Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

FOREWARD

Education has long been recognized as a powerful tool for social transformation, and in the context of gender equity and sustainable development, its significance becomes even more pronounced. Women's education in India has been a subject of extensive discourse, evolving from a historical struggle for access to a crucial instrument for empowerment. Women's colleges, as dedicated spaces of learning, have played a pivotal role in shaping generations of women leaders, professionals, and change-makers. Their contributions go beyond academics, fostering environments that encourage critical thinking, social responsibility, and leadership, thereby making them essential to India's progress towards gender parity and sustainable development.

This research project, focusing on the role of women's colleges as catalysts for gender equity and sustainable development, aims to explore and substantiate the multifaceted impact these institutions have had in India. The selected colleges—Loreto College (Kolkata), Jesus and Mary College (New Delhi), Patna Women's College, Nirmala College (Ranchi), and Jyoti Nivas College (Bangalore)—have been at the forefront of this movement. As members of the Xavier Board of Higher Education, these institutions share a common ethos rooted in inclusive and transformative education. Their emphasis on academic excellence, social commitment, and leadership development makes them exemplary models for understanding the broader contributions of women's colleges in India.

The collaboration between these institutions is particularly significant as it allows for a comparative analysis of diverse regional contexts while highlighting shared goals and challenges. The Xavier Board of Higher Education has long upheld the mission of providing holistic and values-driven education, with a strong emphasis on social justice and empowerment. By bringing together these distinguished colleges, this project not only examines their individual contributions but also underscores the collective impact of faith-based women's higher education institutions in fostering sustainable and equitable development.

We hope that the findings of this research will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, educators, and researchers, offering insights into best practices and areas for further improvement. Through this collaborative effort, we hope to reaffirm the importance of women's colleges in nation-building and advocate for their continued support and evolution in an ever-changing socio-economic landscape.

This study is a testament to the enduring legacy of women's education in India and the unwavering commitment of these institutions to shaping a more just and sustainable future. We extend our deepest gratitude to the participating colleges, the Xavier Board of Higher Education, and all those who have contributed to making this research possible.

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MEMBERS

Jesus & Mary College, New Delhi under the supervision of Dr. Saumya Varghese, Associate Professor Department of History
- Angelmaria Antony, Second Year, Department of Economics,
- Diya Maria George, Third Year, Department of Psychology
- Janiya Shijan, Second Year, Department of Economics
- Mahima Susan Thomas, Second Year, Department of Economics

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru under the supervision of Dr. Vasudha MC, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology
- Vaishalini. S, Second Year Department of Psychology
- Taranum Begum, Second Year, Department of History
- Hemalatha G.A, Second Year, Department of Economics
- Maanya Sood, Second Year, Department of Psychology

Loreto College, Kolkata under the supervision of Mrs. Sharmila Mitra Deb, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Dr. Sumedha Verma, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
- Aastha Gupta, Second Year, Department of Political Science
- Aliza Israr, Second Year, Department of Political Science
- Mashia Meher, Second Year, Department of Political Science
- Sudipti Rai, Second Year, Department of Political Science

Nirmala College, Ranchi under the supervision of Dr. Emma Seraphim, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology
- Aditi Tirkey, Second Year, Department of Zoology
- Anamika Singh, Second Year, Department of Zoology
- Devki Rani Munda, Second Year, Department of Zoology
- Laxmi Kumari, Second Year, Department of Zoology

Patna Women's College, under the supervision of Dr. Vinita Priyedarshi, Assistant Professor Department of Political Science
- Aishwarya Kumari, Second Year, Department of Political Science
- Amisha Shivani, Second Year, Department of Political Science
- Bhavya Shreya, Second Year, Department of Political Science
- Stuti Dubey, Second Year, Department of Political Science

Project Coordinator-
Dr. Sumedha Verma
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
Loreto College, Kolkata

Co-cordinator-
Mrs. Sharmila Mitra Deb
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
Loreto College, Kolkata

Advisor-
Dr. Priya Singh
Associate Director, Asia in Global Affairs, Kolkata
Postdoctoral Researcher, Centre on Gender and Forced Displacement, AIT, Bangkok.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equity and sustainable development have emerged as central themes in contemporary global discourse. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlight the need for gender equality (Goal 5) and quality education (Goal 4) as fundamental drivers of social progress. In this context, higher education plays a critical role in equipping individuals, especially women, with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities necessary to challenge systemic inequalities and contribute to sustainable development. Among the various educational institutions, women's colleges have historically functioned as catalysts for social transformation, fostering gender equity through inclusive education, leadership opportunities, and a focus on community engagement.

In India, the significance of women's education has been emphasized since the colonial period, with pioneering institutions such as Bethune College (established in 1879) and Isabella Thoburn College (founded in 1887) setting the foundation for women's higher education. The establishment of women's colleges was not merely an academic endeavor but a socio-political movement aimed at empowering women and redefining their roles in a traditionally patriarchal society. Over the decades, these institutions have continued to play a vital role in advancing gender justice, particularly in regions where social and economic barriers hinder women's participation in higher education.

Despite advancements, gender disparities in education and employment persist in India. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–22, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for women in higher education has increased, but significant gaps remain in access to leadership roles, research opportunities, and technical education. In this scenario, women's colleges continue to serve as safe spaces that not only provide academic learning but also encourage social mobility, skill development, and leadership among women. Their contributions extend beyond individual empowerment to societal progress, aligning with broader national and global goals of gender justice and sustainability.

The role of women's colleges in India has often been viewed through the lens of historical necessity rather than as dynamic institutions actively shaping gender-conscious education. While coeducational institutions have gained prominence, women's colleges continue to be relevant in fostering a gender-sensitive learning environment that enables women to excel in academia, leadership, and professional spaces. However, there is limited research examining their evolving role in contemporary India, particularly in relation to sustainable development and gender equity.

This study is motivated by the need to critically analyze how women's colleges function as enablers of gender equity while also contributing to broader socio-economic and environmental sustainability. By focusing on five well-established women's colleges—Loreto College (Kolkata), Jesus and Mary College (New Delhi), Patna Women's College, Nirmala College (Ranchi), and Jyoti Nivas College (Bangalore)—this research aims to document the diverse strategies these institutions employ to empower women and foster inclusive growth. Representing diverse regions of India, these colleges reflect the varied landscape of women's education in the country. From the metropolitan settings of Delhi and Kolkata to the historically significant educational hubs of Patna, Ranchi, and Bangalore, each institution operates within distinct socio-cultural and economic contexts. This regional diversity provides valuable insights into how women's colleges navigate local challenges and opportunities in advancing gender equity and sustainability. The study highlights differences in access to resources,

curriculum integration of gender and sustainability topics, and institutional efforts to foster leadership among women in different parts of India.

Additionally, the study seeks to bridge the gap in literature regarding the long-term impact of women's colleges. While several reports and policy documents recognize their role in expanding access to education, there is little documentation on how these institutions contribute to shaping women's agency, leadership, and participation in sustainable development initiatives. By analyzing the experiences of students, faculty, and alumni, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the transformative potential of women's colleges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The discourse on gender equity in India has been deeply influenced by the capabilities approach, as articulated by Martha C. Nussbaum in ***Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*** (2000). Nussbaum argues that education is central to expanding women's capabilities, allowing them to participate fully in social and economic spheres. Similarly, Amartya Sen, in ***Development as Freedom*** (1999), emphasizes education as a means of expanding freedoms and overcoming traditional constraints on women's agency. These theoretical perspectives provide a foundational framework for understanding the role of education in gender equity, underscoring its transformative potential in societal structures.

Historically, women in India faced significant barriers to education. Uma Chakravarti, in ***Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai*** (1998), documents the struggle of early women reformers in challenging the rigid patriarchal structures that limited educational opportunities for women. These struggles paved the way for institutions dedicated to women's education, ensuring access to learning in a safe and empowering environment. The expansion of women's colleges emerged as a significant milestone in this journey, providing an alternative educational space that not only imparted academic knowledge but also nurtured a sense of agency among women.

The link between education and employment is highlighted by Nirmala Banerjee in ***Indian Women in a Changing Industrial Scenario*** (1991). She argues that higher education has significantly improved women's participation in the workforce, yet systemic issues such as gender biases in hiring and pay disparities persist. This aligns with Amartya Sen's argument that education alone is not sufficient for empowerment—it must be coupled with broader socio-economic reforms to create real opportunities for women in professional and leadership roles.

Women's colleges in India have played a crucial role in challenging societal norms and promoting gender equity. Karuna Chanana's ***Higher Education and Women's Empowerment in India*** (2000) examines how women's colleges serve as incubators for social change by providing a gender-sensitive learning environment. The study highlights how such institutions have historically nurtured women leaders who have gone on to shape Indian society. Geraldine Forbes, in ***Women in Modern India*** (1996), traces the historical evolution of women's education, emphasizing that women's colleges were initially established as safe spaces for learning but gradually transformed into hubs for activism and social change.

Further reinforcing this argument, Vina Mazumdar's ***Education & Social Change: The Women's Movement in India*** (2012) explores the role of women's colleges in fostering feminist consciousness among students, leading to increased political participation and leadership. Similarly, Neera Desai and Usha Thakkar's ***Women in Indian Society*** (2001) argue that women's colleges continue to be instrumental in providing opportunities that may not always be available in coeducational institutions. These colleges often implement gender-focused curricula and extracurricular activities that encourage critical thinking about social issues, equipping students to become agents of change in their communities.

As of the *All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2021–22*, there are over 2,000 women's colleges in India, with a high concentration in states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and West Bengal. These colleges report higher graduation rates compared to their coeducational counterparts, demonstrating their effectiveness in retaining students through a supportive academic environment.

Education is also a key driver of sustainable development, and women's colleges play a pivotal role in integrating sustainability into their curricula and outreach programs. Nelly P. Stromquist's ***Women in the Third World: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Issues*** (1998) underscores the importance of education in enabling women to participate in environmental and social sustainability initiatives. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has consistently highlighted gender equality as a prerequisite for sustainable development. Its various reports emphasize that women's colleges, through their specialized programs and community engagement efforts, contribute significantly to sustainability by promoting eco-consciousness, ethical leadership, and social entrepreneurship.

Gita Sen and C. Grown's ***Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*** (1987) argue that women's education must extend beyond traditional subjects to include environmental science, public health, and sustainable business practices. Many women's colleges in India have adopted this approach by integrating interdisciplinary courses on sustainability. Naila Kabeer's ***Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*** (1994) critiques traditional development models that exclude gender perspectives, emphasizing the role of education in challenging these hierarchies and fostering inclusive growth. Several Indian women's colleges have embraced this approach through community engagement programs and research initiatives focused on rural development.

Government policies and international frameworks have recognized the role of women's education in fostering gender equity and sustainable development. The ***National Policy on Education (1986, modified in 1992)*** emphasized the need for increased investment in women's education, acknowledging its long-term benefits for social development. The *Towards Equality* report (1974) by the Committee on the Status of Women in India was a landmark document that highlighted systemic gender disparities in education and recommended the expansion of women's colleges. This report laid the groundwork for subsequent policies aimed at improving women's access to higher education.

The *UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report* (various years) has consistently reinforced the importance of gender-responsive education policies, citing India's women's colleges as successful models for promoting higher education among women. The *All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)* provides annual data on women's participation in higher education. The latest reports indicate a steady increase in female enrolment, with women's colleges playing a significant role in this progress.

The literature reviewed underscores the crucial role of women's colleges in advancing gender equity and sustainable development in India. The historical evolution of women's education, as documented by scholars like Chakravarti, Forbes, and Mazumdar, highlights the transformative potential of these institutions. Empirical data from AISHE and policy reports further affirm their continued relevance in contemporary India. By integrating sustainability into their curricula and outreach programs, women's colleges are not only fostering gender-inclusive education but also preparing students to address broader socio-economic challenges.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to utilise the existing information within this domain and analyse its effectiveness in contributing to the society at large. Through this study we aim to

- Examine how women's colleges in India contribute to sustainable development and gender equity, particularly in relation to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
- Explore and document effective practices and programs that these institutions employ to foster sustainable development and gender equity.
- Provide students with a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful research, develop their academic skills, and gain a deeper understanding of the critical issues at the intersection of gender and sustainability.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How have women's colleges contributed to gender equity in higher education and professional spaces?
2. What role do women's colleges play in fostering leadership, activism, and social change among students?
3. How have curricular and extracurricular programs in these institutions supported sustainable development initiatives?
4. What are the key similarities and differences in the impact of these colleges across different regional and socio-economic contexts?
5. What challenges do women's colleges face in continuing their mission, and what policy recommendations can be made to support their sustainability and growth?

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a **feminist research methodology in social science**, integrating both **qualitative and quantitative research approaches** to ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender equity and sustainable development in women's colleges. The methodology is rooted in the principles of participatory research, intersectionality, and reflexivity, acknowledging the lived experiences of women as central to the analysis.

1. **Comparative Case Studies:**
   o Detailed case studies of the five selected colleges will be conducted to understand their unique contributions and common patterns.
   o Institutional records and policy documents will be analyzed.
2. **Survey and Questionnaires:**
   o Structured questionnaires will be distributed to current students, to gauge perceptions of gender equity, leadership, and sustainable development initiatives.
   o Responses will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and impact measures.
3. **Policy Analysis:**
   o Review of national and institutional policies related to women's education and sustainable development.
   o Assessment of how these policies have influenced the growth and evolution of women's colleges.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

This section presents an analysis of data collected from students across five women's colleges in India: Loreto College (Kolkata), Jesus and Mary College (New Delhi), Patna Women's College, Nirmala College (Ranchi), and Jyoti Nivas College (Bangalore). The study explores the role of these institutions in promoting gender equity and sustainable development through education, institutional policies, extracurricular activities, and career support.

The questionnaire covered key aspects such as the quality of education, leadership opportunities for women, socio-economic impact, sustainable development curriculum, and institutional practices. Additionally, college-specific questions provided insights into the unique initiatives and challenges faced by each institution.

By analyzing the responses, this section aims to highlight the strengths and areas for improvement in how women's colleges contribute to empowerment and sustainability. The findings will help assess the effectiveness of existing programs and suggest recommendations for enhancing their impact on students' academic, professional, and social development.

JESUS AND MARY COLLEGE, NEW DELHI

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi, with a total student strength of 3,070, had 175 students participate in this research survey, reflecting a relatively low response rate of approximately 5.7%. The analysis highlights key aspects of education quality, leadership development, career readiness, sustainability awareness, and institutional support for gender equity and social inclusion.

The college is highly rated in terms of education quality, with **21% of students rating it as excellent and 57% as good**, resulting in a **78% overall satisfaction rate**. However, **16% rated the education as average, while 6% found it below average**, indicating that while most students are content with the academic experience, there are areas for improvement. Leadership development is well-promoted, with **50% of respondents strongly agreeing and 28% agreeing that the college fosters women's leadership**. However, **7% disagreed or strongly disagreed**, suggesting that while the institution encourages leadership, some students may not feel adequately supported.

The accessibility of gender-related resources such as counseling and workshops is moderate, with **25% of students finding them very accessible and 49% moderately accessible**. However, **10% reported that these resources are not accessible**, indicating a need for better awareness and availability. Participation in community development activities is relatively strong, with **49% actively involved and 36% engaged to a limited extent**. Similarly, **52% of students acknowledged that the college collaborates with external organizations to promote gender equity**, but **40% were unsure**, suggesting a lack of awareness about these initiatives.

In terms of career readiness, **only 26% of students reported receiving extensive job placement and internship support**, while **38% said they received some support, 28% reported limited support, and 8% said they received no support at all**. This indicates that while efforts are being made, there is a significant need for stronger career counseling and industry linkages. Furthermore, while **47% of students are highly likely to pursue further**

studies or a career in their field, 20% remain unsure and 10% are unlikely to continue, pointing to the need for better career guidance. When asked if their college education has prepared them for employment, **only 12% strongly agreed, 38% agreed, while 31% remained neutral and 19% disagreed**, reflecting uncertainty about job readiness.

Sustainability awareness is relatively high, with **75% of students being very familiar with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. However, **only 19% reported frequent sustainability-related events, while 55% said they occurred occasionally, 14% rarely, and 12% never**. This suggests that while students are aware of sustainability issues, more initiatives could be implemented to ensure active participation. Additionally, **48% of students felt that SDG topics were very well integrated into the curriculum, while 38% found them somewhat integrated, and 14% felt they were not integrated at all**.

Institutional support for gender equity is moderate, with **66% of students supporting the introduction of a dedicated course on gender equality and sustainable development**. However, **40% of students were unaware of programs promoting gender equity and social inclusion**, suggesting a need for greater visibility of such initiatives. The biggest challenge in promoting sustainability at the college was identified as **other institutional priorities (45%)**, followed by **limited student participation (30%)**, highlighting the need for greater engagement.

JYOTI NIVAS COLLEGE, BENGALURU

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru, with a total student strength of 3,156, exhibits a strong commitment to gender equity and sustainable development. Based on survey responses from 529 students, reflecting a response rate of approximately 16.7%, the majority (76%) rate the quality of education as either excellent or good. The college actively promotes women's leadership, with 51% strongly agreeing and 28% agreeing with this statement. Gender-related resources, such as counseling and workshops, are largely accessible, with 77% finding them very or moderately accessible. Community engagement is encouraged, as 63% of students report active participation in community development activities. Additionally, the college collaborates with external organizations for gender equity initiatives, though 45% of respondents are unsure about the extent of these collaborations. Leadership training opportunities exist, yet 51% of students have never participated in such programs. The college offers job placement and skill development support, but only 32% find it extensive. While 50% of students are highly likely to pursue further studies or careers in their field, opinions on employment readiness are divided, with 57% feeling prepared and 21% disagreeing. Efforts to promote non-traditional careers are evident, with 73% acknowledging such encouragement. Sustainability initiatives, including workshops and eco-friendly practices, are in place, but their effectiveness is mixed, with 44% neutral about their impact. Notably, 56% of students claim to practice eco-friendly habits due to college initiatives. While gender-related topics are somewhat integrated into the curriculum, 22% believe they are not included at all. A dedicated gender equality and sustainable development course has strong support (55%). The college also promotes women's rights education, though awareness of specific feminist courses remains low. Institutional barriers to gender equity are minimal, with 58% perceiving no major challenges. However, limited student participation (29%) and other institutional priorities (41%) hinder sustainability efforts. The Women's Cell (Jyoti Mahila Samiti) and Eco-Green Club exist, but active participation is limited. Programs like "Utsav" aim to support women entrepreneurs, though only 19% have participated. Overall, Jyoti Nivas College demonstrates

significant progress in fostering gender equity and sustainability, yet there is scope for greater student engagement and institutional awareness.

LORETO COLLEGE, KOLKATA

With a total student strength of 829, the survey received 403 responses, indicating a participation rate of approximately 48.6%. The responses suggest a largely positive perception of the college's initiatives, with 56% rating the overall quality of education as excellent and 39% as good. Similarly, 69% of respondents strongly agreed that the college actively promotes women's leadership, and 54% acknowledged that leadership programs are conducted regularly. Gender-related resources, such as counseling and workshops, were deemed very accessible by 62% of respondents, and 91% reported active encouragement to engage in community development activities. The data also highlights strong external collaborations, with 74% confirming partnerships with organizations for gender equity programs. However, when it comes to direct participation in leadership workshops, only 59% had attended at least once, suggesting that while opportunities exist, not all students engage actively. Regarding career prospects, 80% of respondents felt the college provided at least some support for job placements, internships, or skill development, while 60% were highly likely to pursue further studies or careers in their respective fields. Encouragement toward non-traditional career paths, such as STEM and entrepreneurship, was acknowledged by 86% of students. Awareness of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was also relatively high, with 69% being very familiar and 22% somewhat familiar.Despite these positive findings, there were notable gaps in response rates and participation levels. Given the total strength of 829 students, the response rate remained below 50%. Several factors could explain this—students' academic workload, survey fatigue, or a lack of awareness about the study's significance.

Overall, the data underscores that while Loreto College, Kolkata, has made substantial progress in fostering an inclusive and empowering academic environment, there is room for improvement in increasing student engagement, participation in leadership programs, and awareness of sustainability initiatives.

NIRMALA COLLEGE RANCHI

Nirmala College, Ranchi, with a total student strength of 2,131 and 1,259 survey responses (a high 59% participation rate), demonstrates both strengths and areas for improvement in education, career readiness, gender equity, and sustainability. The perception of education quality is mixed, with 30% rating it as excellent and 35% as good, but a significant 28% rating it below average, indicating dissatisfaction among a portion of students. While leadership development is actively promoted, with 30% strongly agreeing that the college encourages women's leadership and 33% agreeing, a notable 29% strongly disagree, reflecting a polarized opinion. Accessibility to gender-related resources such as counseling and workshops is also an issue, with 27% finding them very accessible but 32% stating they are not accessible at all.

Career readiness remains a challenge, as only 25% of students reported extensive job placement and internship support, while 34% received some support, and a concerning 32% reported no support at all. In terms of employability, only 21% of students strongly agreed that their college education prepared them well for jobs, 35% agreed, and a significant 33% disagreed, highlighting major gaps in job readiness training. Furthermore, while 37% of students were highly likely to pursue further studies or a career in their field, 31% were unlikely to do so.

Sustainability awareness and integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curriculum also require improvement. Only 33% of students were very familiar with SDGs, while 39% were not familiar at all. Similarly, only 32% of students felt that sustainability topics were well integrated into the curriculum, while 39% believed they were not integrated at all. The frequency of sustainability-related events is low, with only 27% saying events happen frequently, while 34% reported that they never occur. Additionally, participation in sustainability-focused extracurricular activities is lacking, as 42% of students reported no involvement.

Institutional barriers to gender equity are relatively low, with 58% of students believing there are no major barriers. However, 23% cited societal norms, 13% pointed to institutional limitations, and 6% identified cultural challenges as obstacles. The biggest challenges in promoting sustainability were identified as institutional priorities (45%), limited student participation (23%), and a lack of awareness and funding (16% each). While student participation in community outreach is strong, with 52% actively engaged, environmental awareness and involvement in sustainability projects remain low, as 38% of students never participate in such activities. The most needed outreach areas, according to students, include livelihood and employment (45%), education (22%), and skill development (14%), while only 1% prioritized environmental issues, reflecting the need for a stronger focus on sustainability.

PATNA WOMEN'S COLLEGE

Patna Women's College, with a total student strength of 4,299, demonstrates a strong commitment to academic excellence, gender equity, and sustainability. The survey received responses from 269 students, representing approximately **6.3%** of the total student body. Among respondents, **82%** rated the quality of education as "Excellent" or "Good," indicating high student satisfaction. The institution is recognized for promoting women's leadership, with **85%** of students agreeing that the college fosters leadership opportunities. However, **62%** of students reported never having attended a leadership workshop, suggesting a need for greater student engagement in such programs.

Career preparedness is an area requiring improvement, as **38%** of students reported "Extensive" job placement and internship support, while **14%** felt there was no support and **11%** found it limited. Additionally, while **52%** of students were "Highly Likely" to pursue further studies or careers in their field, **22%** remained unsure or unlikely, highlighting gaps in career counseling. Encouragingly, the college actively supports women entering non-traditional careers, with **54%** strongly agreeing and **28%** somewhat agreeing that they are encouraged to pursue STEM and entrepreneurship.

Sustainability awareness is well integrated into college initiatives, with **65%** of students being "Very Familiar" with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Additionally, **52%** noted that sustainability-related events occur frequently on campus. However, participation in extracurricular sustainability-focused clubs remains moderate, with only **37%** actively involved, while **20%** do not engage at all. In terms of curriculum integration, **61%** of students felt that SDGs were "Very Well Integrated," while **24%** believed they were "Somewhat Integrated." Institutional policies supporting gender equity and social inclusion appear strong, with **76%** confirming that women's rights and gender equality are comprehensively covered in college programs. Additionally, **66%** acknowledged special initiatives for disadvantaged and marginalized students. However, barriers such as societal norms (**26%**) and limited

institutional resources (**8%**) persist, requiring further action to promote gender equity. Community engagement is encouraged, with **72%** of students stating they are "Actively Encouraged" to participate in development activities. The college also collaborates with external organizations to promote gender equity, as confirmed by **76%** of respondents. However, "Other Institutional Priorities" (**39%**) and "Limited Student Participation" (**28%**) hinder progress in sustainability and outreach programs. In terms of eco-friendly practices, **73%** of students acknowledged initiatives like waste segregation, tree plantations, and recycling, while **82%** reported adopting eco-friendly habits due to college influence. While **57%** rated the college's sustainability efforts as "Very Effective," **29%** remained neutral, and **14%** found them ineffective. Similarly, while **49%** found community outreach programs "Very Impactful," **21%** saw little or no impact.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Participation and Response Rate

College	Total Students	Responses	Response Rate (%)
Loreto College, Kolkata	829	403	**48.6%**
Jesus & Mary College, Delhi	3,070	175	**5.7%**
Patna Women's College	2,131	269	**12.6%**
Nirmala College, Ranchi	2,131	1,259	**59%**
Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru	2,131	529	**24.8%**

- Nirmala College had the highest response rate (59%), followed by Loreto College (48.6%).
- Jesus & Mary College had the lowest response rate (5.7%), limiting the representativeness of its data.

2. Quality of Education & Leadership Development

College	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Below Average (%)	Strongly Agree (Leadership)
Loreto College, Kolkata	**56%**	39%	1%	**69%**
Jesus & Mary College, Delhi	21%	57%	6%	**50%**
Patna Women's College	**45%**	37%	10%	**54%**
Nirmala College, Ranchi	30%	35%	**28%**	**30%**
Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru	28%	48%	11%	**51%**

Key Observations:

- Loreto College (Kolkata) and Patna Women's College had the highest academic ratings, while Nirmala College had the lowest, with 28% of students rating it below average.
- Leadership promotion was strongest at Loreto College (69%), followed by Patna Women's College (54%).

- Nirmala College had the weakest perception of leadership opportunities (30%), indicating institutional gaps.

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3. Career Readiness & Job Placement Support

College	Extensive Job Support (%)	Limited/No Support (%)	Strongly Agree (Prepared for Jobs)
Loreto College, Kolkata	**40%**	20%	**29%**
Jesus & Mary College, Delhi	26%	**36%**	**12%**
Patna Women's College	**38%**	25%	**30%**
Nirmala College, Ranchi	25%	**32%**	**21%**
Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru	32%	**30%**	**21%**

Key Observations:

- Loreto and Patna Women's College provide the strongest career support (40% and 38%), while Jesus & Mary and Nirmala College lag behind.
- More than 30% of students at Jesus & Mary, Nirmala, and Jyoti Nivas reported inadequate career support, reflecting a need for stronger industry linkages.
- Job preparedness perception is lowest at Jesus & Mary College (only 12% strongly agreed), indicating a need for enhanced skill-building programs.

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4. Sustainability Awareness & SDG Integration

College	Very Familiar with SDGs (%)	SDGs Well Integrated (%)	Sustainability Events (Frequent)
Loreto College, Kolkata	**69%**	**52%**	**58%**
Jesus & Mary College, Delhi	**75%**	**48%**	**19%**
Patna Women's College	**65%**	**61%**	**52%**
Nirmala College, Ranchi	**33%**	**32%**	**27%**
Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru	**31%**	**29%**	**41%**

Key Observations:

- Jesus & Mary College had the highest SDG awareness (75%), while Nirmala and Jyoti Nivas College had the lowest (33% and 31%).

- Patna Women's College had the best SDG integration (61%), but Nirmala and Jyoti Nivas College had the weakest (32% and 29%).
- Sustainability events were most frequent at Loreto (58%) and Patna (52%), but rare at Jesus & Mary (19%).

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5. Institutional Barriers to Gender Equity

College	No Major Barriers (%)	Societal Norms (%)	Institutional Barriers (%)
Loreto College, Kolkata	**65%**	22%	**7%**
Jesus & Mary College, Delhi	**61%**	18%	**12%**
Patna Women's College	**59%**	**26%**	**8%**
Nirmala College, Ranchi	**58%**	23%	**13%**
Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru	**58%**	20%	**10%**

Key Observations:

- Loreto College had the fewest institutional barriers (7%), while Nirmala College faced the most (13%).
- Societal norms were a stronger challenge at Patna Women's College (26%), reflecting regional cultural constraints.
- Overall, all colleges showed progress in gender equity, with 58–65% of students seeing no major barriers.

The findings of this study reaffirm the crucial role of women's colleges in India as catalysts for gender equity and sustainable development. These institutions serve as safe and empowering spaces that not only provide quality education but also foster leadership, career readiness, and environmental consciousness. The comparative analysis of Loreto College (Kolkata), Jesus and Mary College (New Delhi), Patna Women's College, Nirmala College (Ranchi), and Jyoti Nivas College (Bengaluru) highlights both their strengths and areas for improvement.

LIMITATIONS

While this research provides valuable insights into the role of women's colleges in India as catalysts for gender equity and sustainable development, it is important to acknowledge its limitations.

Limited Sample Size and Response Rate: Although the study included five colleges, the response rates varied significantly, with some institutions like Jesus and Mary College (5.7%) having low participation. This uneven distribution limits the generalizability of findings. A larger and more representative sample across different academic disciplines and years of study would provide a more comprehensive analysis.

Institutional and Regional Differences: The selected colleges operate in diverse socio-cultural and economic contexts, making direct comparisons challenging. Factors like urban vs.

semi-urban settings, access to funding, and regional gender norms may have influenced student responses in ways not fully accounted for in the study.

Self-Reported Data and Subjectivity: The study relied on survey responses, which are inherently subjective. Perceptions of education quality, leadership opportunities, and gender equity may vary based on personal experiences, leading to potential bias.

Lack of Longitudinal Data: This study provides a snapshot of student perspectives but does not track long-term impact. A longitudinal approach would be beneficial to assess how these institutions contribute to career advancement, leadership, and community development over time.

Limited Scope on Faculty and Policy Implementation: The study focused primarily on student experiences but did not deeply examine faculty perspectives or institutional policies. Future research could include interviews with administrators and faculty to assess how gender equity and sustainability policies are being implemented at an institutional level.

Limited Exploration of Socio-Economic Factors: While some questions addressed barriers to gender equity, the study did not fully explore how socio-economic status, caste, and rural-urban divides affect access to opportunities in women's colleges. A more intersectional approach would strengthen the analysis.

CONCLUSION

While the majority of students across all five institutions rate their education quality positively, disparities remain in career preparedness, sustainability initiatives, and institutional outreach. The participating colleges actively implement initiatives to promote gender equity, leadership, and sustainability, student perception of these efforts remains lower than expected, often due to apathy, lack of awareness, or limited engagement, highlighting a gap between institutional efforts and student participation.

These colleges occupy a unique position in society, particularly in India, where gender disparities in education, employment, and leadership continue to persist. By ensuring access to higher education for women—especially those from marginalized backgrounds—these institutions contribute directly to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Additionally, their efforts in sustainability-focused education and extracurricular activities align with SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). However, to fully realize their transformative potential, targeted improvements are necessary.

Recommendations for Improvement

- Enhance career readiness and job placement support by strengthen alumni mentorship programs and corporate partnerships to increase job opportunities and integrate more industry-focused skill development courses to bridge the employability gap.
- Expand leadership training and gender equity initiatives by increasing access to leadership workshops and actively encourage participation.
- Ensure better outreach for gender equity programs, as many students are unaware of existing resources.
- Strengthen sustainability awareness and SDG integration by introducing mandatory SDG-focused coursework and environmental impact projects. Increase frequency and visibility of sustainability-related events to encourage greater student participation.
- Improve institutional support for women in non-traditional careers. Actively promote STEM, entrepreneurship, and other non-traditional career paths. Provide funding and scholarships for women pursuing higher education in these fields.
- Address regional and institutional barriers to gender equity by implementing community engagement programs that challenge societal norms restricting women's education and career growth. Strengthen policies that support marginalized and first-generation female students.

Women's colleges in India are not merely academic institutions; they are engines of social change. They nurture leadership, promote gender-sensitive education, and provide a foundation for sustainable development. With strategic improvements, these institutions can continue to play an instrumental role in shaping an equitable and progressive society, ensuring that women are not just educated, but empowered to lead.
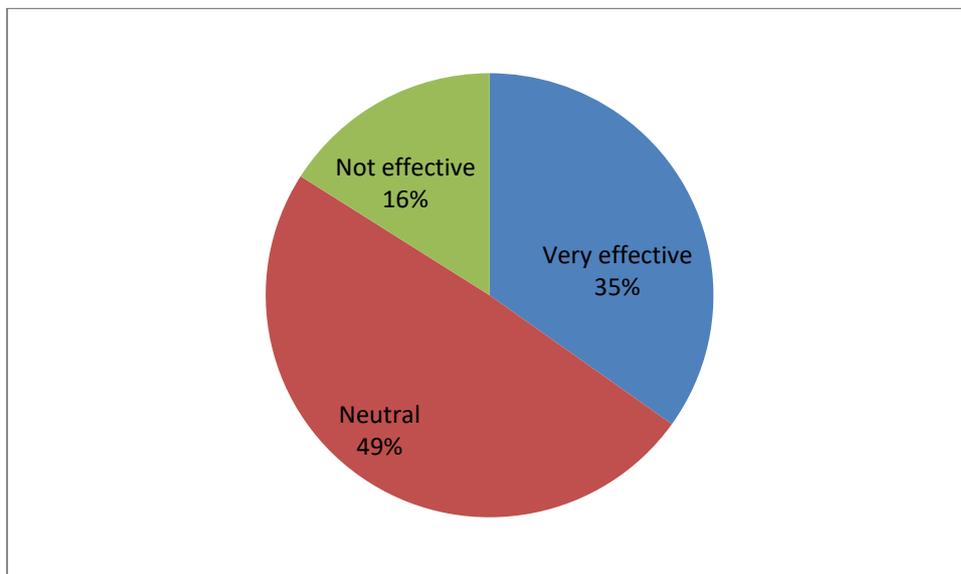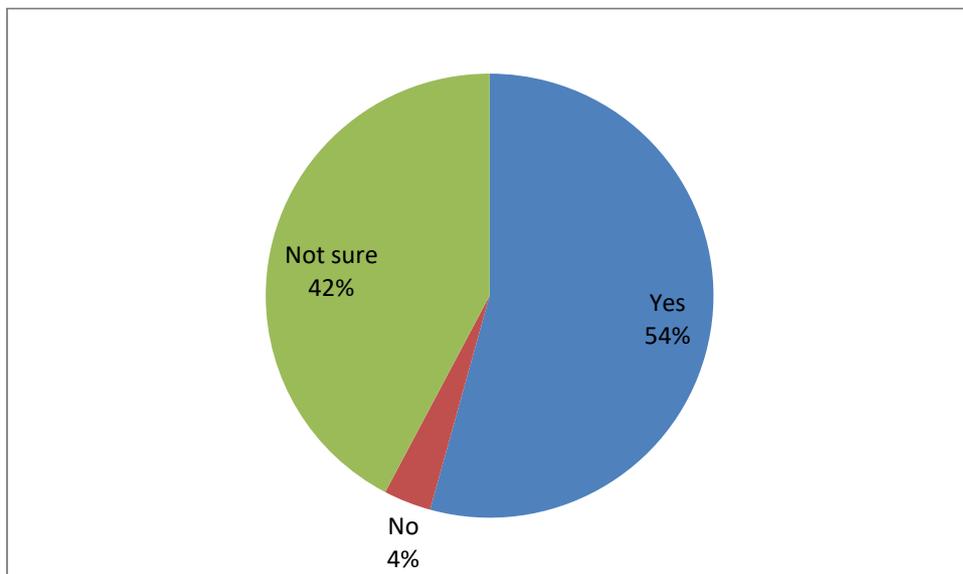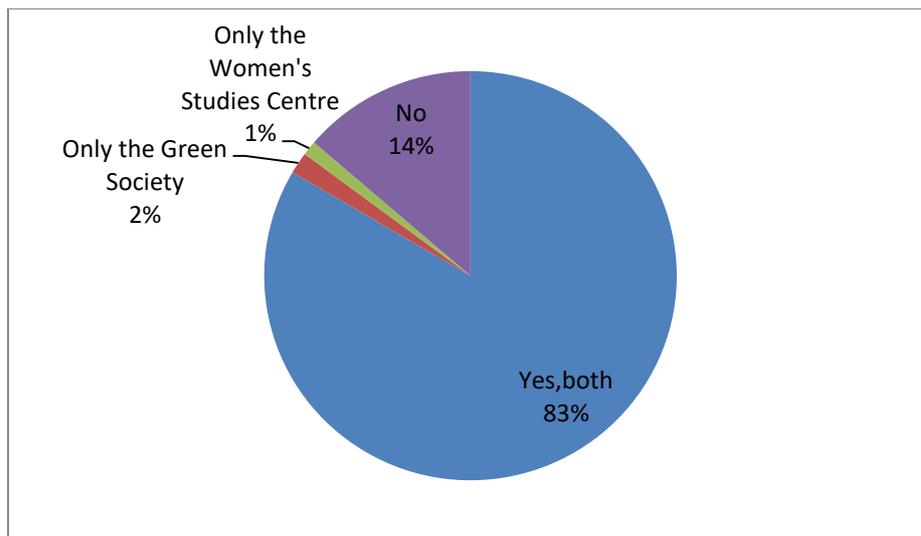
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

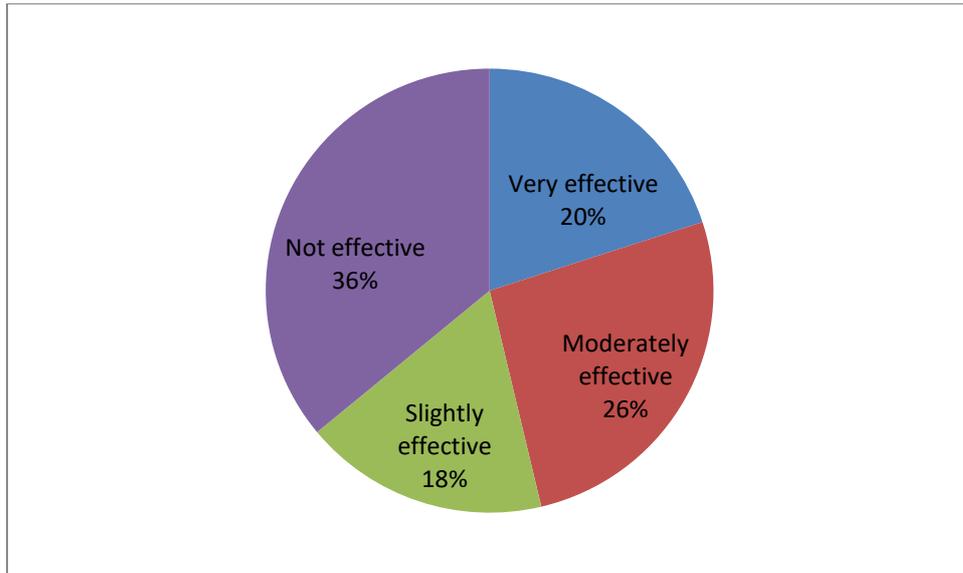**Total Responses = 175**
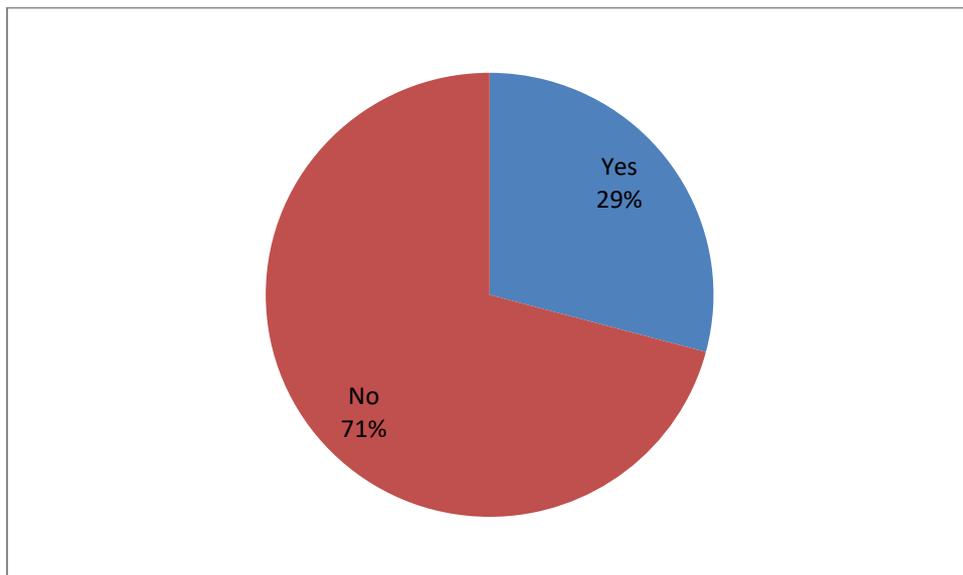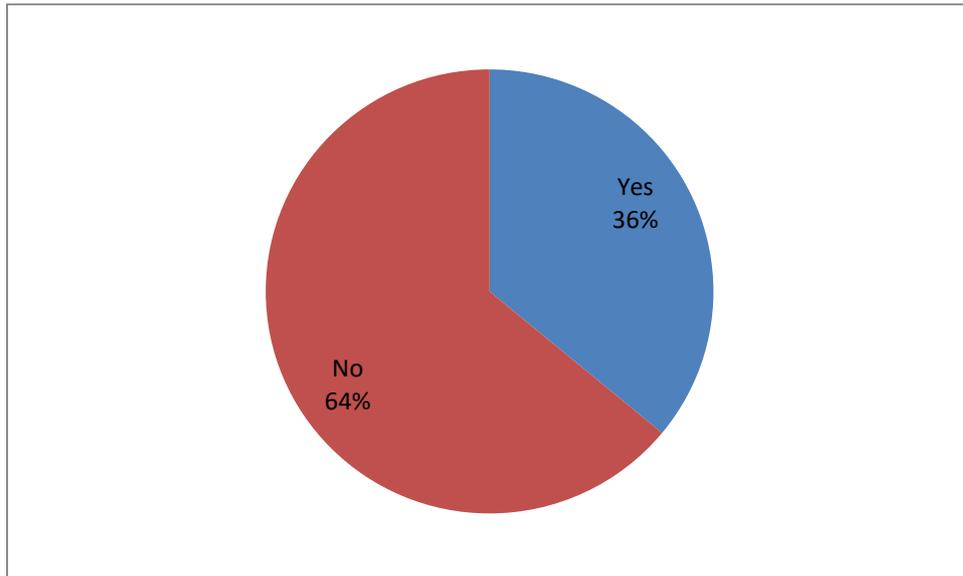
1) How would you rate the overall quality of education provided by your institution?

