

An Analysis of Gender Sensitization Among Selected Universities Students with Special Reference to Maharashtra

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Abstract:

Gender sensitization is an essential practice for promoting equity, respect, and inclusivity in educational institutions. Universities, as institutions of advanced education and societal change, significantly influence the attitudes and views of young adults on gender issues. This study investigates the awareness, attitudes, and actions of chosen university students concerning gender equality, stereotypes, and discrimination. The objective is to investigate the degree to which institutional initiatives, educational interventions, and extracurricular activities influence the development of gender-sensitive behavior. The study emphasizes the value of universities as venues for academic advancement and as transforming environments for fostering gender equity and equipping students to contribute effectively to a fair society. In this article, an analysis of gender sensitization among selected universities students with special reference to Maharashtra has been discussed.

Keywords: Gender, Sensitization, Universities, Students, Maharashtra.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Gender sensitization among university student's entails enhancing awareness and altering behaviors to cultivate gender equality and respect by confronting gender stereotypes, encouraging comprehension of varied needs, and mitigating discrimination and sexual harassment. (Anand, P.A., 2020) Gender sensitization denotes the process of fostering understanding and cultivating sensitivity to matters pertaining to gender equality, equity, and inclusivity. (Baruah, B., 2019) It seeks to transform stereotypical perceptions, contest conventional gender norms, and foster respect for all genders in social, educational, and professional environments. (Jha, S.S., 2020) In today's society, where gender discrimination and inequalities remain prevalent, gender sensitization has become an essential strategy to promote equitable and inclusive development. (Khandave, K.B. et al., 2020) Universities, as institutions of advanced education and societal change, significantly influence the viewpoints, dispositions, and actions of young adults. University students are at a transitory phase of life, preparing to become professionals, leaders, and responsible citizens. Their perspectives on gender equality strongly impact both their personal relationships and the future dynamics of employment environments and societal systems. (Malavi, J., 2016) Consequently, educating university students about gender-related issues is crucial for establishing a fair and progressive society. (Mittal, R. & Kaur, J., 2019) Gender sensitization is the process of raising awareness about gender equality and the necessity to eradicate prejudice, fostering attitudes and actions that advocate for gender justice. (Najjar, O.Y. & Shahin, S., 2015) Universities play a vital role in this process, as students invest considerable time in these institutions, creating an optimal setting for the cultivation of attitudes and behaviors from an early age. The objective is to cultivate an inclusive and fair educational atmosphere, confront gender stereotypes, and avert problems such as gender-based violence and harassment. (Sarkar, S., 2017) Gender sensitization among university students underscores its importance in fostering knowledge of gender equality, confronting stereotypes, and encouraging respectful attitudes and behaviors within the academic setting. This method enables university students to critically analyze society norms, comprehend gender as a social construct, and promote an inclusive culture that addresses discrimination and harassment, thereby facilitating individual and societal advancement. (Sharma, R., 2017)

The necessity for gender sensitization in universities arises from the existence of gender biases, inequitable opportunities, harassment, and implicit prejudices that might impact academic performance, social interactions, and career ambitions. Gender sensitization programs and activities can elevate awareness, foster conversation, and advance inclusivity among students. (Srinivas, V. & Chinta, P.K., 2017) These initiatives foster empathy, respect, and equitable involvement, establishing a foundation for sustainable social development. A study on gender sensitization among certain university students offers significant insights into their perceptions, attitudes, and practices toward gender equality. (Vyas, A.N., 2020) It also underscores the problems encountered in fostering awareness and the potential solutions that might be employed within the academic setting to cultivate

gender-sensitive mind sets. (Advincula, G. B. & Cayabat, C.V., 2020) The objective of the study was to analyse the gender sensitisation among selected university students with special reference to Maharashtra.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Study Area: Maharashtra state. Three universities were selected from this state.

Variables:

Dependent Variables: Age, Gender, Religion, Educational Category, Family Type, Father's Occupation, Mother's Occupation, Family Income.

Independent Variables: Gender Sensitization, Values.

Research Design: In this research, qualitative and quantitative research design has been used.

Sources of Data: In this research, primary and secondary data has been used.

Sampling Plan: In this research, simple random sampling has been used.

