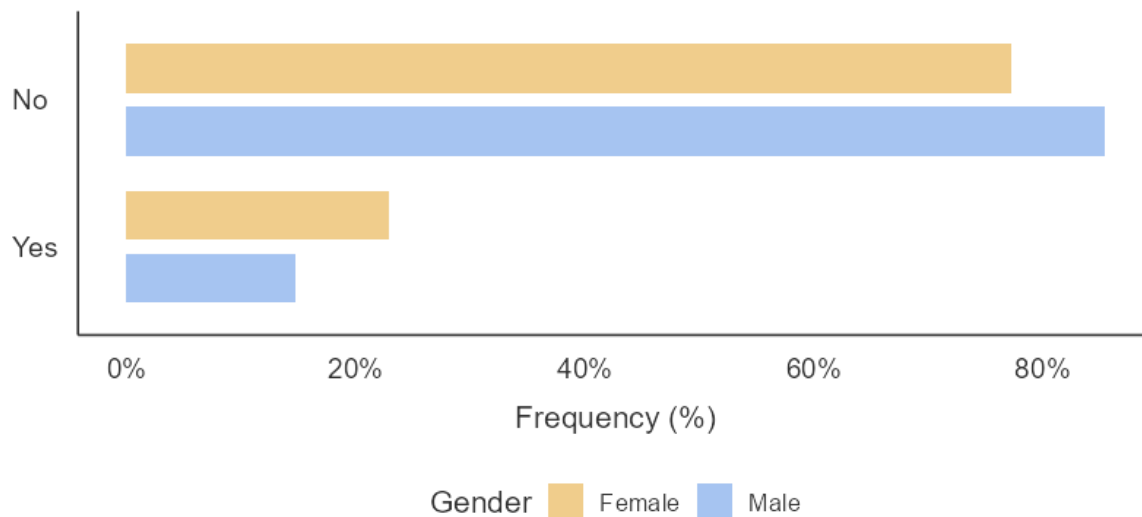
Are you aware of the Internal Complaints Committee established in the University?			
Gender	No	Yes	Total
Female	87	62	149
	58.4 %	41.6 %	100.0 %
Male	19	15	34
	55.9 %	44.1 %	100.0 %
Total	106	77	183
	57.9 %	42.1 %	100.0 %



There were no significant gender differences in awareness about Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the University. However it is to be noted that 57.9% of the participants, including 58.4 % females are not aware of the existence of ICC in the university.

Awareness about Procedures Involved in Approaching ICC

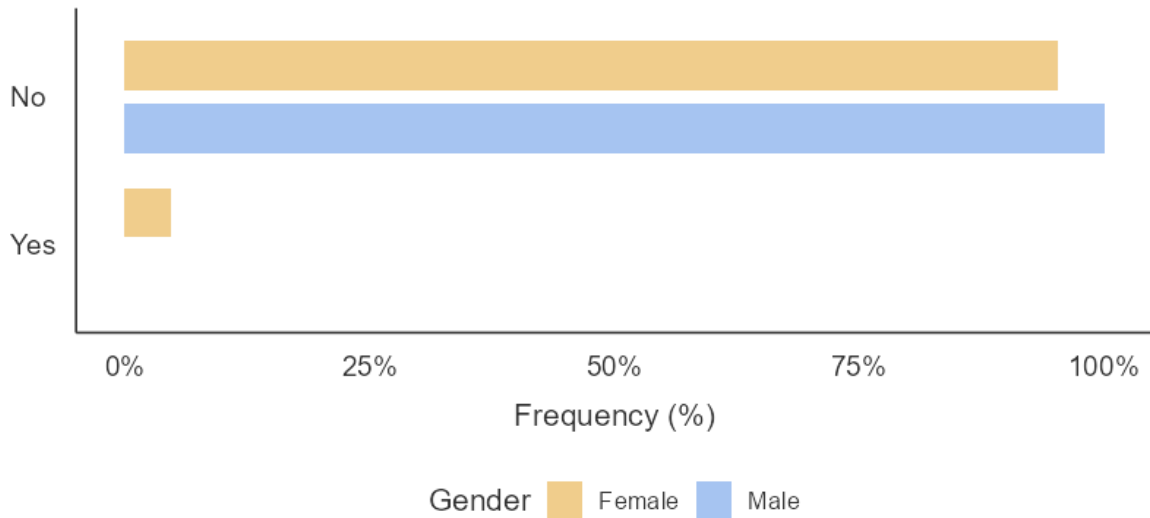
Are you aware of the procedure involved in approaching the Internal Complaints Committee of the University?			
Gender	No	Yes	Total
Female	115 77.2 %	34 22.8 %	149 100.0 %
Male	29 85.3 %	5 14.7 %	34 100.0 %
Total	144 78.7 %	39 21.3 %	183 100.0 %



It is noteworthy that the awareness regarding the existence of ICC in the University does not translate into awareness about the procedure involved in approaching the ICC. The proportion of female students who are not aware of the procedures is 77.2 % and that of males is 85.3 %. Among those who are aware of such procedures, females (22.8 %) outnumber males (14.7 %).