Excellent	36
Good	100
Average	28
Below Average	11
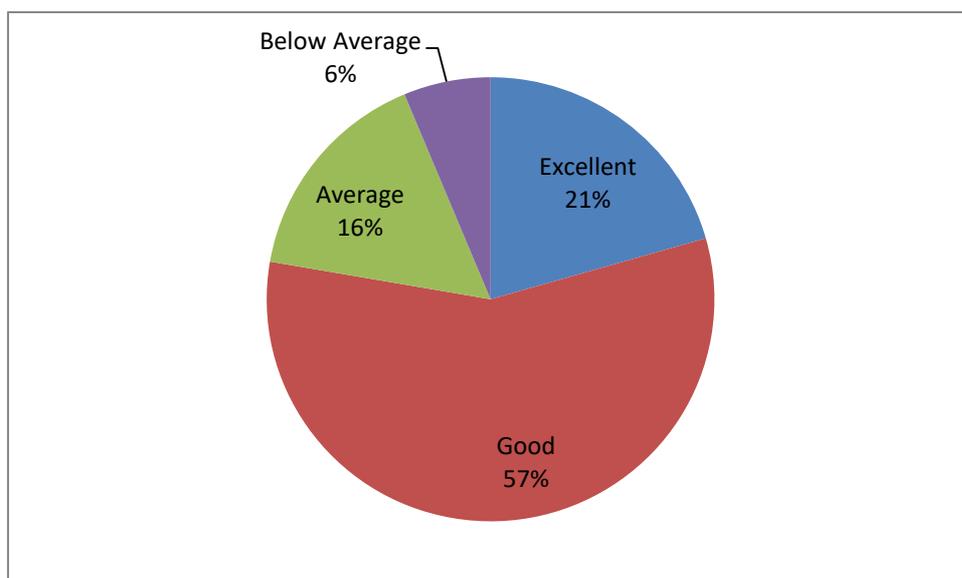
2) To what extent do you agree that your college promotes women's leadership?

|	
Strongly Agree	88
Agree	49
Neutral	25
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	9

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
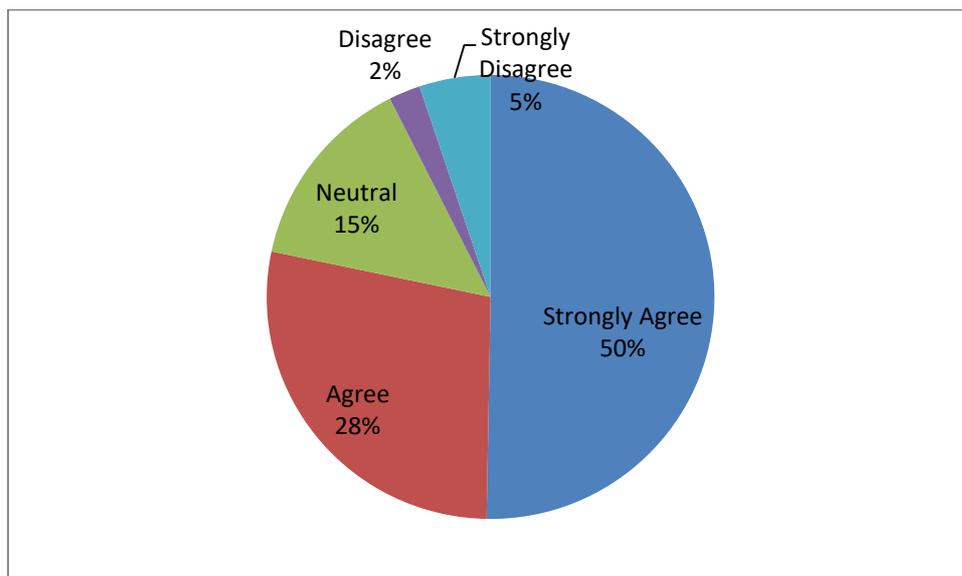
3) How accessible are gender-related resources (e.g., counselling, workshops) at the college?

|	
Very accessible	44
Moderately accessible	86
Slightly accessible	28
Not accessible	17
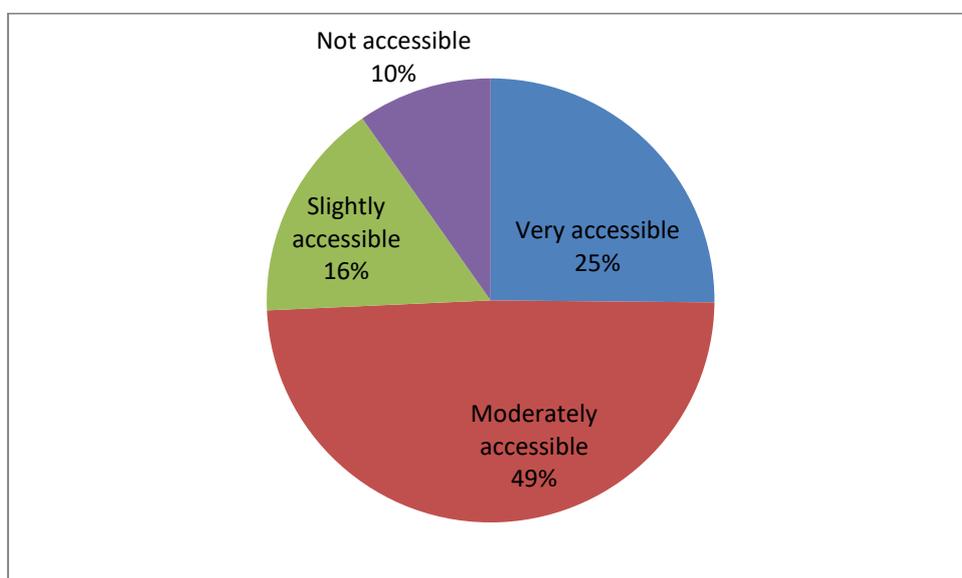
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

4) Are students encouraged to participate in community development activities?

Yes, actively	86
Yes, but limited	63
Rarely	10
No	16
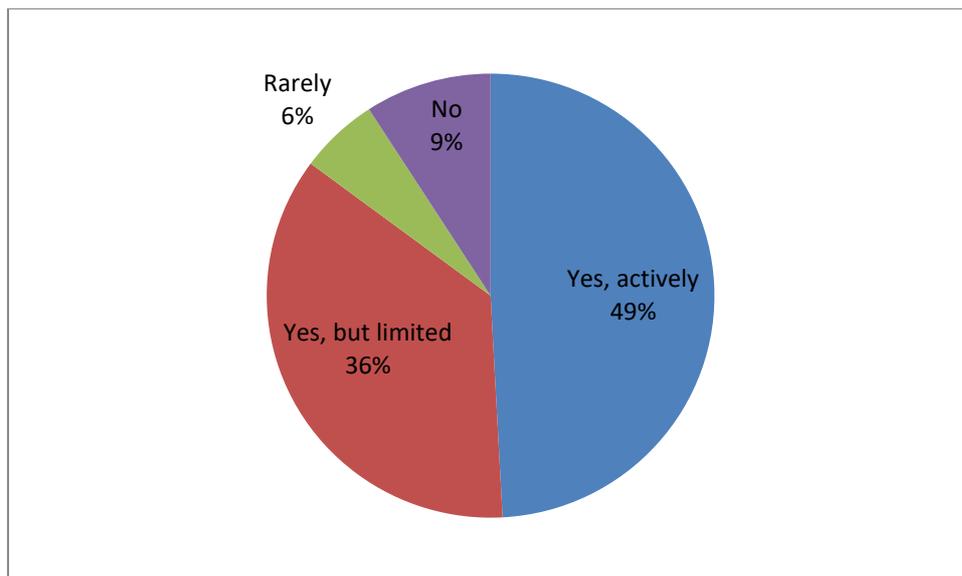
5) Does the college collaborate with external organizations to promote gender equity?

Yes	91
No	14
Not Sure	70
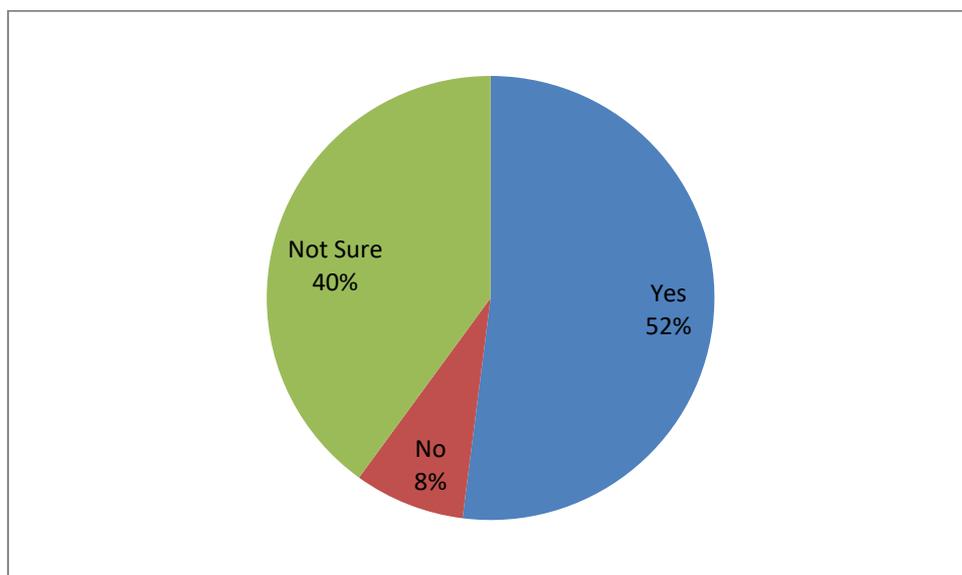
6) Have you participated in any leadership workshops or related programs organized by your college?

Yes, more than once	44
Yes, once	52
No	79
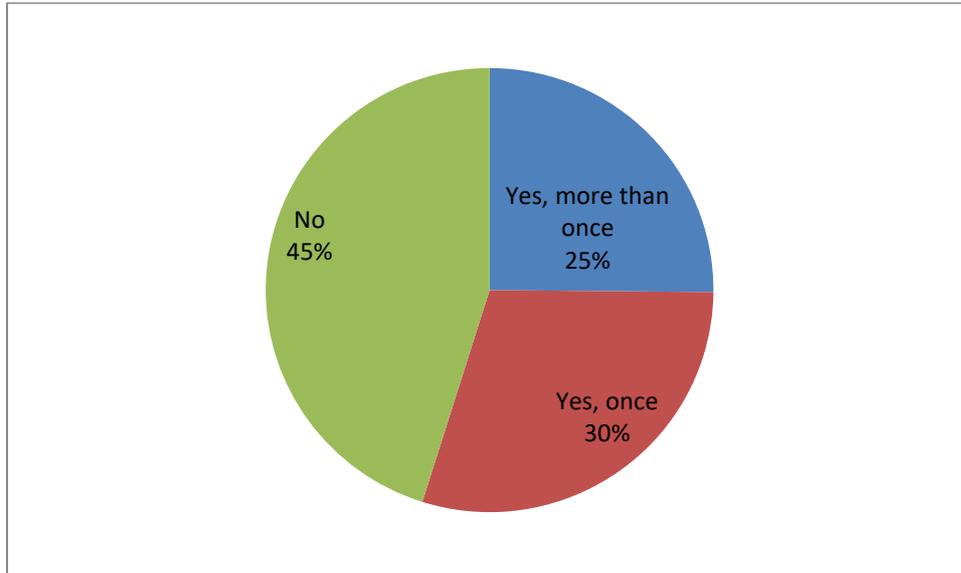
7) Does your college provide support for job placements, internships, or skill development?

|	
Yes, extensively	46
Yes, to some extent	66
Limited support	49
No support	14

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
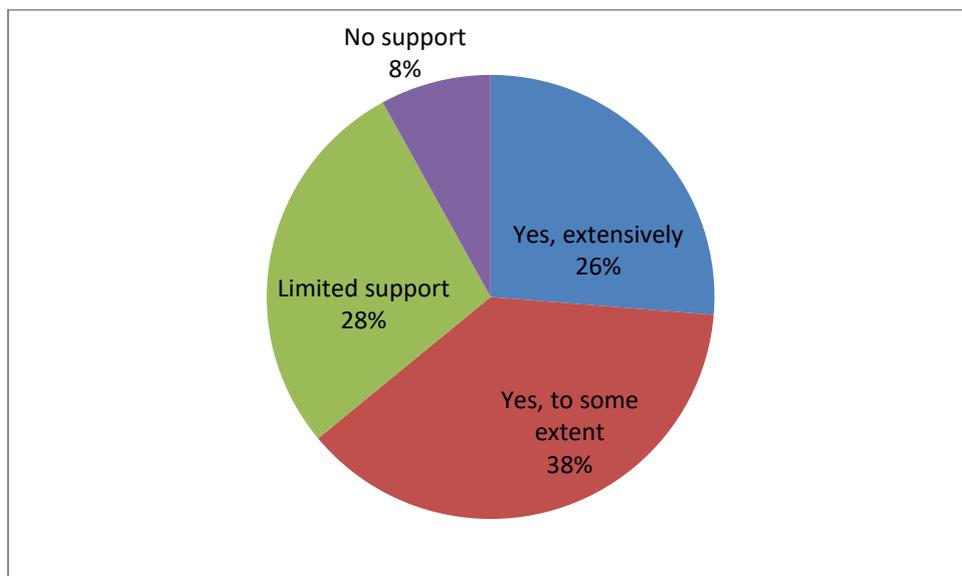
8) How likely are you to pursue further studies or a career related to your field of study?

Highly likely	82
Somewhat likely	40
Not sure	35
Unlikely	18
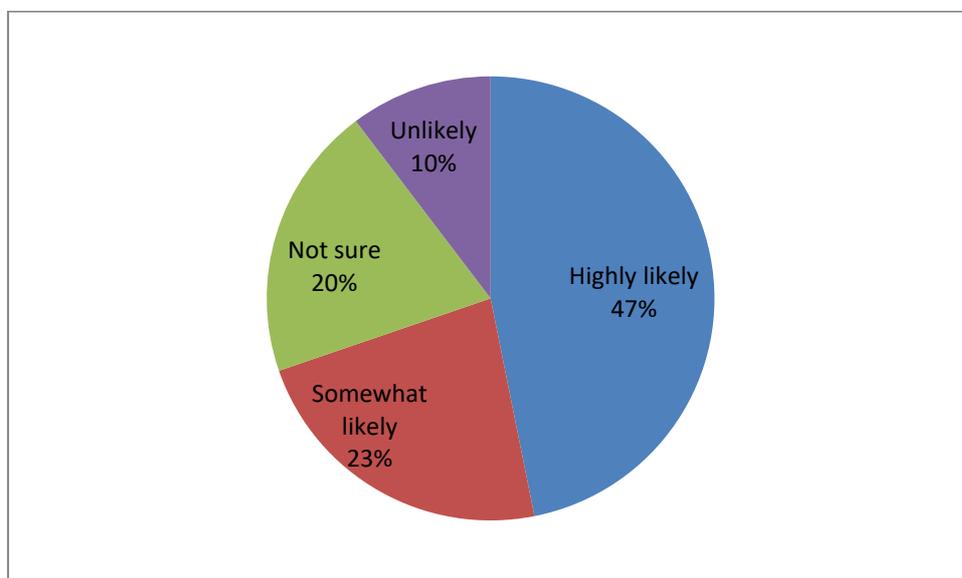
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

9) Do you feel that your college education has prepared you well for future employment?

Strongly Agree	20
Agree	67
Neutral	54
Disagree	34
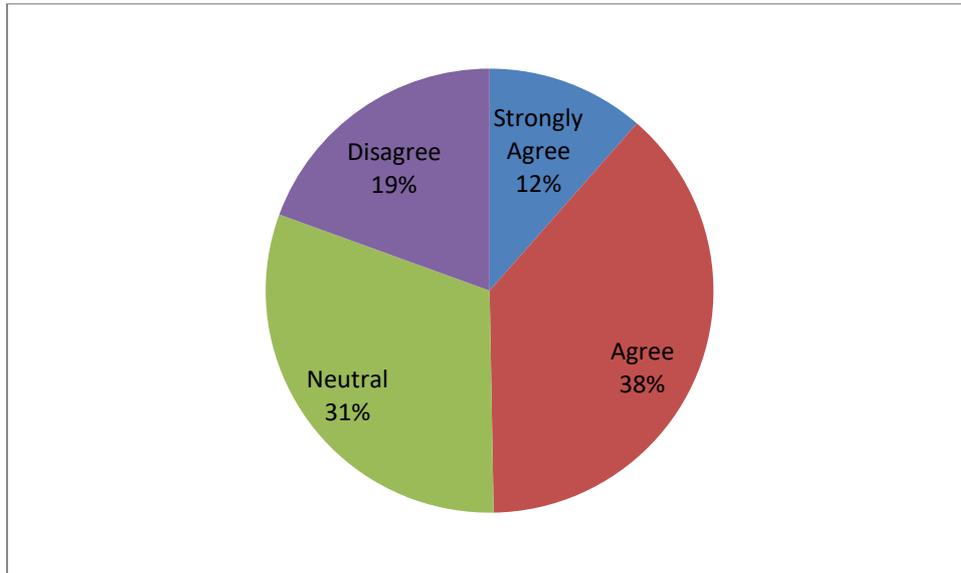
10) Does your college encourage women to enter non-traditional career paths(e.g., STEM fields, entrepreneurship)?

Yes, strongly	61
Yes, somewhat	49
No	7
Not aware	58

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
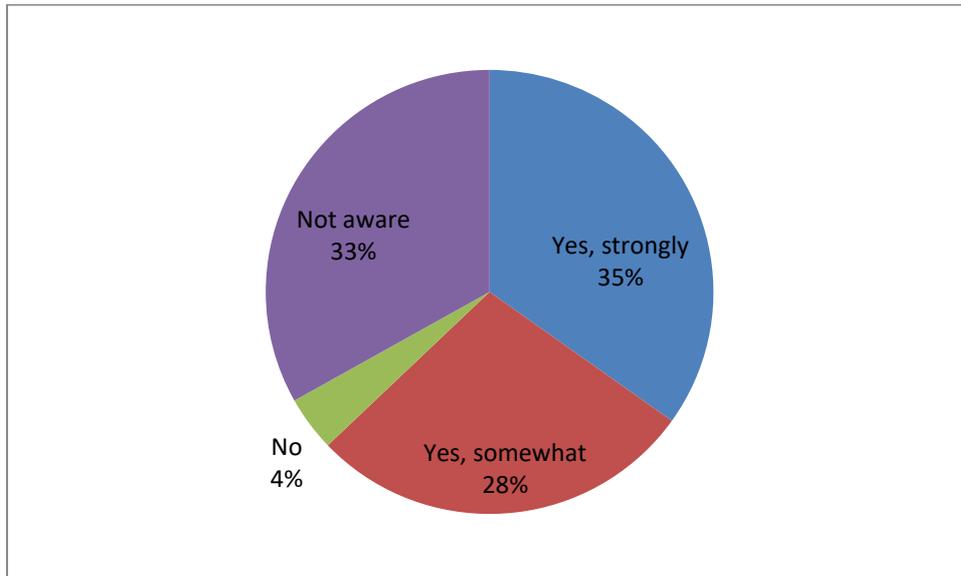
11) Are you familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations?

Yes, very familiar	131
Somewhat familiar	25
Not familiar	19
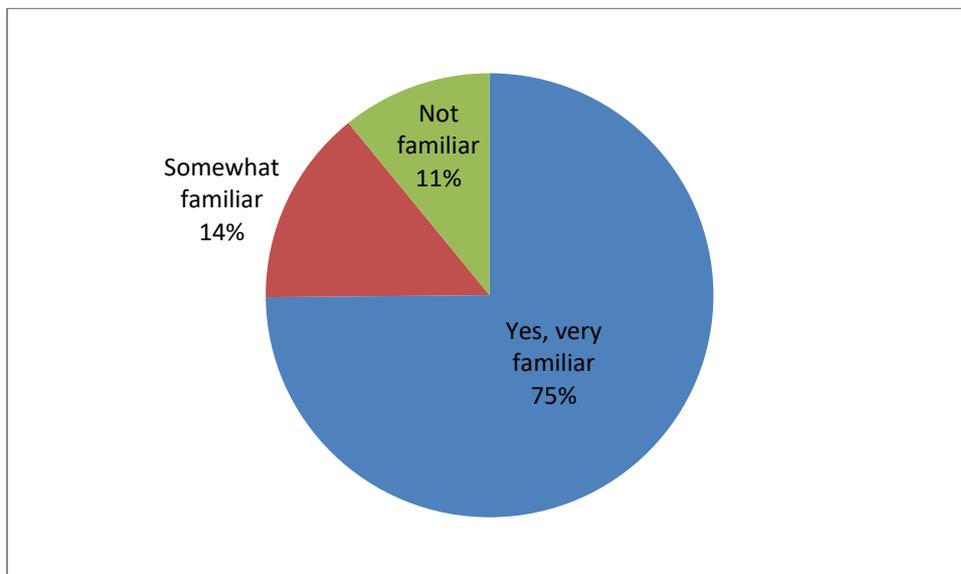
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

12) How frequently does your college organize sustainability-related events (e.g.,workshops, campaigns)?

Frequently	33
Occasionally	96
Rarely	25
Never	21
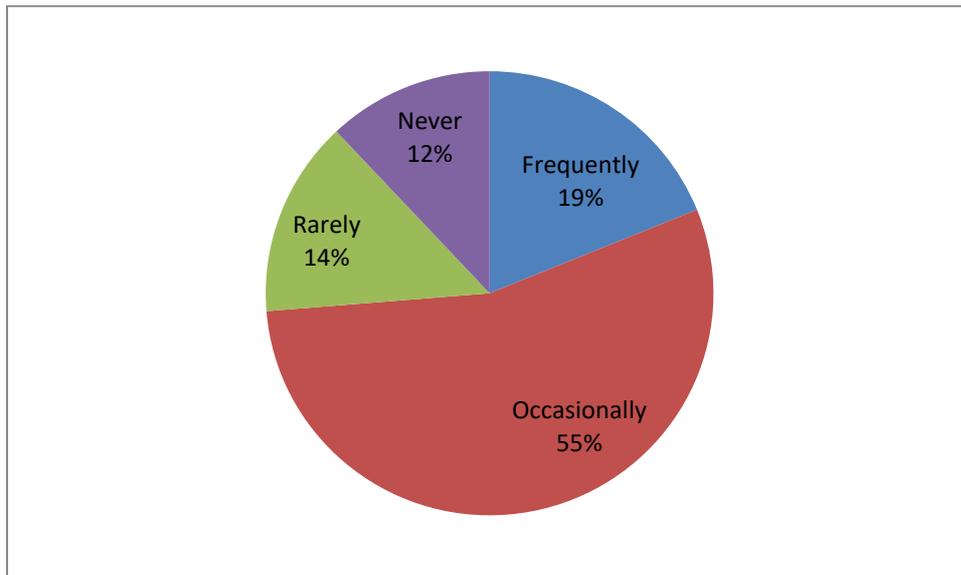
13) Do you participate in extracurricular clubs or societies focused on sustainability and social causes?

Yes, actively	63
Occasionally	56
Rarely	25
No	31
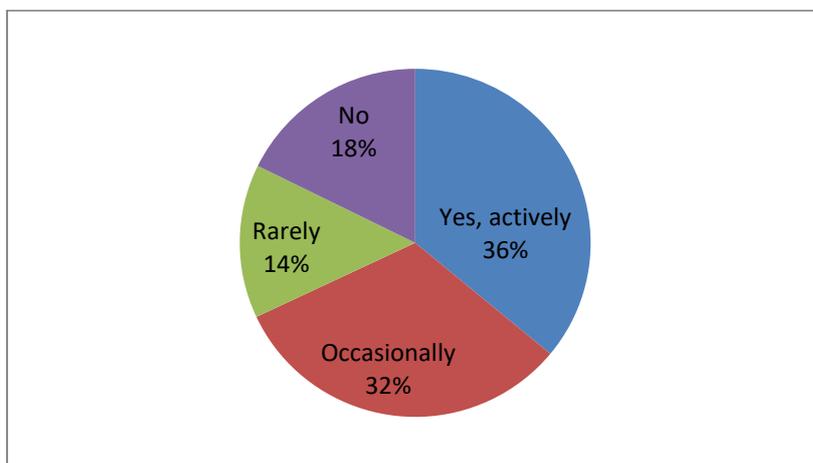
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

14) Do you think that participating in such activities has enhanced your awareness of sustainable development?

Strongly Agree	42
Agree	79
Neutral	30
Disagree	24
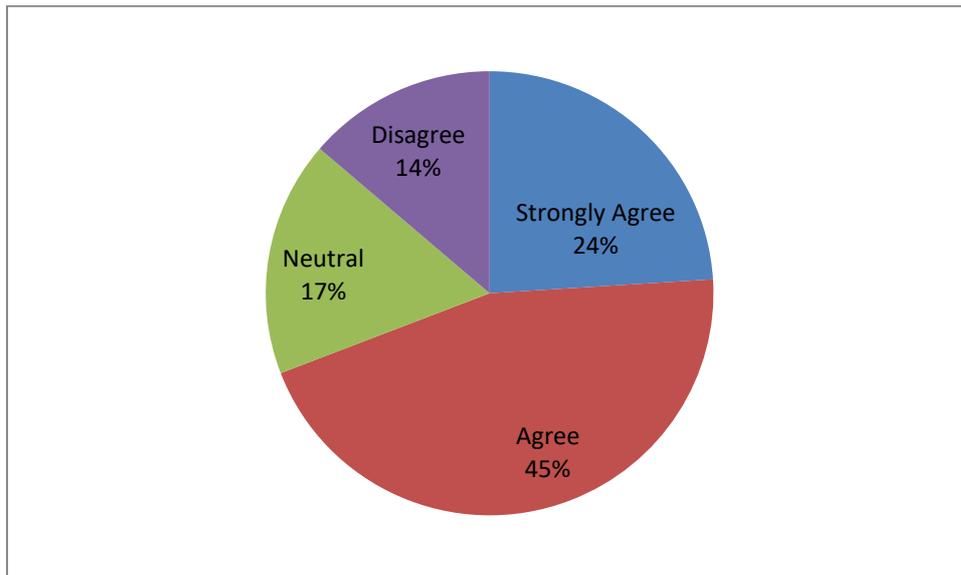
15) To what extent do you feel that topics related to the SDGs (e.g., poverty reduction, gender equality, climate action) are integrated into your curriculum?

Very well integrated	84
Somewhat integrated	66
Not integrated at all	25

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
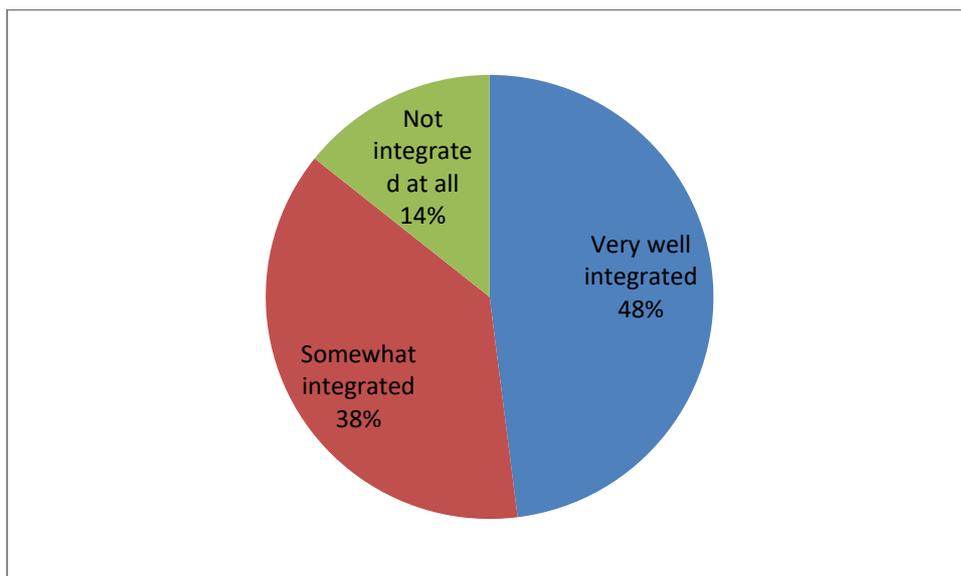
16) How well does the curriculum promote understanding of gender equality issues?

Very well	79
Somewhat	41
Needs improvement	31
Not at all	24
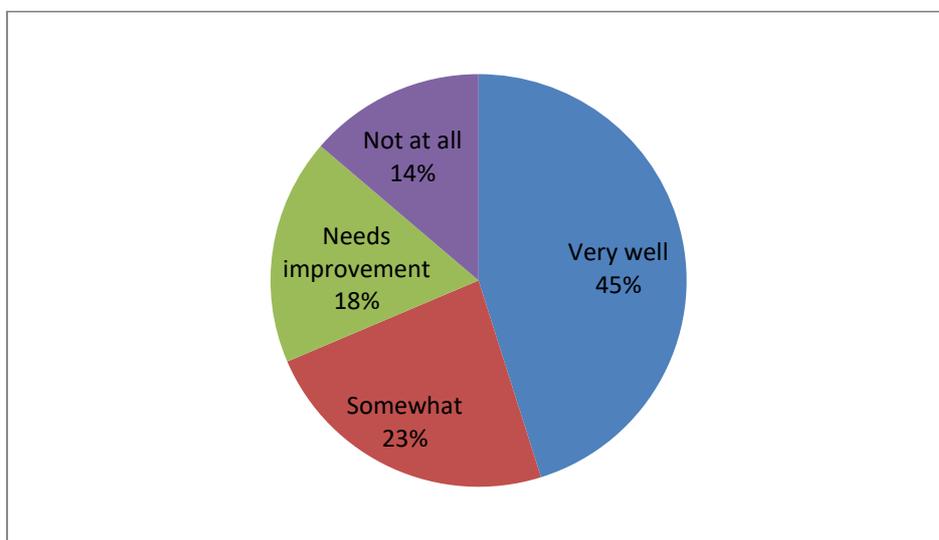
17) Do classroom discussions promote equal participation among all students?

Strongly Agree	61
Agree	56
Neutral	27
Disagree	31
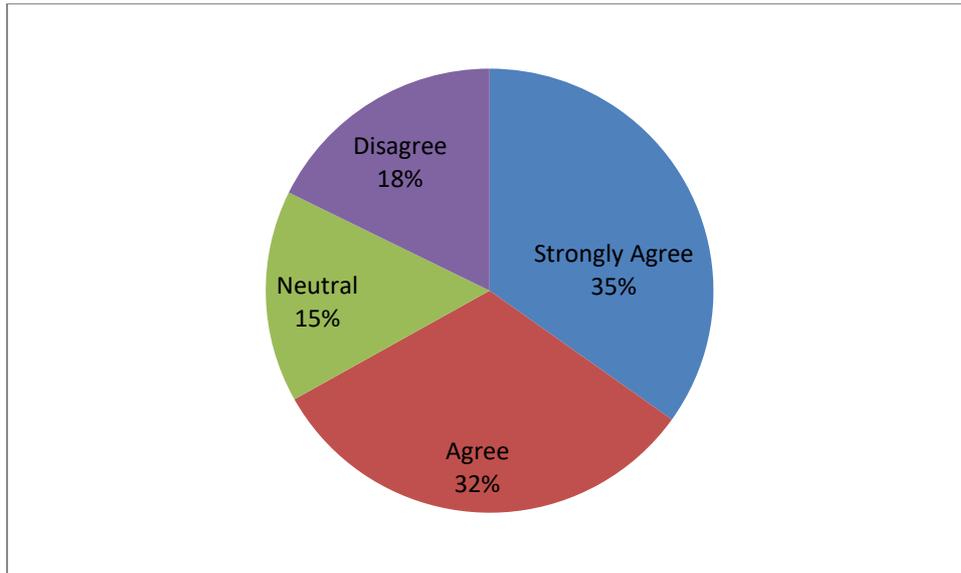
18) Would you support the introduction of a dedicated course on gender equality and sustainable development?

Yes	116
No	5
Maybe	54
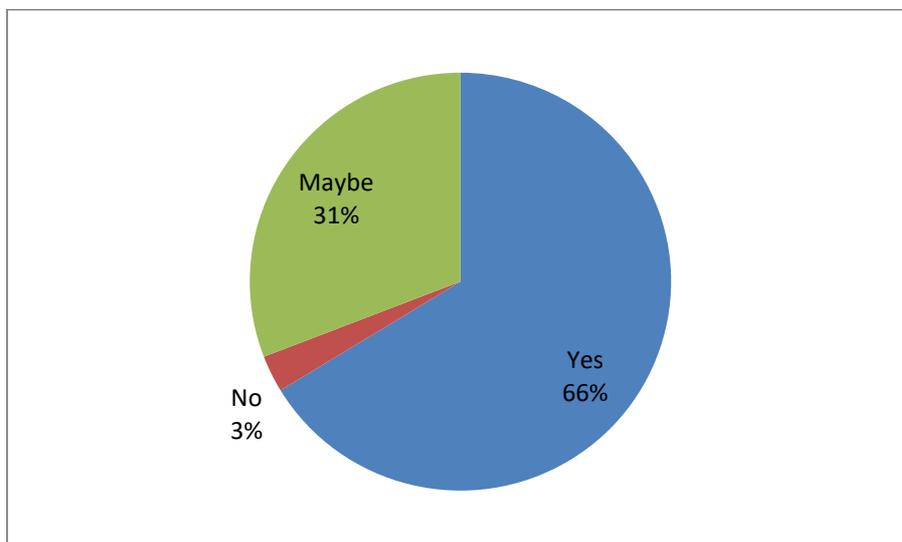
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

19) How effective are your college's policies in promoting sustainable practices on campus (e.g., waste management, energy conservation)?

Very effective	61
Moderately effective	65
Slightly effective	28
Not effective	21
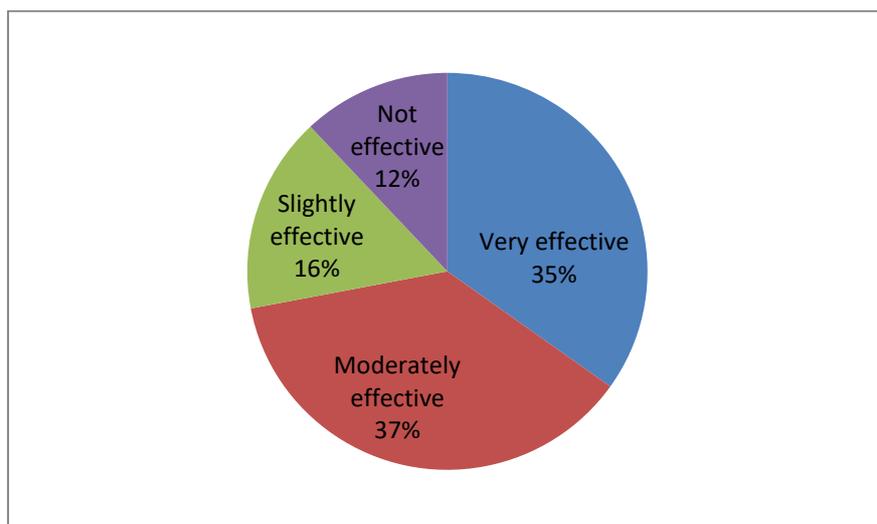
20) Are there programs that promote gender equity and social inclusion (e.g.,scholarships, counseling services)?

Yes, multiple programs	50
Yes, but limited	51
No	3
Not aware	71
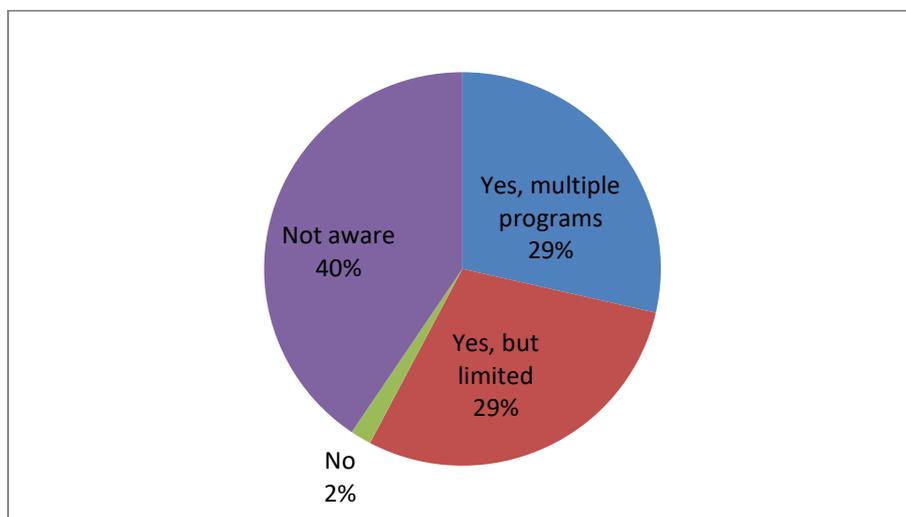
21) Does your college provide access to an alumni support system?

Yes	37
No	18
Not aware	120
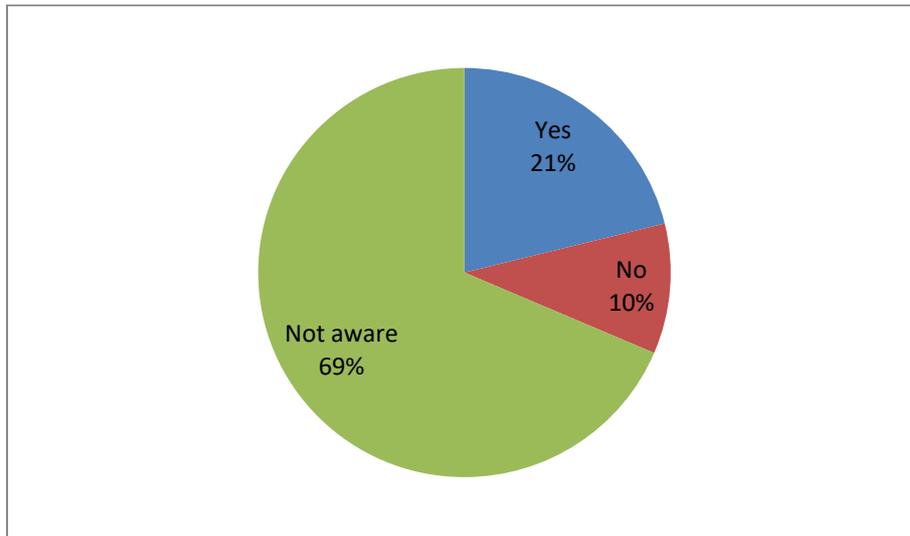
22) Which of the following community outreach areas do you think needs the most attention?