Sample Size: University Students (i.e. Under Graduate, Post Graduate & Ph.D. students of Science, Arts and Commerce discipline) was constituted the population of the study. The sample size: Male-225 and Female-225. Total- 450 respondents.

Methodology:

The respondents were selected from the selected one state government & two private universities of Maharashtra state, India. Students belong to the selected Universities, but primary data have been collected outside the University premises. The age of the respondents were 18-32 years. After clearing the research objectives, the structured questionnaires and 5 Point Likert Scale sheet were distributed in favor of each respondent. Sufficient time was given in favor of each respondent. Then, after collection of the sheets, these were preserved for further data analysis and interpretation.

Research Tools: In this research, structured questionnaires (5 Point Likert Scale sheet) were used.

Data Analysis and Interpretation: In this research, pie charts were used.

III. DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

[Abbreviations: Strongly Disagree (SD)- 1 Point, Disagree (D)- 2 Points, Neutral (N)- 3 Points, Agree (A)- 4 Points, Strongly Agree (SA)- 5 Points]

Personal Profile:

Table 1. Age:

Age	Respondents	%
18-22 years	167	37.11
23-27 years	158	35.11
28-32 years	125	27.78
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

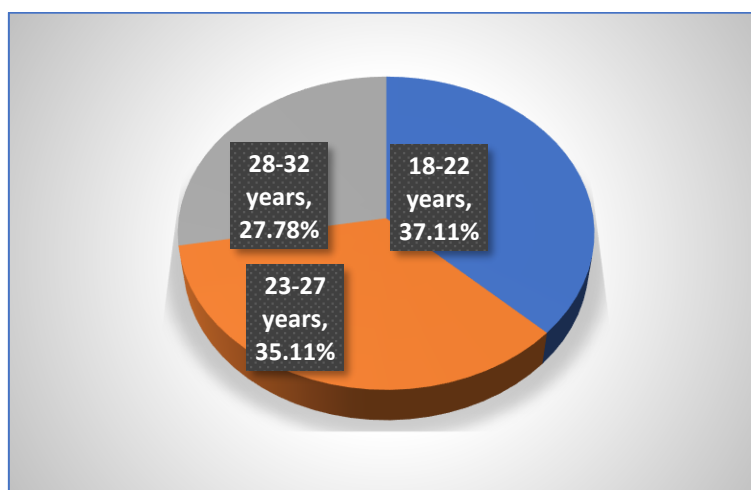


Figure 1. Age (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were 18-22 years: 37.11%, 23-27 years: 35.11%, 28-32 years: 27.78%.

Table 2. Gender:

Gender	Respondents	%
Male	225	50
Female	225	50
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

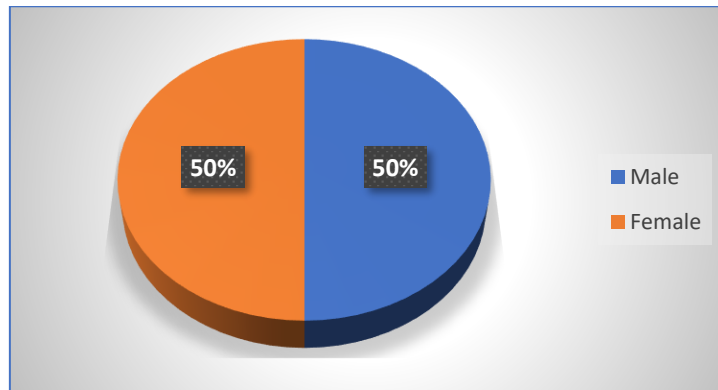


Figure 2. Gender (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were Male: 50% and Female: 50%.