Incidences of Gender Based Violence.

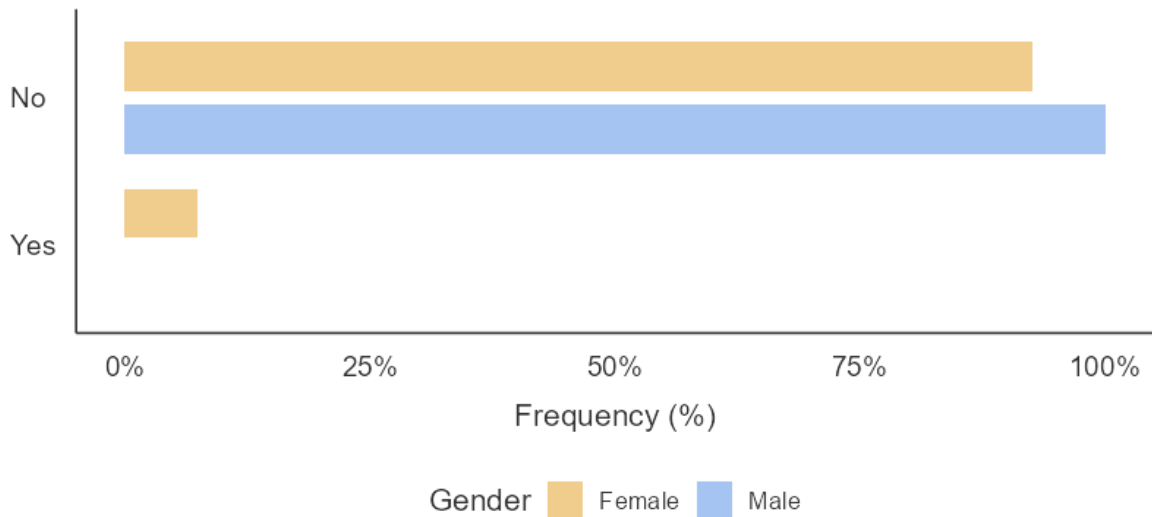
Gender	Have you faced any form of gender based violence in the University?		
	No	Yes	Total
Female	142 95.3 %	7 4.7 %	149 100.0 %
Male	34 100.0 %	0 0.0 %	34 100.0 %
Total	176 96.2 %	7 3.8 %	183 100.0 %



Incidence of gender based violence is almost entirely targeted at women, and this trend is seen in this survey as well. Though only 3.8 % of the participants reported incidents of gender based violence, all of them were females, making up 4.7 % of the female respondents.

Incidences of Cyber Bullying

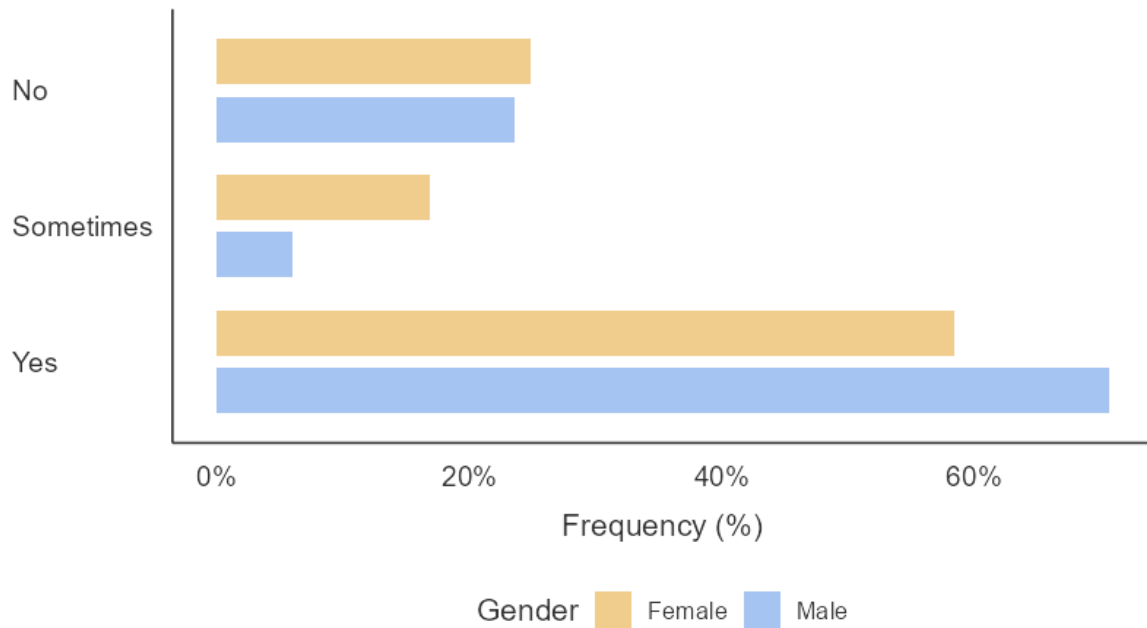
Gender	Have you faced Cyber-bullying based on your gender?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	138 92.6 %	11 7.4 %	149 100.0 %
Male	34 100.0 %	0 0.0 %	34 100.0 %
Total	172 94.0 %	11 6.0 %	183 100.0 %