Education	19
Healthcare	13
Environment	8
Women Empowerment	9
Skill Development	28
Mental Health	32
Livelihood and Employment	66

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
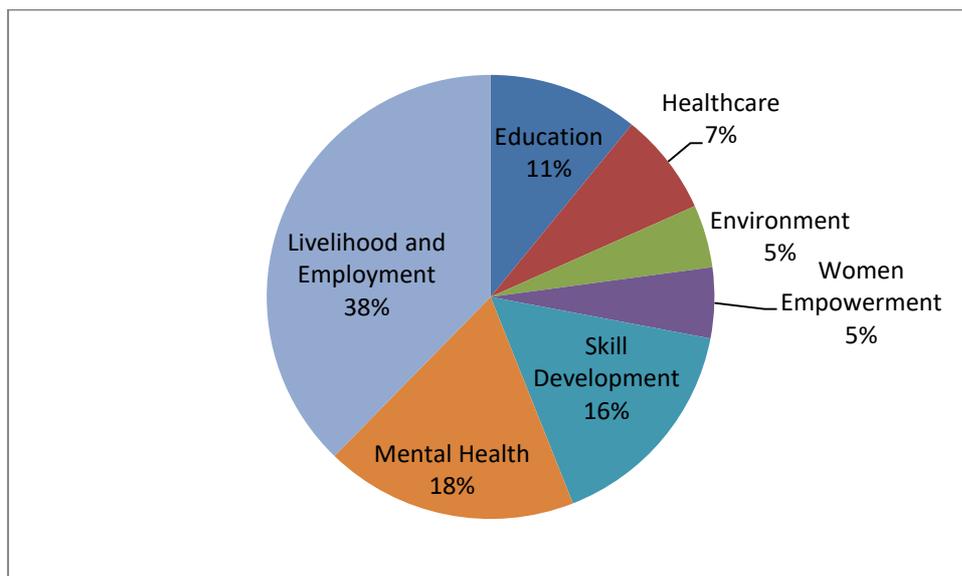
23) What is the primary challenge faced by your college in promoting sustainable development?

Limited funding	24
Lack of awareness	20
Limited student participation	53
Other institutional priorities	78
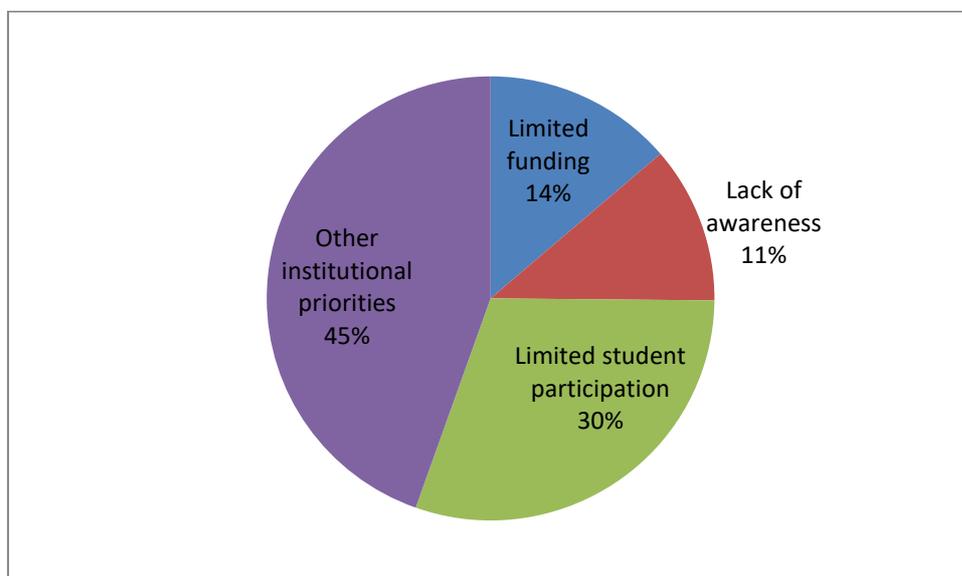
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

24) What is the biggest barrier to achieving gender equity within your institution?

Societal norms and expectations	31
Limited institutional resources	22
Cultural challenges	15
No major barriers	107
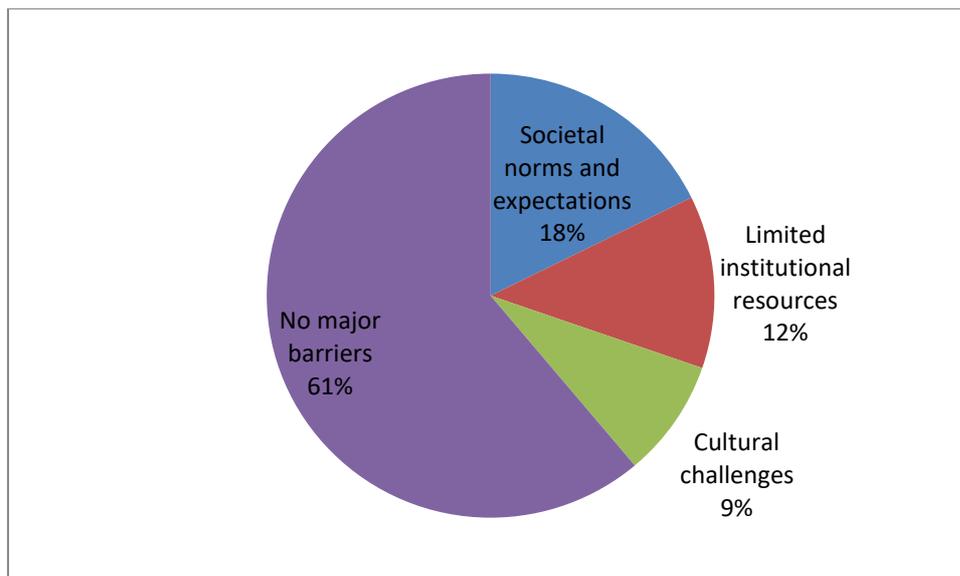
25) Does the college promote eco-friendly practices (e.g., waste segregation,recycling, tree plantation)?

Waste segregation	12
Plastic free campus	2
Recycling	5
Tree plantation drives/Green campus initiation	37
All of the above	70
Not Aware	49

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
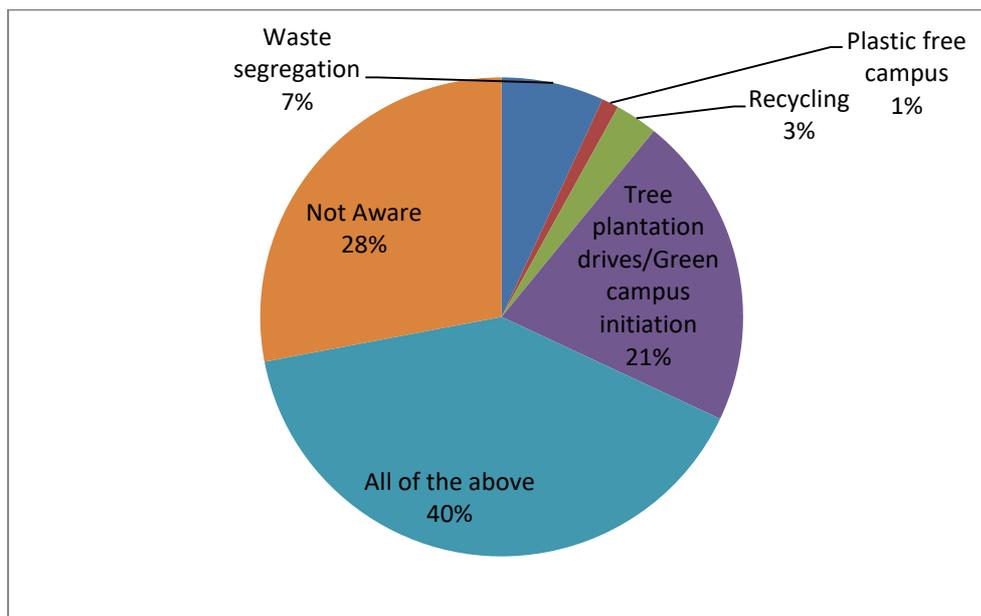
26) How often do you participate in environmentally focused activities (e.g., clean-up drives, awareness campaigns) organized by the college?

Very often	35
Occasionally	59
Rarely	41
Never	40
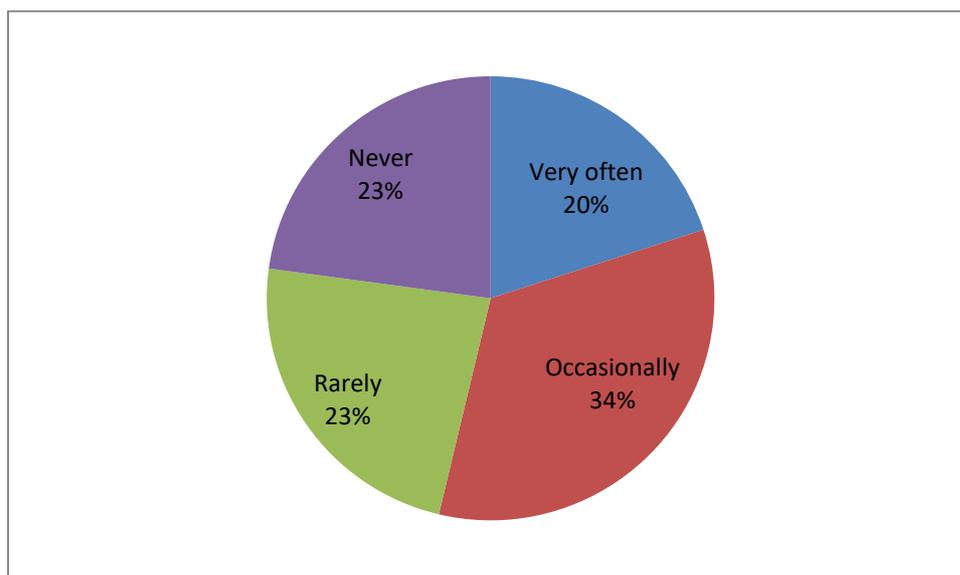
27) Do you incorporate eco-friendly practices in your daily life due to the influence of college initiatives?

Yes	115
No	60
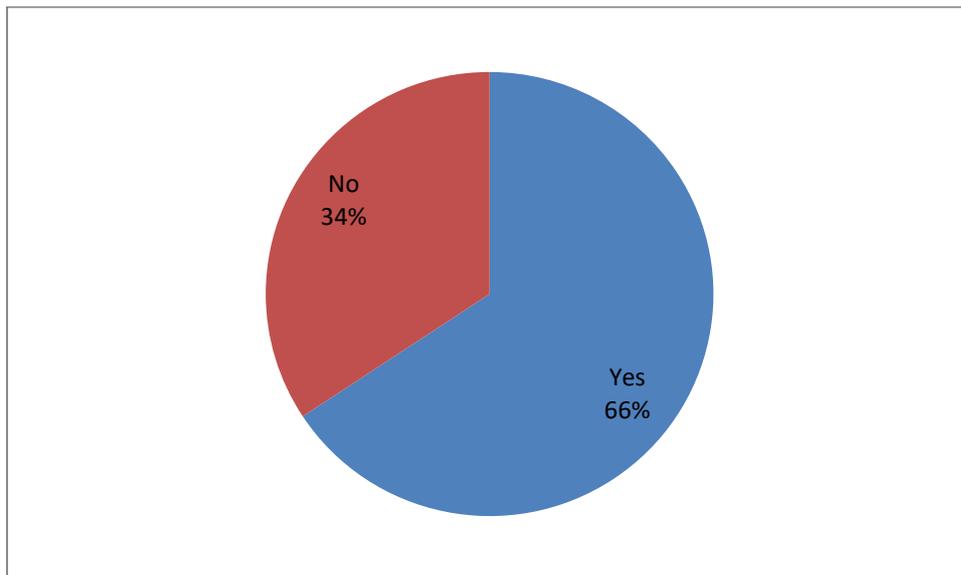
28) How do you rate the impact of community outreach programs on promoting gender equity and sustainable development?

Very impactful	45
Moderately impactful	66
Slightly impactful	29
Not impactful	35

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
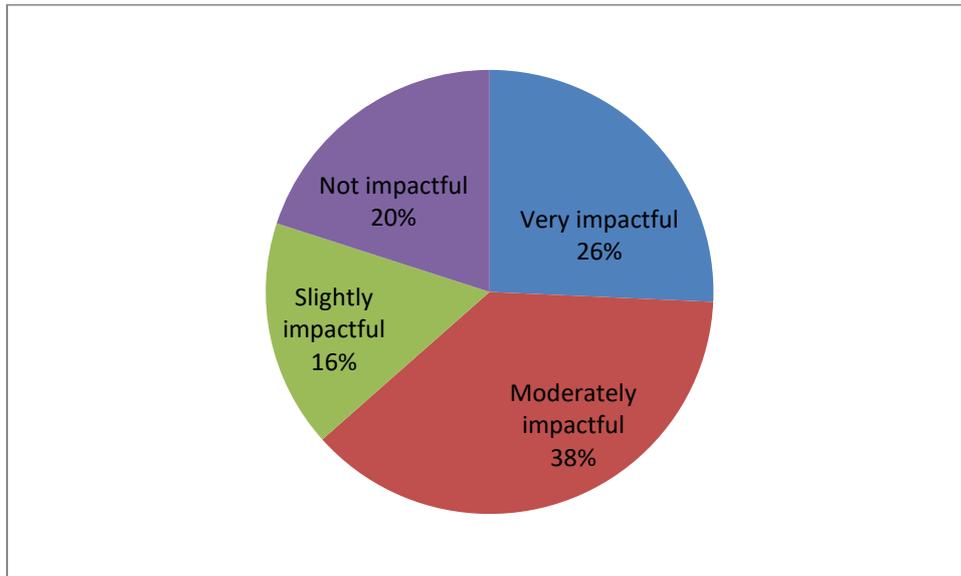
29) How would you rate the effectiveness of the college's sustainability initiatives?

Very effective	61
Neutral	86
Not effective	28

30) Are students educated about women's rights and gender equality through college programs?

Yes, comprehensively	86
Yes, but not comprehensively	56
No	33

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi
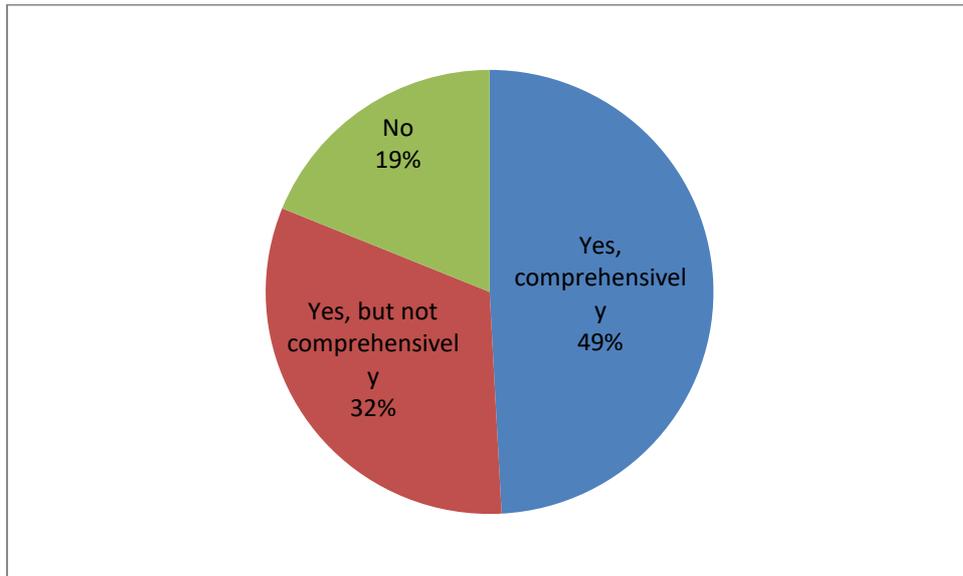
31) Are there special initiatives for students from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds?

Yes	95
No	6
Not sure	74

32) Are you aware of the Green Society and the Women's Studies Centre at JMC?

Yes,both	146
Only the Green Society	3
Only the Women's Studies Centre	2
No	24

33) Are you a member of the Green Society or the Women?s Studies Centre?

Yes,Green Society	9
Yes,Women's Study Centre	59
Yes,both	10
None	97
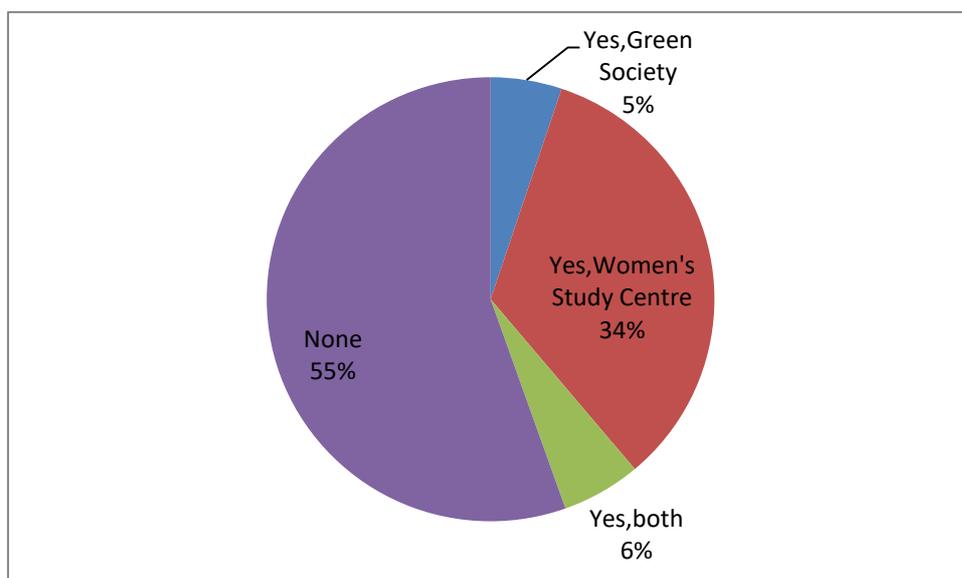
34) Do you think the Green Society addresses relevant environmental issues?

Strongly Agree	41
Agree	64
Neutral	45
Disagree	25
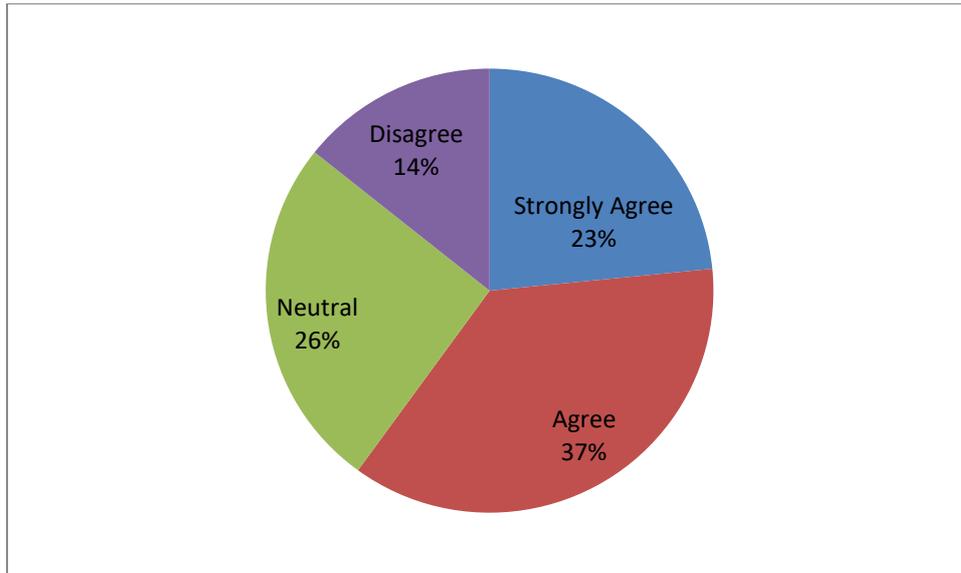
35) Do you believe the Women's Studies Centre is active in promoting feminist awareness?

Strongly Agree	77
Agree	47
Neutral	27
Disagree	24
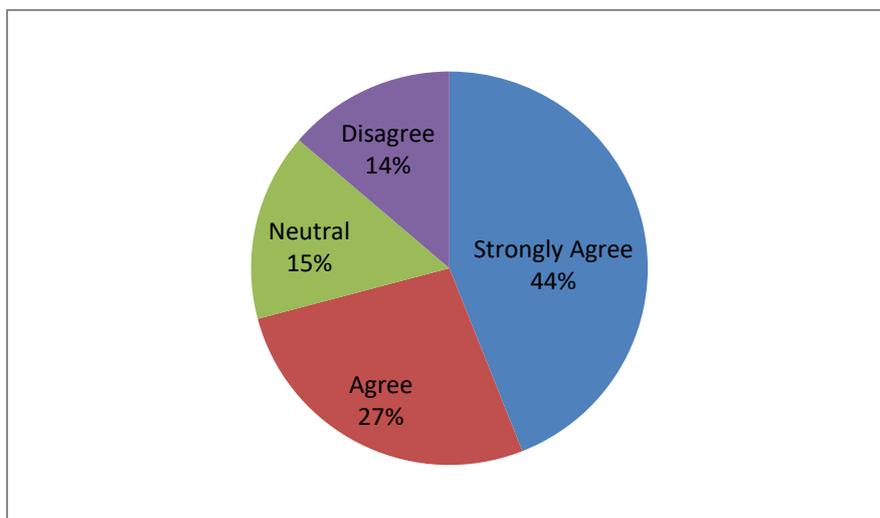
36) How does the mentor-ward system support your personal and academic growth?

Very effective	35
Moderately effective	46
Slightly effective	31
Not effective	63

37) Are you aware of JMC's 'Naari Samarika' initiative?

Yes	51
No	124

38) Have you read 'Jigyasa', the magazine of the Women's Studies Centre?
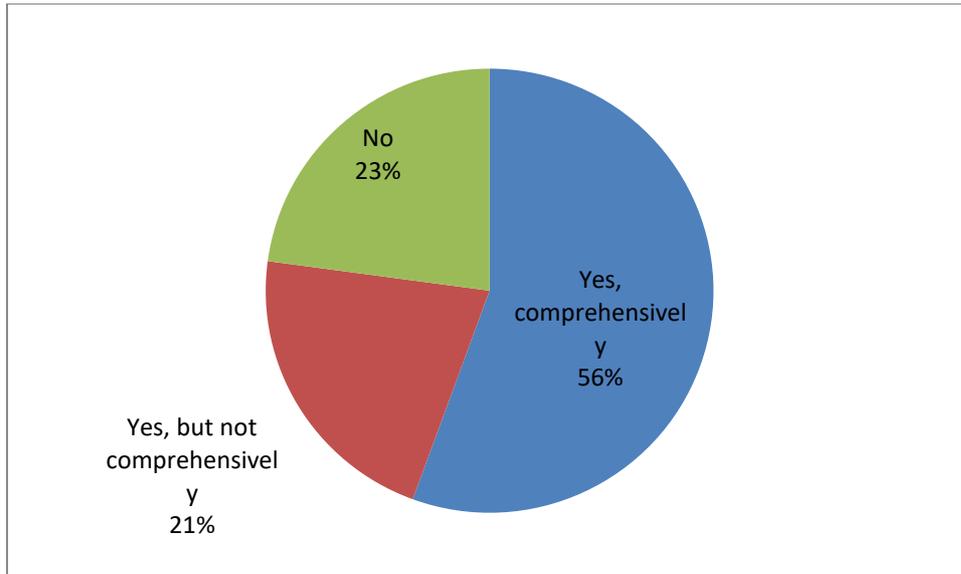
Yes	63
No	112

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

**Total Responses = 529**

1) How would you rate the overall quality of education provided by your institution?

Excellent	149
Good	254
Average	70
Below Average	56
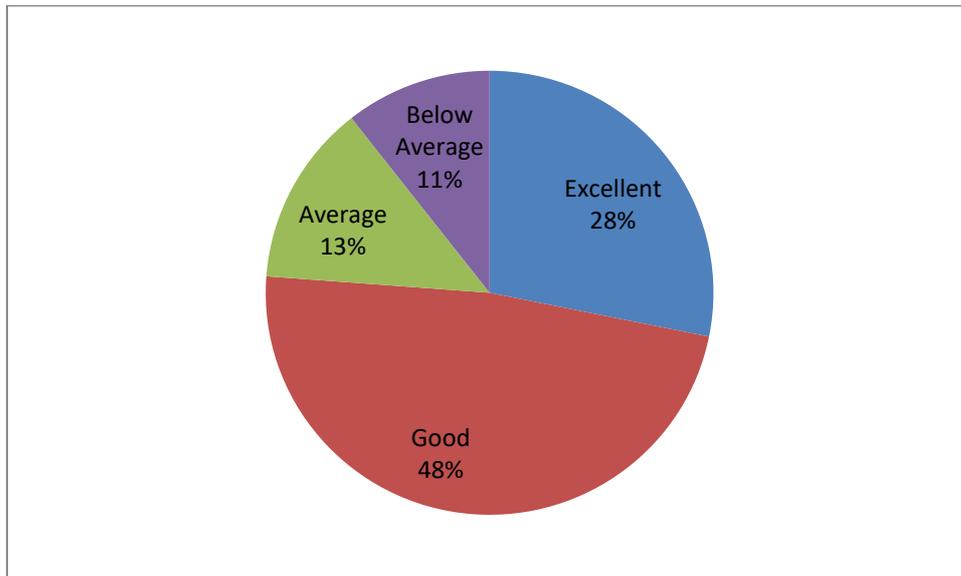
2) To what extent do you agree that your college promotes women's leadership?

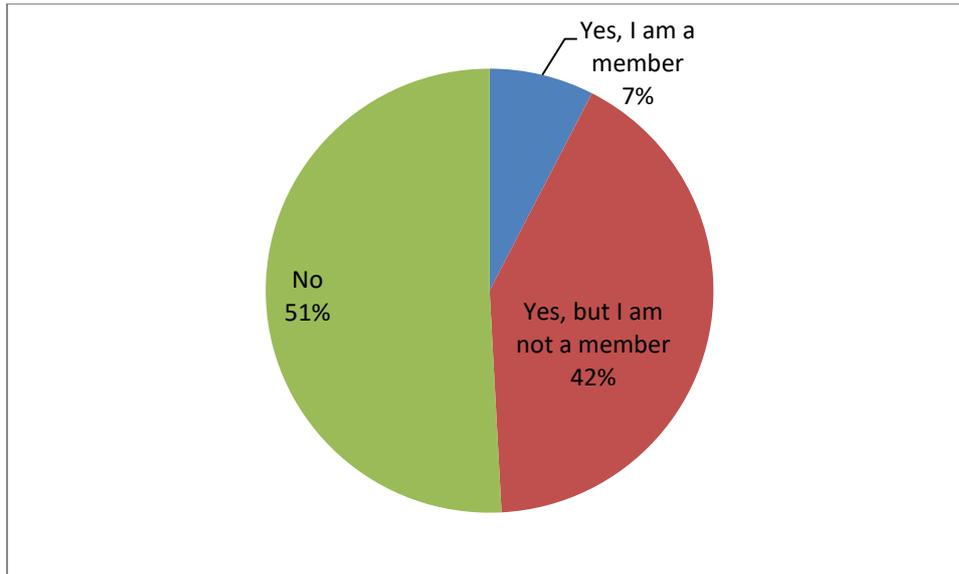|	
Strongly Agree	270
Agree	145
Neutral	58
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	54

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru
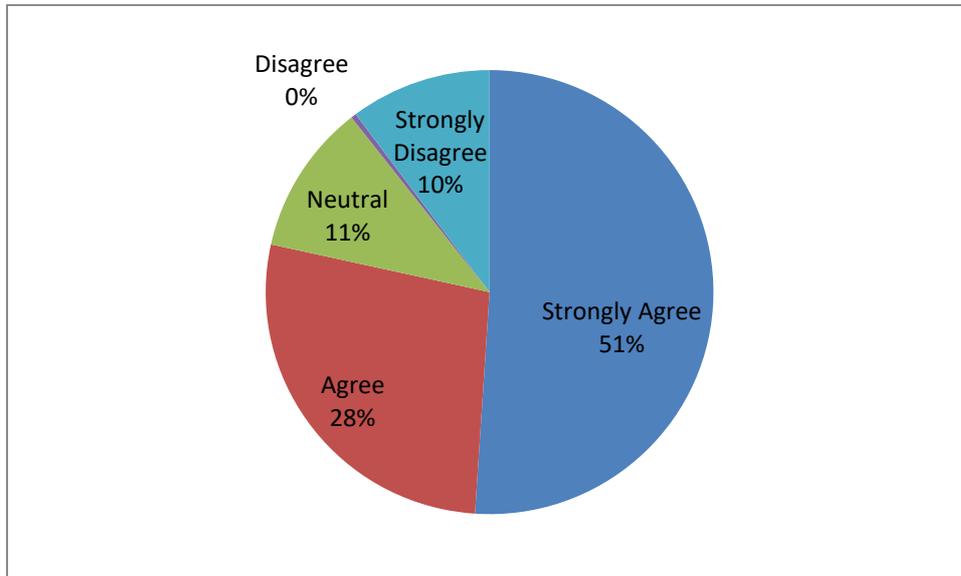
3) How accessible are gender-related resources (e.g., counselling, workshops) at the college?

Very accessible	223
Moderately accessible	187
Slightly accessible	50
Not accessible	69
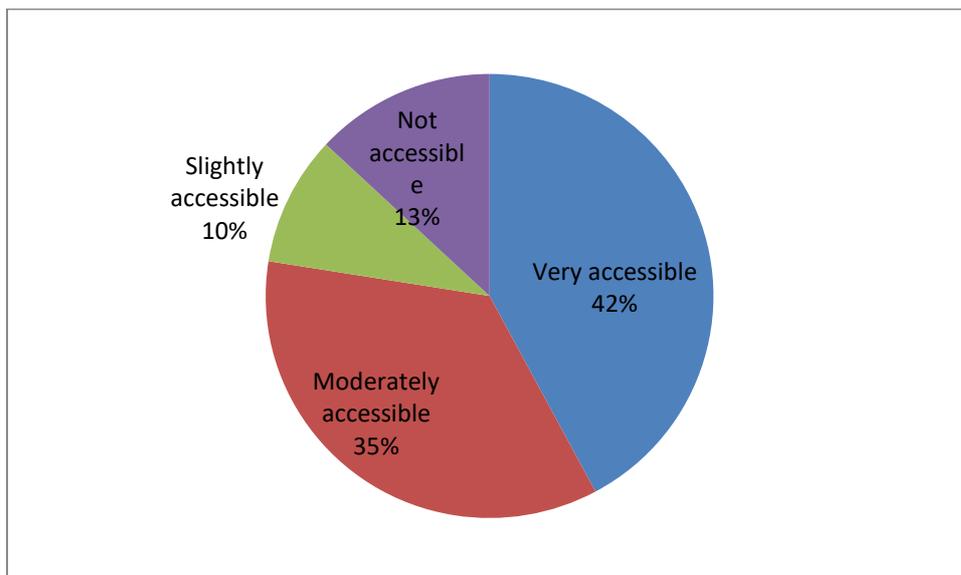
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity
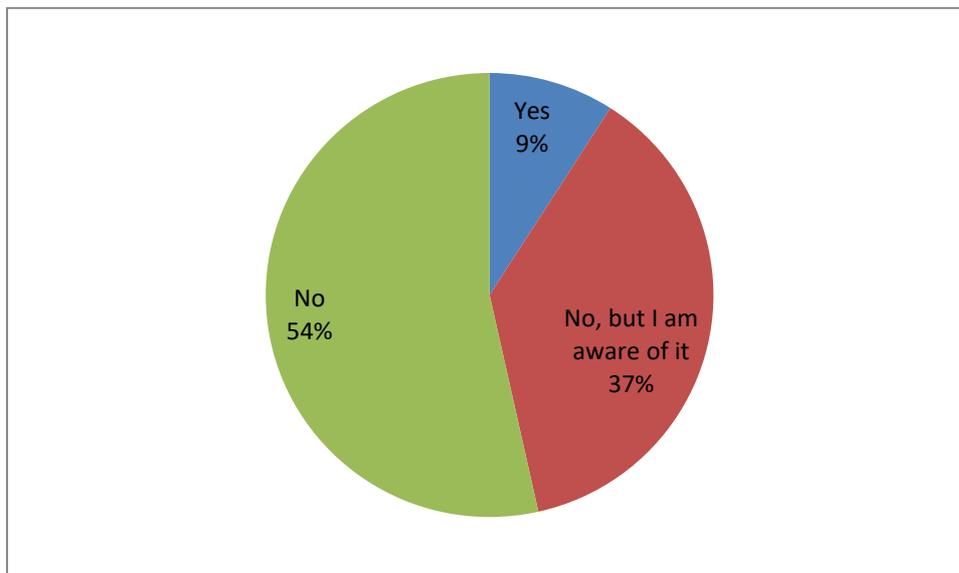
Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

4) Are students encouraged to participate in community development activities?

Yes, actively	332
Yes, but limited	110
Rarely	22
No	65
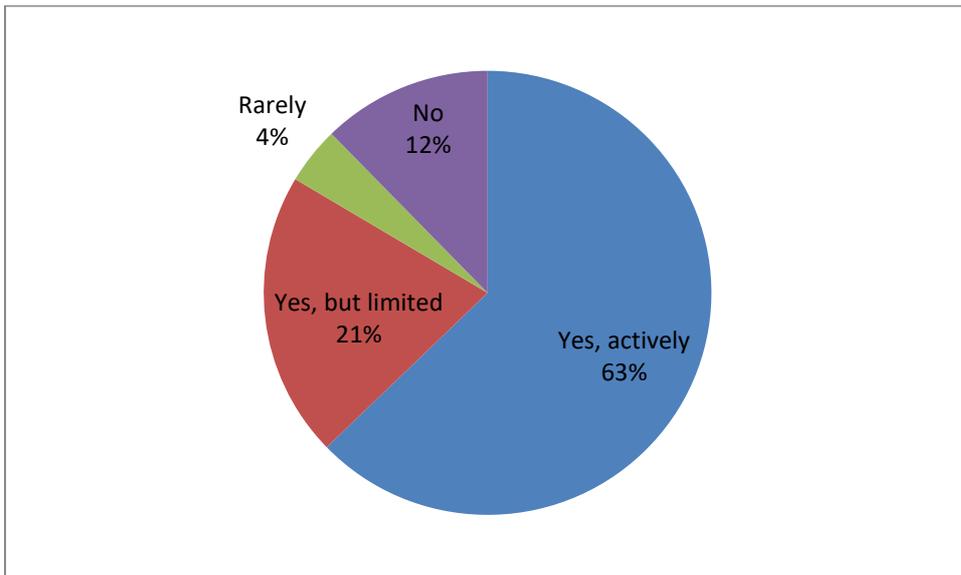
5) Does the college collaborate with external organizations to promote gender equity?
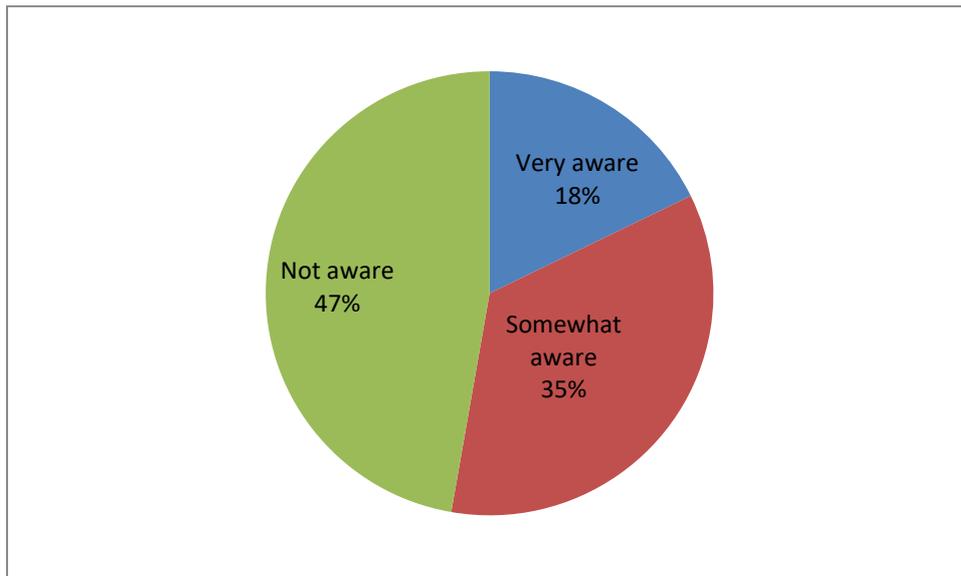
Yes	276
No	15
Not Sure	238
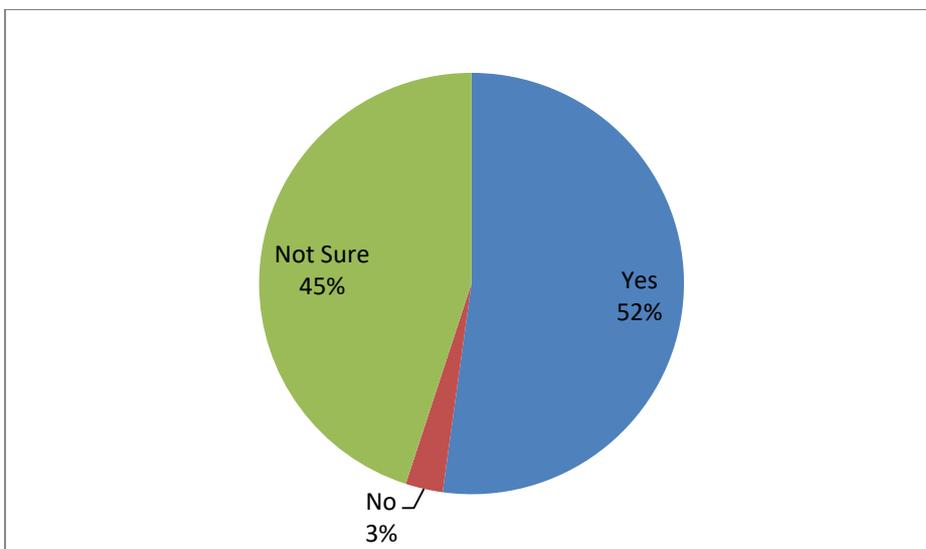
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

**6) Have you participated in any leadership workshops or related programs organized by your college?**

Yes, more than once	107
Yes, once	151
No	271
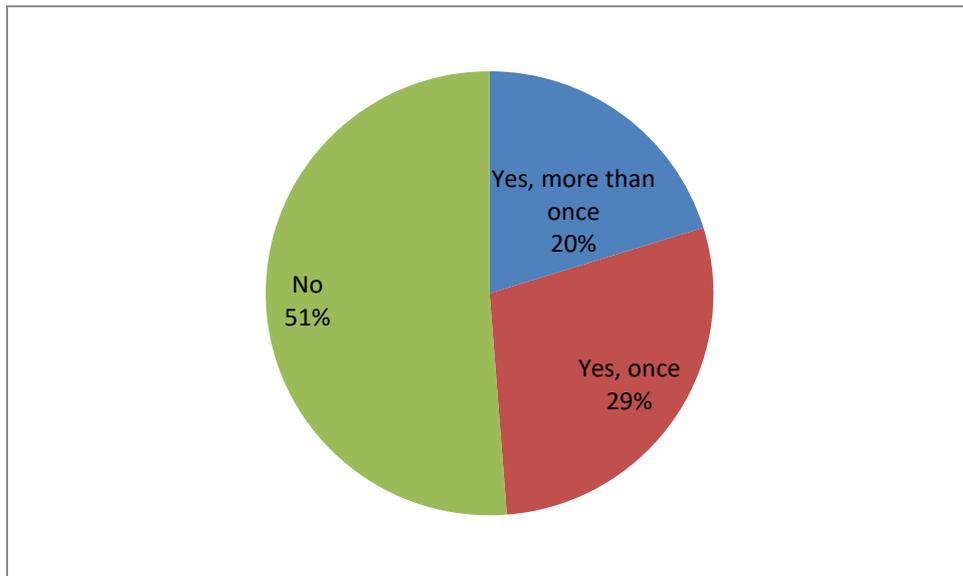
7) Does your college provide support for job placements, internships, or skill development?