Family Background Information:

Table 3. Family Type:

Family Type	Respondents	%
Nuclear	289	64.22
Joint	161	35.78
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

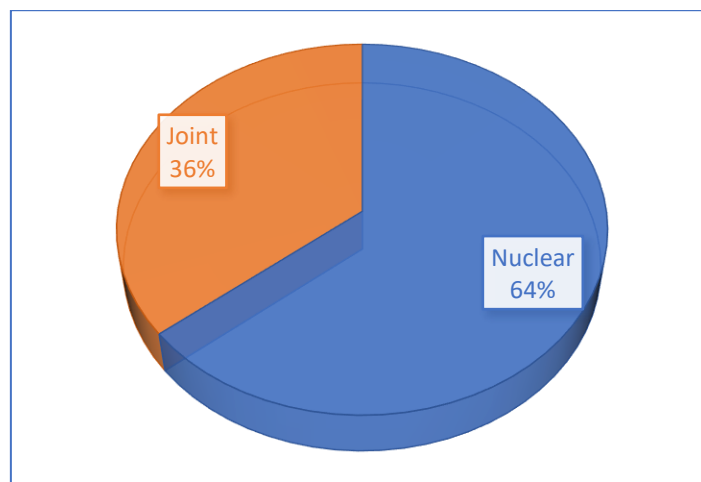


Figure 3. Family Type (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were Nuclear: 64.22% and Joint: 35.78%.

Table 4. Occupation of Father:

Occupation of Father	Respondents	%
Government job	112	24.89
Private job	296	65.78
Business	27	6
Household	5	1.11
Others	10	2.22
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

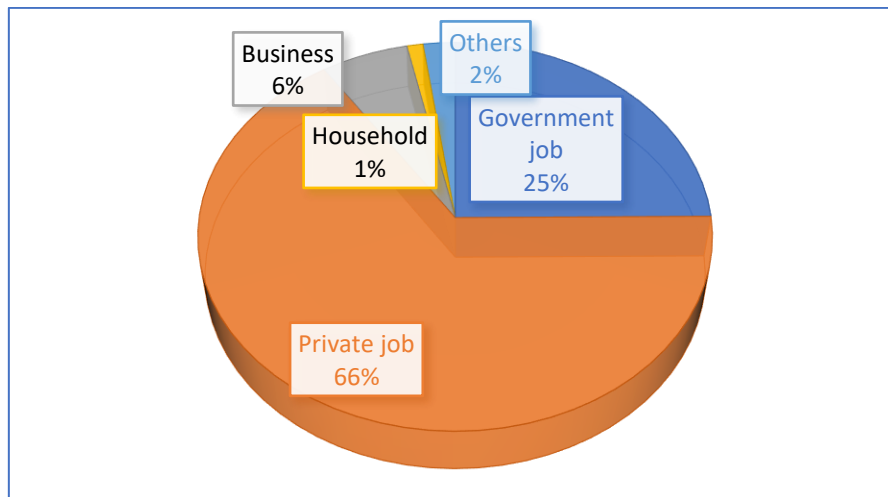


Figure 4. Occupation of Father (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were Government job: 24.89%, Private job: 65.78%, Business: 6%, Household: 1.11% and Others: 2.22%.

Table 5. Occupation of Mother:

Occupation of Mother	Respondents	%
Government job	63	14
Private job	116	25.78
Business	15	3.33
Household	234	52
Others	22	4.89
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

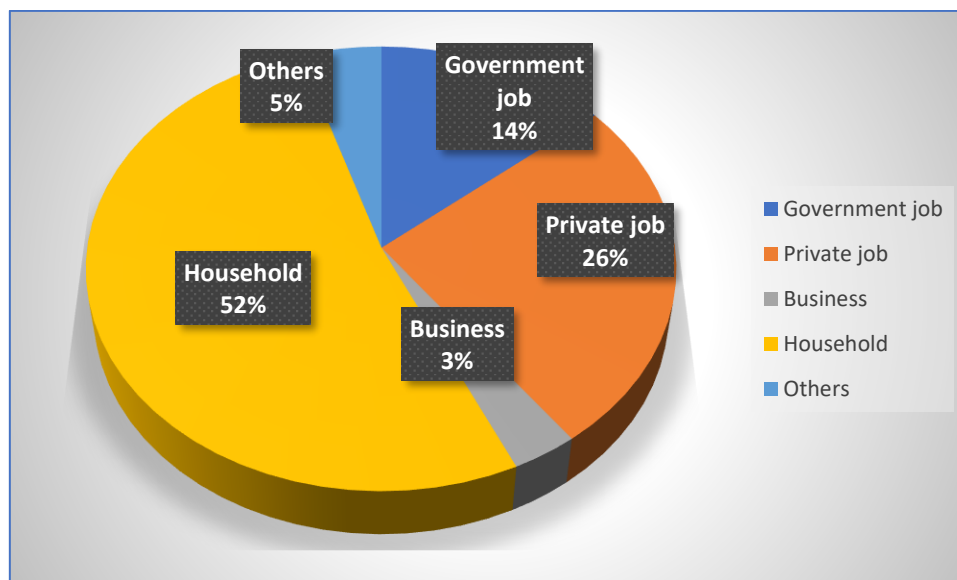


Figure 5. Occupation of Mother (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were Government job: 14%, Private job: 25.78%, Business: 3.33%, Household: 52% and others: 4.89%.