The incidence of cyber bullying also followed the trend of gender based violence. While all male participants reported never having encountered any cyber bullying based on their gender, 7% of the female participants said that they have faced gender based cyber bullying at least once. This points to a need for building awareness and putting in place preventive mechanisms to tackle the emerging issues of gender based cyber bullying.

Gender as a Criteria in Assigning Responsibilities

Have you felt that gender has been a criterion in assigning roles and responsibilities in activities/programs in or outside the classroom?				
Gender	No	Sometimes	Yes	Total
Female	37 24.8 %	25 16.8 %	87 58.4 %	149 100.0 %
Male	8 23.5 %	2 5.9 %	24 70.6 %	34 100.0 %
Total	45 24.6 %	27 14.8 %	111 60.7 %	183 100.0 %

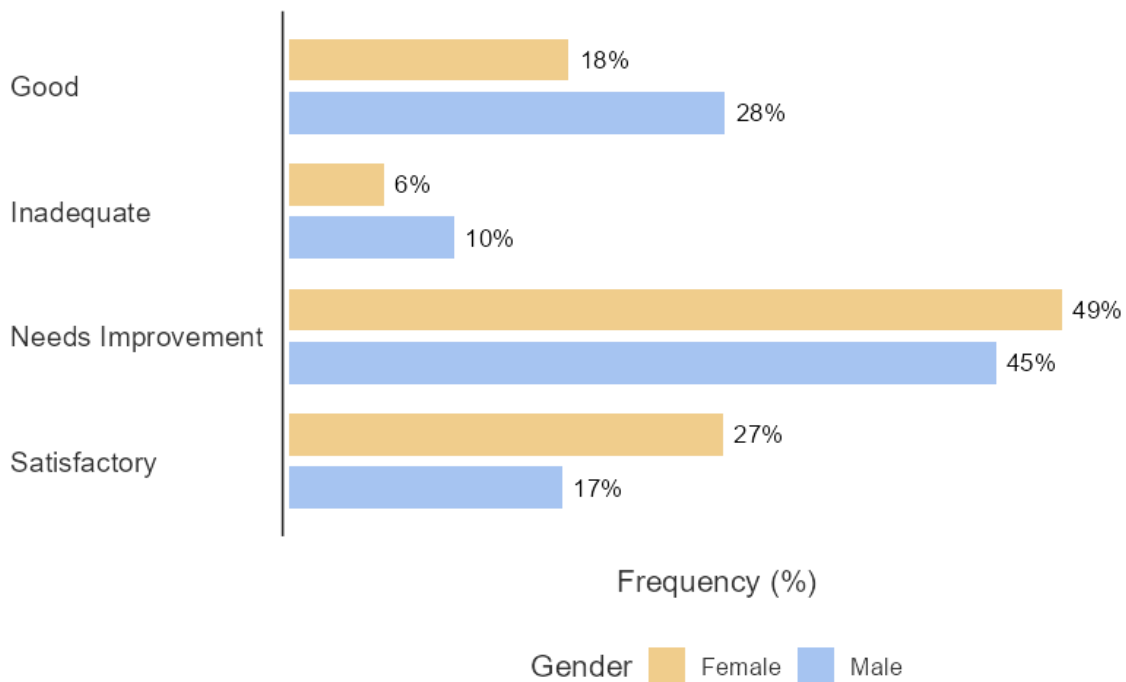


Regarding the experiences of gender being a criterion for fixing roles and responsibilities in activities, 71% of the male participants and 58% of the female participants agree that gender has been a criterion in assigning roles and responsibilities in activities/programs in or outside the classroom. This gender difference is not seen in the case of those who said that they never felt such discrimination in assigning roles and responsibilities. Almost similar numbers of males and females responded in the negative.