Yes, extensively	168
Yes, to some extent	201
Limited support	84
No support	76
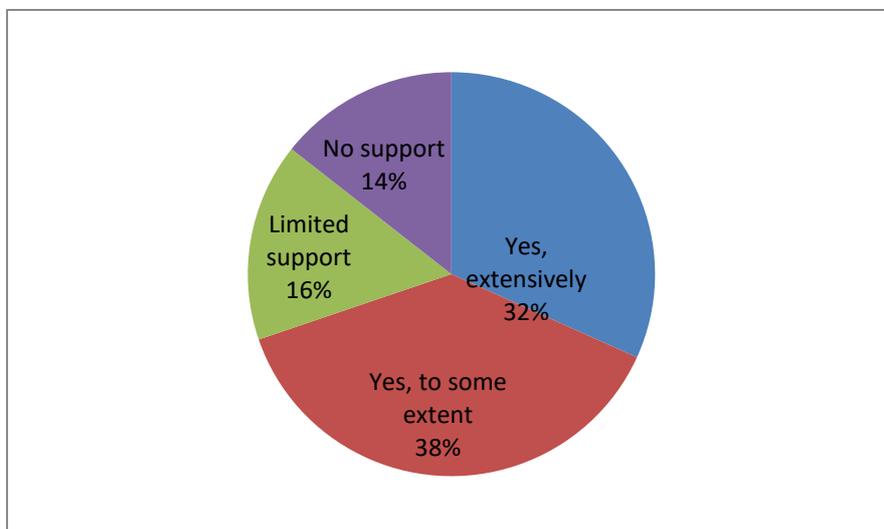
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

**8) How likely are you to pursue further studies or a career related to your field of study?**

Highly likely	264
Somewhat likely	122
Not sure	63
Unlikely	80
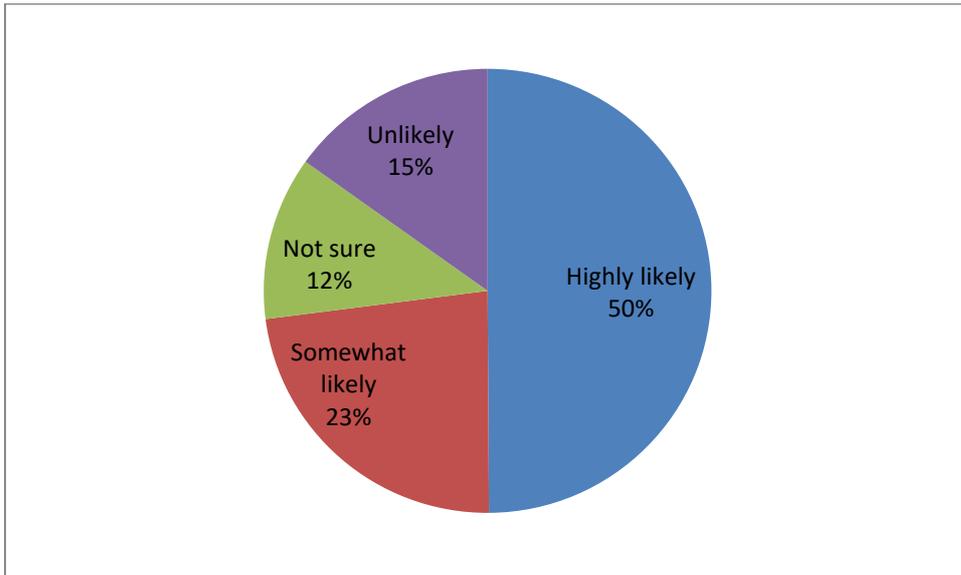
9) Do you feel that your college education has prepared you well for future employment?

Strongly Agree	112
Agree	189
Neutral	119
Disagree	109
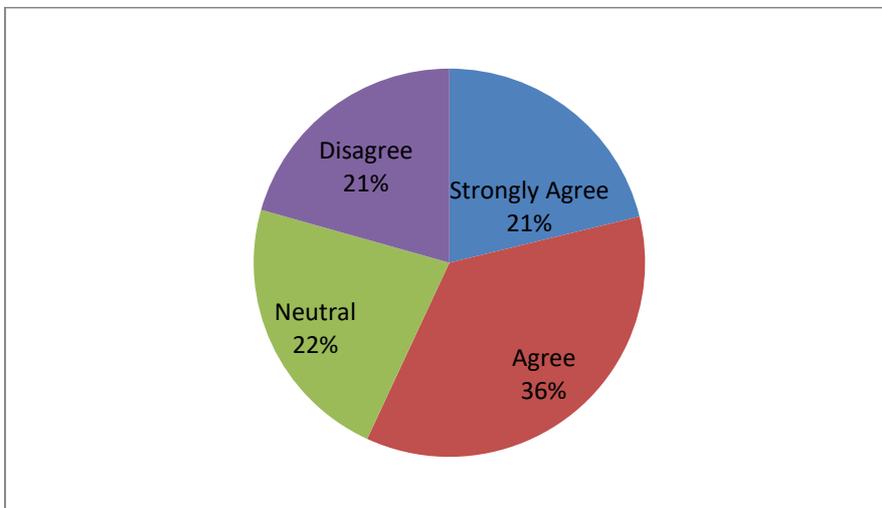
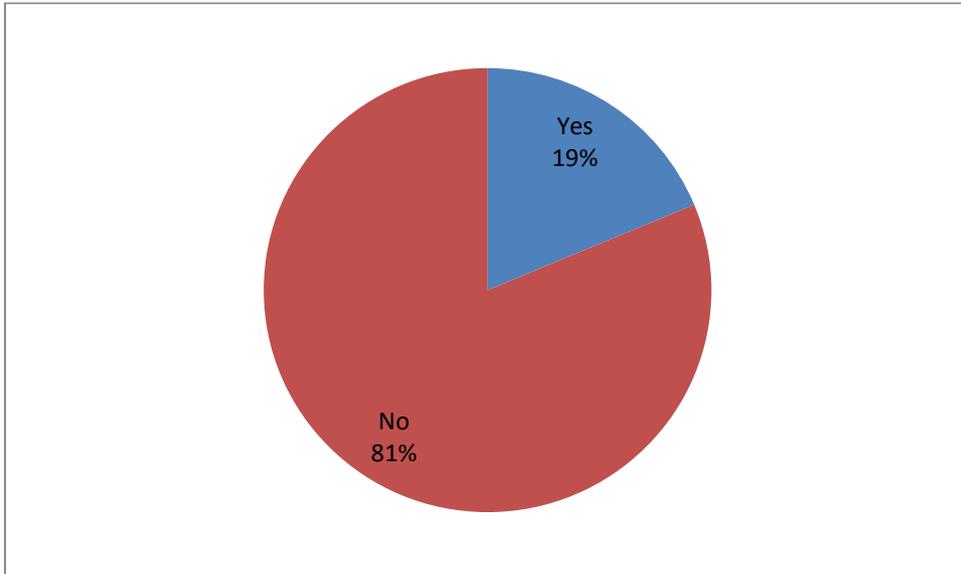# Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

**10) Does your college encourage women to enter non-traditional career paths(e.g., STEM fields, entrepreneurship)?**

Yes, strongly	227
Yes, somewhat	156
No	7
Not aware	139
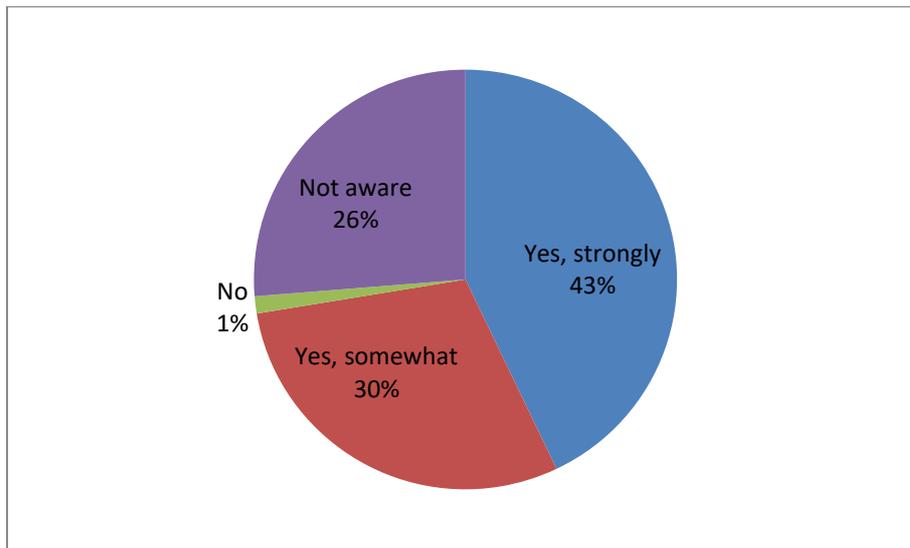
11) Are you familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations?

Yes, very familiar	163
Somewhat familiar	189
Not familiar	177
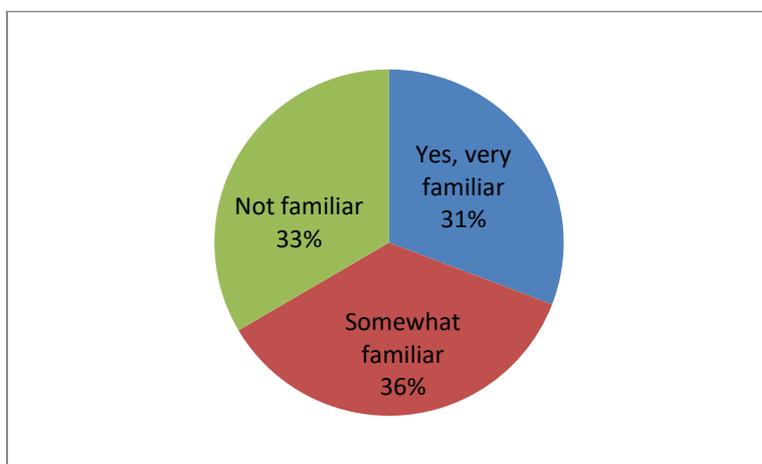
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

12) How frequently does your college organize sustainability-related events (e.g.,workshops, campaigns)?

Frequently	217
Occasionally	171
Rarely	46
Never	95
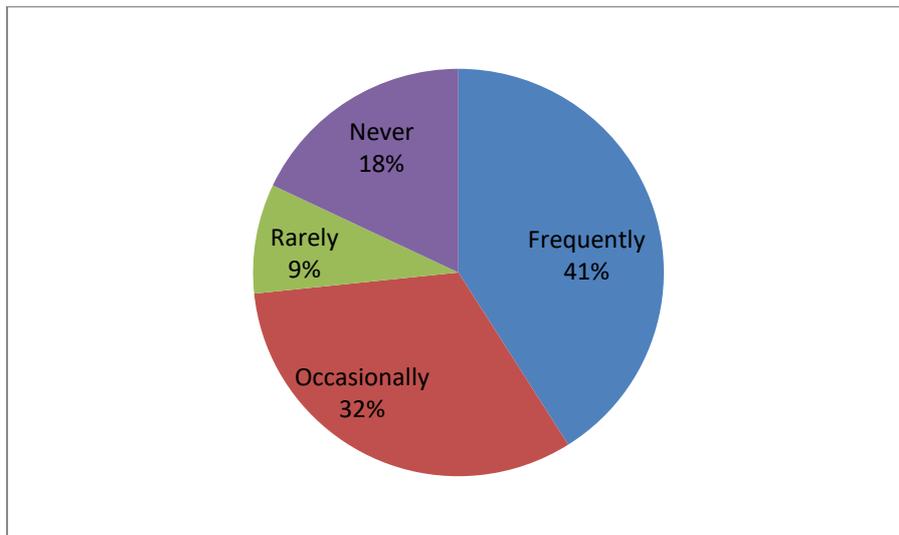
13) Do you participate in extracurricular clubs or societies focused on sustainability and social causes?

Yes, actively	111
Occasionally	167
Rarely	111
No	140
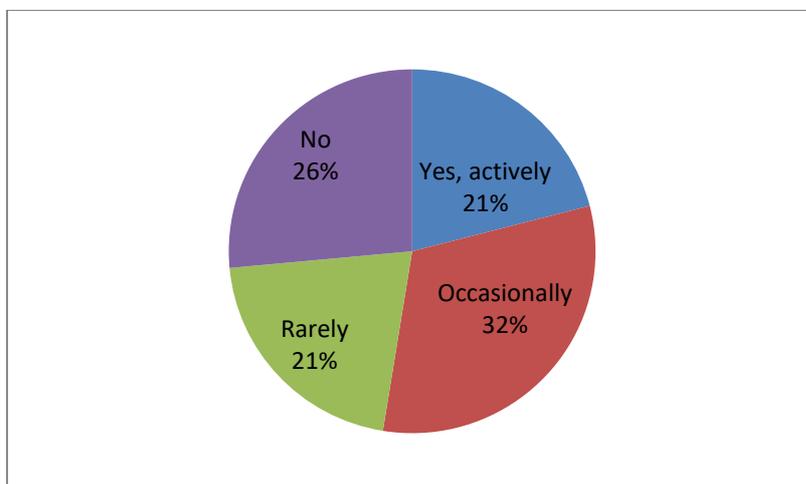
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

14) Do you think that participating in such activities has enhanced your awareness of sustainable development?

Strongly Agree	118
Agree	205
Neutral	104
Disagree	102
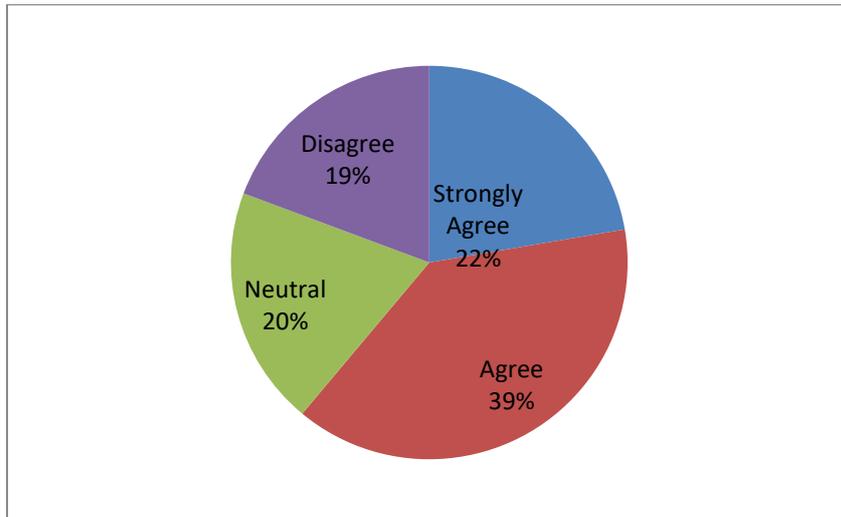
15) To what extent do you feel that topics related to the SDGs (e.g., poverty reduction, gender equality, climate action) are integrated into your curriculum?

Very well integrated	154
Somewhat integrated	259
Not integrated at all	116
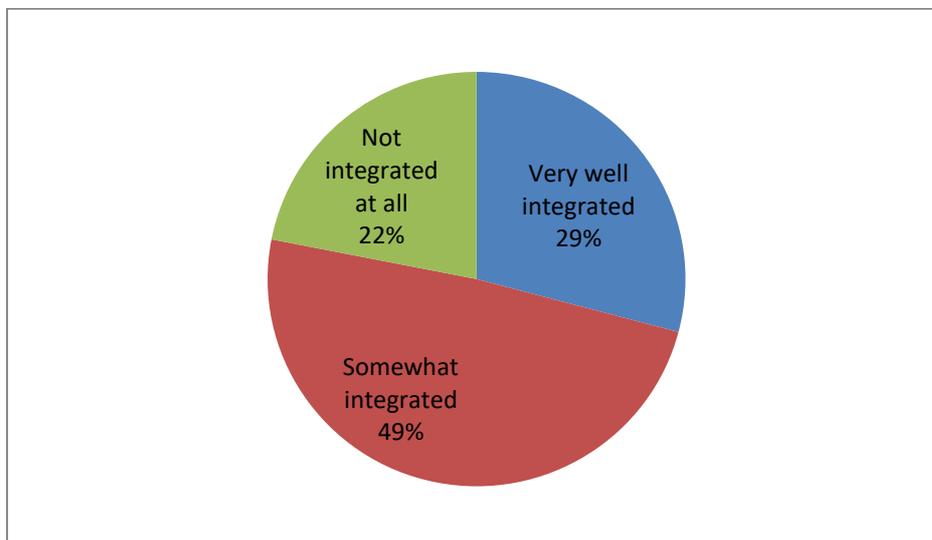
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

16) How well does the curriculum promote understanding of gender equality issues?

Very well	196
Somewhat	169
Needs improvement	65
Not at all	99
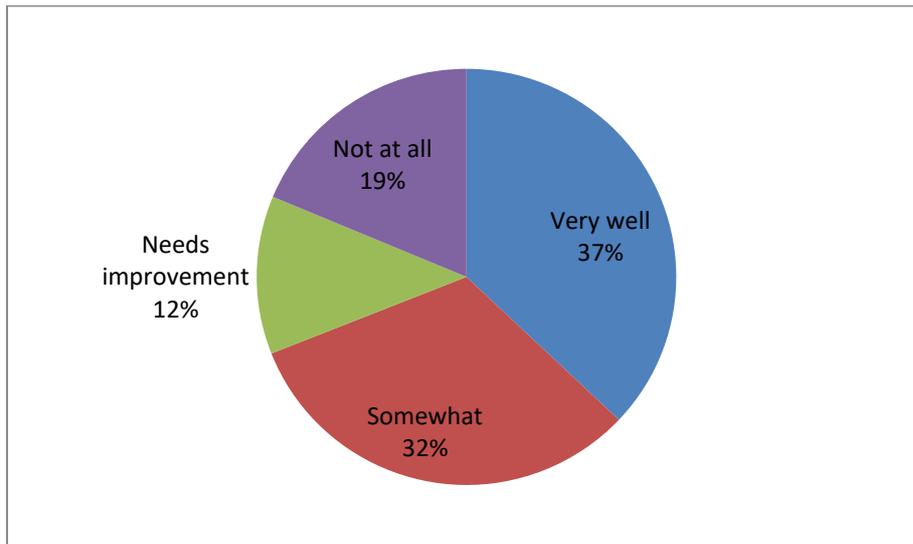
17) Do classroom discussions promote equal participation among all students?

Strongly Agree	179
Agree	183
Neutral	56
Disagree	111
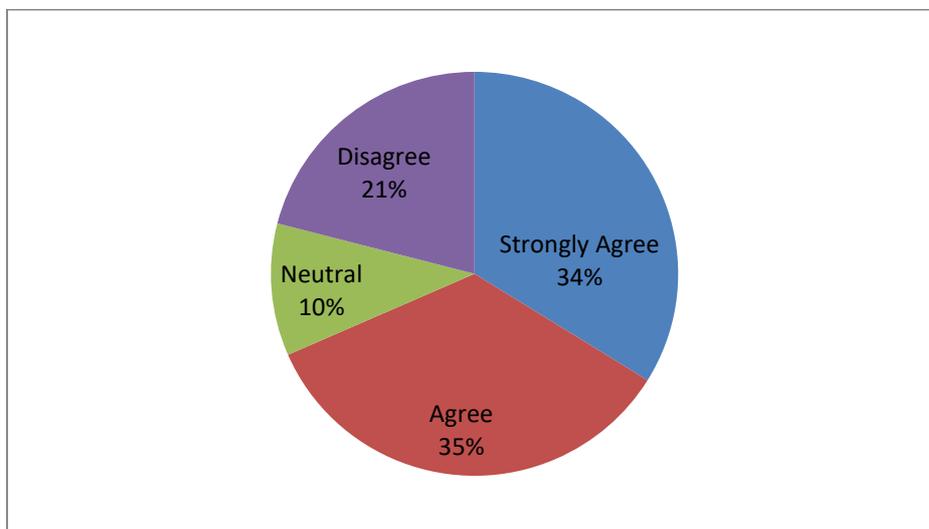
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

18) Would you support the introduction of a dedicated course on gender equality and sustainable development?

Yes	293
No	13
Maybe	223
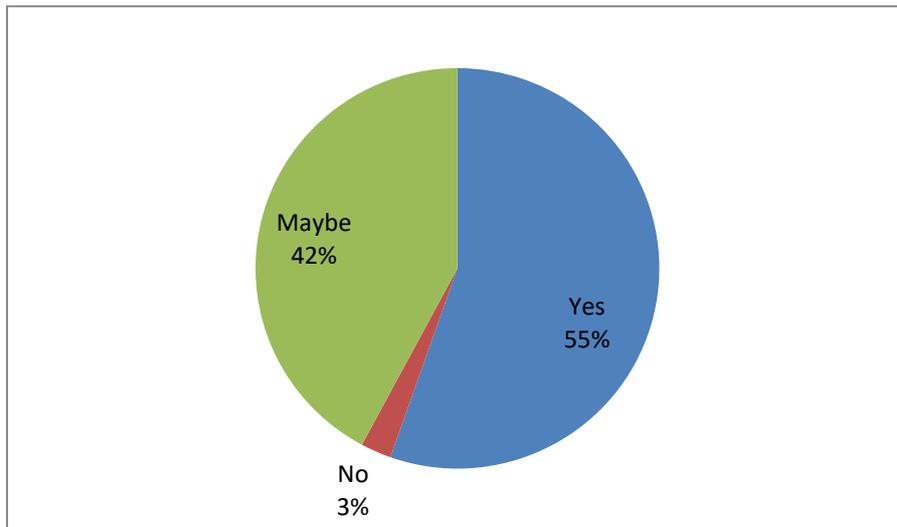
19) How effective are your college's policies in promoting sustainable practices on campus (e.g., waste management, energy conservation)?

Very effective	174
Moderately effective	182
Slightly effective	49
Not effective	124
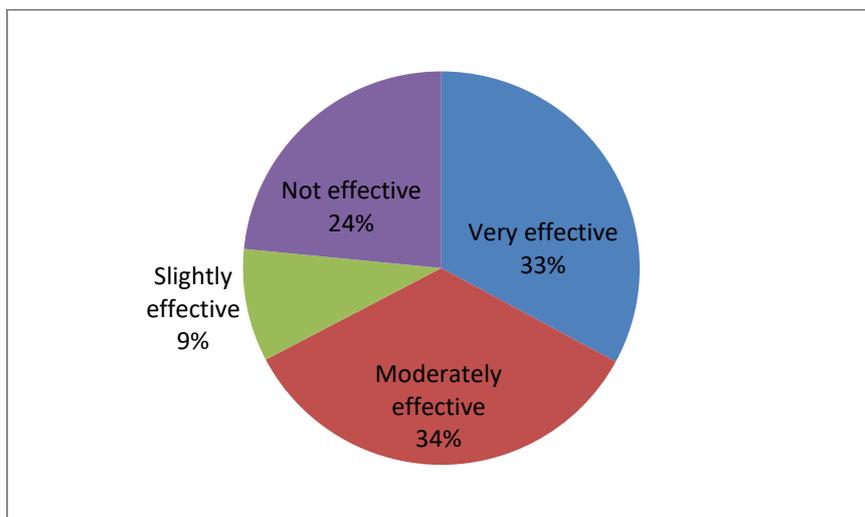
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

20) Are there programs that promote gender equity and social inclusion (e.g.,scholarships, counselling services)?

Yes, multiple programs	165
Yes, but limited	181
No	19
Not aware	164
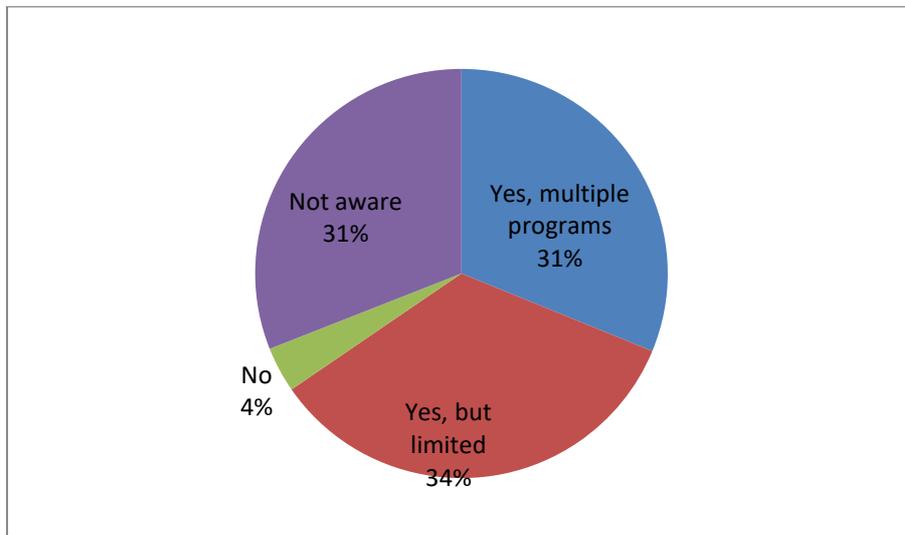
21) Does your college provide access to an alumni support system?

Yes	204
No	23
Not aware	302
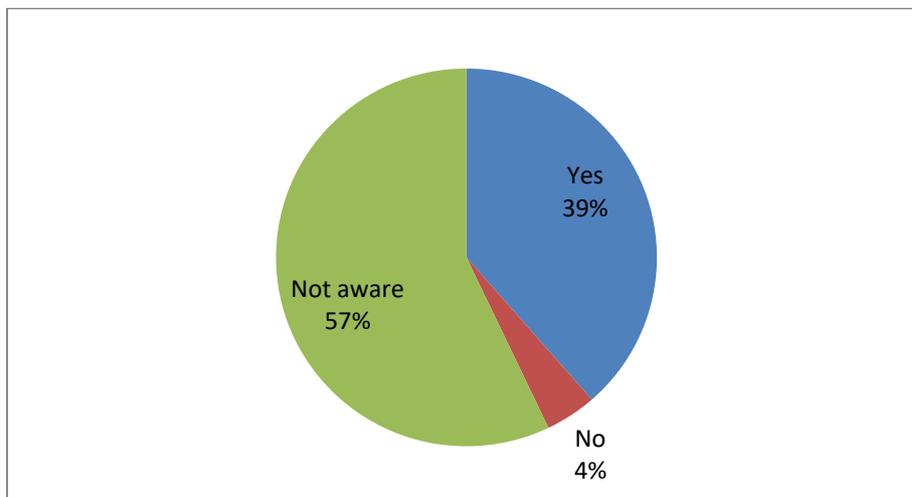
22) Which of the following community outreach areas do you think needs the most attention?

Education	68
Healthcare	18
Environment	27
Women Empowerment	42
Skill Development	115
Mental Health	82
Livelihood and Employment	177
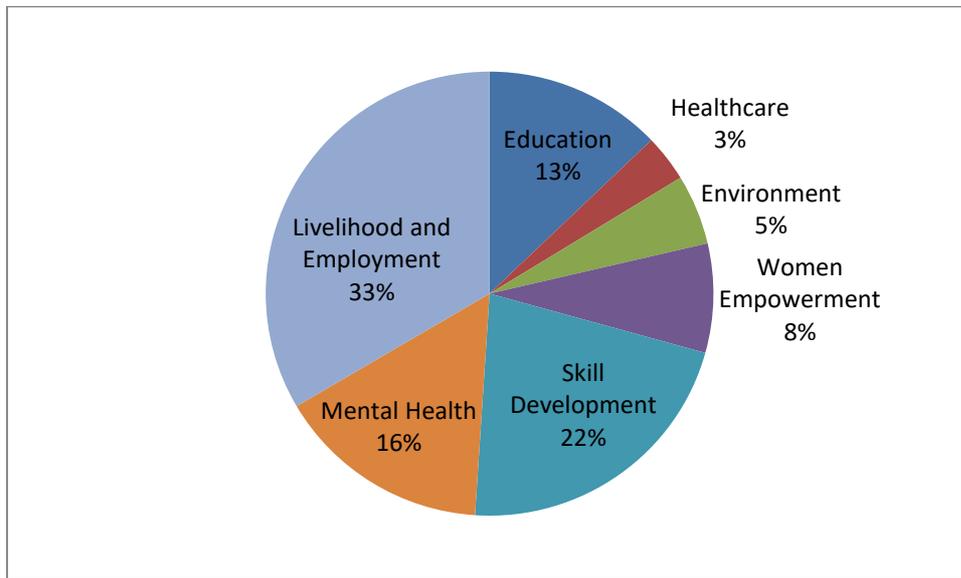
23) What is the primary challenge faced by your college in promoting sustainable development?

Limited funding	80
Lack of awareness	77
Limited student participation	155
Other institutional priorities	217

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru
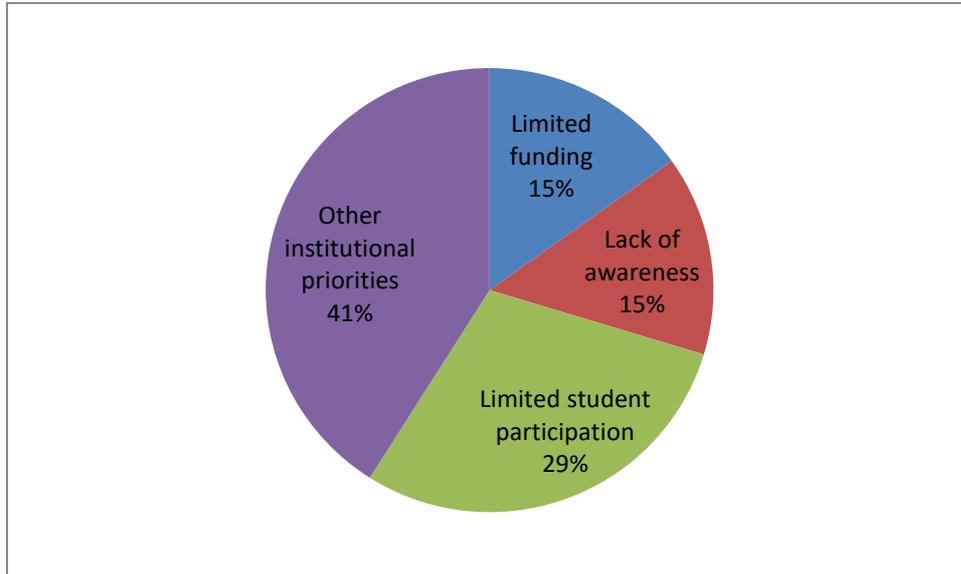
24) What is the biggest barrier to achieving gender equity within your institution?

Societal norms and expectations	107
Limited institutional resources	53
Cultural challenges	64
No major barriers	305
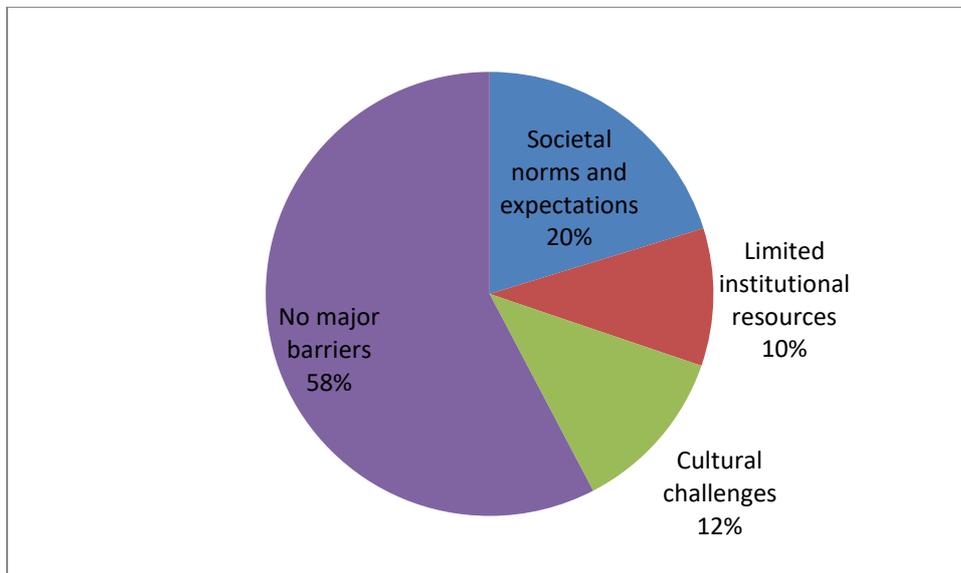
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

25) Does the college promote eco-friendly practices (e.g., waste segregation,recycling, tree plantation)?

Waste segregation	27
Plastic free campus	28
Recycling	50
Tree plantation drives/Green campus initiation	35
All of the above	257
Not Aware	132
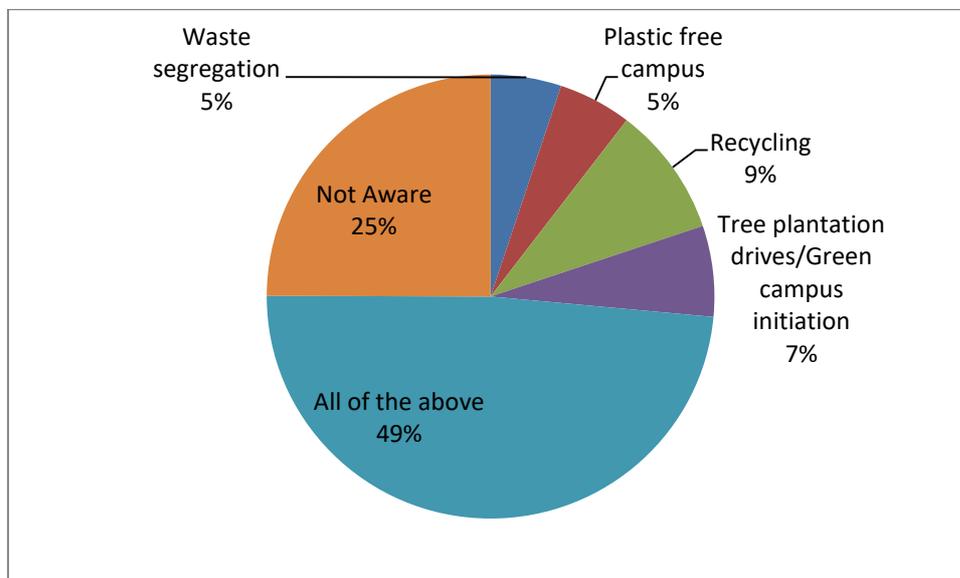
26) How often do you participate in environmentally focused activities (e.g., clean-up drives, awareness campaigns) organized by the college?

Very often	65
Occasionally	161
Rarely	142
Never	161

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru
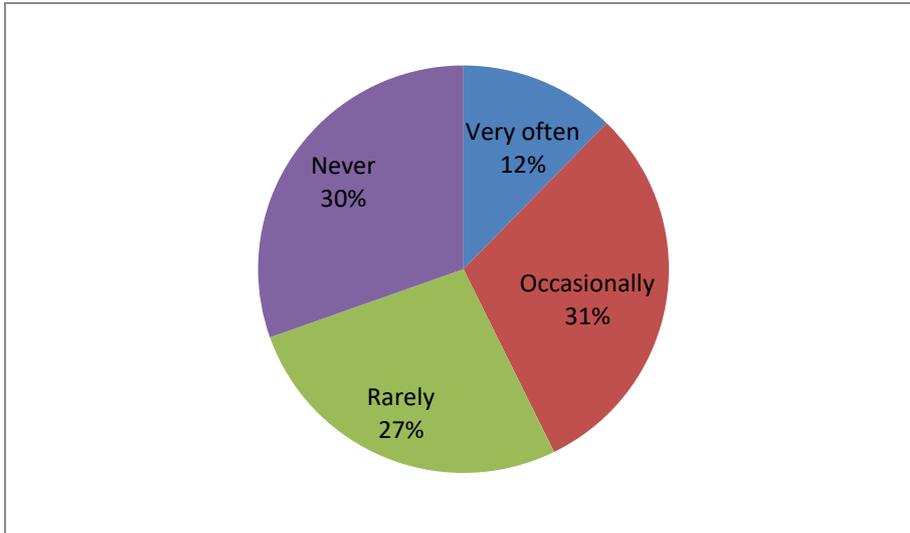
27) Do you incorporate eco-friendly practices in your daily life due to the influence of college initiatives?

Yes	294
No	235
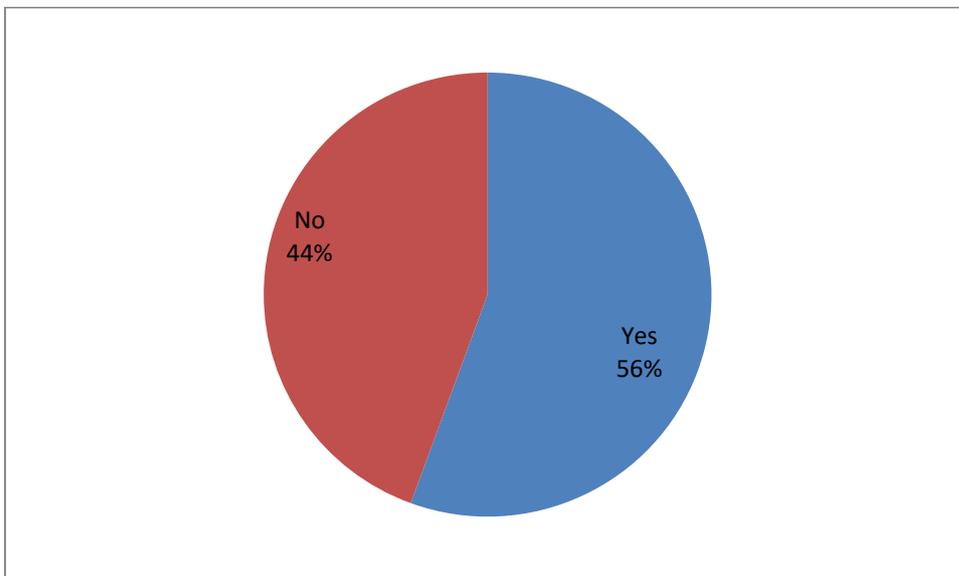
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

28) How do you rate the impact of community outreach programs on promoting gender equity and sustainable development?

Very impactful	113
Moderately impactful	171
Slightly impactful	107
Not impactful	138
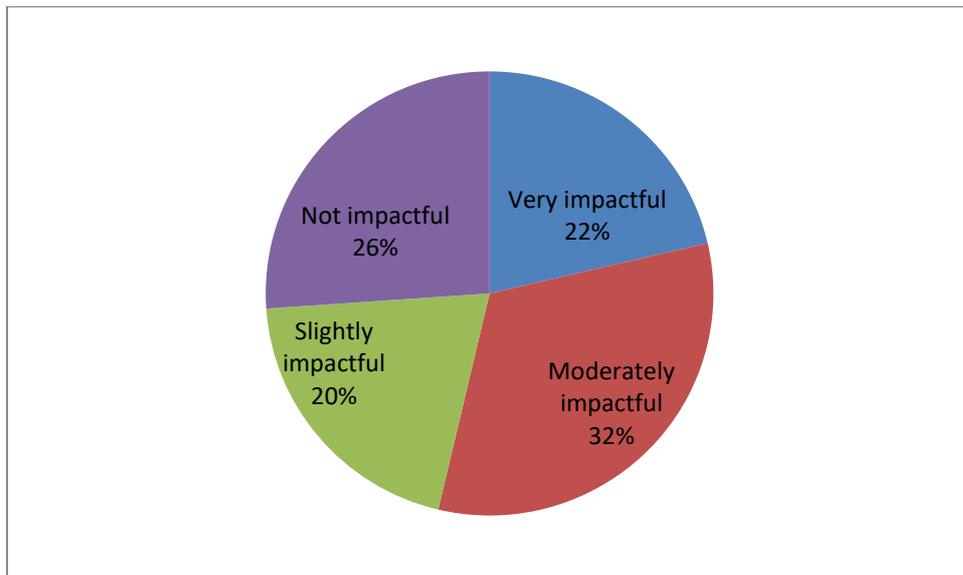
29) How would you rate the effectiveness of the college's sustainability initiatives?