Gender Sensitivity:

Table 6. Men & women should be equal:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	36	8

D	49	10.89
N	32	7.11
A	197	43.77
SA	136	30.23
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

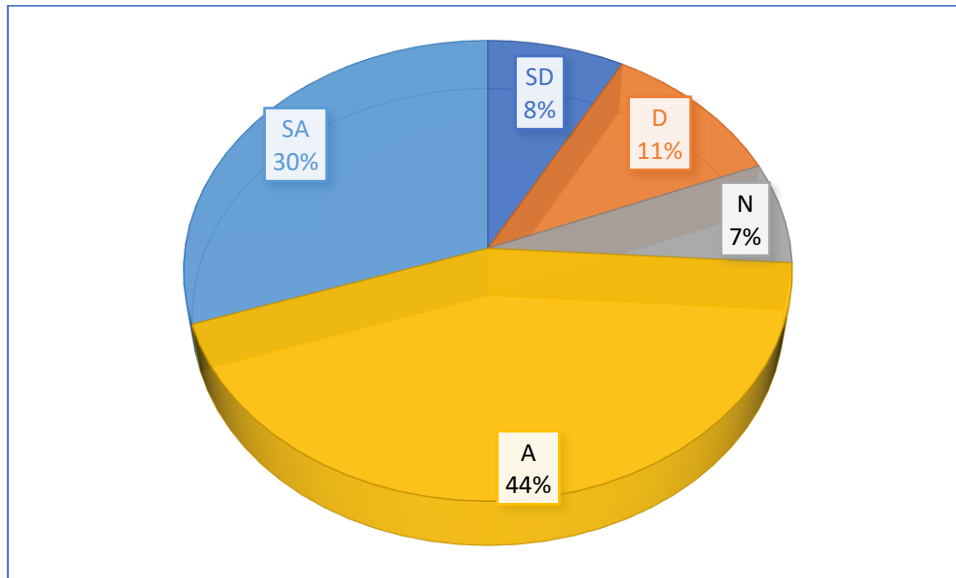


Figure 6. Men & women should be equal (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 8%, D: 10.89%, N: 7.11%, A: 43.77% and SA: 30.23%.

Table 7. Men & women have the same rights in our country:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	35	7.78
D	58	12.89
N	24	5.33
A	206	45.78
SA	127	28.22
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