Survey among Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

Adequacy of Amenities Available for Women

Are the amenities available for women in the university adequate?					
Gender	Good	Inadequate	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Total
Female	9 17.6 %	3 5.9 %	25 49.0 %	14 27.5 %	51 100.0 %
Male	8 27.6 %	3 10.3 %	13 44.8 %	5 17.2 %	29 100.0 %
Total	17 21.3 %	6 7.5 %	38 47.5 %	19 23.8 %	80 100.0 %

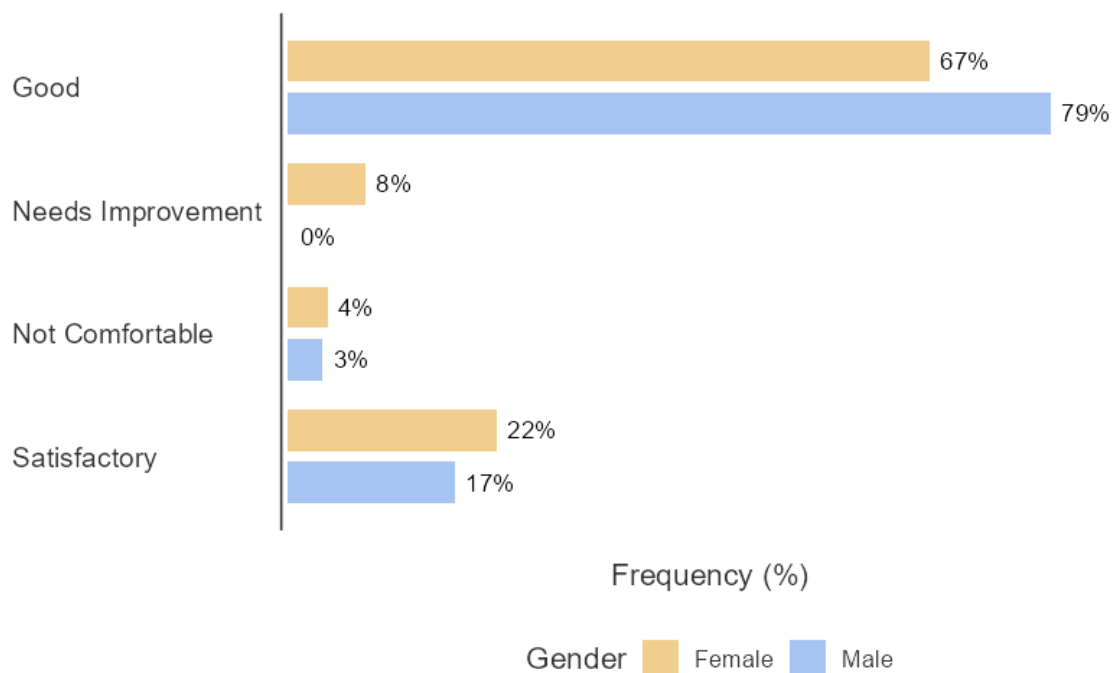


The majority of respondents (49% females and 45% males) reported that the amenities provided for women need improvement. Six percent of the female staff and 10% of the male staff reported that the amenities are inadequate. However, 27% of the female participants and 17% of the male participants found the amenities satisfactory. Another gender difference was

noticed among those who found the amenities adequate, with only 18% women saying the amenities were good, compared to 28% men who felt so.