Very effective	164
Neutral	231
Not effective	134
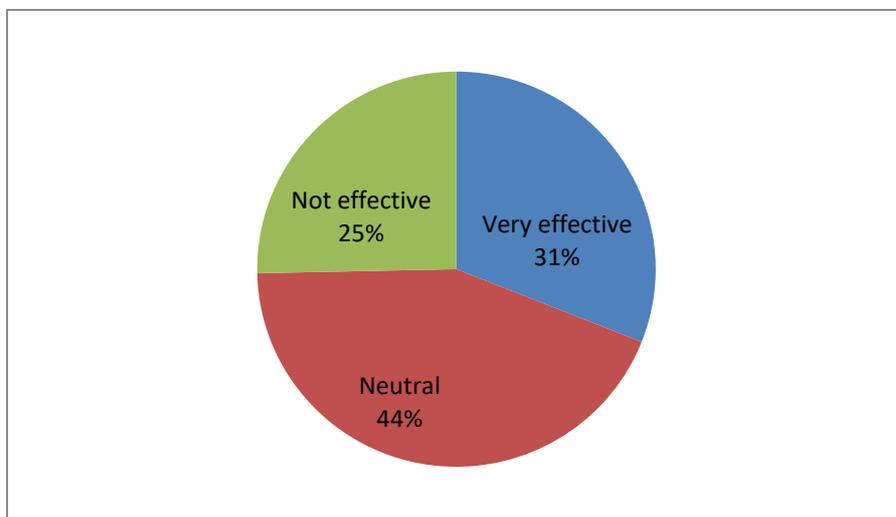
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

30) Are students educated about women's rights and gender equality through college programs?

Yes, comprehensively	294
Yes, but not comprehensively	114
No	121

31) Are there special initiatives for students from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds?

Yes	182
No	32
Not sure	315
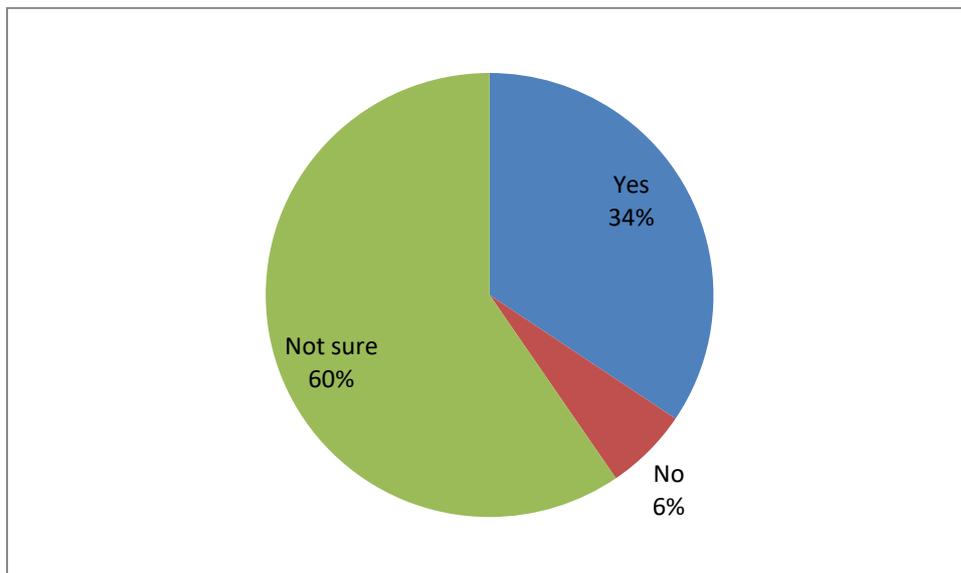
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

32) Are you aware of the women's cell "Jyoti Mahila Samiti" at Jyoti Nivas College?

Yes, I am a member	40
Yes, but I am not a member	220
No	269

33) Are you an active participant in the "Jyoti Eco-Green Club"?

Yes	48
No, but I am aware of it	198
No	283

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

34) How aware are you of courses with feminist perspectives (e.g., Feminist Literacy, Sociology of Gender)?

Very aware	94
Somewhat aware	185
Not aware	250

35) Have you ever taken electives such as Organic Manure Production or Mushroom Cultivation?

Yes	70
No	459
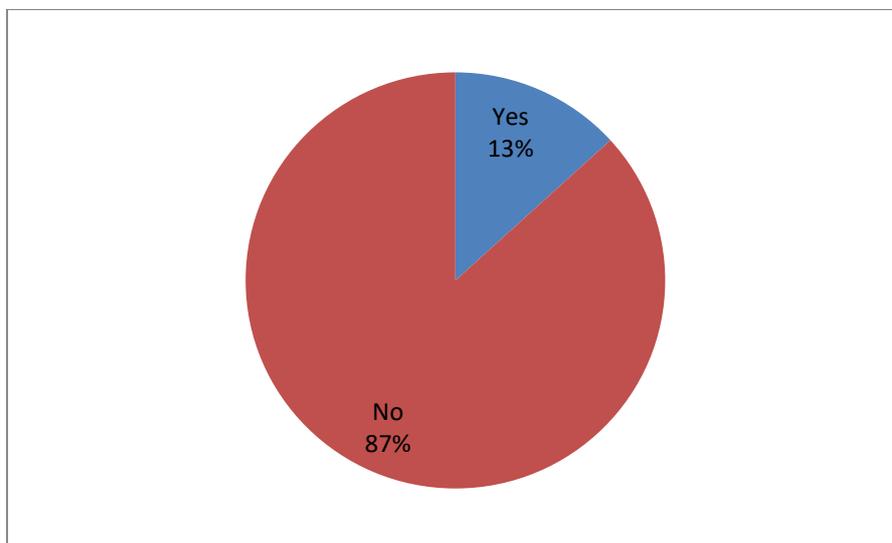
Jyoti Nivas College, Bengaluru

36) Have you attended seminars such as "Becoming Women" or "Go Green"?

Yes,multiple times	72
Yes,once	129
No	328
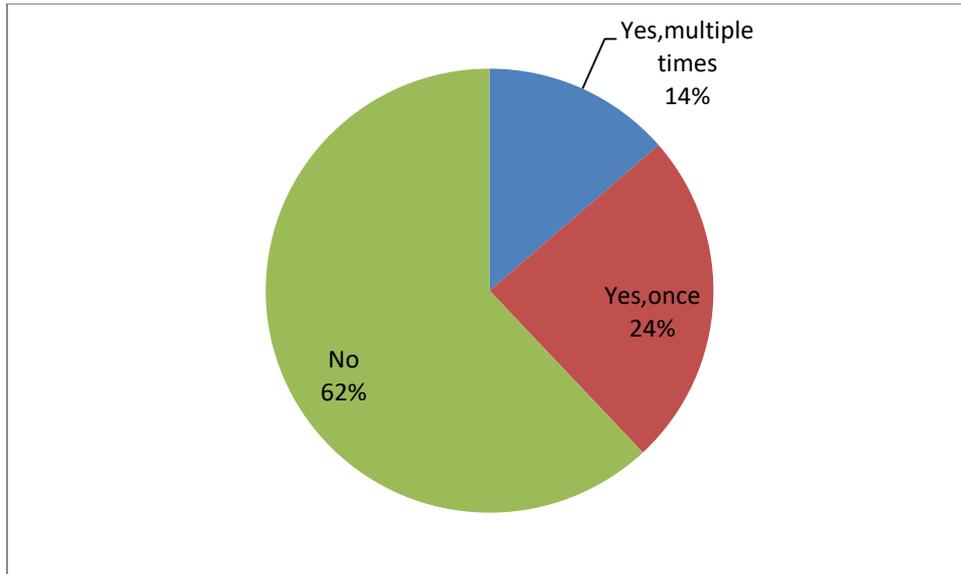
37) Are you aware of the plastic-free campus initiatives?

Yes	339
No	190
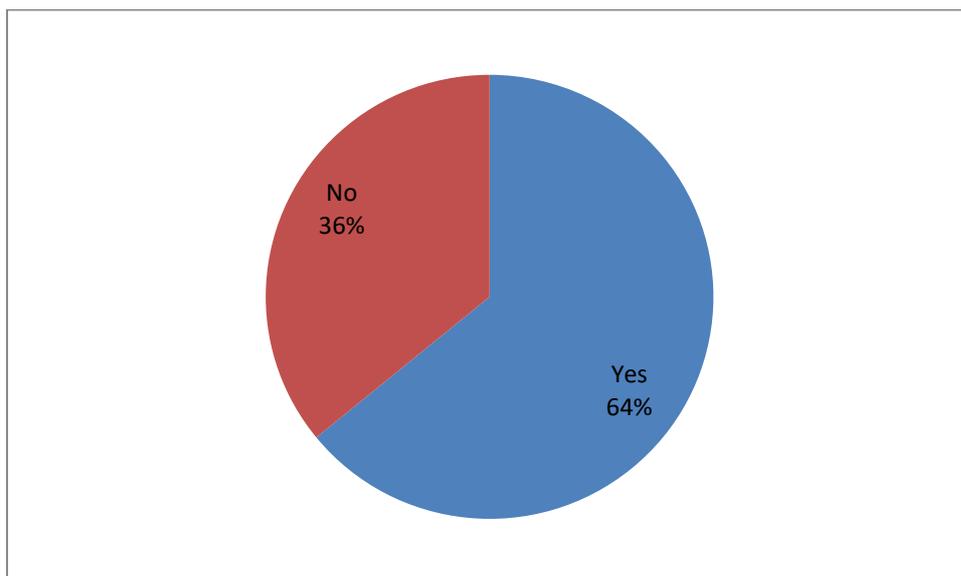
38) Have you participated in "Utsav" - a carnival promoting women entrepreneurs with eco-friendly products?

Yes	99
No	430

39) Which of the following initiatives have you seen / used or are aware of on campus?

paper recycling unit	176
wind turbines	25
Sanjivini Jyoti Ayur Vana park	29
All of the above	299
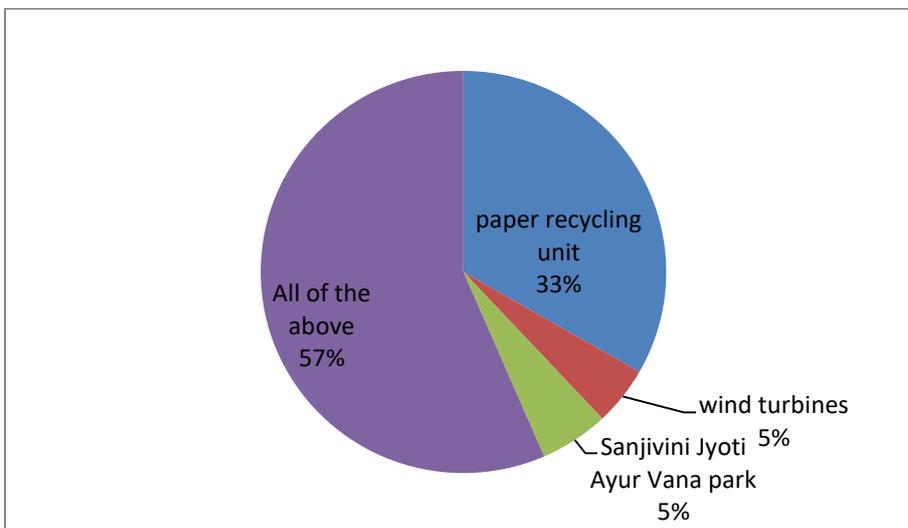
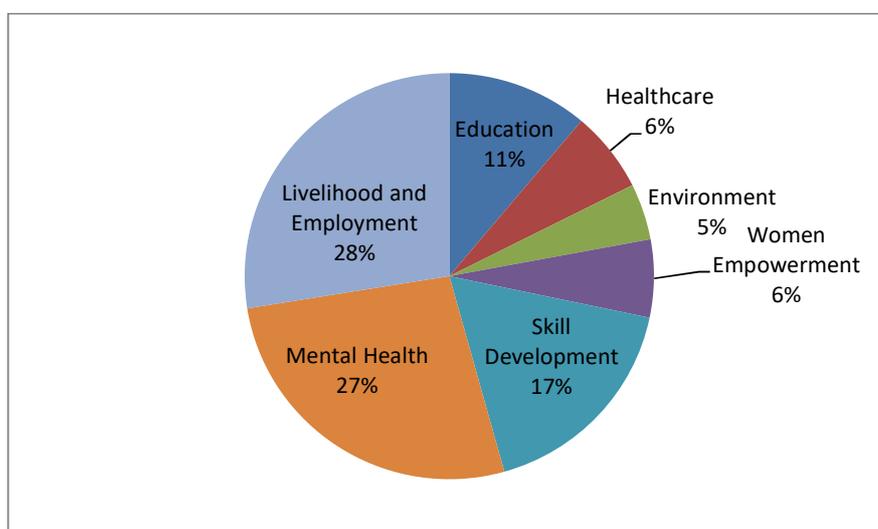# WOMEN'S COLLEGES IN INDIA AS CATALYSTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUITY
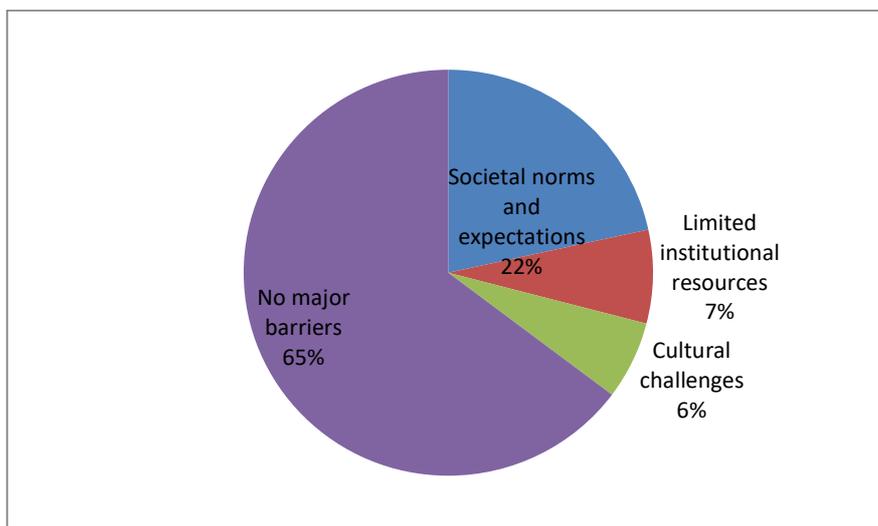
LORETO COLLEGE KOLKATA

Total Responses = 403

1) How would you rate the overall quality of education provided by your institution?

Excellent	227
Good	158
Average	14
Below Average	4
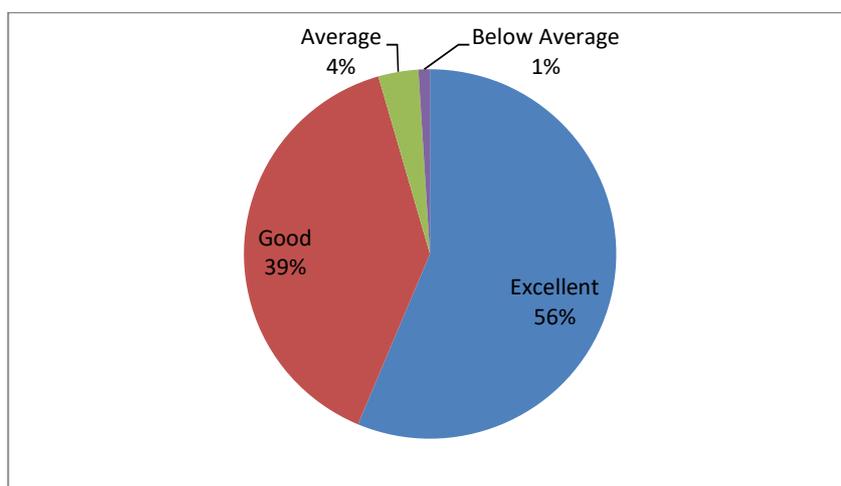
2) To what extent do you agree that your college promotes women's leadership?

Strongly Agree	278
Agree	102
Neutral	17
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	6
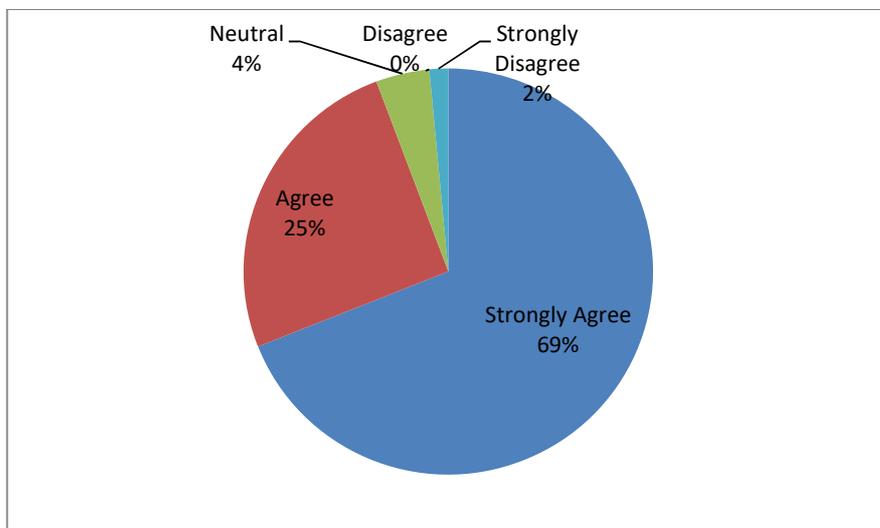
3) Does your college offer programs specifically aimed at developing women's leadership skills?

Yes, regularly	216
Yes, occasionally	163
Rarely	16
No	8

4) How accessible are gender-related resources (e.g., counselling, workshops) at the college?

Very accessible	251
Moderately accessible	128
Slightly accessible	15
Not accessible	9
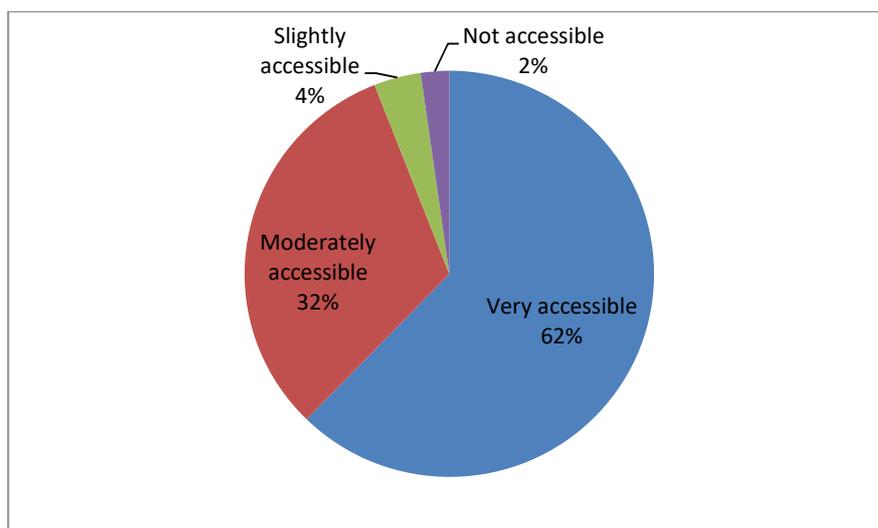
5) Are students encouraged to participate in community development activities?

Yes, actively	366
Yes, but limited	28
Rarely	1
No	8

6) Does the college collaborate with external organizations to promote gender equity?

Yes	297
No	4
Not Sure	102
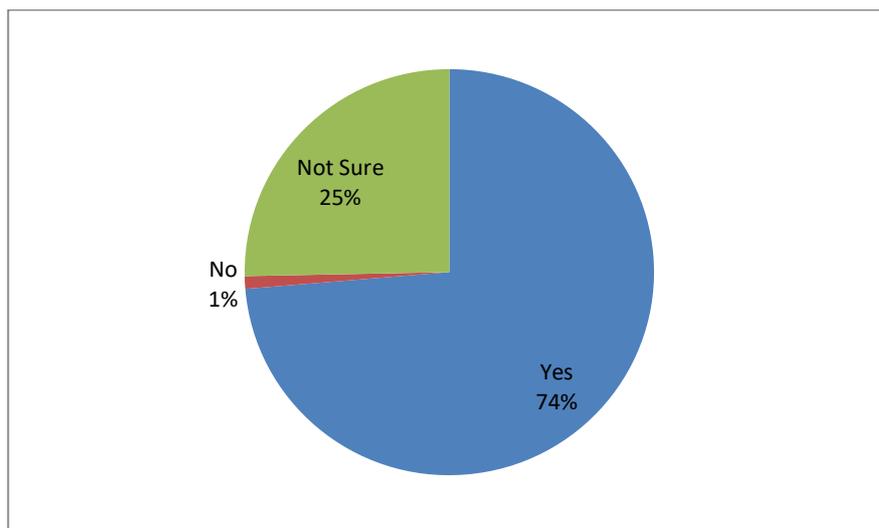
7) Have you participated in any leadership workshops or related programs organized by your college?

Yes, more than once	130
Yes, once	108
No	165

8) Does your college provide support for job placements, internships, or skill development?

Yes, extensively	161
Yes, to some extent	161
Limited support	65
No support	16
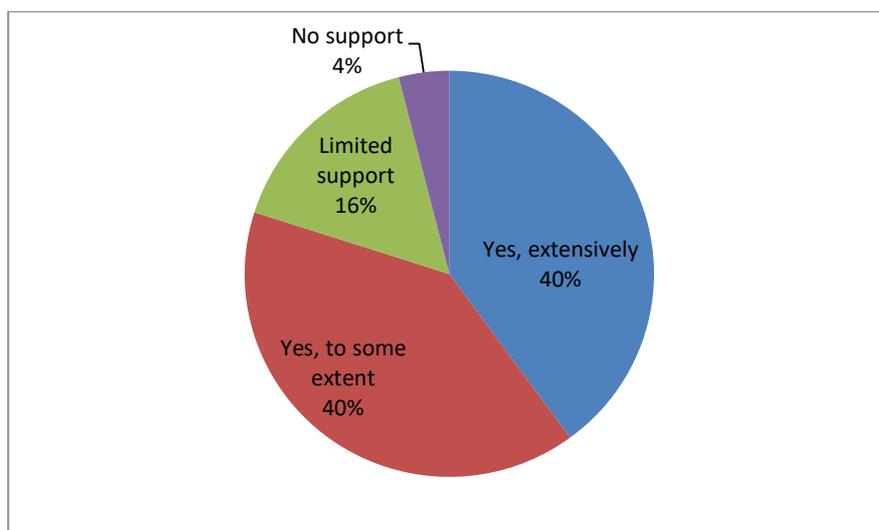
9) How likely are you to pursue further studies or a career related to your field of study?

Highly likely	239
Somewhat likely	106
Not sure	37
Unlikely	21

10) Do you feel that your college education has prepared you well for future employment?

Strongly Agree	117
Agree	164
Neutral	104
Disagree	18
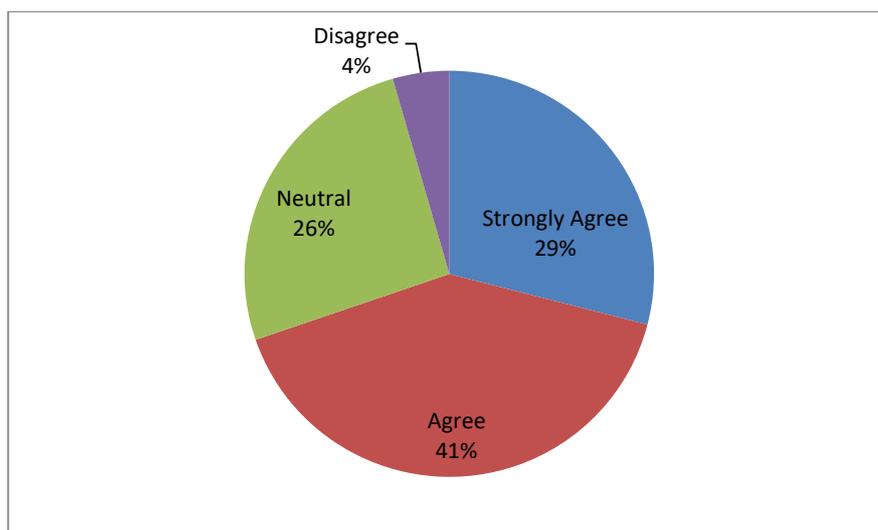
11) Does your college encourage women to enter non-traditional career paths(e.g., STEM fields, entrepreneurship)?

Yes, strongly	236
Yes, somewhat	109
No	9
Not aware	49

12) Are you familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations?

Yes, very familiar	280
Somewhat familiar	87
Not familiar	36
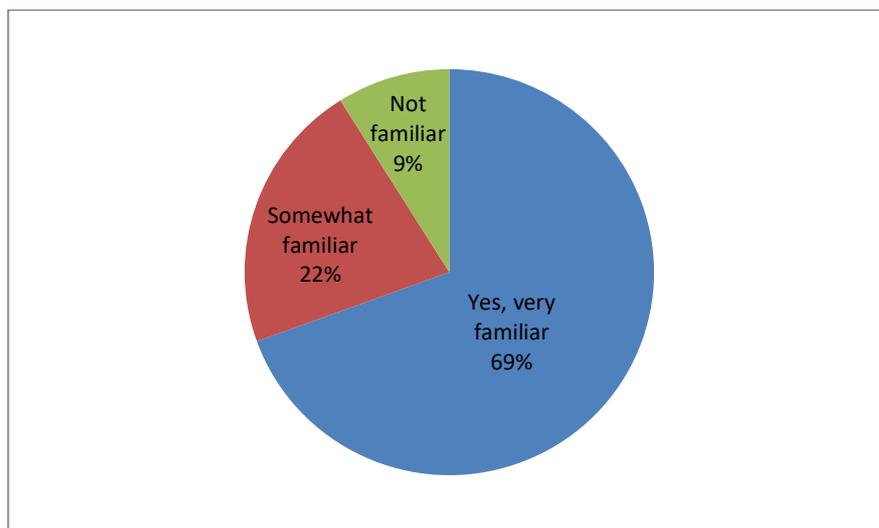
13) How frequently does your college organize sustainability-related events (e.g.,workshops, campaigns)?

Frequently	234
Occasionally	148
Rarely	8
Never	13
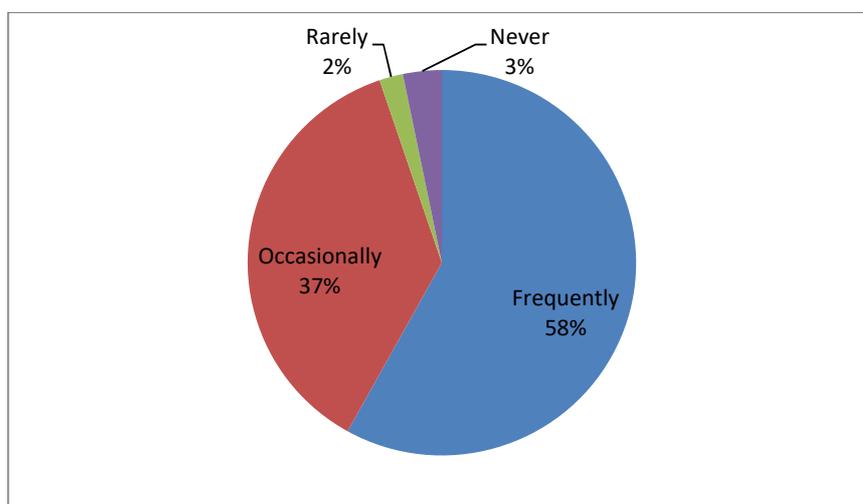
14) Do you participate in extracurricular clubs or societies focused on sustainability and social causes?

Yes, actively	148
Occasionally	164
Rarely	47
No	44
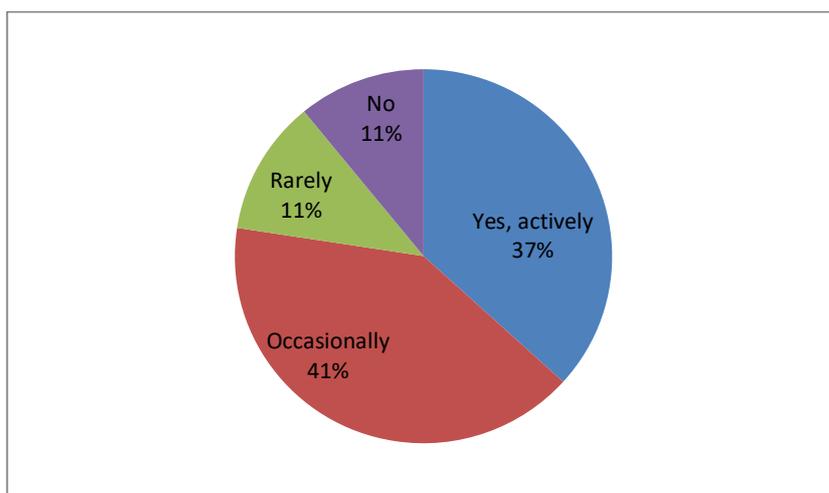
15) Do you think that participating in such activities has enhanced your awareness of sustainable development?

Strongly Agree	162
Agree	169
Neutral	47
Disagree	25
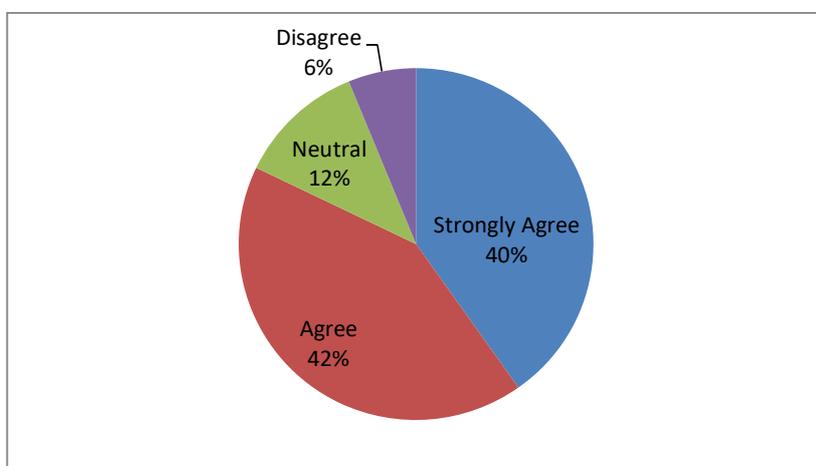
16) To what extent do you feel that topics related to the SDGs (e.g., poverty reduction, gender equality, climate action) are integrated into your curriculum?

Very well integrated	211
Somewhat integrated	160
Not integrated at all	32
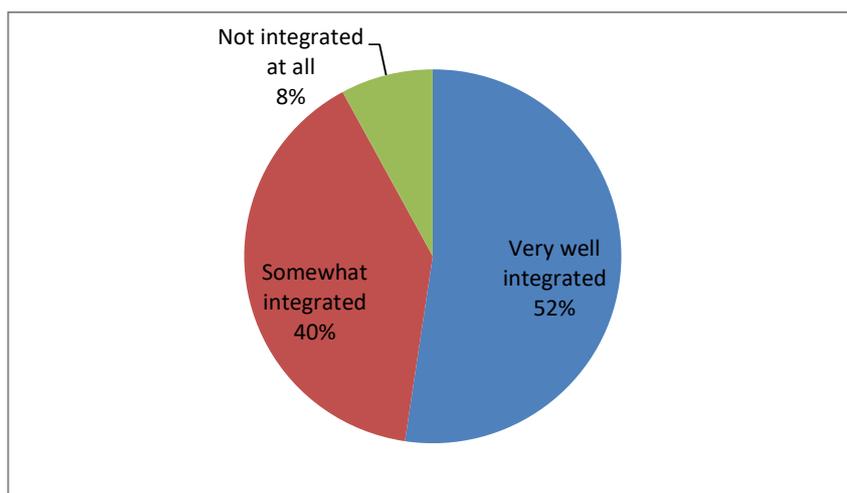
17) How well does the curriculum promote understanding of gender equality issues?

Very well	199
Somewhat	143
Needs improvement	33
Not at all	28
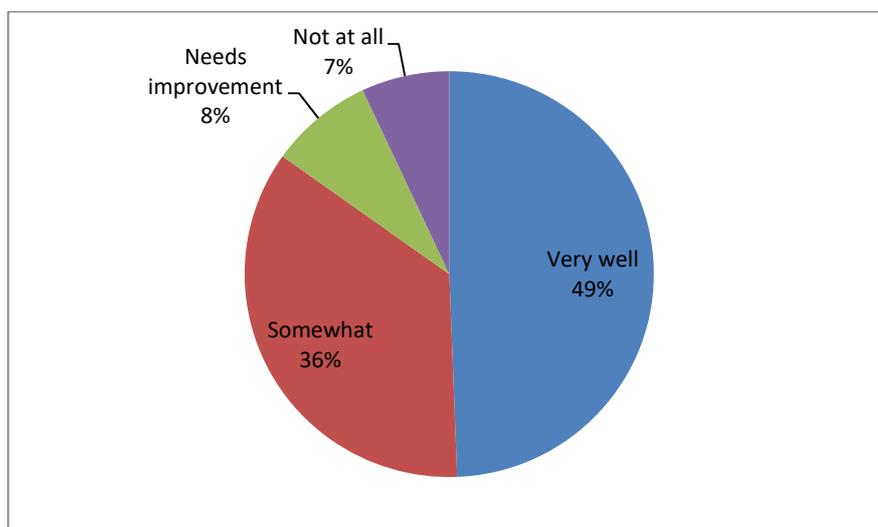
18) Do classroom discussions promote equal participation among all students?

Strongly Agree	229
Agree	113
Neutral	33
Disagree	28
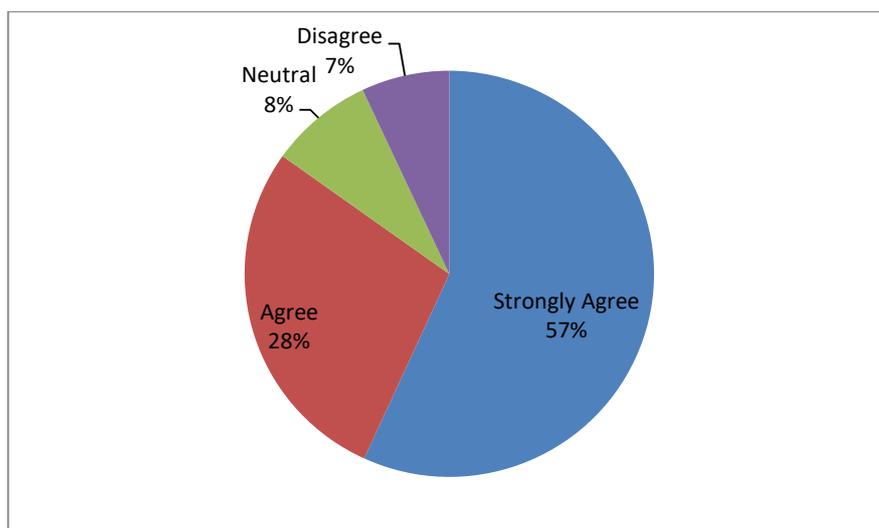
19) Would you support the introduction of a dedicated course on gender equality and sustainable development?

Yes	260
No	14
Maybe	129
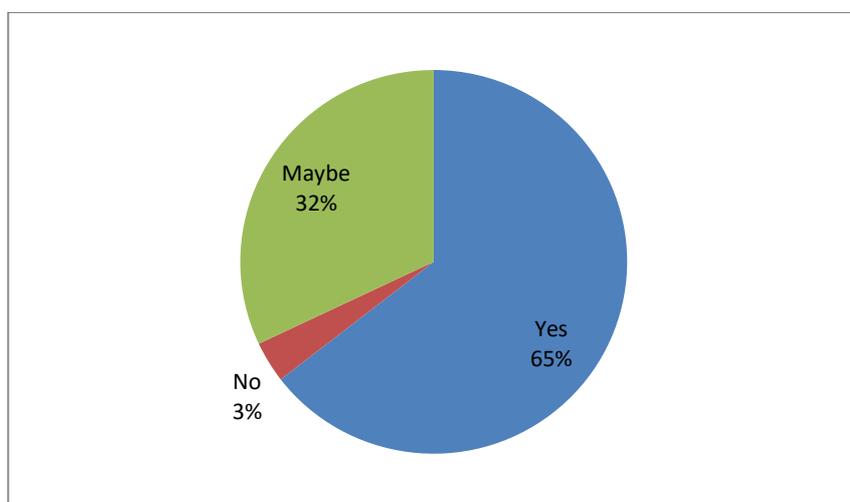
20) How effective are your college's policies in promoting sustainable practices on campus (e.g., waste management, energy conservation)?

Very effective	227
Moderately effective	132
Slightly effective	19
Not effective	25
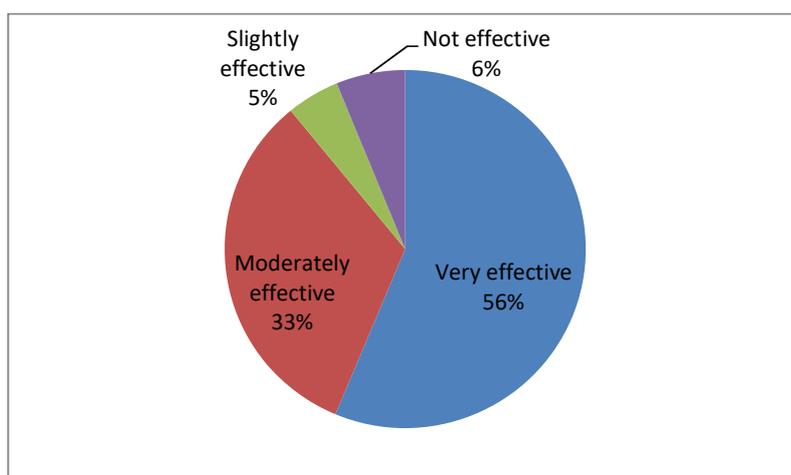
21) Are there programs that promote gender equity and social inclusion (e.g. scholarships, counselling services)?

Yes, multiple programs	214
Yes, but limited	117
No	7
Not aware	65
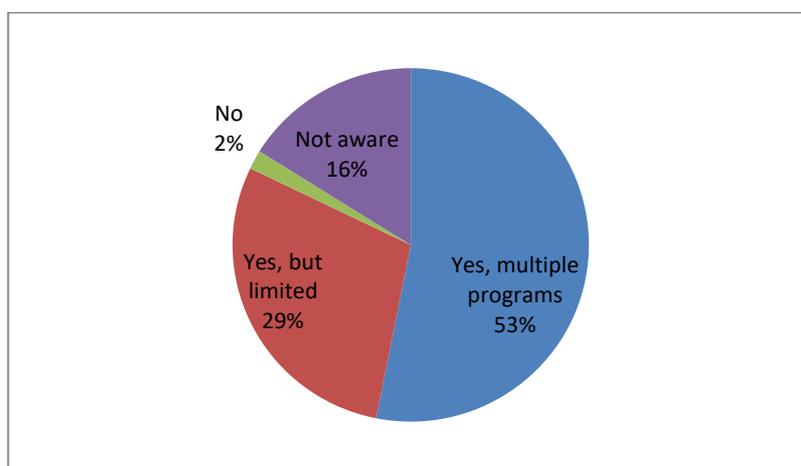
LORETO COLLEGE KOLKATA

22) Does your college collaborate with external organizations for sustainability or gender equity projects?

Yes, frequently	211
Occasionally	150
Rarely	16
Never	26
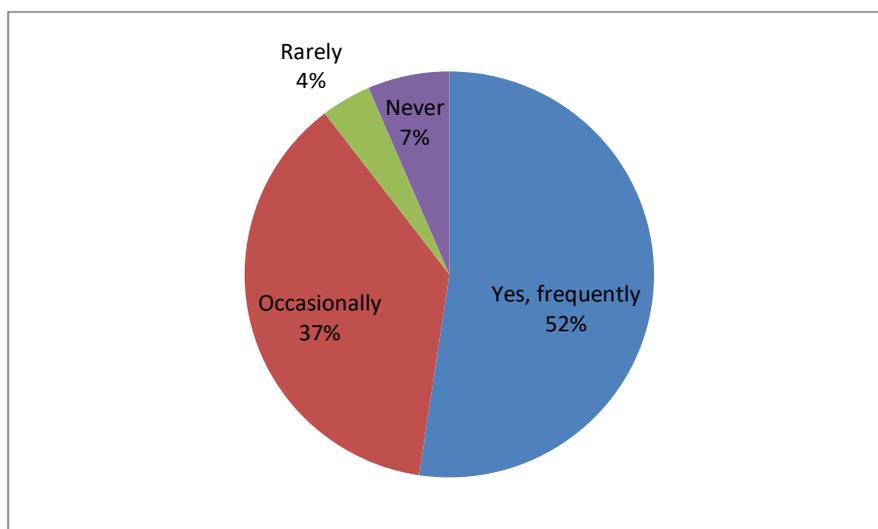
23) Does your college provide access to an alumni support system?