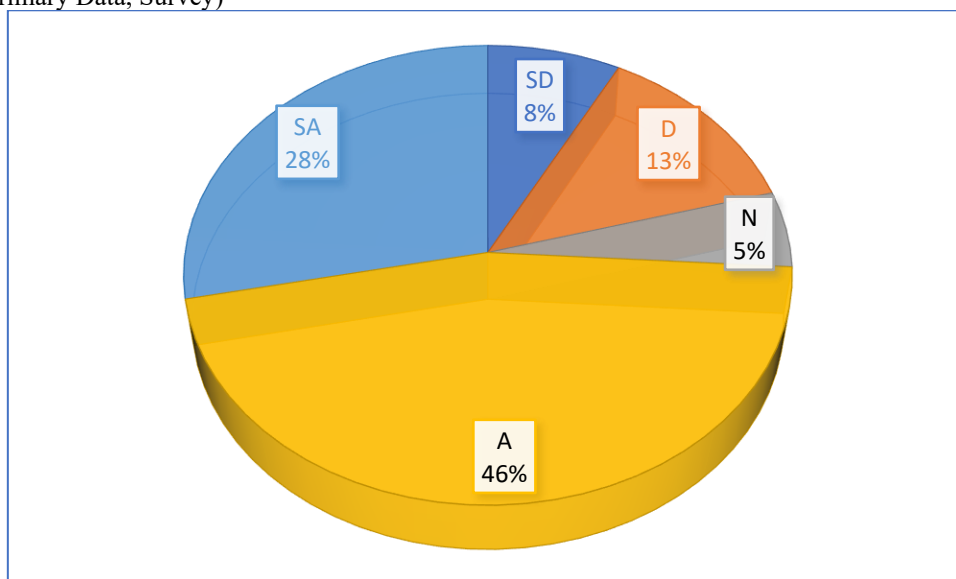


Figure 7. Men & women have the same rights in our country (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 7.40%, D: 12.89%, N: 5.33%, A: 45.78% and SA: 28.22%.

Table 8. Gender awareness plays an important role in informing women and men about gender equality:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	23	5.11
D	33	7.33
N	27	6
A	228	50.67
SA	139	30.89
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

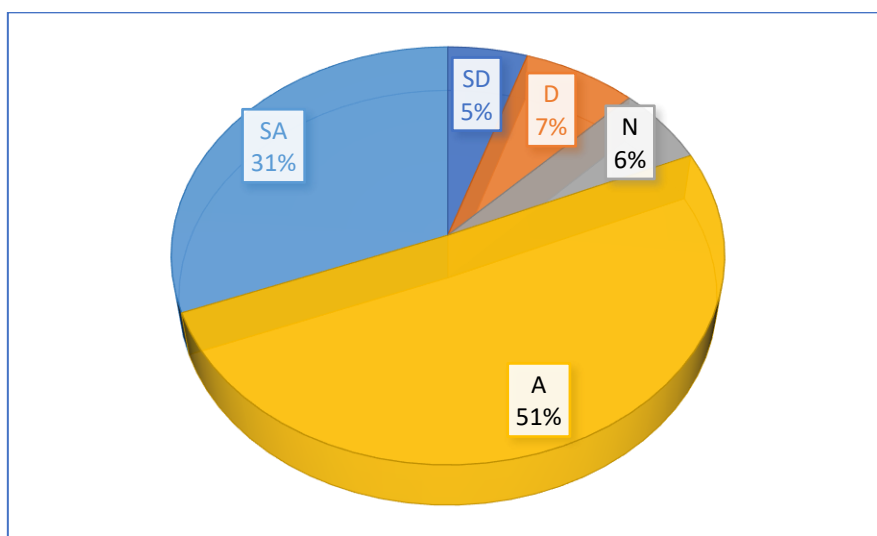


Figure 8. Gender awareness plays an important role in informing women and men about gender equality (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 5.11%, D: 7.33%, N: 6%, A: 50.67% and SA: 30.89%.

Study of Values:

Table 9. Theoretical Values- Knowledge and Inquiry:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	40	8.89
D	89	19.78
N	27	6
A	176	39.11
SA	118	26.22
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