Opinions About Office Timings

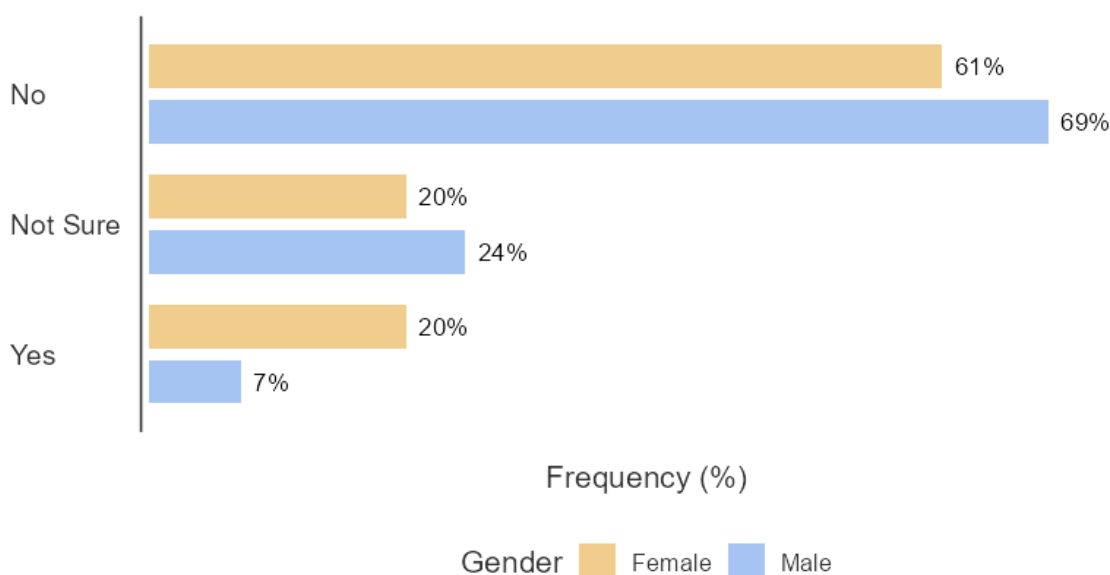
Are the office timings in the University comfortable for women?					
Gender	Good	Needs Improvement	Not Comfortable	Satisfactory	Total
Female	34 66.7 %	4 7.8 %	2 3.9 %	11 21.6 %	51 100.0 %
Male	23 79.3 %	0 0.0 %	1 3.4 %	5 17.2 %	29 100.0 %
Total	57 71.3 %	4 5.0 %	3 3.8 %	16 20.0 %	80 100.0 %



The majority of respondents (71% good and 20% satisfactory) are satisfied with the office timings. However, among those who rated the timings as good, there is a considerable gender difference, with more men (79%) than women (67%) reporting the office timings as good. Those who reported the timings as not comfortable include the 4% of females and 3% of males.

Views About Gender Based Discrimination

Gender	Do you believe that gender based discrimination exists in the University?			Total
	No	Not Sure	Yes	
Female	31 60.8 %	10 19.6 %	10 19.6 %	51 100.0 %
Male	20 69.0 %	7 24.1 %	2 6.9 %	29 100.0 %
Total	51 63.7 %	17 21.3 %	12 15.0 %	80 100.0 %

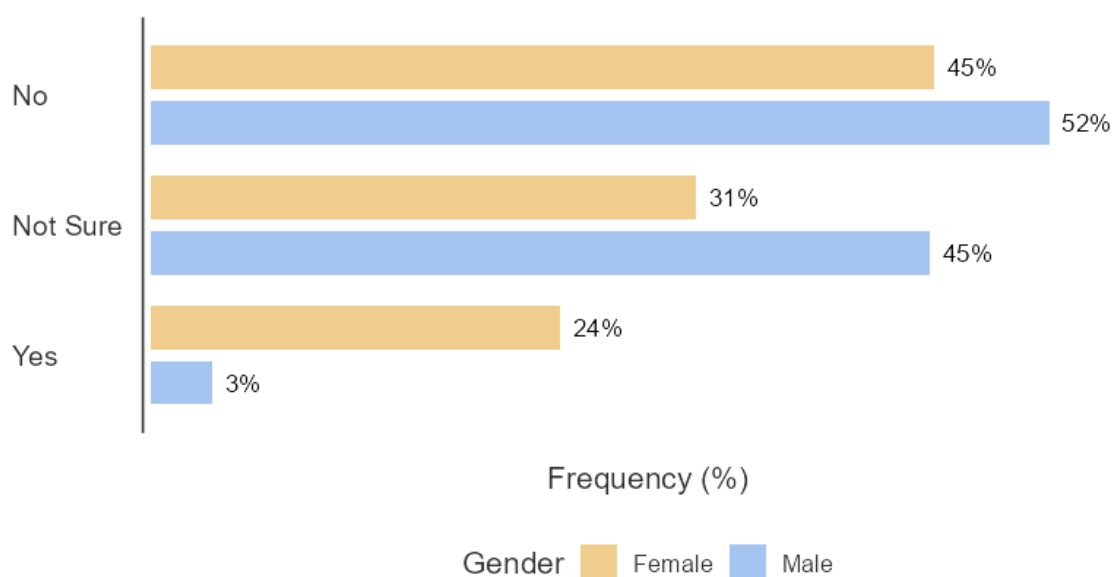


Majority of respondents without much gender difference (69% of the male participants and 61% of the female participants) believe that no discrimination based on gender exists in the University. This bodes well for the gendered environment of the University. There was a notable gender difference among those who felt that gender based discrimination does exist in

the University. Almost three times women (20%) as men (6%) said that gender based discrimination exists. This is reflective of the general trend in a patriarchal society.