Yes	217
No	10
Not aware	176
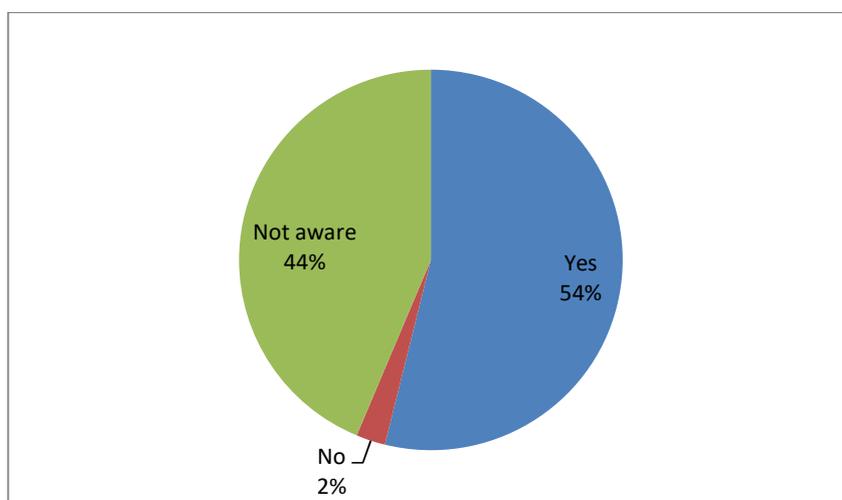
24) Which of the following community outreach areas do you think needs the most attention?

Education	45
Healthcare	26
Environment	18
Women Empowerment	25
Skill Development	70
Mental Health	108
Livelihood and Employment	111

25) What is the primary challenge faced by your college in promoting sustainable development?

Limited funding	94
Lack of awareness	45
Limited student participation	148
Other institutional priorities	116
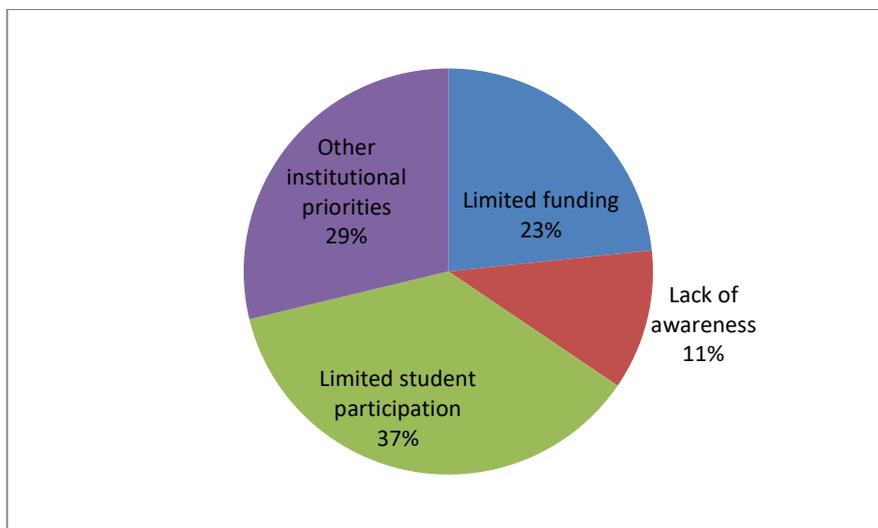
26) What is the biggest barrier to achieving gender equity within your institution?

Societal norms and expectations	87
Limited institutional resources	30
Cultural challenges	25
No major barriers	261

27) Are you aware of any gender sensitive policies (example: anti-harassment) or sustainability initiatives on campus?

Yes	303
No	100
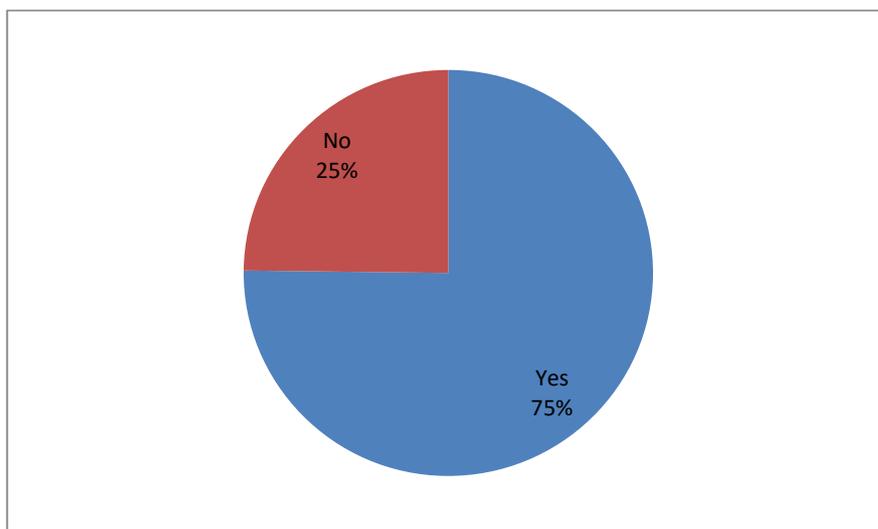
28) Does the college promote eco-friendly practices (e.g., waste segregation,recycling, tree plantation)?

Waste segregation	15
Plastic free campus	15
Recycling	5
Tree plantation drives/Green campus initiation	92
All of the above	241
Not Aware	35
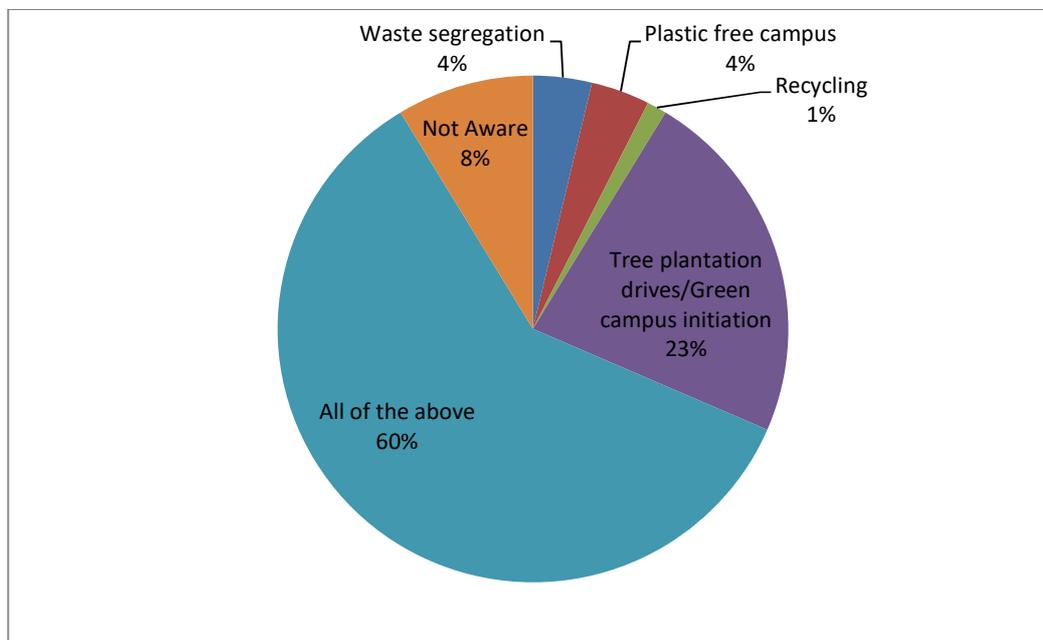
29) How often do you participate in environmentally focused activities (e.g., clean-up drives, awareness campaigns) organized by the college?

Very often	95
Occasionally	197
Rarely	63
Never	48
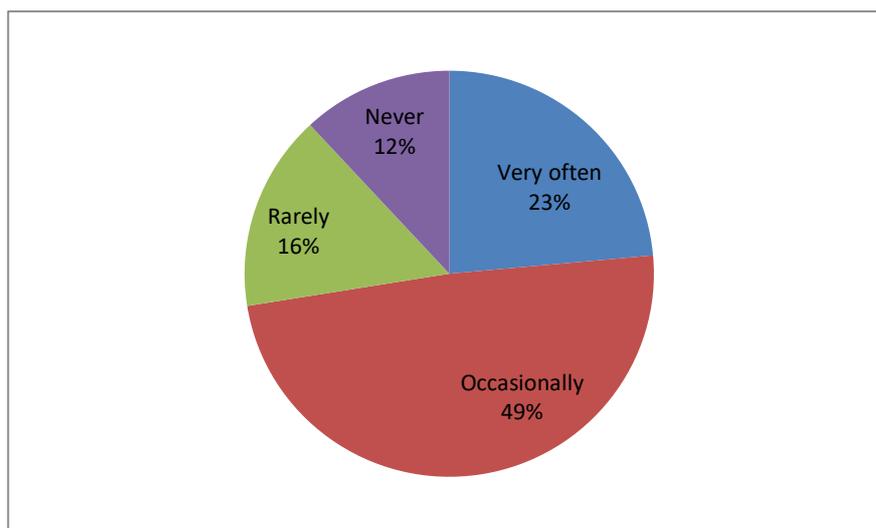
30) Are there any provisions for renewable energy use (e.g., solar panels) at the college?

Yes	217
No	7
Not aware	179
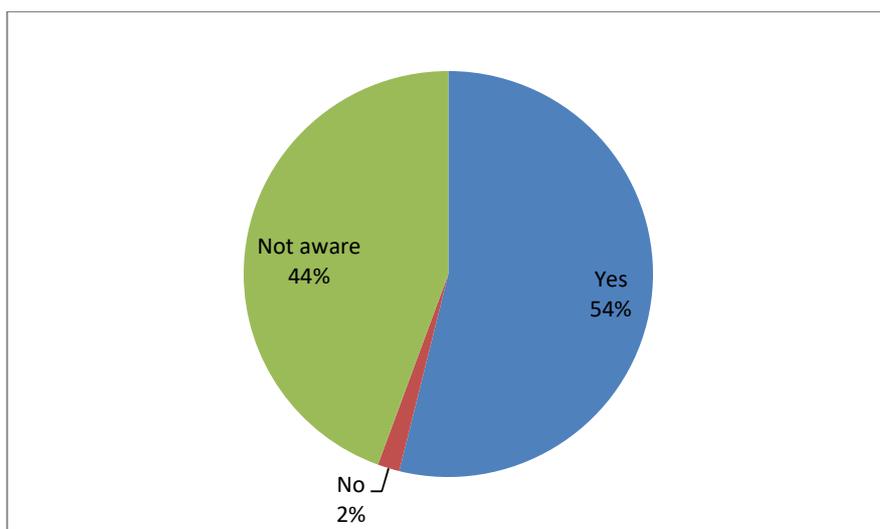
31) Do you incorporate eco-friendly practices in your daily life due to the influence of college initiatives?

Yes	334
No	69
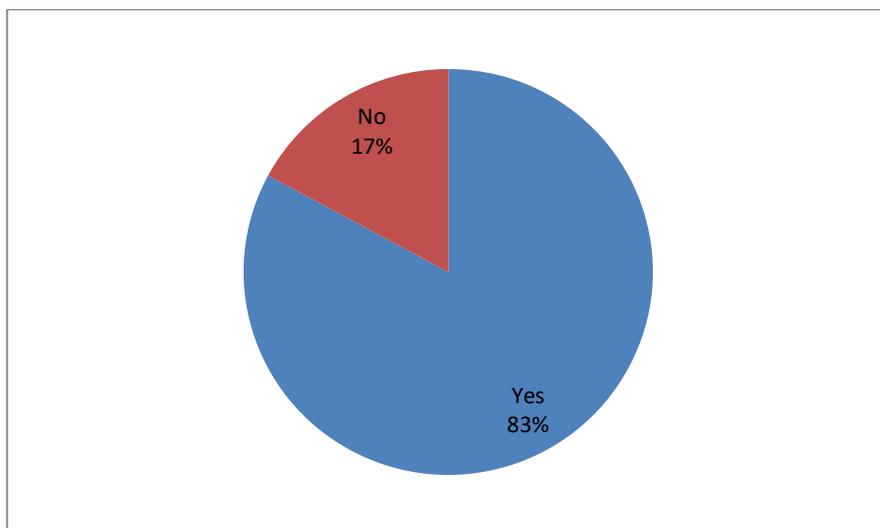
32) How do you rate the impact of community outreach programs on promoting gender equity and sustainable development?

Very impactful	177
Moderately impactful	171
Slightly impactful	33
Not impactful	22
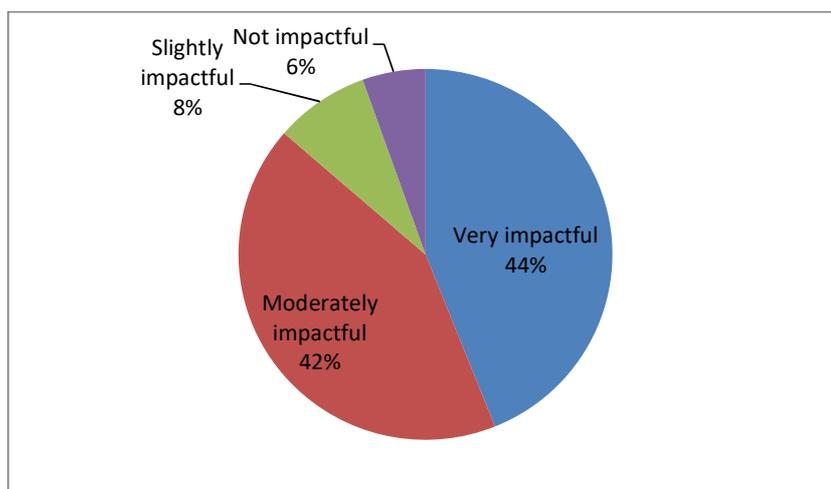
33) Does the college encourage students to engage in community service to address societal needs?

Yes, actively	337
Occasionally	40
Rarely	5
No	21
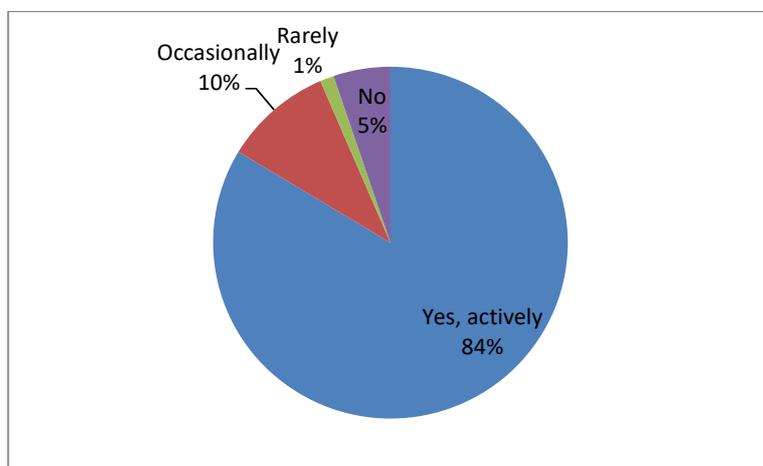
34) How would you rate the effectiveness of the college's sustainability initiatives?

Very effective	249
Neutral	134
Not effective	20
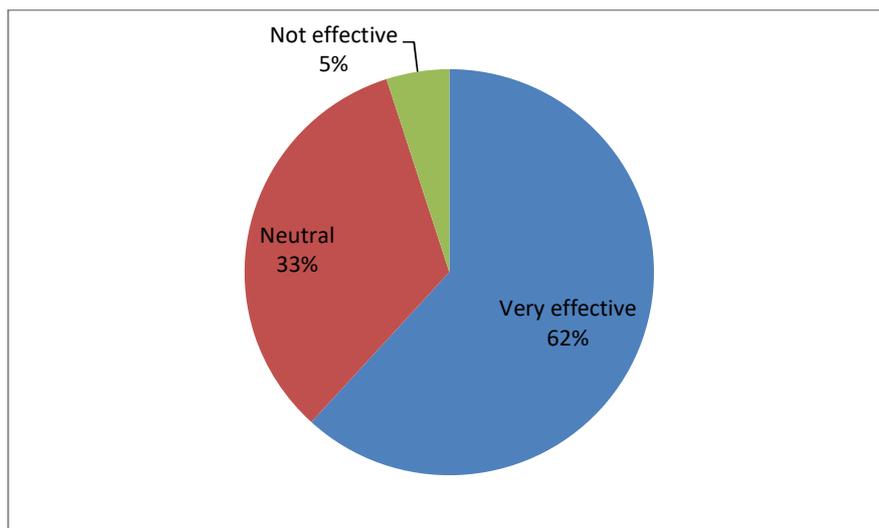
35) Are students educated about women's rights and gender equality through college programs?

Yes, comprehensively	319
Yes, but not comprehensively	64
No	20
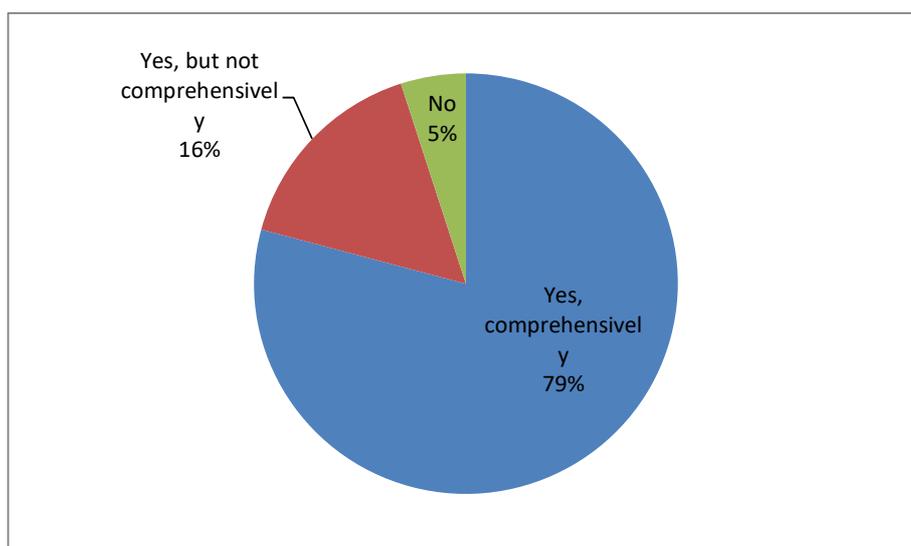
36) Are there special initiatives for students from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds?

Yes	262
No	22
Not sure	119
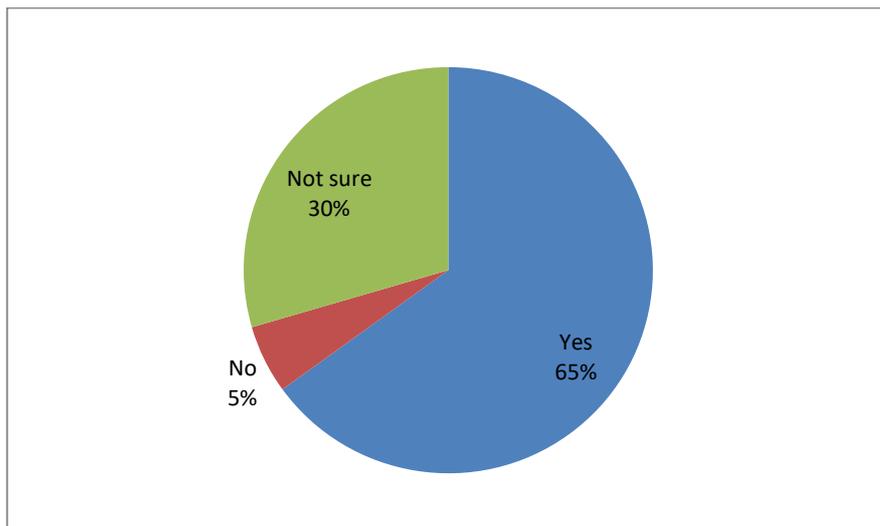
37) Are you aware of the Women's Cell at Loreto College and its activities?

Yes, very aware	219
Somewhat aware	140
Not aware at all	44
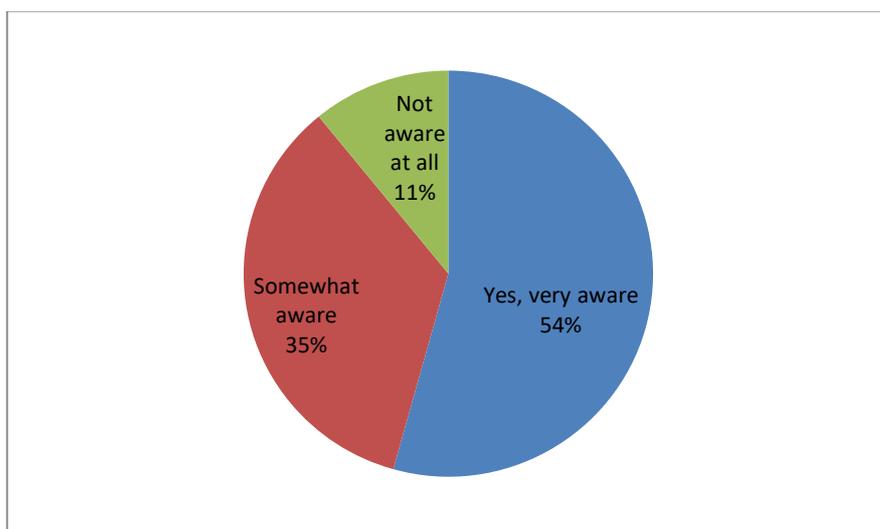
38) Are there specific initiatives to support women entrepreneurs at the college?
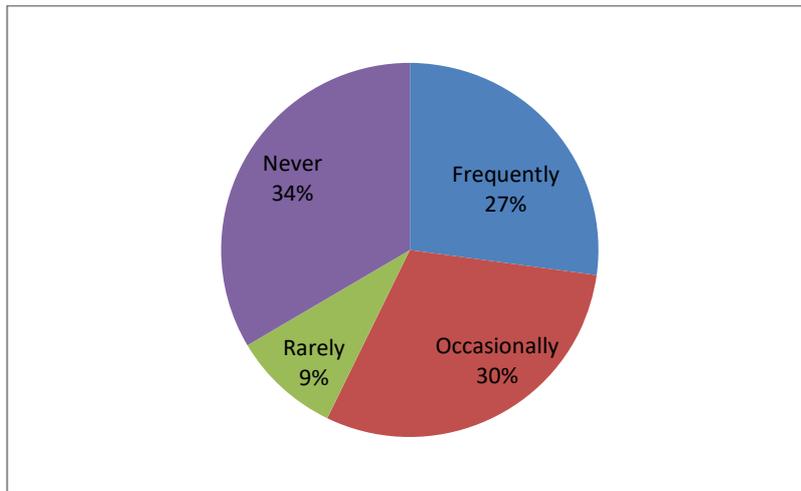
Yes	288
No	11
Not aware	104
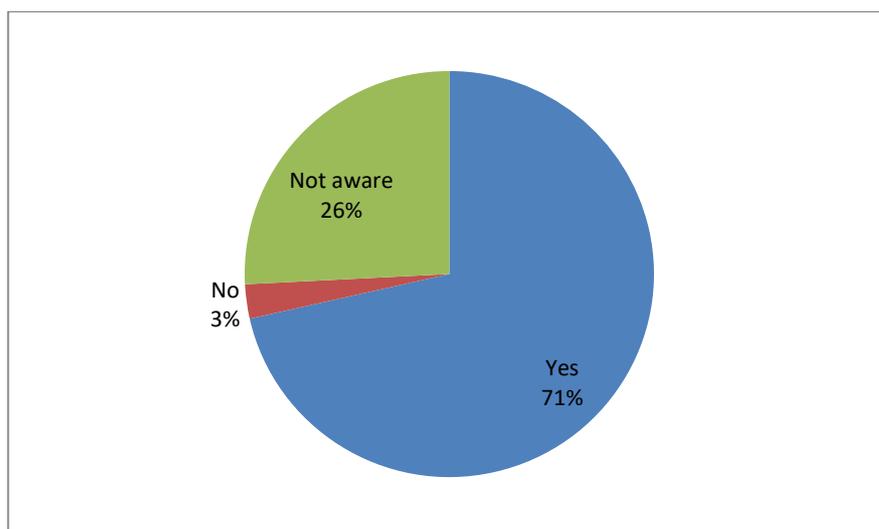
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity
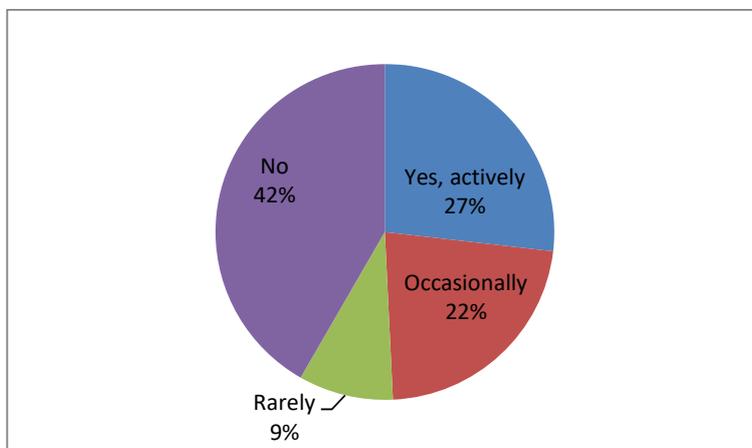
Nirmala College, Ranchi

Total Responses = 1259

1) How would you rate the overall quality of education provided by your institution?

Excellent	381
Good	437
Average	91
Below Average	350
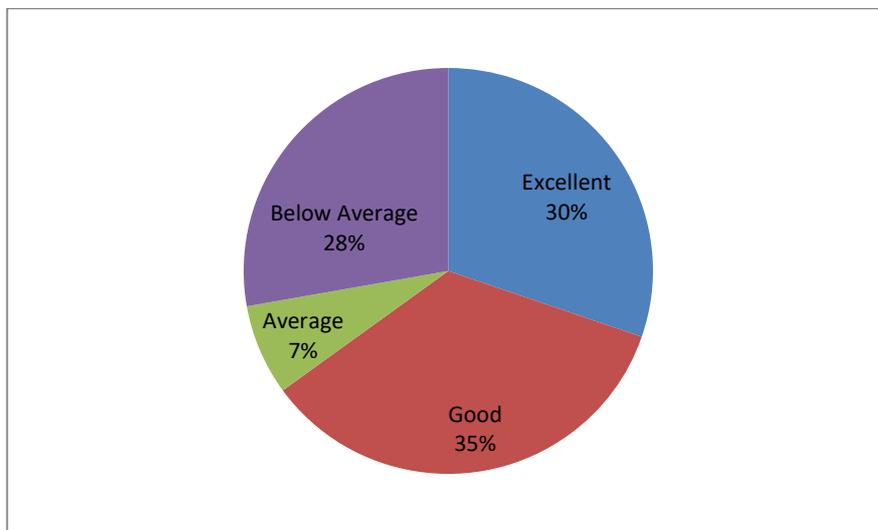
2) To what extent do you agree that your college promotes women's leadership?

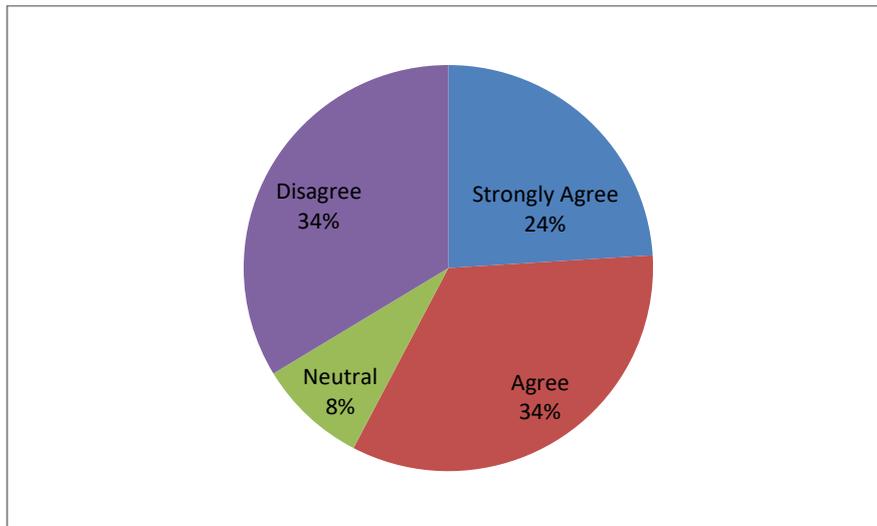| Strongly Agree	381
Agree	411
Neutral	99
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	361

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi
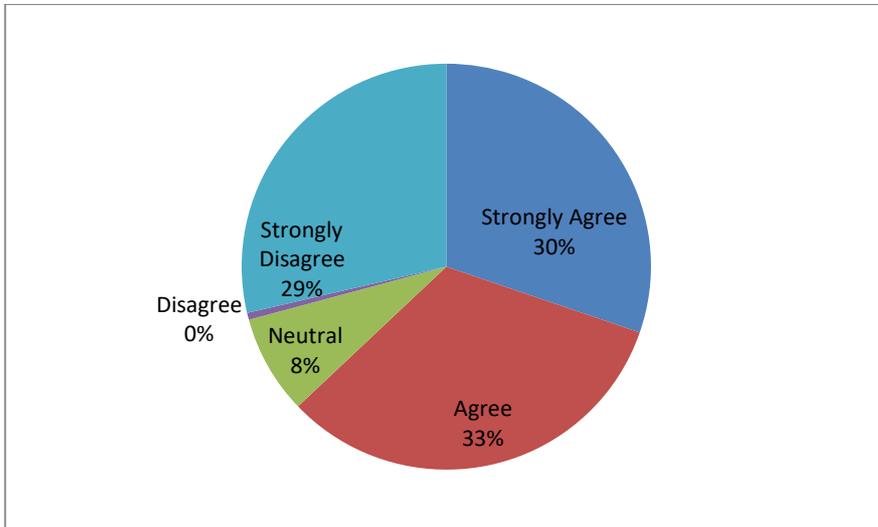
3) How accessible are gender-related resources (e.g., counselling, workshops) at the college?

Very accessible	337
Moderately accessible	421
Slightly accessible	99
Not accessible	402
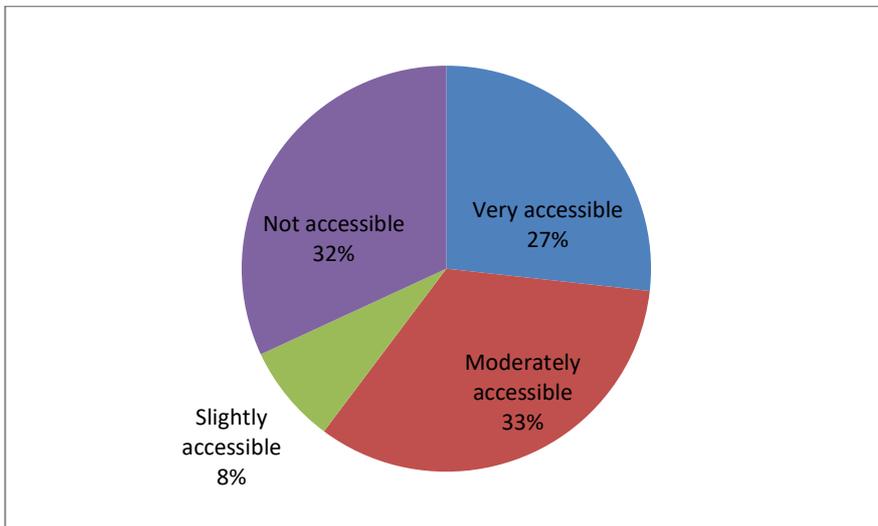
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi

**4) Are students encouraged to participate in community development activities?**

Yes, actively	656
Yes, but limited	202
Rarely	37
No	364
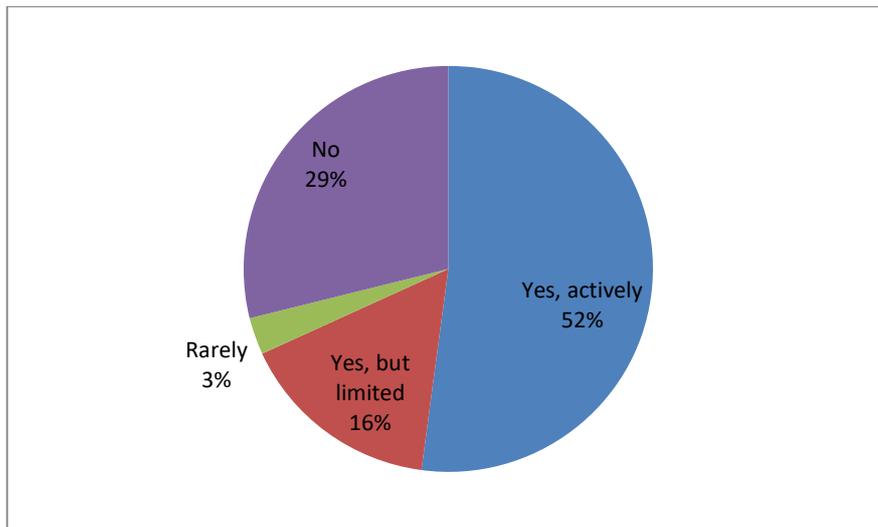
5) Does the college collaborate with external organizations to promote gender equity?

Yes	672
No	43
Not Sure	544
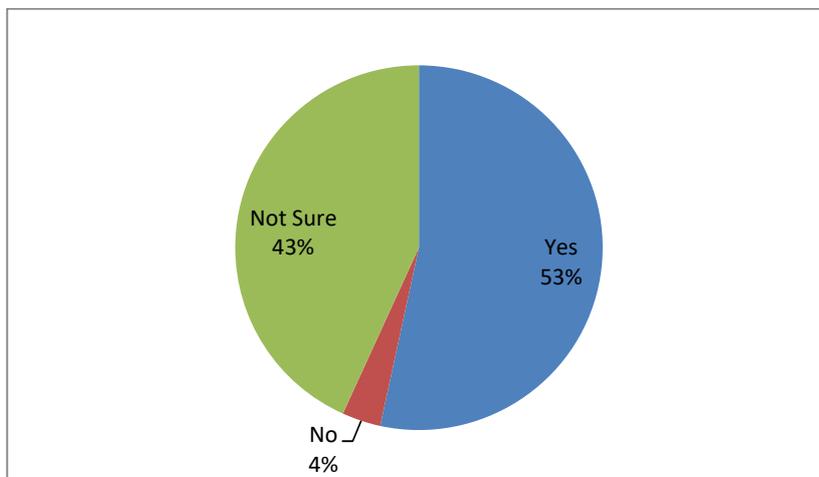
6) Have you participated in any leadership workshops or related programs organized by your college?

Yes, more than once	374
Yes, once	287
No	598
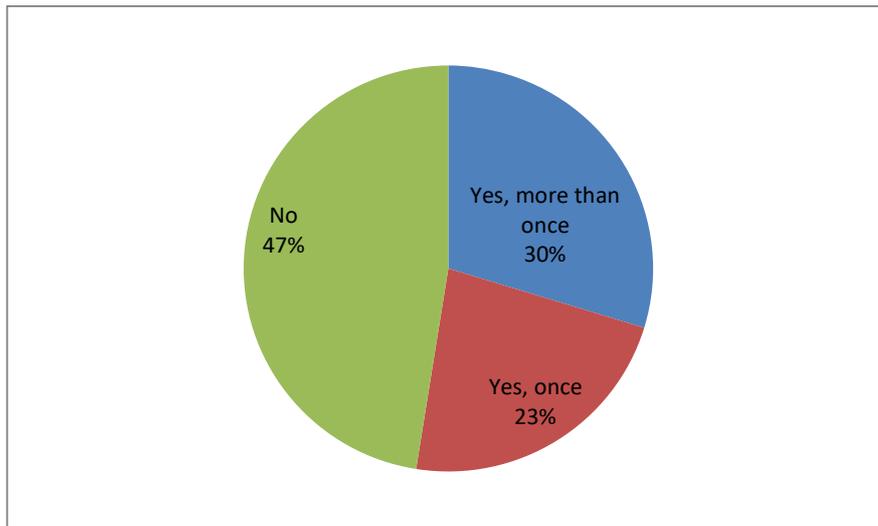
7) Does your college provide support for job placements, internships, or skill development?

Yes, extensively	318
Yes, to some extent	424
Limited support	118
No support	399
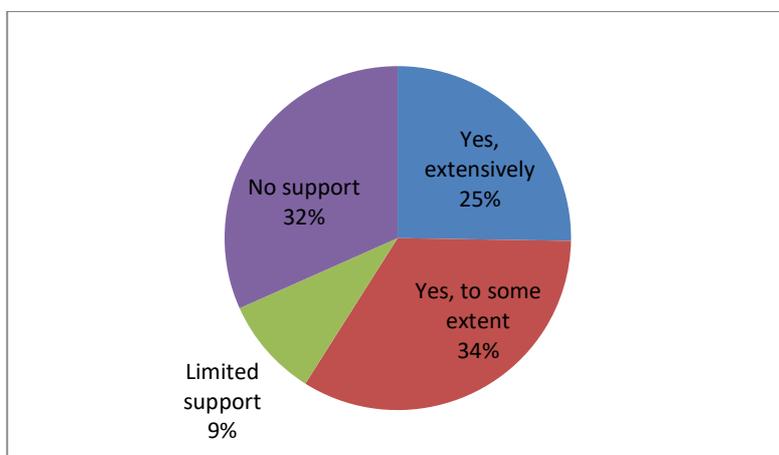
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi

**8) How likely are you to pursue further studies or a career related to your field of study?**

Highly likely	464
Somewhat likely	326
Not sure	81
Unlikely	388
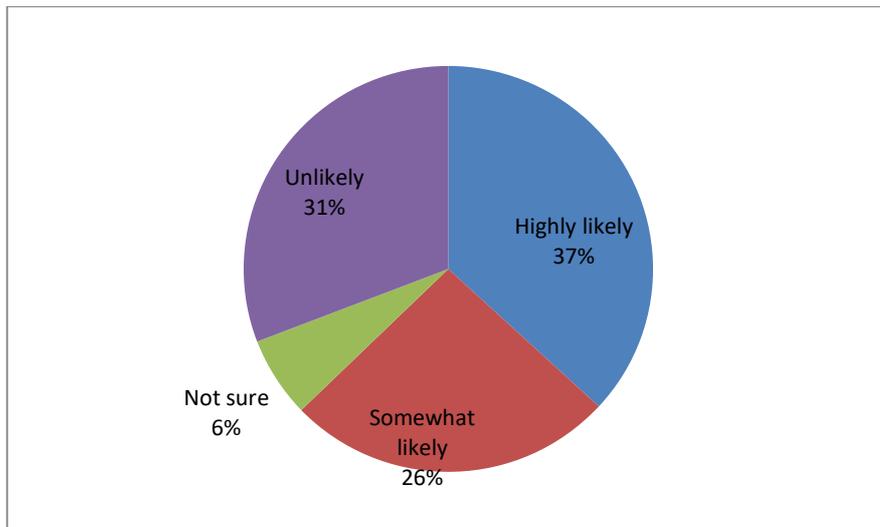
9) Do you feel that your college education has prepared you well for future employment?