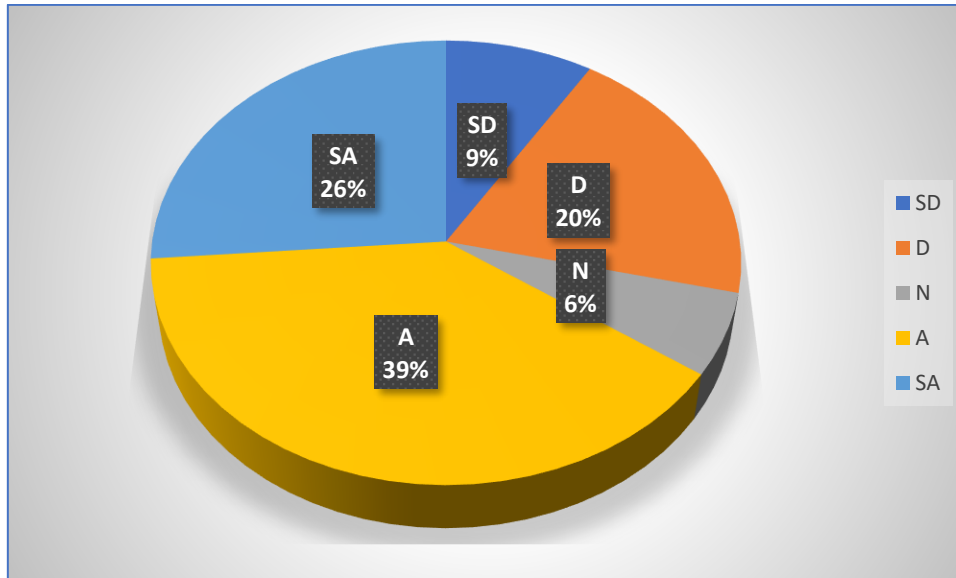


Figure 9. Theoretical Values- Knowledge and Inquiry (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 8.89%, D: 19.78%, N: 6%, A: 39.11% and SA: 26.22%.

Table 10. Theoretical Values- Intellectual Curiosity:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	119	26.44
D	134	29.78
N	32	7.11
A	113	25.11
SA	52	11.56
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

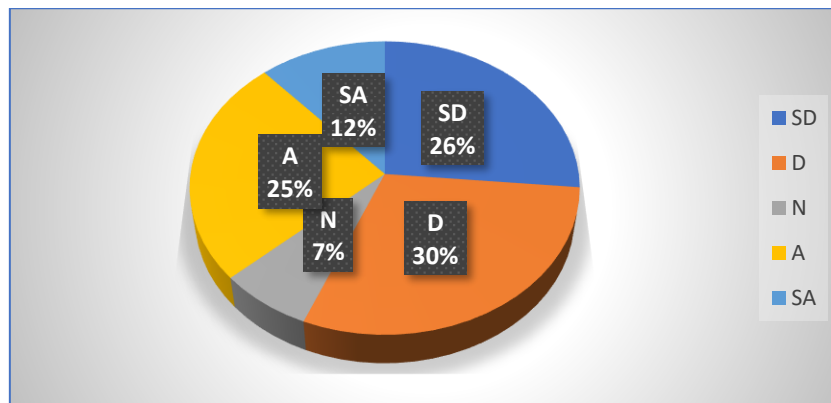


Figure 10. Theoretical Values- Intellectual Curiosity (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 26.44%, D: 29.78%, N: 7.11%, A: 25.11% and SA: 11.56%.

Table 11. Theoretical Values- Scientific Reasoning:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	148	32.89
D	127	28.22
N	23	5.11
A	111	24.67
SA	41	9.11
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

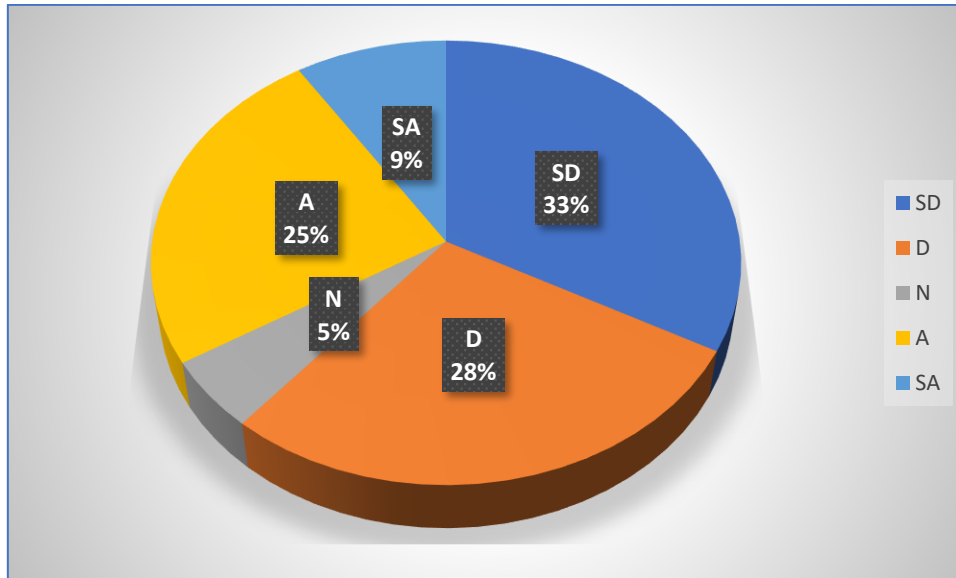


Figure 11. Theoretical Values- Scientific Reasoning (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 32.89%, D: 28.22%, N: 5.11%, A: 24.67% and SA: 9.11%.

