

# “EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS: THE IMPACT OF SELF-DEFENCE TRAINING ON SCHOOL GIRLS”

Miss. Vaidehi Purani<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Bhavesh Jadav<sup>2</sup>, Prof. Satish Makadiya<sup>3</sup>

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1, Author and student of the Department of Social Work, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University, PO: Limda, Ta: Waghodia, Dist. Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

2410262010015@paruluniversity.ac.in

2, Author, Department of Social Work, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University, PO: Limda, Ta: Waghodia, Dist. Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Bhaveshbhai.jadav33494@paruluniversity.ac.in

3, Author, Department of Social Work, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University, PO: Limda, Ta: Waghodia, Dist. Vadodara, Gujarat, India

satishkumar.makadiya31794@paruluniversity.ac.in

**Corresponding Author: Miss. Vaidehi Purani**

\*Researcher & student of the Department of Social Work, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University, PO: Limda, Ta: Waghodia, Dist. Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

2410262010015@paruluniversity.ac.in

## ABSTRACT

In today's society, the safety and empowerment of girls have become very important concerns. Many school-going girls face problems such as fear, lack of confidence, and limited awareness about how to protect themselves in unsafe situations. These challenges not only affect their personal safety but also influence their mental well-being and overall development.

This study titled “*Empowering Young Minds: The Impact of Self-Defence Training on School Girls*” aims to examine how self-defence training helps in improving confidence, safety awareness, and empowerment among schoolgirls. The study was conducted on 60 participants using an experimental research design, where data was collected before and after the training.

The findings of the study show that self-defence training has a positive impact on girls. There was a noticeable improvement in their confidence level, awareness of surroundings, and ability to handle risky situations. The training also helped reduce fear and encouraged girls to express themselves more confidently.

The study concludes that self-defence training is not only useful for physical protection but also plays an important role in building self-confidence, independence, and mental strength. Therefore, it is recommended that such training should be included in school education for the overall development and empowerment of girls.

## KEYWORDS

Self-defence, Empowerment, Schoolgirls, Confidence, Safety Awareness, Gender Equality, Adolescence, Psychological Development

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the issue of safety and empowerment of girls has become a major concern, especially in India. Schoolgirls often face challenges such as harassment, fear of public spaces, and lack of confidence, which affect their freedom and development. These problems can also impact their education, mental health, and participation in social activities.

Adolescence is an important stage where personality, confidence, and self-identity are developed. However, due to social and cultural factors, girls are often encouraged to be dependent and cautious rather than confident and independent. This can make them feel more vulnerable in difficult situations.

Self-defence training has emerged as an effective way to address these issues. It not only teaches physical techniques but also helps in developing awareness, decision-making ability, and confidence. It encourages girls to recognize unsafe situations, respond effectively, and protect themselves when needed.

This study focuses on understanding the impact of self-defence training on schoolgirls. It aims to analyse how such training improves their confidence, safety awareness, and ability to handle challenging situations. The study is important because it provides practical insights into how self-defence training can contribute to the overall empowerment and development of girls.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature helps in understanding previous research related to self-defence training, empowerment, and confidence among girls. It provides a theoretical base for the present study and shows the importance of such training programs.

**Bandura (1977)** introduced the concept of *self-efficacy*, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and handle situations. According to this theory, when individuals gain skills through training and practice, their confidence increases. In the context of self-defence, girls who learn protective techniques develop stronger belief in their ability to face unsafe situations.

**McCaughey (1997)** studied women's self-defence and found that training changes the mindset of women from being passive victims to active protectors of themselves. The study highlighted that self-defence is not just physical training but also a form of empowerment that builds confidence and independence.

**Hollander (2014)** conducted research on the impact of self-defence training on women and found that participants experienced reduced fear and increased confidence after training. The study also showed that trained individuals were more aware of their surroundings and better prepared to respond to threats.

In the Indian context, several studies and reports have highlighted the importance of safety training for girls. Programs conducted in schools and colleges have shown positive outcomes such as increased awareness, improved confidence, and better communication skills. Government and NGO initiatives have also emphasized the need for empowering girls through education and self-protection training.

Research in adolescent psychology suggests that teenage years are very important for personality development. Activities that build confidence and independence during this stage can have long-term positive effects. Self-defence training helps in developing not only physical strength but also mental and emotional stability among girls.