Strongly Agree	265
Agree	442
Neutral	137
Disagree	415
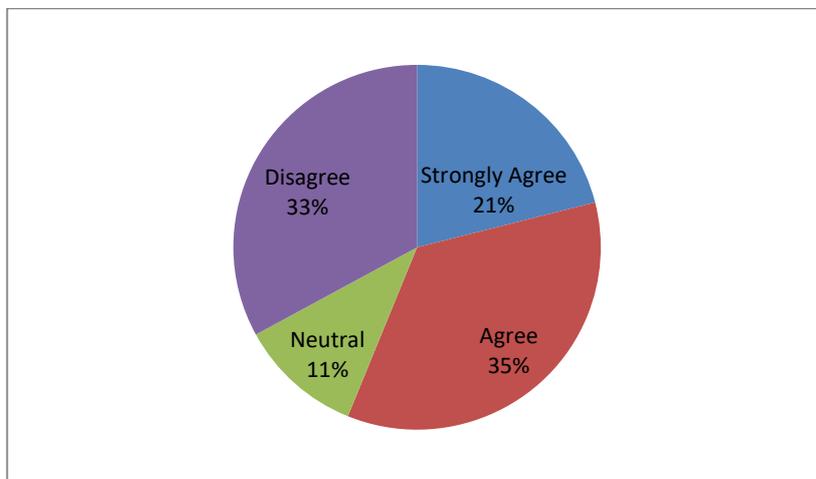
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity
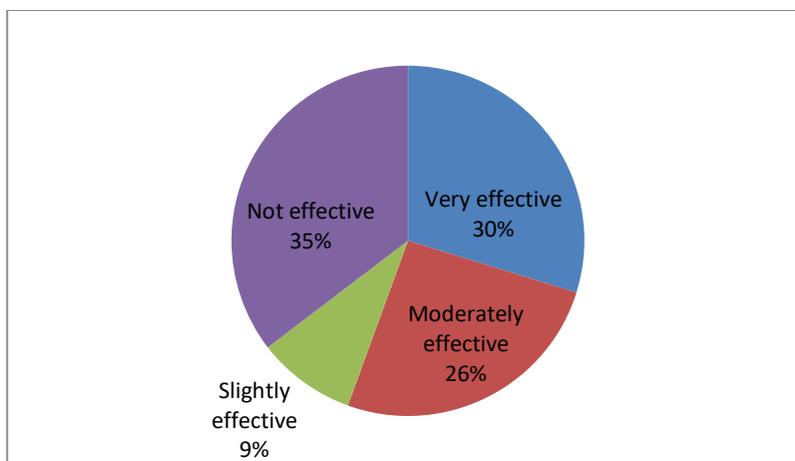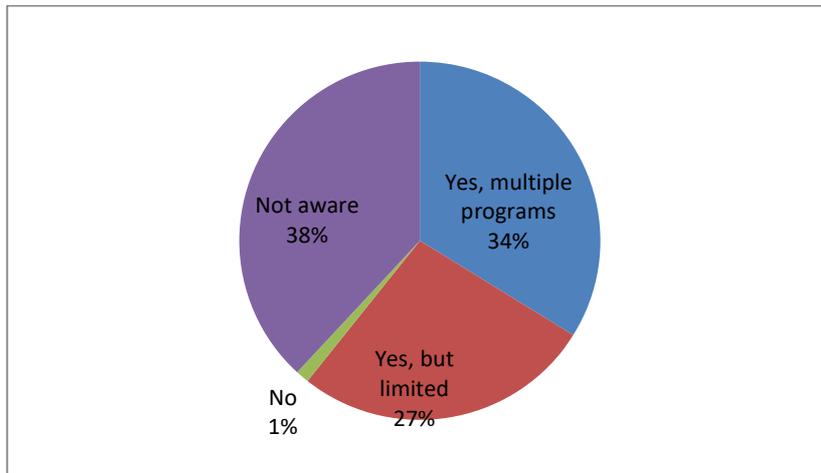
Nirmala College, Ranchi

10) Does your college encourage women to enter non-traditional career paths(e.g., STEM fields, entrepreneurship)?

Yes, strongly	354
Yes, somewhat	358
No	41
Not aware	506
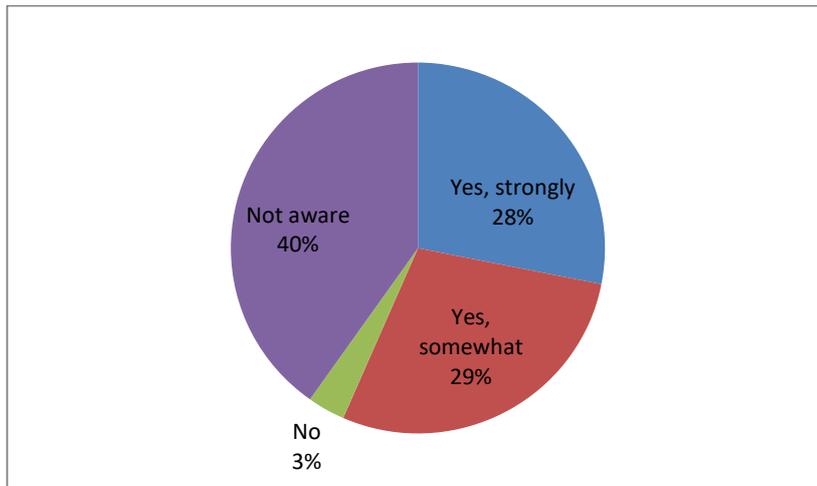
11) Are you familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations?

Yes, very familiar	408
Somewhat familiar	355
Not familiar	496
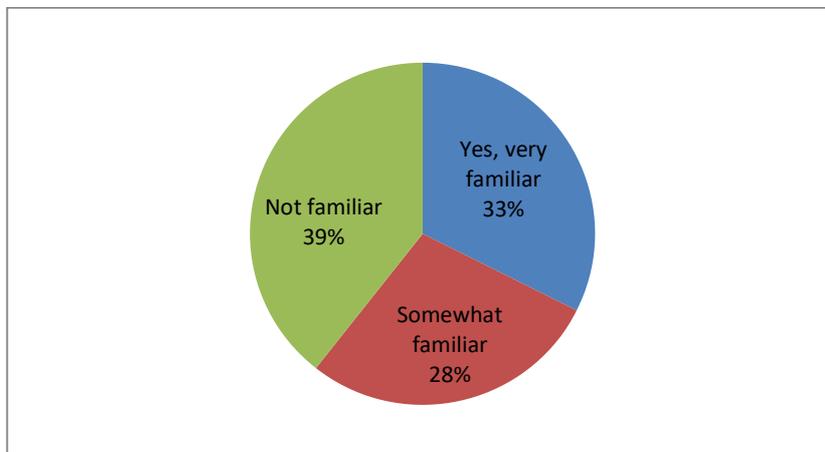
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi

**12) How frequently does your college organize sustainability-related events (e.g.,workshops, campaigns)?**

Frequently	342
Occasionally	378
Rarely	117
Never	422

13) Do you participate in extracurricular clubs or societies focused on sustainability and social causes?

Yes, actively	338
Occasionally	282
Rarely	114
No	525

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi

14) Do you think that participating in such activities has enhanced your awareness of sustainable development?

Strongly Agree	302
Agree	424
Neutral	109
Disagree	424

15) To what extent do you feel that topics related to the SDGs (e.g., poverty reduction, gender equality, climate action) are integrated into your curriculum?

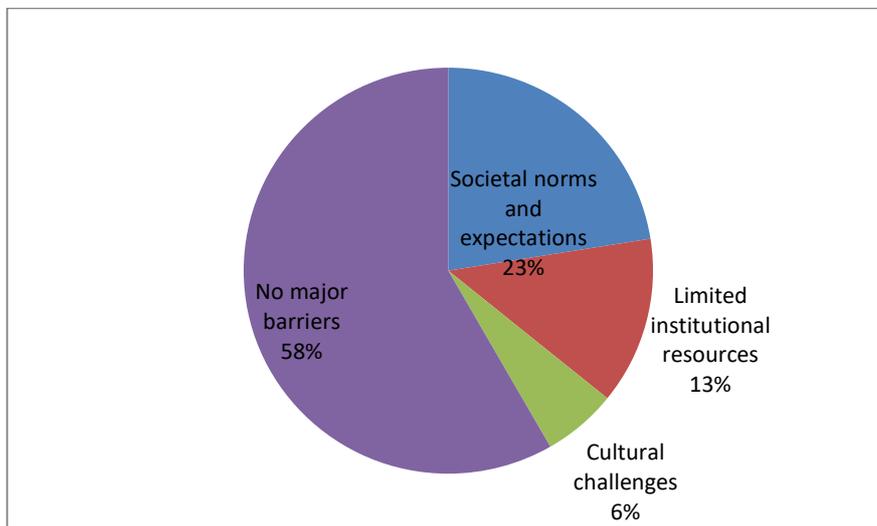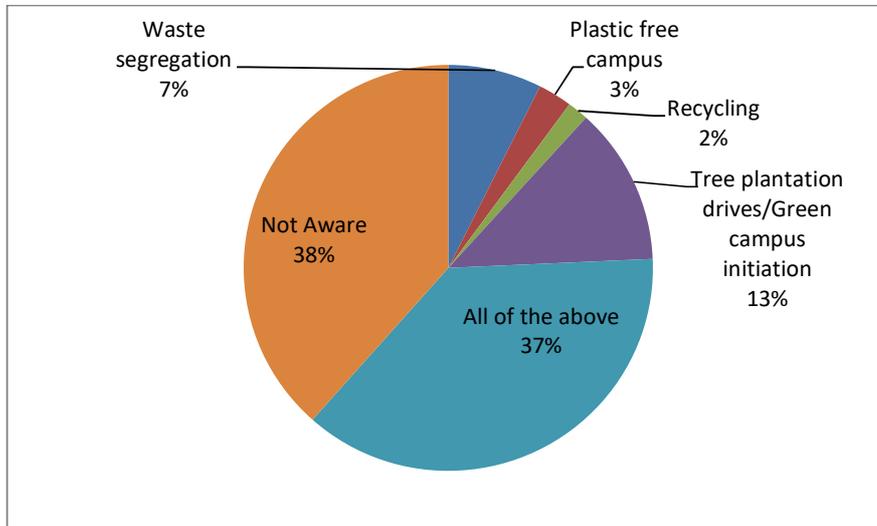|	
Very well integrated	407
Somewhat integrated	369
Not integrated at all	483
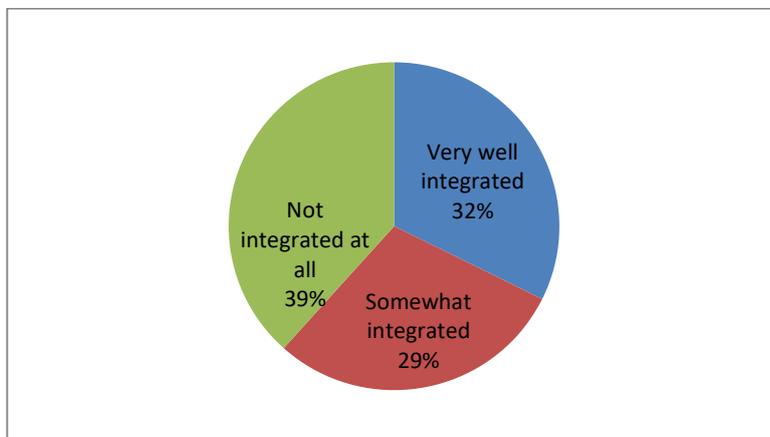
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi

16) How well does the curriculum promote understanding of gender equality issues?

Very well	432
Somewhat	237
Needs improvement	140
Not at all	450
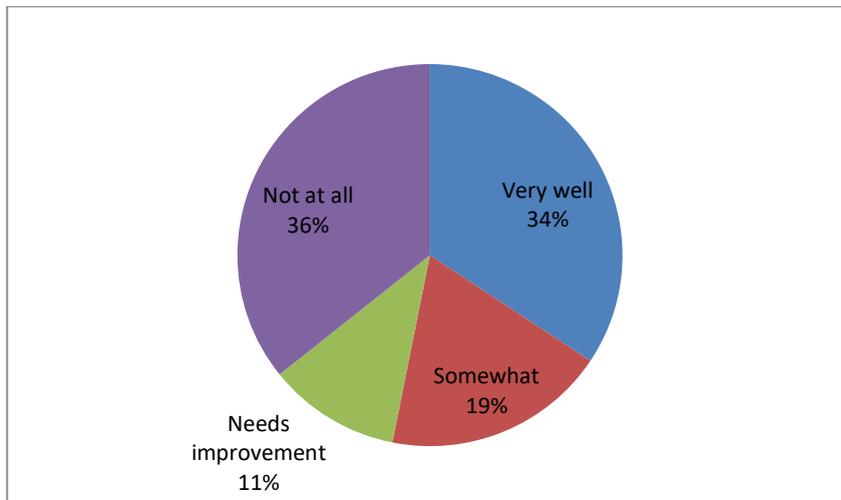
17) Do classroom discussions promote equal participation among all students?

Strongly Agree	392
Agree	392
Neutral	65
Disagree	410
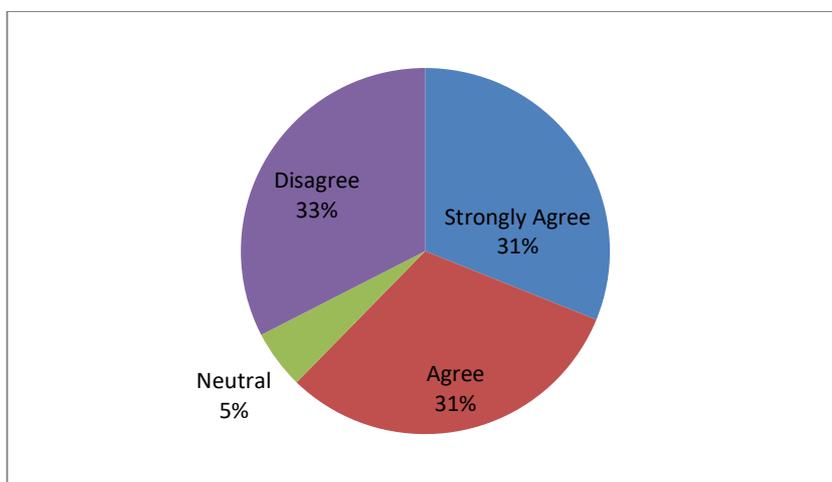
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity
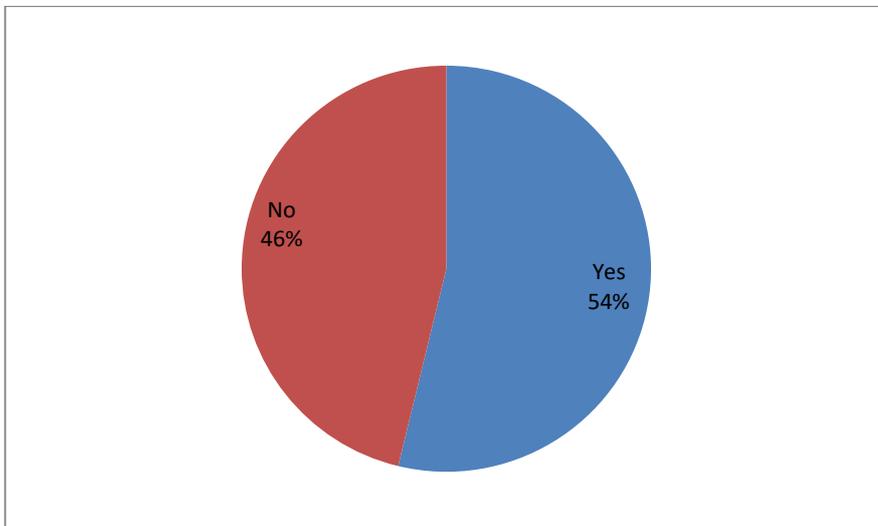
Nirmala College, Ranchi

18) Would you support the introduction of a dedicated course on gender equality and sustainable development?

Yes	674
No	20
Maybe	565
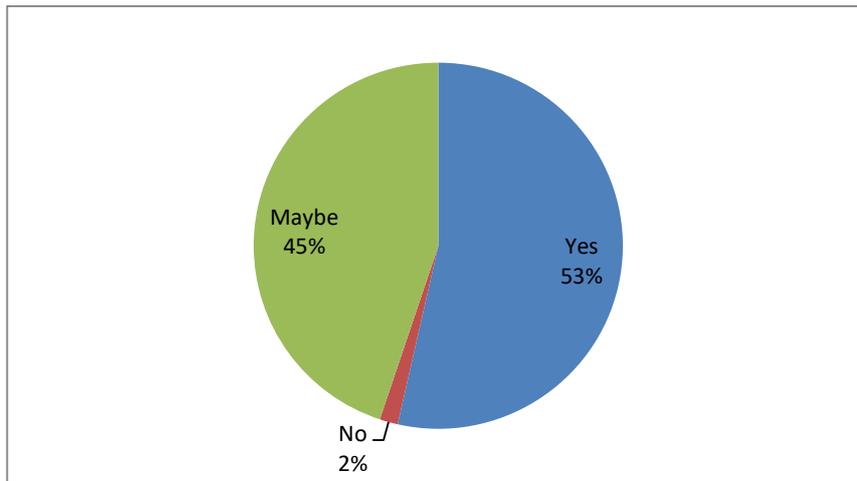
19) How effective are your college's policies in promoting sustainable practices on campus (e.g., waste management, energy conservation)?

Very effective	375
Moderately effective	324
Slightly effective	114
Not effective	446

20) Are there programs that promote gender equity and social inclusion (e.g., scholarships, counselling services)?

Yes, multiple programs	426
Yes, but limited	338
No	15
Not aware	480

21) Does your college provide access to an alumni support system?

Yes	494
No	53
Not aware	712
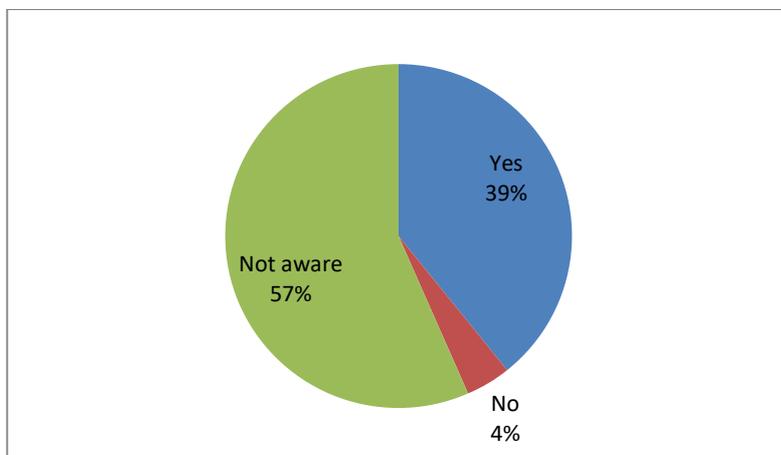
22) Which of the following community outreach areas do you think needs the most attention?

Education	278
Healthcare	43
Environment	17
Women Empowerment	106
Skill Development	170
Mental Health	76
Livelihood and Employment	569
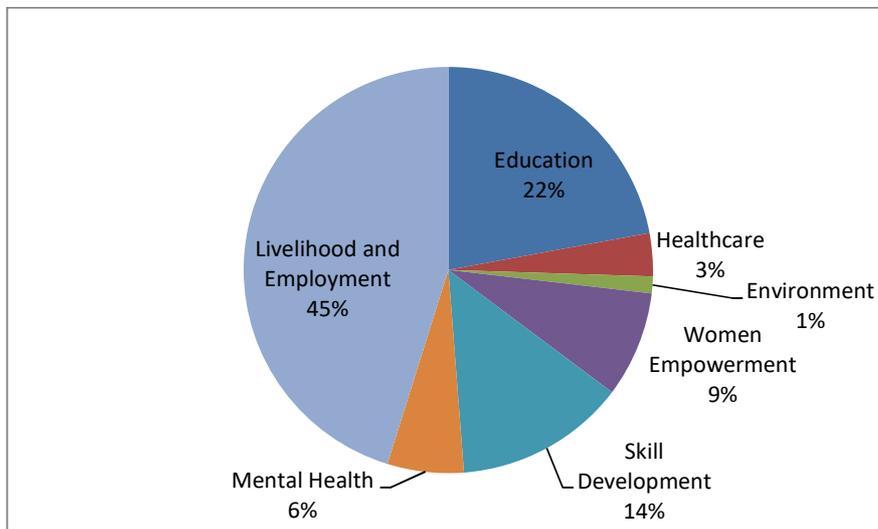
23) What is the primary challenge faced by your college in promoting sustainable development?

|	
Limited funding	200
Lack of awareness	200
Limited student participation	286
Other institutional priorities	573

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi
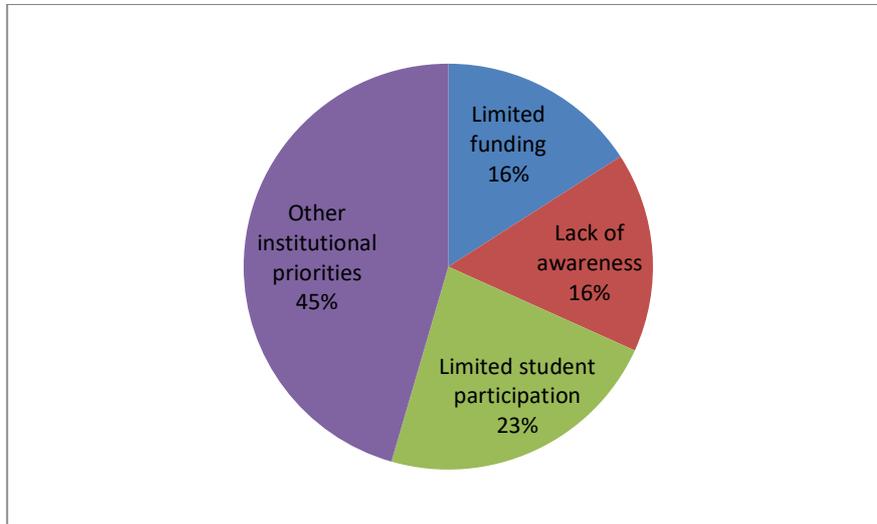
**24) What is the biggest barrier to achieving gender equity within your institution?**

|	
Societal norms and expectations	283
Limited institutional resources	168
Cultural challenges	74
No major barriers	734

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity
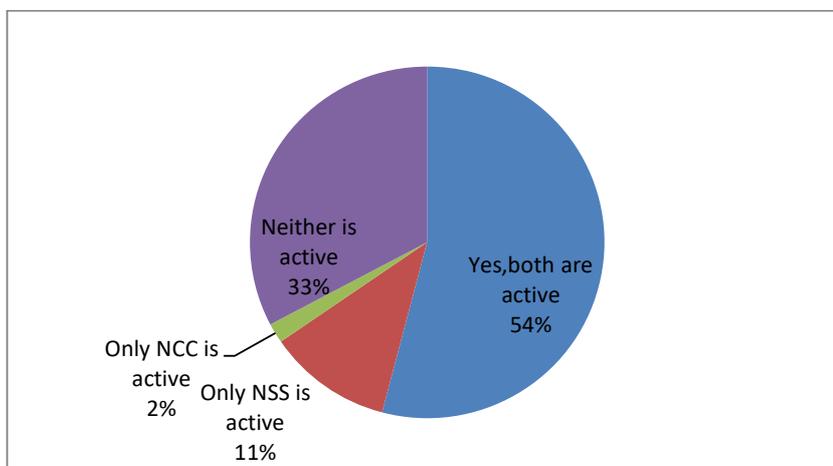
Nirmala College, Ranchi

25) Does the college promote eco-friendly practices (e.g., waste segregation,recycling, tree plantation)?

Waste segregation	93
Plastic free campus	34
Recycling	21
Tree plantation drives/Green campus initiation	158
All of the above	469
Not Aware	484

26) How often do you participate in environmentally focused activities (e.g., clean-up drives, awareness campaigns) organized by the college?

|	
Very often	297
Occasionally	346
Rarely	142
Never	474

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi
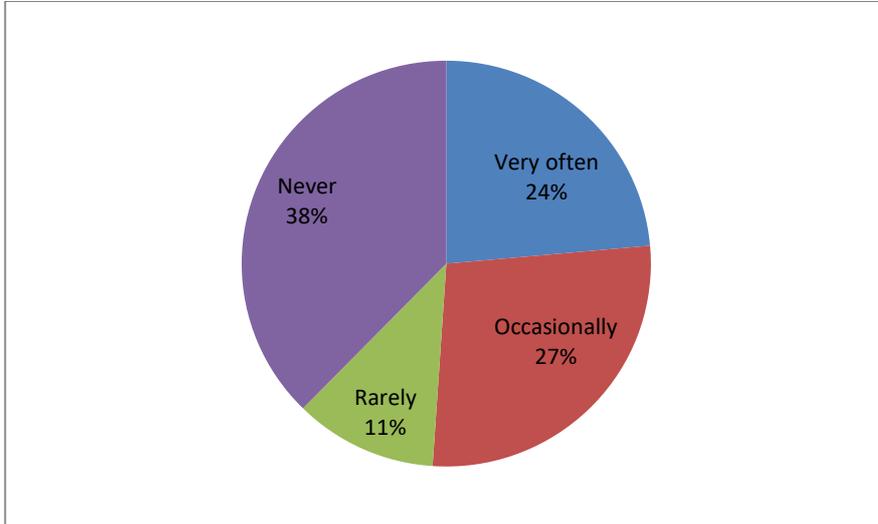
27) Do you incorporate eco-friendly practices in your daily life due to the influence of college initiatives?

Yes	677
No	582

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi

28) How do you rate the impact of community outreach programs on promoting gender equity and sustainable development?

Very impactful	299
Moderately impactful	383
Slightly impactful	98
Not impactful	479
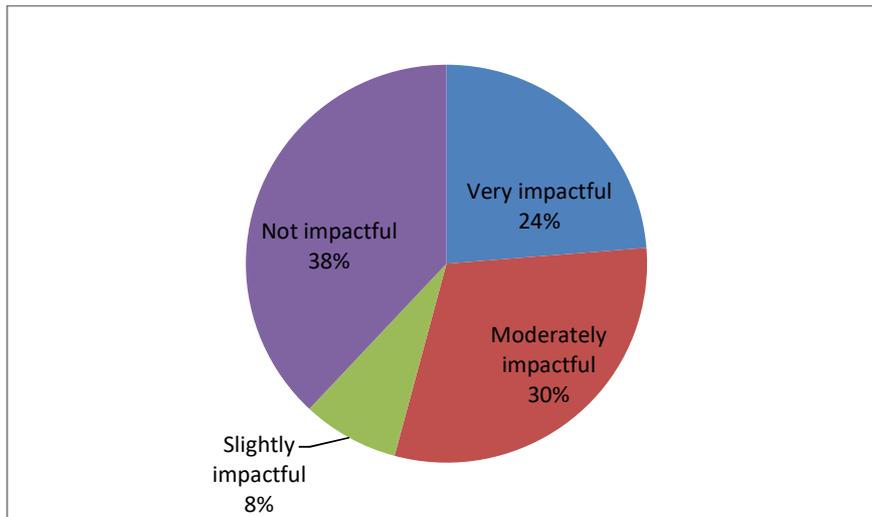
29) How would you rate the effectiveness of the college's sustainability initiatives?

Very effective	416
Neutral	344
Not effective	499
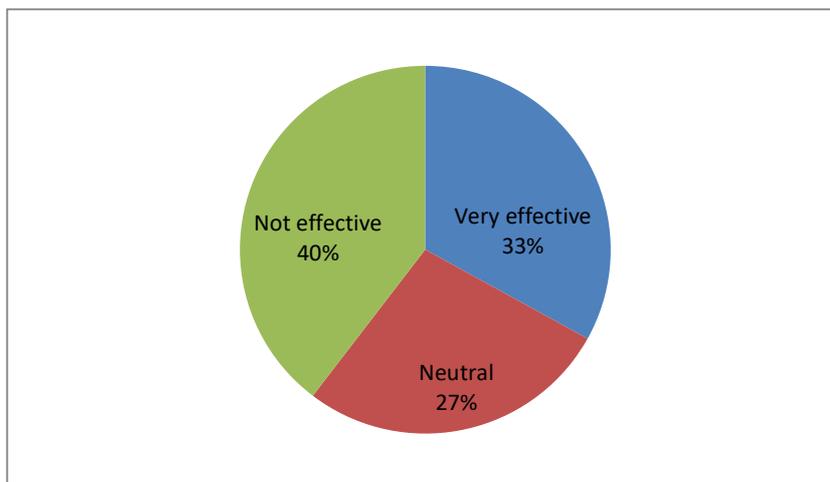
30) Are students educated about women's rights and gender equality through college programs?

Yes, comprehensively	646
Yes, but not comprehensively	172
No	441
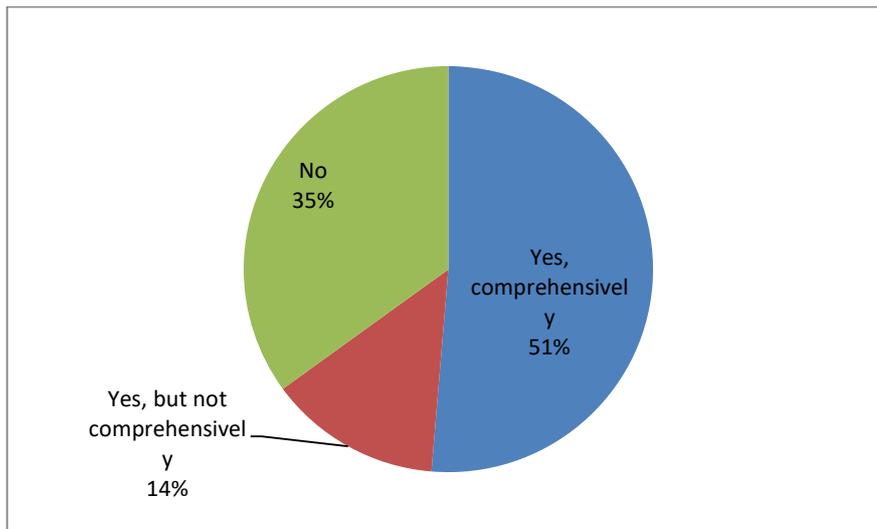
31) Are there special initiatives for students from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds?

Yes	452
No	63
Not sure	744
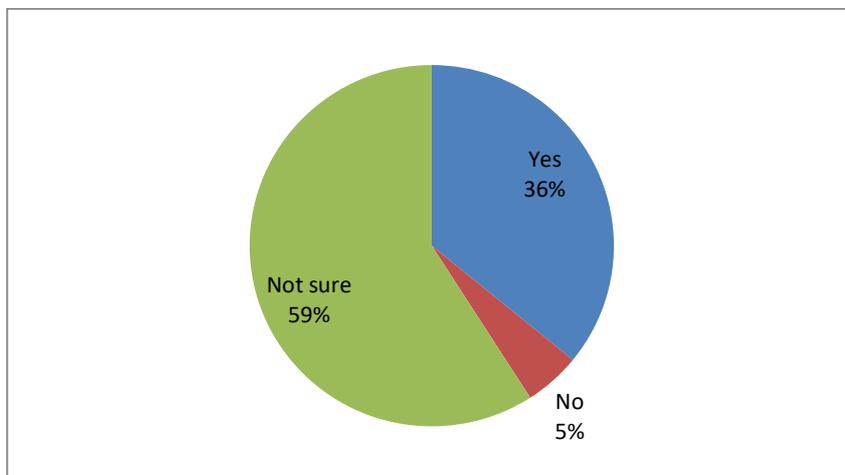
32) Are there any programs focused on water conservation at the college?

Yes, through rainwater harvesting	206
Yes,through awareness campaigns	224
Both	285
None of the above	544
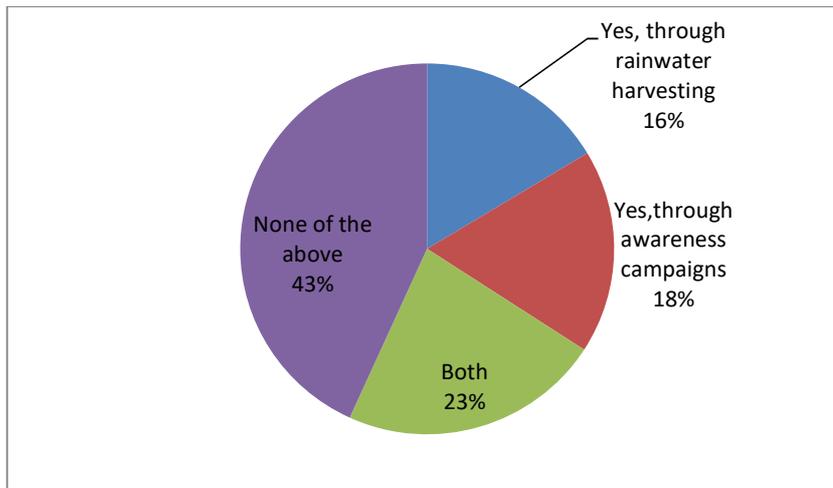
33) Does the college have active NSS (National Service Scheme) and NCC (National Cadet Corps) units?

Yes, both are active	681
Only NSS is active	143
Only NCC is active	23
Neither is active	412

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Nirmala College, Ranchi

34) What type of community programs are conducted through NSS/NCC?

|	
Health and Cleanliness drives	114
Educational Workshops	51
Environmental Campaigns	33
All of the above	1061
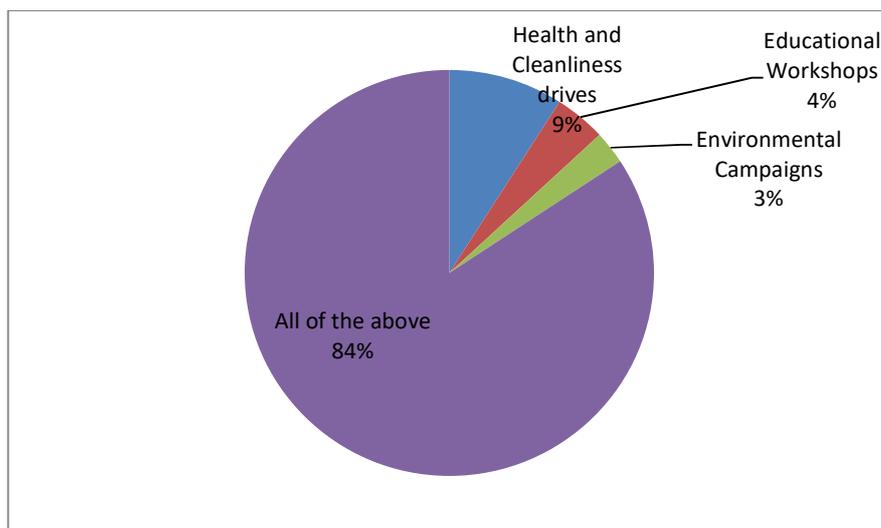
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity
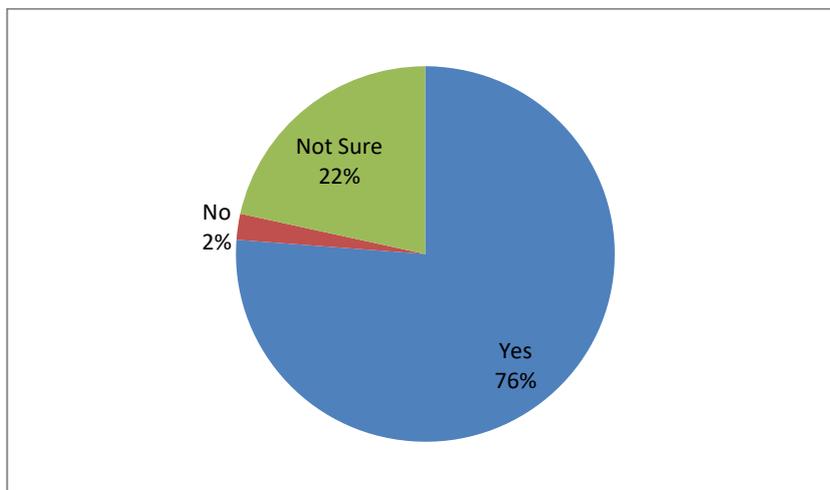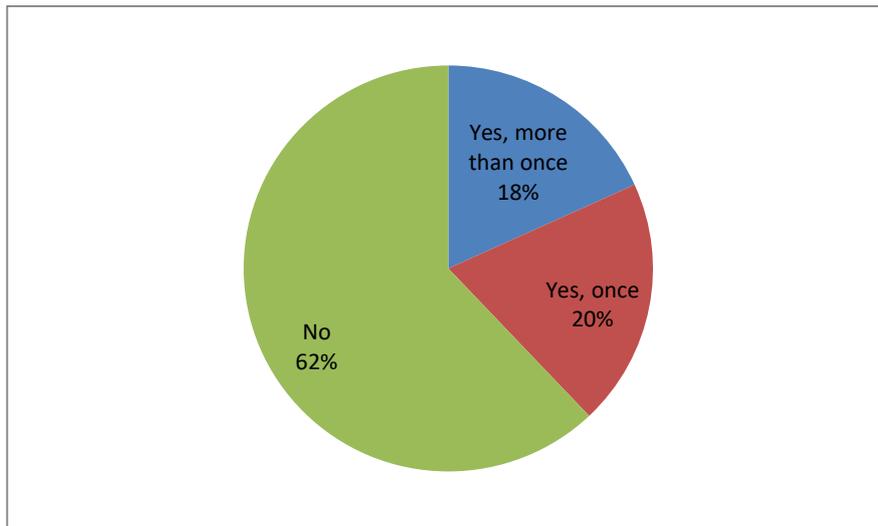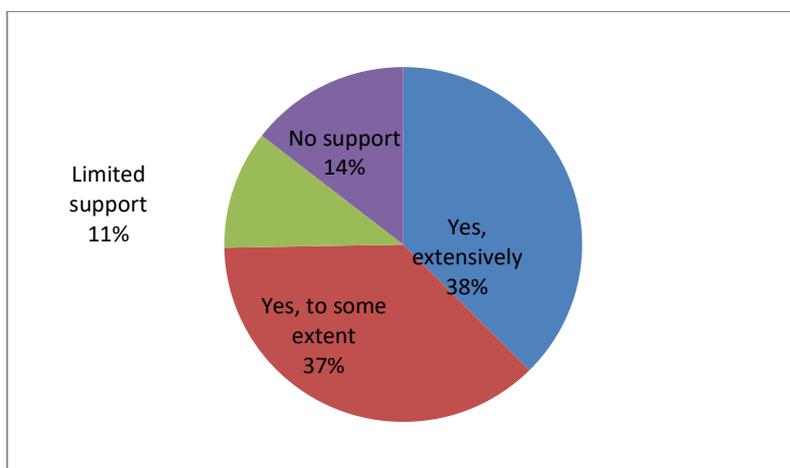
Patna Women's College

Total Responses = 269

1) How would you rate the overall quality of education provided by your institution?

Excellent	120
Good	101
Average	22
Below Average	26
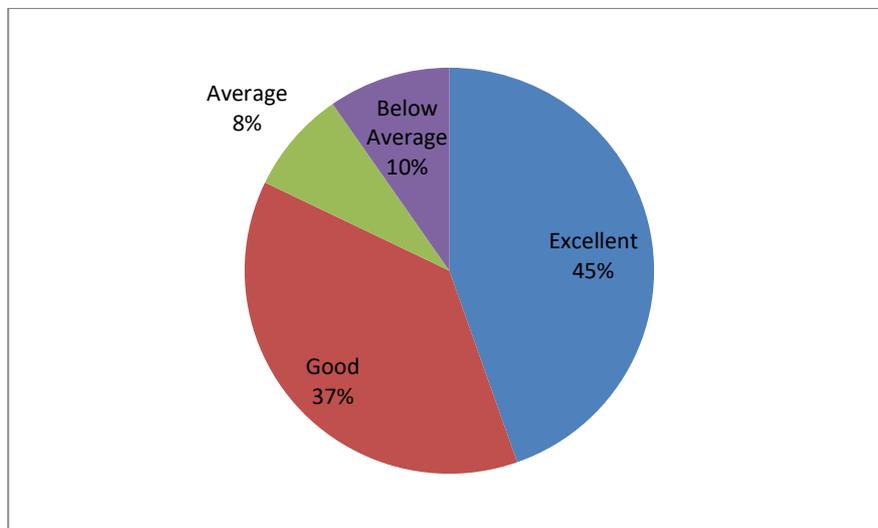
2) To what extent do you agree that your college promotes women's leadership?