Psychological Examination:

Table 12. Girls should independently determine the appropriate time for marriage:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	22	4.89
D	88	19.55
N	39	8.67
A	176	39.11
SA	125	27.78
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

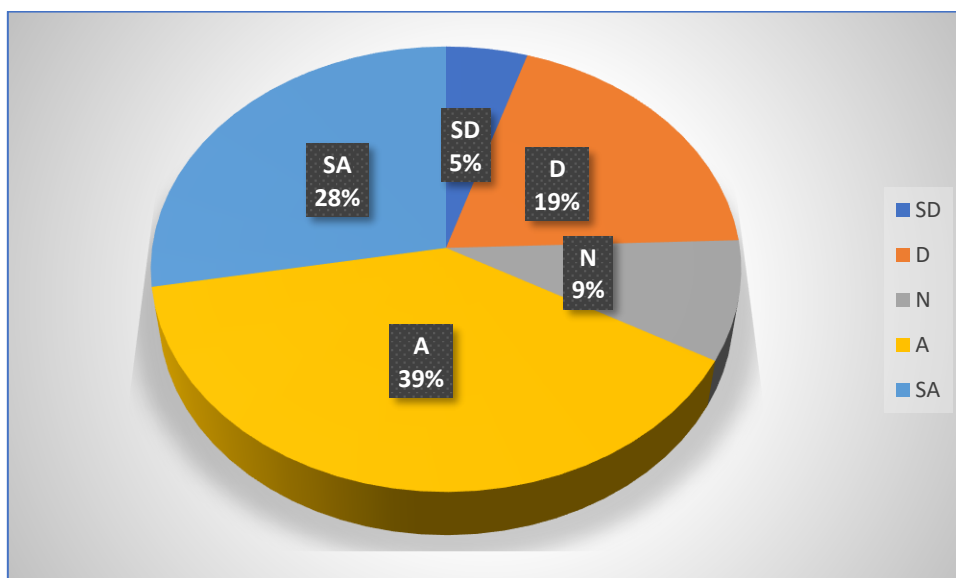


Figure 12. Girls should independently determine the appropriate time for marriage (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 4.89%, D: 19.55%, N: 8.67%, A: 39.11% and SA: 27.78%.

Table 13. Boys should independently decide when to marry:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	47	10.44
D	148	32.89
N	6	1.33
A	201	44.67
SA	48	10.67
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

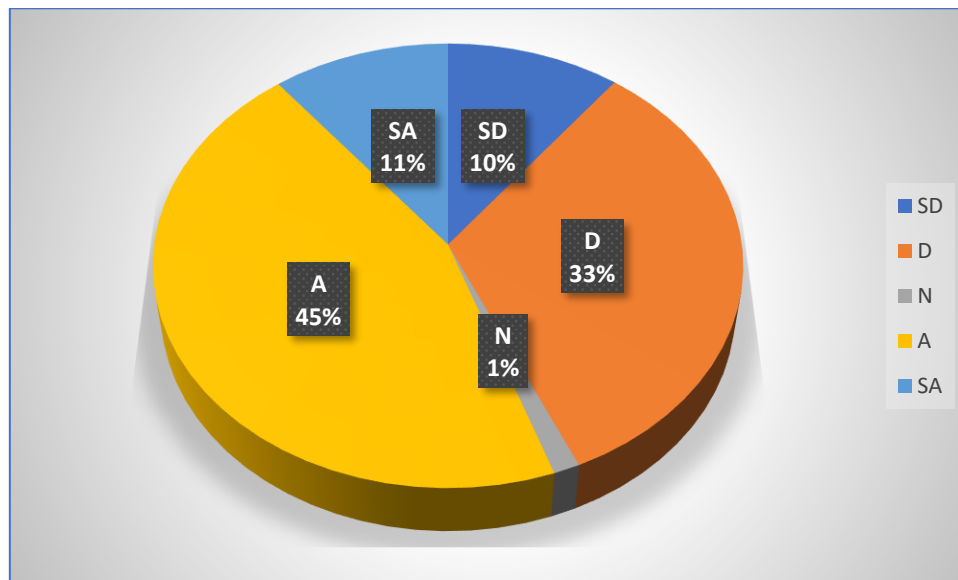


Figure 13. Boys should independently decide when to marry (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 10.44%, D: 32.89%, N: 1.33%, A: 44.67% and SA: 10.67%.