Perceptions on The existence of Glass Ceiling

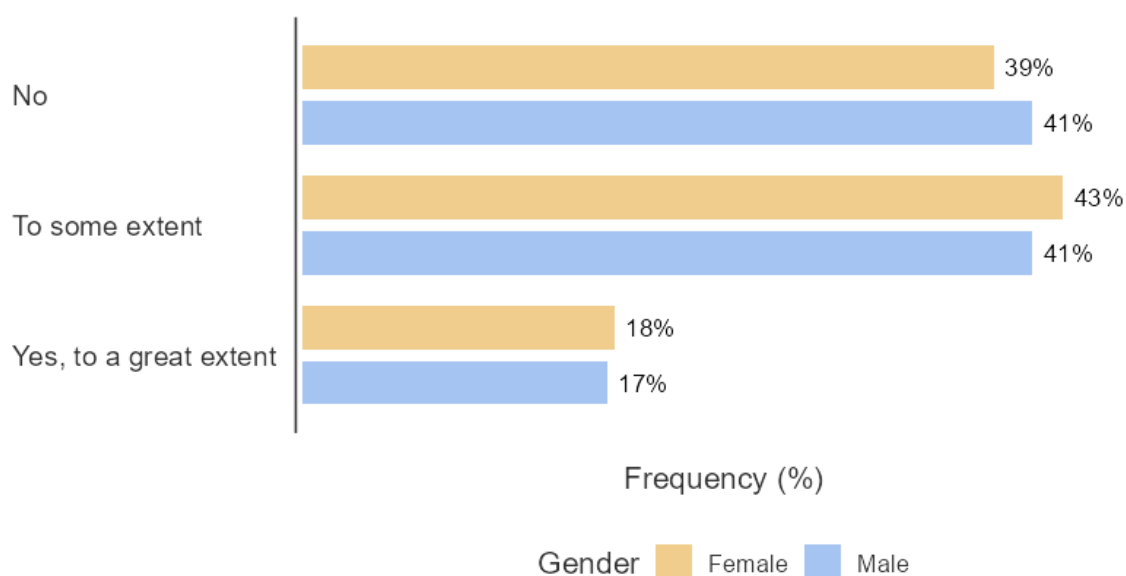
Are there 'invisible barriers' for women in their career progression in the University?				
Gender	No	Not Sure	Yes	Total
Female	23 45.1 %	16 31.4 %	12 23.5 %	51 100.0 %
Male	15 51.7 %	13 44.8 %	1 3.4 %	29 100.0 %
Total	38 47.5 %	29 36.3 %	13 16.3 %	80 100.0 %



A much larger number of female teaching and non-teaching staff (24%) than their male counterparts (3%) felt that there were invisible barriers for career progression for women workforce. This, along with the higher percentage of males who said there were no such invisible barriers (52%) when compared to females (45%) are also reflective of the general attitudes towards glass ceilings in the workplace.

Work-Family Balance

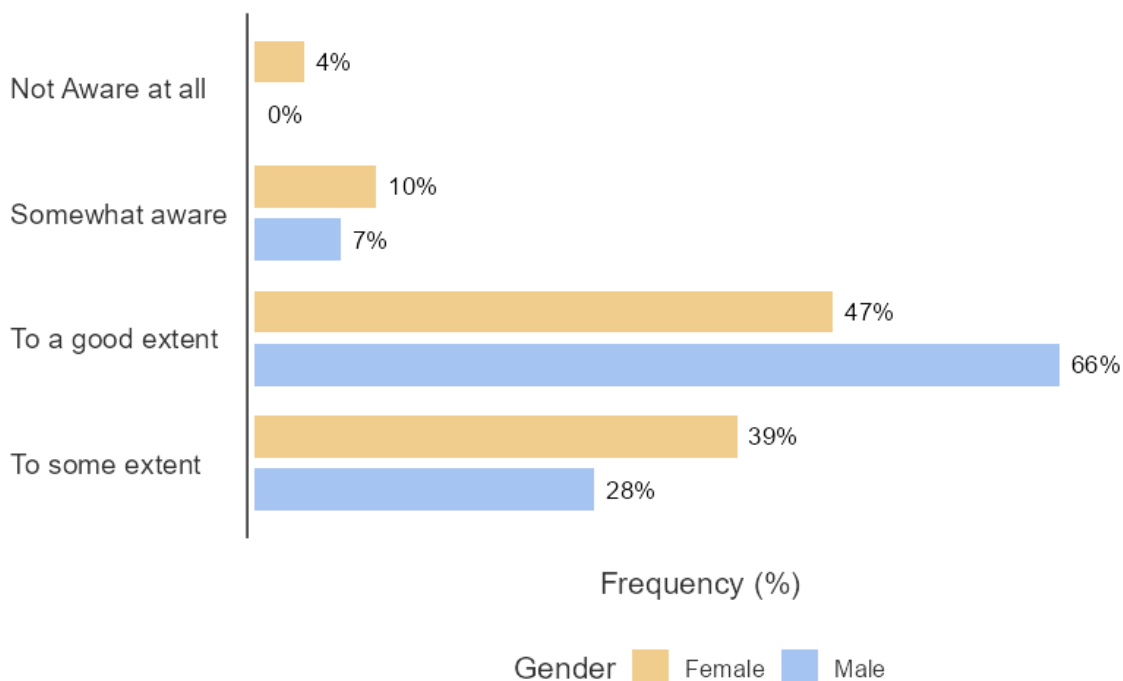
Do you face difficulties in balancing the demands of studies/work and family commitments?				
Gender	No	To some extent	Yes, to a great extent	Total
Female	20 39.2 %	22 43.1 %	9 17.6 %	51 100.0 %
Male	12 41.4 %	12 41.4 %	5 17.2 %	29 100.0 %
Total	32 40.0 %	34 42.5 %	14 17.5 %	80 100.0 %