Some studies also focus on the role of awareness and assertiveness in preventing unsafe situations. Girls who are trained to say "no", express themselves clearly, and identify risky situations are less likely to become victims of harassment or abuse.

However, many existing studies are based on general observations or adult women, and there is limited research specifically focused on schoolgirls, especially using experimental methods. There is also a lack of data comparing the condition before and after training.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the level of awareness about self-defence among schoolgirls
2. To measure the impact of self-defence training on confidence
3. To analyse changes in safety awareness after training
4. To examine improvement in ability to handle unsafe situations
5. To study overall empowerment among participants

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

The study uses an **experimental research design** to compare the condition of participants before and after training.

#### Sample Size

- Total respondents: 60 schoolgirls
- Age group: Adolescents

#### Sampling Method

Simple random sampling method was used.

#### Data Collection Tools

- Structured questionnaire
- Pre-test and post-test method

#### Sources of Data

The study is based on both **primary and secondary data**:

- **Primary**

Collected directly from the participants using questionnaires and observations before and after the training.

- **Secondary**

Collected from books, research articles, journals, and online sources related to self-defence, empowerment, and adolescent development.

#### Procedure

- First, baseline data was collected (before training)
- Then, self-defence training was conducted
- After training, data was collected again
- Comparison was made to analyse changes

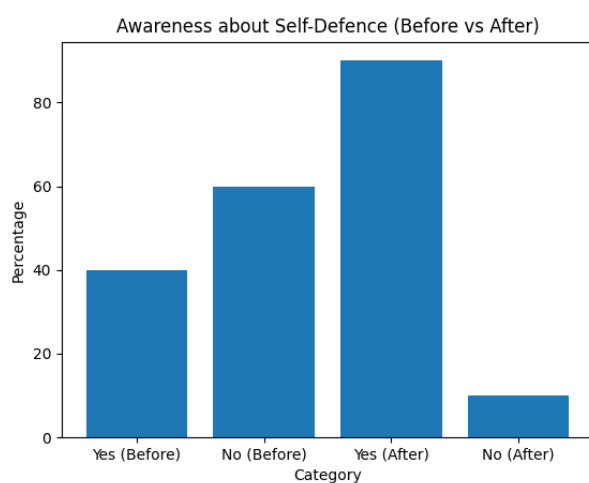
## Data Analysis Method

- Percentage method
- Tabular analysis

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 1: Awareness about Self-Defence**

Category	Before (%)	After (%)
Yes	40%	90%
No	60%	10%



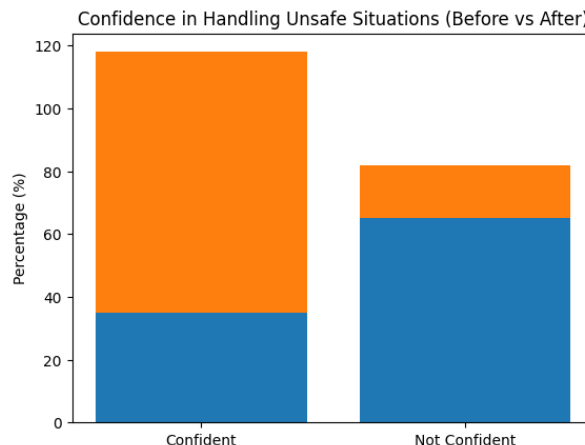
### Interpretation:

Before the self-defence training, only **40%** of the schoolgirls were aware of self-defence, while a majority of **60%** had no awareness about it. This indicates that most participants initially lacked knowledge about personal safety measures and protective techniques.

After the training, awareness increased significantly, with **90%** of the girls becoming aware of self-defence, and only **10%** remaining unaware. This clearly shows that the training program was highly effective in improving awareness and understanding of personal safety among the participants.