Table 14. Women should have the autonomy to pursue employment post-marriage to generate their income:

Options	Respondents	%
SD	70	15.56
D	192	42.67
N	31	6.89
A	94	20.88
SA	63	14
Total	450	100

(Source: Primary Data, Survey)

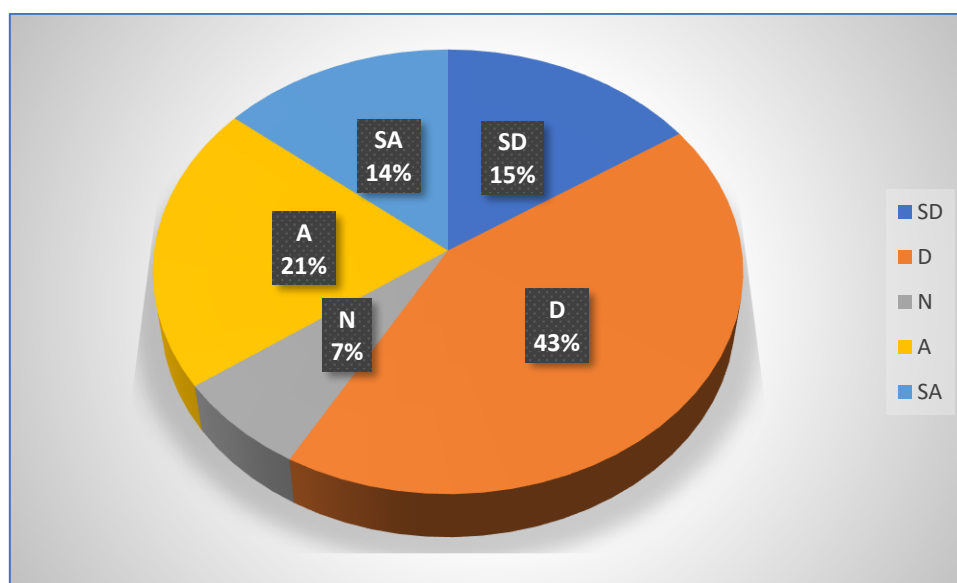


Figure 14. Women should have the autonomy to pursue employment post-marriage to generate their income (%)

From the above table & figure, the % of respondents were SD: 15.56%, D: 42.67%, N: 6.89%, A: 20.88% and SA: 14%.

IV. CONCLUSION:

The research on gender sensitization among certain university students emphasizes that higher education significantly influences perspectives, attitudes, and practices regarding gender equality. The findings reveal that, although numerous students recognize the significance of gender sensitivity, deficiencies persist in their comprehension and implementation in everyday life. Cultural background, socialization, and institutional objectives substantially shape students' perceptions and behaviors. The study used a descriptive and analytical methodology to elucidate disparities in awareness and sensitivity across students of varying fields, genders, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Research indicates that although a considerable percentage of students demonstrate progressive views on gender parity, remnants of conventional beliefs and biases remain. The study underscores the necessity for structured sensitization initiatives, workshops, and curriculum incorporation to eradicate myths and foster inclusivity. The research indicates that universities, as progressive learning environments, should incorporate gender sensitization into academic courses and co-curricular activities to foster a more inclusive and equitable atmosphere. Awareness campaigns, workshops, counseling sessions, and gender-sensitive regulations can significantly mitigate prejudices, preconceptions, and discriminatory practices. In conclusion, gender sensitization is not simply a theoretical notion but an essential practice for cultivating respect, equality, and harmony among students. Equipping young individuals with gender-sensitive principles will empower them personally and assure their responsible contribution to the establishment of a just and egalitarian society. Students cultivate a profound comprehension of gender-related matters, encompassing notions of citizenship, sexuality, and social conventions. The objective is to alter pupils' attitudes and ideas, resulting in more courteous and equitable conduct. These programs foster a more inclusive and equitable campus atmosphere for all students.

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