The survey shows that the difficulties in balancing the demands of work and family commitments are distributed almost evenly between the genders. Almost similar number of women (18%) and men (17%) have reported that they face such difficulties to a great extent. Similar proportions were seen among women who faced difficulties to some extent (43%) and men who felt the same (41%). This goes on to show that such issues have become more of a lifestyle and choices related concern, as much as they are gender concerns.

Awareness About Guidelines on Prevention of Sexual Harassment

How much are you aware about the existing guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment at workplaces?					
Gender	Not Aware at all	Somewhat aware	To a good extent	To some extent	Total
Female	2 3.9 %	5 9.8 %	24 47.1 %	20 39.2 %	51 100.0 %
Male	0 0.0 %	2 6.9 %	19 65.5 %	8 27.6 %	29 100.0 %
Total	2 2.5 %	7 8.8 %	43 53.8 %	28 35.0 %	80 100.0 %

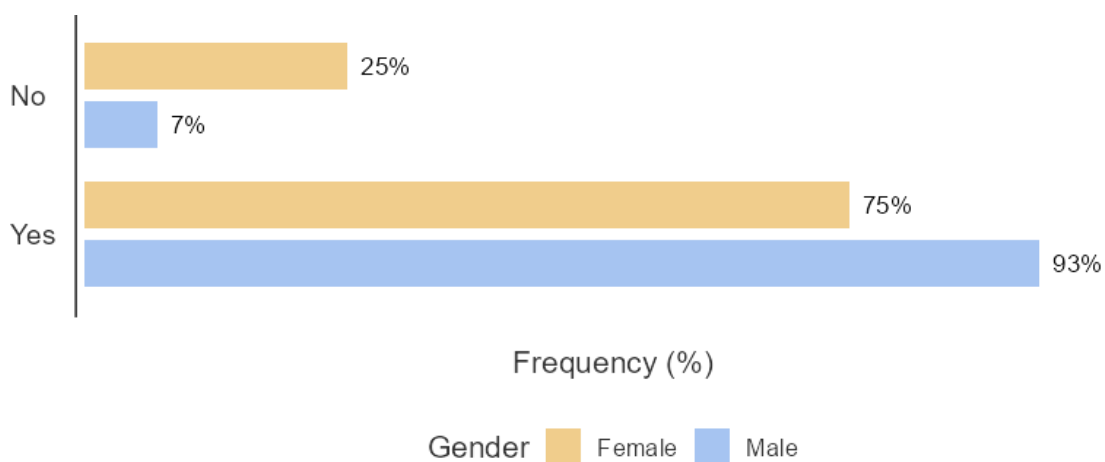


Almost half (47%) of the female participants and 66% of the male participants reported that they were aware to a good extent about the existing guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment at workplaces. More females (39%) than males (28%) were aware to some extent about these guidelines. Combined, these results show an acceptable level of awareness among staff members about the guidelines regarding prevention of sexual harassment in workplaces. However, 4% of the female participants were not aware at all about the existing guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment at workplaces.

Awareness about Internal Complaints Committee

Are you aware of the Internal Complaints Committee established in the University?