**Table 2: Confidence in Handling Unsafe Situations**

Category	Before (%)	After (%)
Confident	35%	83%
Not Confident	65%	17%



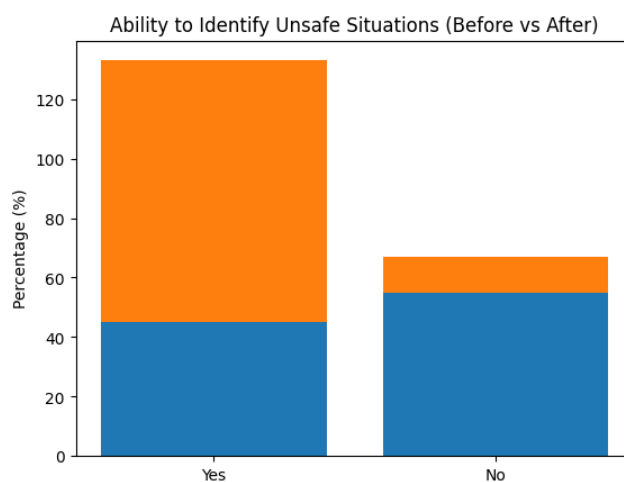
### Interpretation:

Before the self-defence training, only **35%** of the schoolgirls felt confident in handling unsafe situations, while a majority of **65%** were not confident. This shows that most participants initially lacked the confidence and skills needed to protect themselves or respond effectively in difficult situations.

After the training, there was a significant improvement in their confidence levels. The percentage of confident girls increased to **83%**, while those who were not confident reduced to **17%**. This indicates that self-defence training played an important role in building confidence, awareness, and the ability to handle unsafe situations more effectively.

**Table 3: Ability to Identify Unsafe Situations**

Category	Before (%)	After (%)
Yes	45%	88%
No	55%	12%



### Interpretation:

Students became more aware and alert about unsafe situations after the training. The percentage of students able to identify unsafe situations increased significantly from **45%** to **88%**, while those unable to identify such situations decreased from **55%** to **12%**. This clearly shows the effectiveness of the intervention in improving awareness and alertness.

## Overall Interpretation

The data clearly shows that self-defence training has a positive impact on awareness, confidence, and safety behaviour among schoolgirls.

## 6. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Awareness about self-defence increased significantly after training
- Confidence levels improved among majority of participants
- Fear and anxiety reduced in many girls
- Students became more alert about surroundings
- Ability to respond to unsafe situations improved
- Communication skills and assertiveness increased
- Girls showed more willingness to report harassment
- Overall empowerment and independence increased

## 7. SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Self-defence training should be made compulsory in schools
- Regular workshops and practice sessions should be conducted
- Parents should be made aware of its importance
- Government should support such programs through policies
- Training should include psychological and emotional aspects
- Special focus should be given to rural and underprivileged areas
- Schools should collaborate with NGOs and trainers

## 8. PLAN OF ACTION: SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION

The first step in the social work intervention is to create awareness among schoolgirls about personal safety, rights, and the importance of self-defence. Social workers can organize workshops, group discussions, and interactive sessions in schools to help girls understand unsafe situations and how to respond effectively. Involving parents and teachers in these programs is also important to build a supportive and safe environment for the girls.

Secondly, regular self-defence training should be introduced as a part of the school system. Instead of one-time sessions, continuous training programs should be conducted by trained professionals. These sessions should include physical techniques, awareness-building activities, communication skills, and confidence development. Social workers can collaborate with NGOs, trainers, and local authorities to ensure proper implementation and reach more students.

Lastly, counselling and community support should be provided to strengthen the emotional and social well-being of the girls. Social workers can offer individual and group counselling to reduce fear and build self-confidence. At the same time, community awareness programs and proper reporting systems should be developed to encourage girls to speak up against unsafe situations. Regular monitoring and feedback will help in improving the effectiveness of these interventions.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that self-defence training has a significant positive impact on schoolgirls by improving their confidence, awareness, and ability to handle unsafe situations. After the training, the participants showed noticeable changes in their behaviour, such as increased alertness, better understanding of safety measures, and reduced fear. This indicates that such training is effective in preparing girls to face real-life challenges.

Moreover, self-defence training is not limited to physical protection but also contributes to psychological empowerment. It helps girls develop self-belief, emotional strength, and decision-making skills. The training encourages them to express themselves confidently, say “no” in uncomfortable situations, and take appropriate action when needed. These changes are important for their overall personality development.

In conclusion, self-defence training is an essential tool for empowering schoolgirls and ensuring their safety and independence. It should be included as a regular part of school education so that girls can grow into confident, aware, and strong individuals. Such initiatives can play a key role in building a safer and more equal society.

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