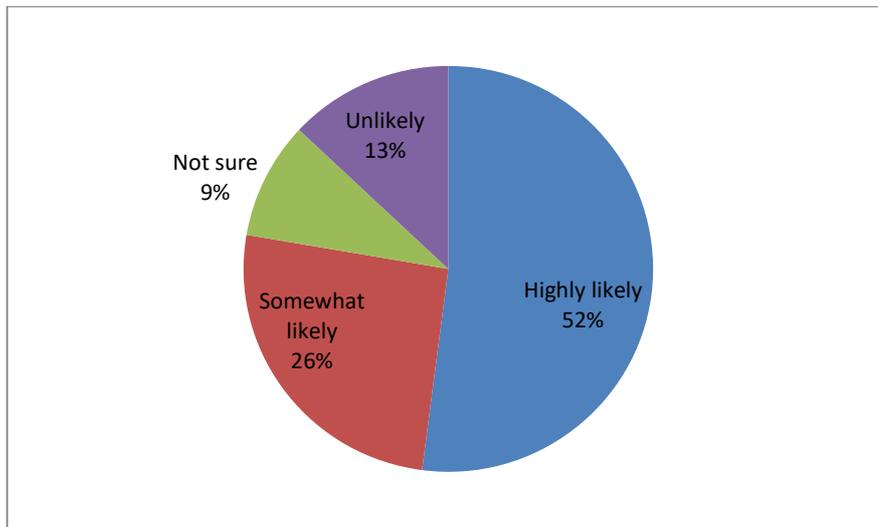|	
Strongly Agree	145
Agree	82
Neutral	13
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	28

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Patna Women's College
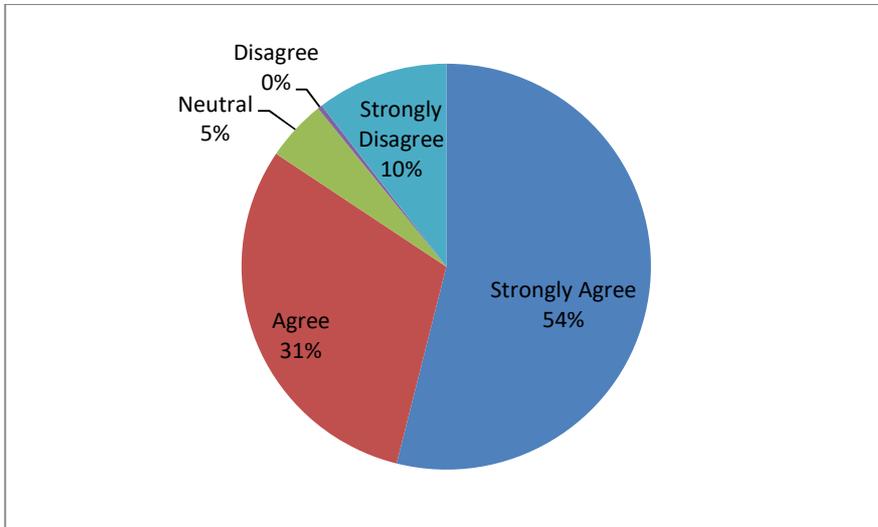
3) How accessible are gender-related resources (e.g., counselling, workshops) at the college?

Very accessible	142
Moderately accessible	82
Slightly accessible	16
Not accessible	29
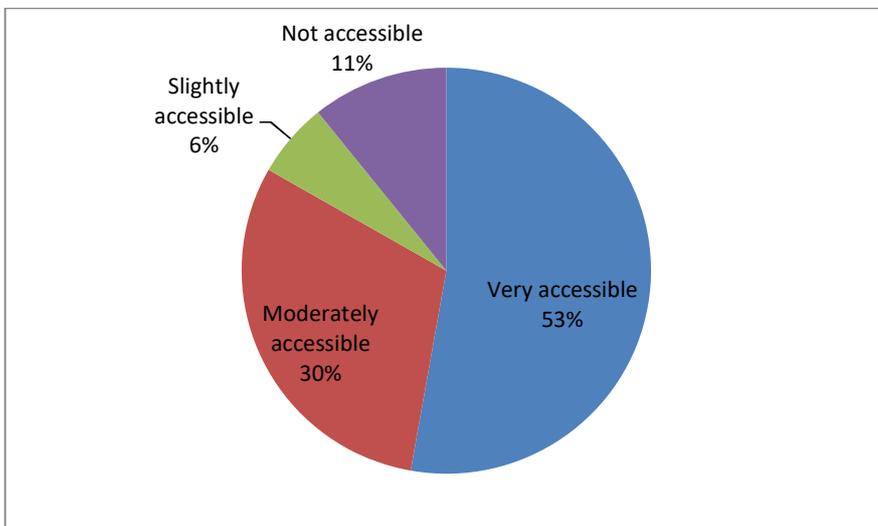
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Patna Women's College

**4) Are students encouraged to participate in community development activities?**

Yes, actively	194
Yes, but limited	42
Rarely	3
No	30
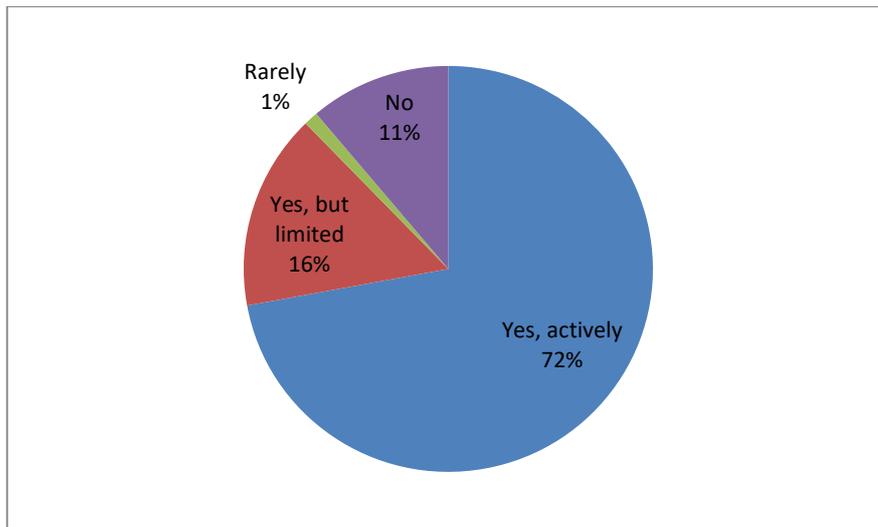
5) Does the college collaborate with external organizations to promote gender equity?

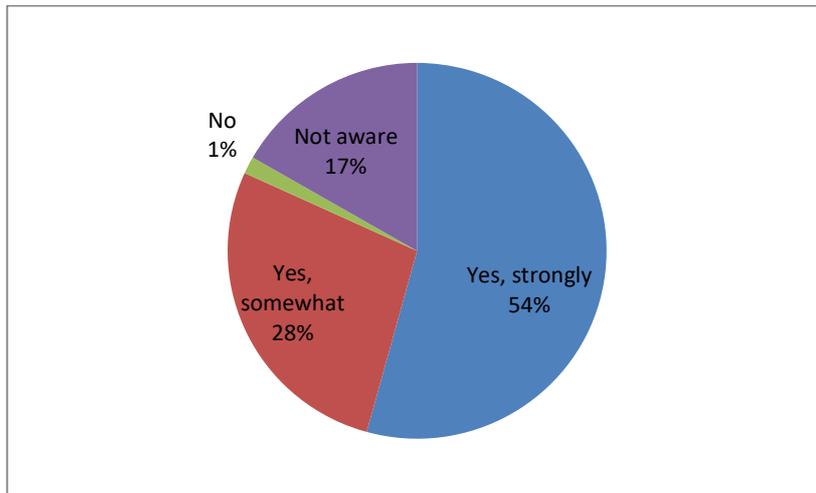|	
Yes	205
No	6
Not Sure	58

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Patna Women's College

**6) Have you participated in any leadership workshops or related programs organized by your college?**

Yes, more than once	49
Yes, once	53
No	167

7) Does your college provide support for job placements, internships, or skill development?

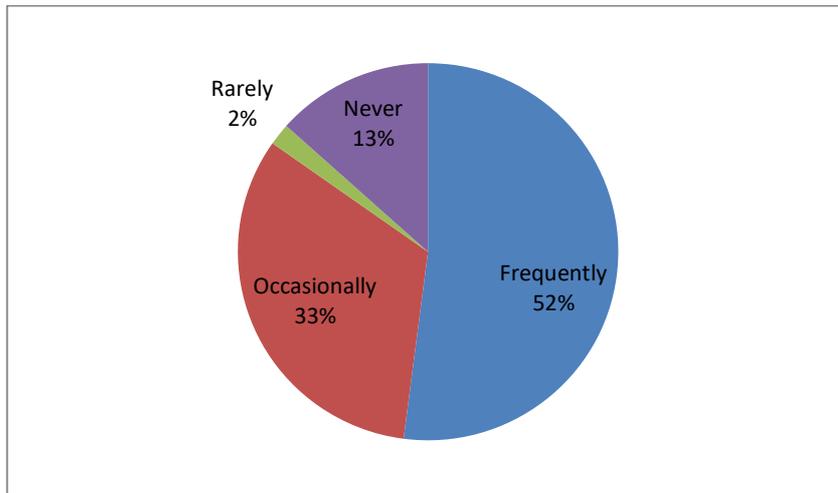|	
Yes, extensively	101
Yes, to some extent	100
Limited support	29
No support	39

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Patna Women's College

**8) How likely are you to pursue further studies or a career related to your field of study?**

Highly likely	140
Somewhat likely	69
Not sure	25
Unlikely	35

9) Do you feel that your college education has prepared you well for future employment?

Strongly Agree	79
Agree	103
Neutral	43
Disagree	44
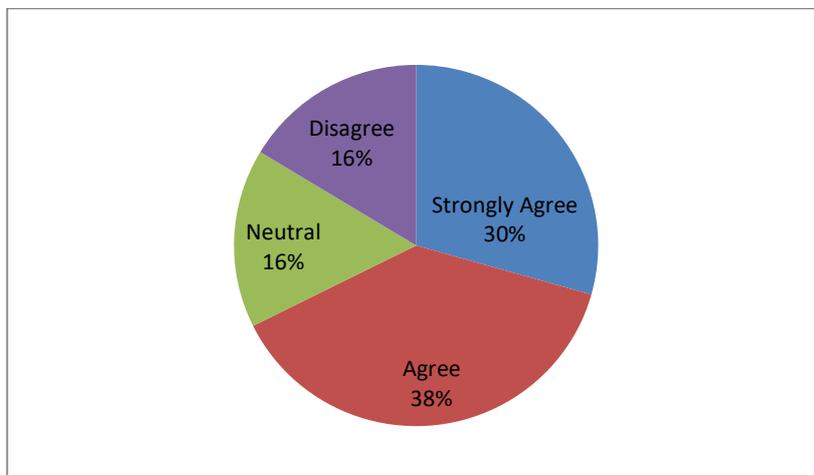
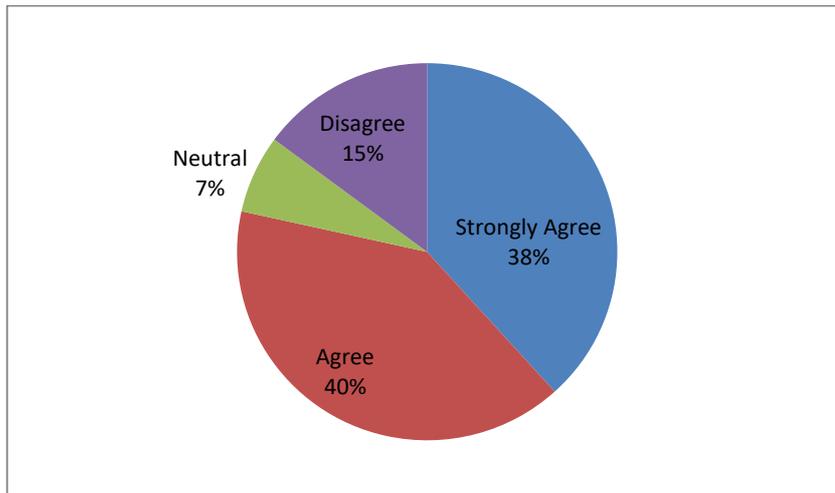# Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Patna Women's College

**10) Does your college encourage women to enter non-traditional career paths (e.g., STEM fields, entrepreneurship)?**

Yes, strongly	146
Yes, somewhat	74
No	4
Not aware	45

11) Are you familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations?

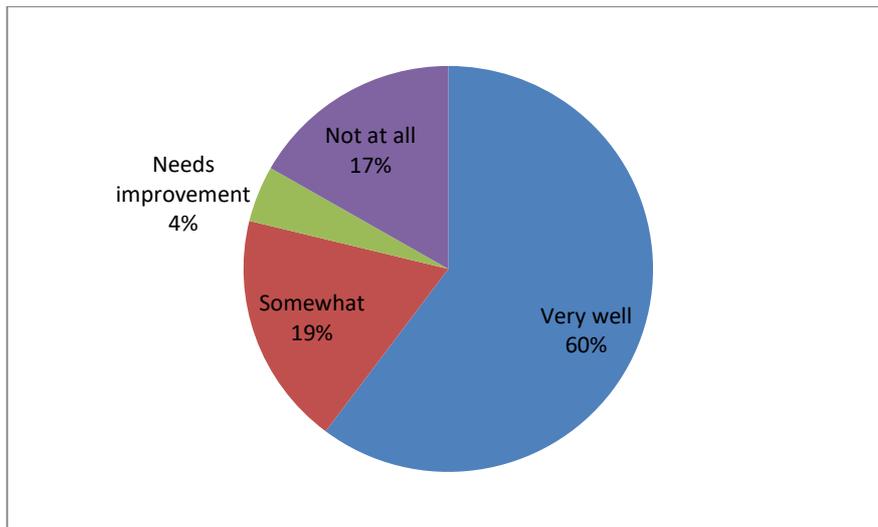| Yes, very familiar	176
Somewhat familiar	51
Not familiar	42
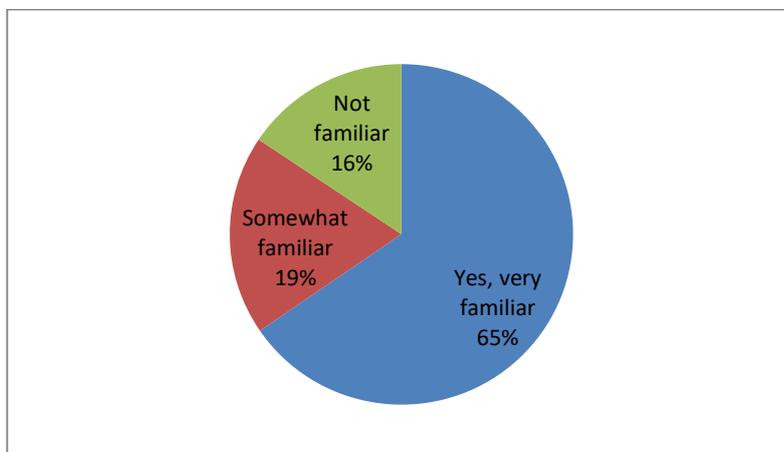
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Patna Women's College

12) How frequently does your college organize sustainability-related events (e.g.,workshops, campaigns)?

Frequently	140
Occasionally	88
Rarely	5
Never	36

13) Do you participate in extracurricular clubs or societies focused on sustainability and social causes?

Yes, actively	99
Occasionally	92
Rarely	24
No	54
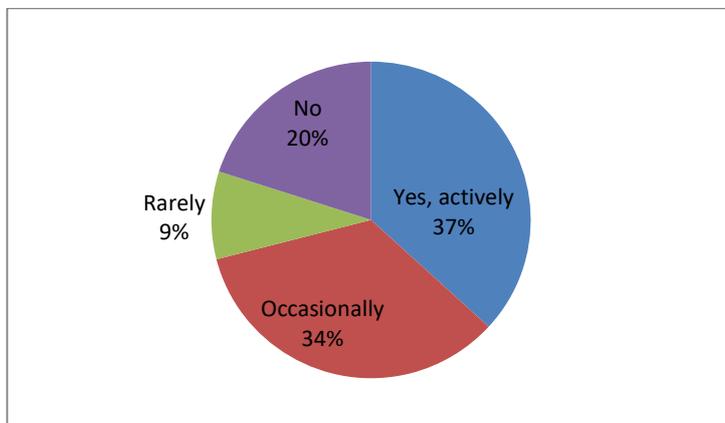
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

Patna Women's College

**14) Do you think that participating in such activities has enhanced your awareness of sustainable development?**

Strongly Agree	103
Agree	108
Neutral	18
Disagree	40

15) To what extent do you feel that topics related to the SDGs (e.g., poverty reduction, gender equality, climate action) are integrated into your curriculum?

Very well integrated	165
Somewhat integrated	64
Not integrated at all	40
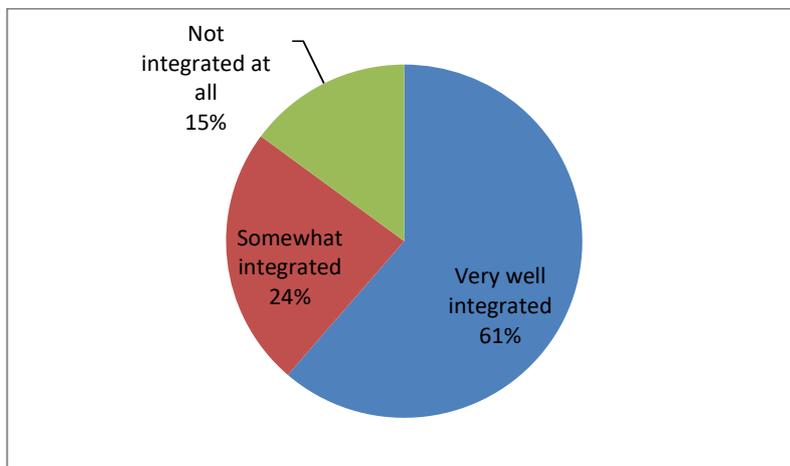
Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity

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**16) How well does the curriculum promote understanding of gender equality issues?**

Very well	162
Somewhat	50
Needs improvement	12
Not at all	45

17) Do classroom discussions promote equal participation among all students?

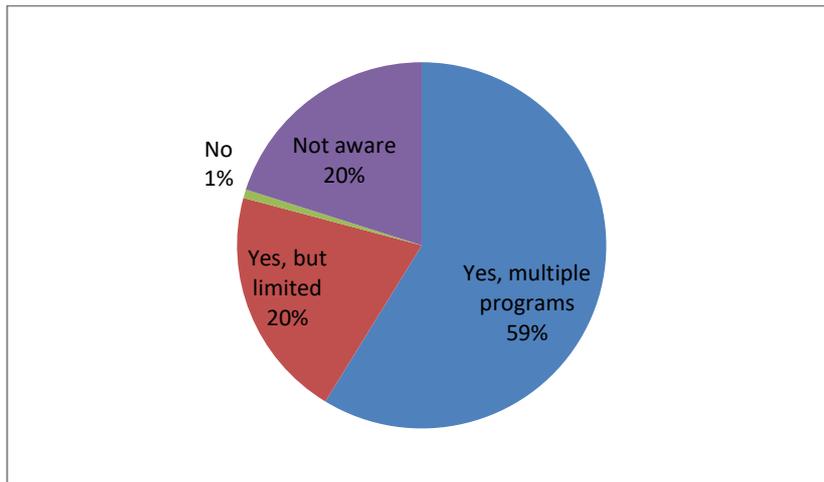| Strongly Agree	137
Agree	83
Neutral	12
Disagree	37
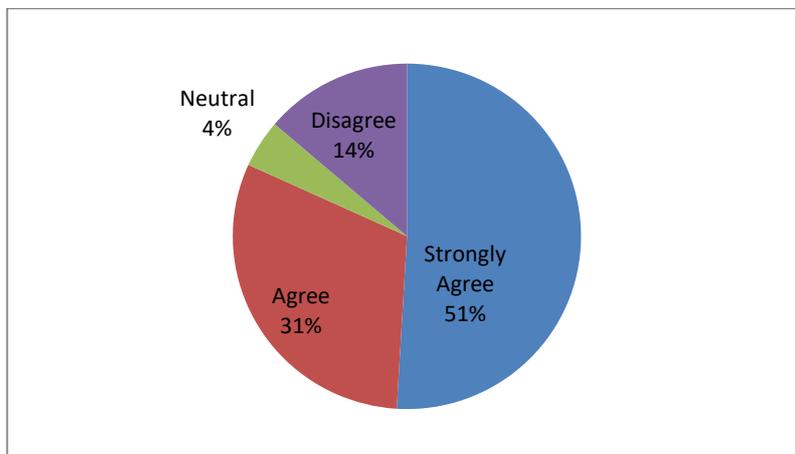
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**18) Would you support the introduction of a dedicated course on gender equality and sustainable development?**

Yes	204
No	4
Maybe	61
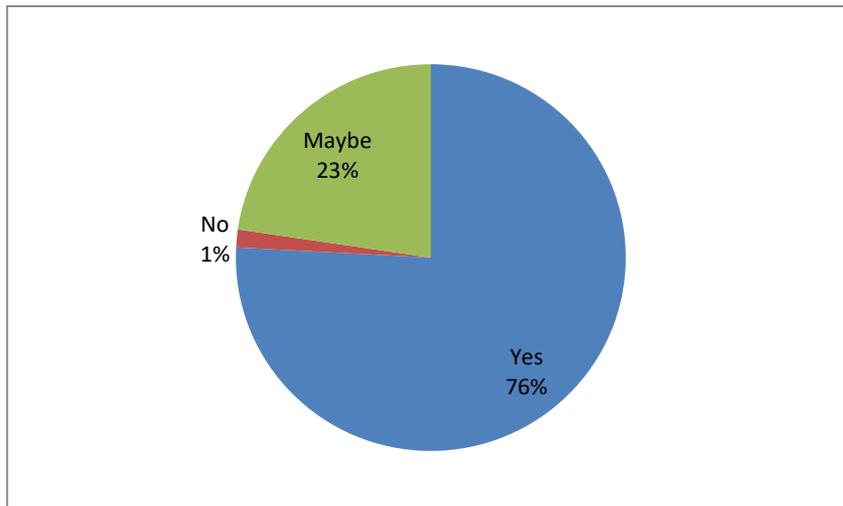
19) How effective are your college's policies in promoting sustainable practices on campus (e.g., waste management, energy conservation)?

Very effective	163
Moderately effective	59
Slightly effective	5
Not effective	42
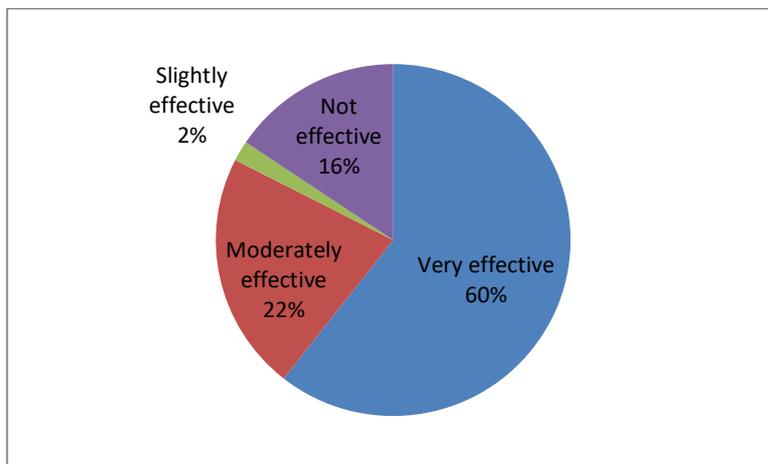
20) Are there programs that promote gender equity and social inclusion (e.g., scholarships, counselling services)?

Yes, multiple programs	158
Yes, but limited	55
No	2
Not aware	54

21) Does your college provide access to an alumni support system?

Yes	182
No	5
Not aware	82
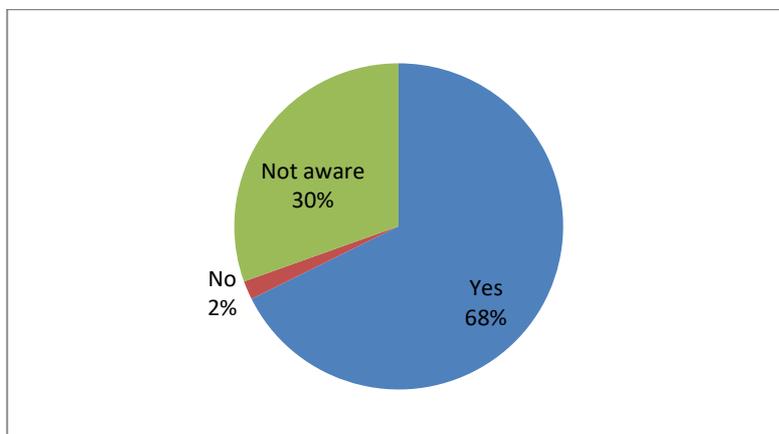
22) Which of the following community outreach areas do you think needs the most attention?

Education	57
Healthcare	21
Environment	10
Women Empowerment	20
Skill Development	41
Mental Health	40
Livelihood and Employment	80
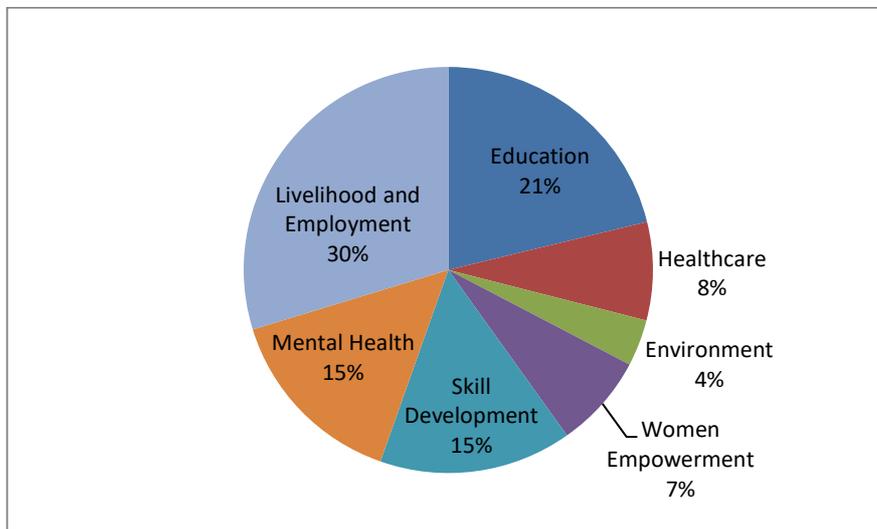
23) What is the primary challenge faced by your college in promoting sustainable development?

|	
Limited funding	48
Lack of awareness	40
Limited student participation	77
Other institutional priorities	104

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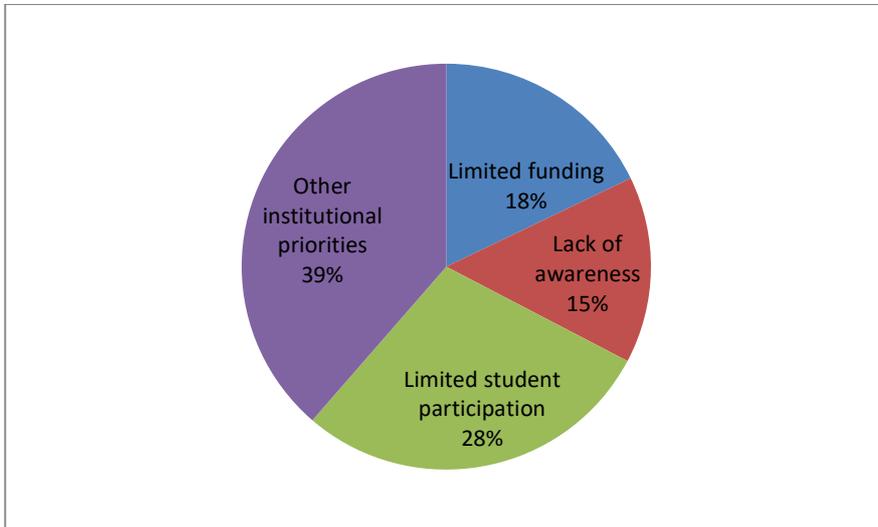
24) What is the biggest barrier to achieving gender equity within your institution?

Societal norms and expectations	69
Limited institutional resources	22
Cultural challenges	20
No major barriers	158
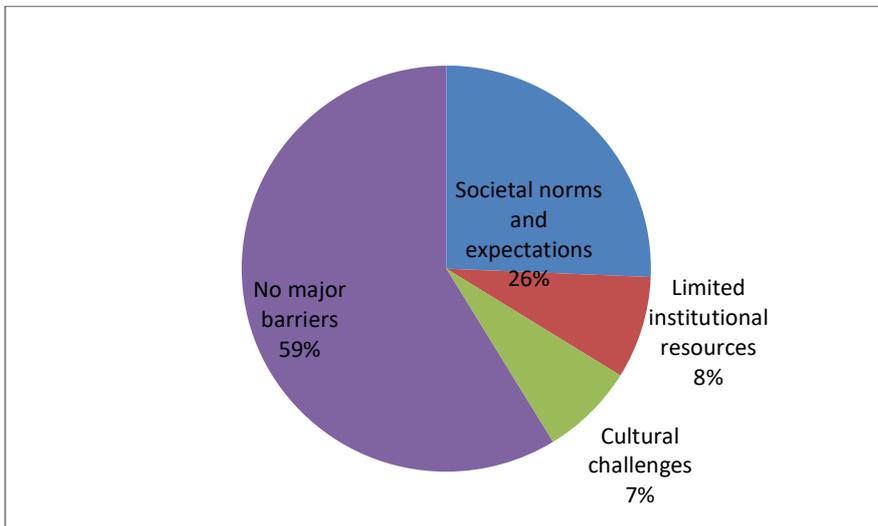
25) Does the college promote eco-friendly practices (e.g., waste segregation, recycling, tree plantation)?

|	
Waste segregation	8
Plastic free campus	3
Recycling	6
Tree plantation drives/Green campus initiation	25
All of the above	195
Not Aware	32
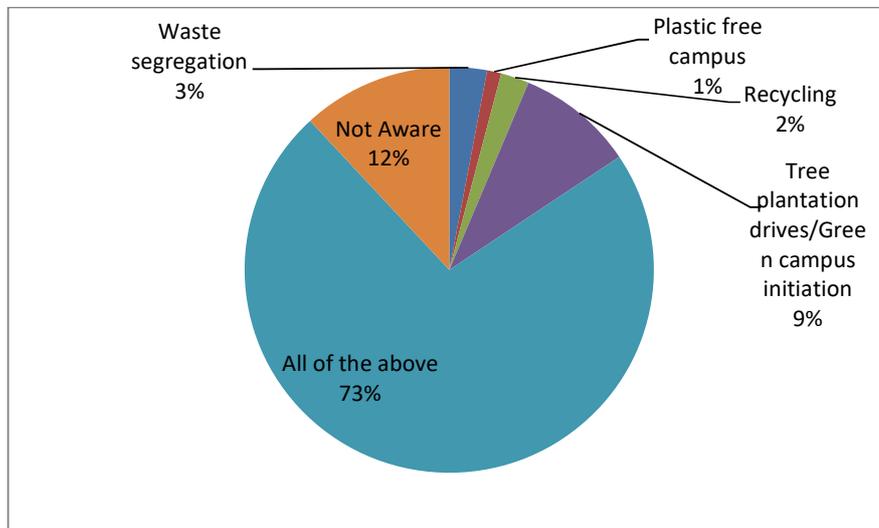
26) How often do you participate in environmentally focused activities (e.g., clean-up drives, awareness campaigns) organized by the college?

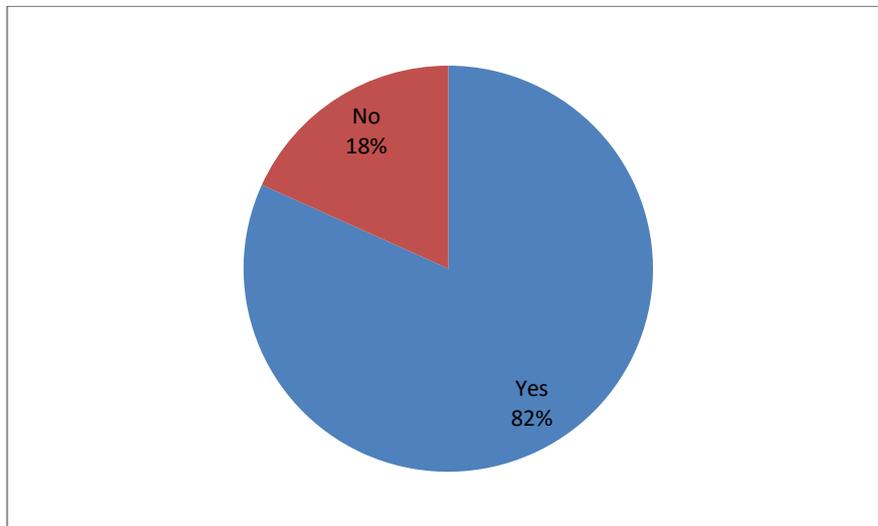|	
Very often	81
Occasionally	111
Rarely	30
Never	47

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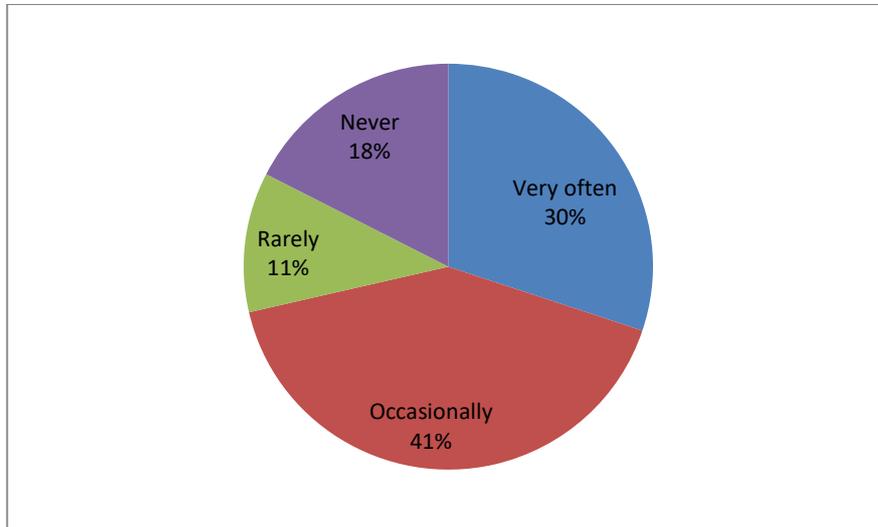
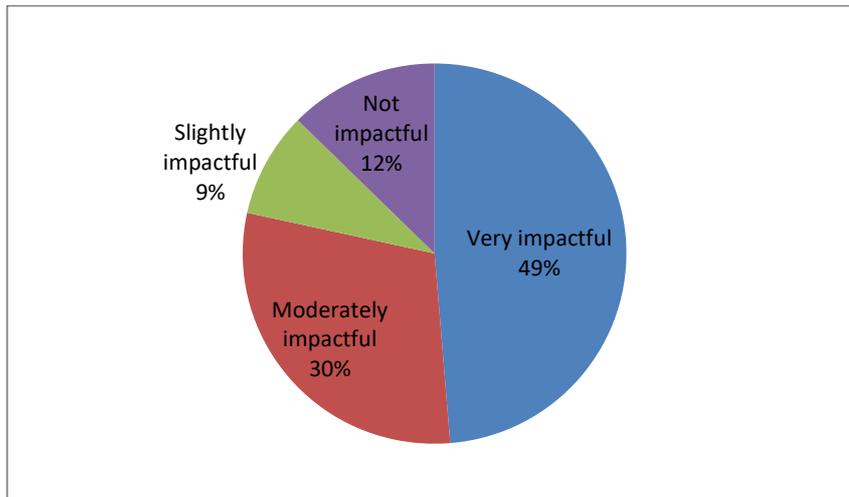**27) Do you incorporate eco-friendly practices in your daily life due to the influence of college initiatives?**
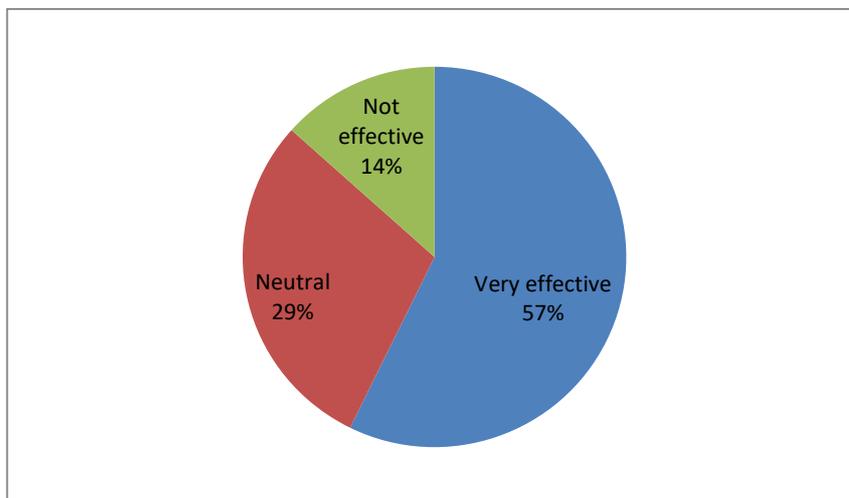
Yes	220
No	49

28) How do you rate the impact of community outreach programs on promoting gender equity and sustainable development?

Very impactful	131
Moderately impactful	80
Slightly impactful	24
Not impactful	34

29) How would you rate the effectiveness of the college's sustainability initiatives?

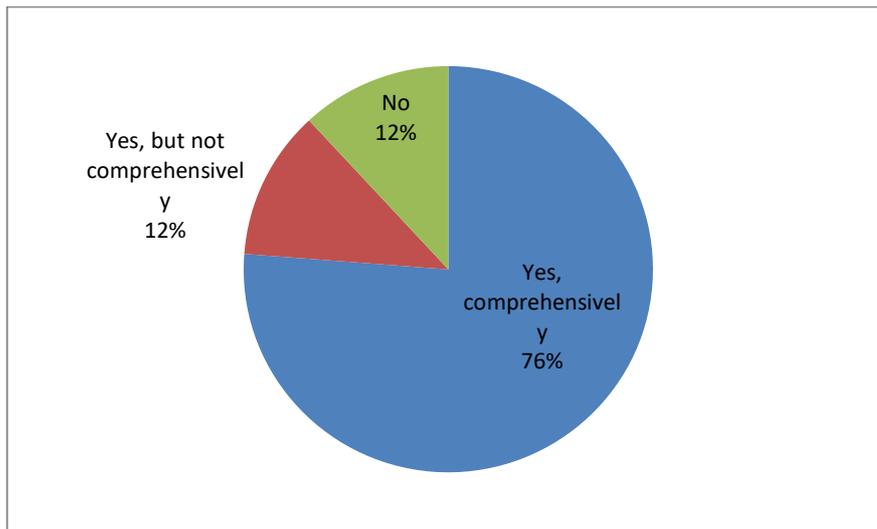| Very effective	154
Neutral	79
Not effective	36

Women's Colleges in India as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Gender Equity
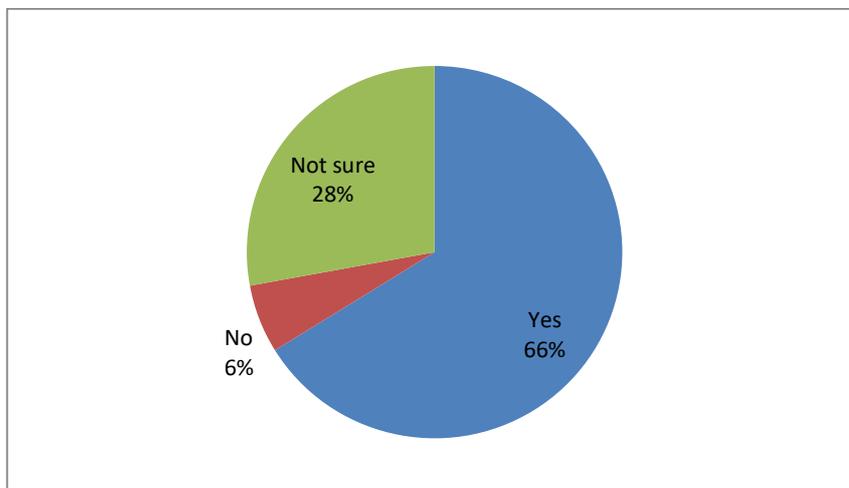
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30) Are students educated about women's rights and gender equality through college programs?

Yes, comprehensively	205
Yes, but not comprehensively	32
No	32

31) Are there special initiatives for students from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds?

Yes	178
No	16
Not sure	75

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32) Are there any provisions for renewable energy use (e.g., solar panels) at the college?

Yes	215
No	1
Not aware	53