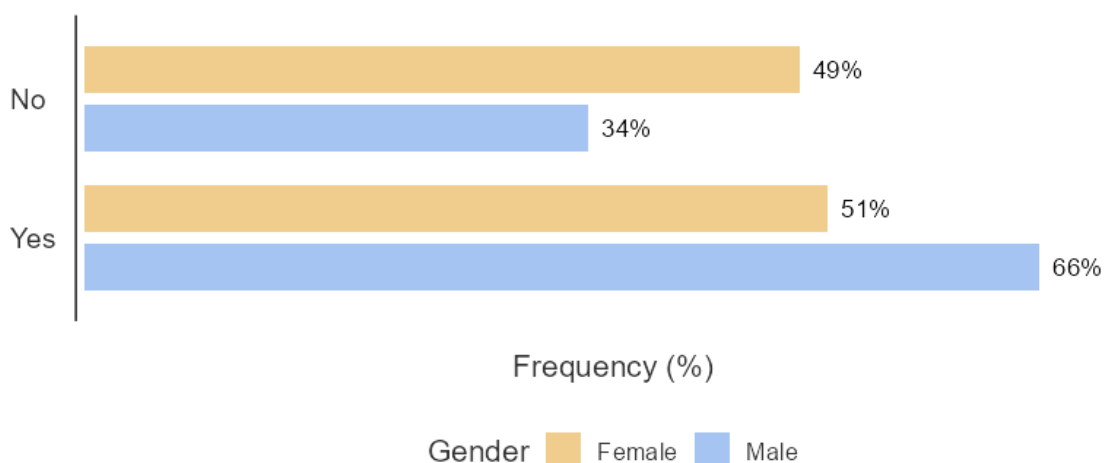
Gender	No	Yes	Total
Female	13 25.5 %	38 74.5 %	51 100.0 %
Male	2 6.9 %	27 93.1 %	29 100.0 %
Total	15 18.8 %	65 81.3 %	80 100.0 %



It was seen that more men (93%) than women (75%) of the teaching and non-teaching staff were aware of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) established in the University. This also shows that a quarter of the female respondents (25%) were not aware of the ICC. This is an issue which has to be considered as part of the future gender sensitization efforts of the University.

Awareness about Procedures Involved in Approaching ICC

Gender	Are you aware of the procedure involved in approaching the Internal Complaints Committee of the University?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	25 49.0 %	26 51.0 %	51 100.0 %
Male	10 34.5 %	19 65.5 %	29 100.0 %
Total	35 43.8 %	45 56.3 %	80 100.0 %



More than half of the female participants (51%) and 66% of the male participants were aware of the procedures involved in approaching the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the University. However, 49% of the female participants and 34% of the male participants were not aware of the procedure involved in approaching the Internal Complaints Committee.

Suggestions/Recommendations

According to UGC, the higher education institutions have to conduct gender audit to ensure women's safety in campus and also initiate programs for gender sensitization. Instilling positive thoughts on gender issues will enable the future generation to overcome gender discriminatory practices. This process need to be strengthened by conducting such audits periodically, and framing policies and programs based on the outcomes.

Open-ended questions regarding the expectations and suggestions of the University community were included in the survey. The following are the important suggestions received from the participants of the survey

➤ Regarding gender sensitization:

- The Gender Policy needs to be linked with service rules and ICC.
- Student representatives could be included in the ICC who could be elected along with the student union representatives or nominated.
- Contact information of ICC members should be easy accessible and should be made available in the website.
- There should be a female staff for the evening duty in library.
- Physical education department should either have a female teacher and /or coaches.
- Women's Study Centre should take up gender issues in general and should consider electing a student representative from each department.
- There should be open discussions about sexualities and talks about sexual orientation for avoiding the stigma around different genders (including LGBTQ+).

Regarding amenities:

- To enhance the availability and regular service of sanitary pad vending machines and disposal facilities.
- To set up a regular system of counseling services for students, scholars and staff.

- Awareness on Cyber bullying for students and assistance system to be provided as per demand.
- Enhanced hostel facilities for women students/scholars/staff.

➤ **Regarding academics:**

- Women students/scholars should have the provision to avail period leave and hence the university should consider providing separate attendance cut off percentage for women students/scholars.
- Gender sensitization programs need to be organized and there should be gender component in the syllabi.

➤ **Regarding safety and security:**

- University campus needs well-lit roads.
- Access to university roads to the public should be curtailed.
- Installation of CCTV cameras inside the campus.

Summary

The Gender Audit Survey was conducted online among students/research scholars and teaching/non-teaching staff of the University. The overall results of the survey showed that there was considerable amount of awareness among the University community on matters related to the issues of women inside the University. There were also areas which deserve concentrated action, such as building of better awareness and the introduction of institutional practices and programs to improve gender equity within the University.

Conclusion

The Gender audit shows that the gender equality and gender equity goals are included and executed in the policies and programmes of the University. The university has been actively contributing to gender sensitisation and the efforts are in line with the relevant UGC guidelines on the same. The representation of women in academic and administrative areas has been exceptionally good. Corresponding levels of amenities and institutional infrastructure are also

in place. There are areas of concern pointed out in the survey regarding security, amenities etc. which may be considered as part of the ongoing gender sensitization plans for the University.