



## STRENGTHENING PERSONAL SAFETY: THE ROLE OF SELF-DEFENSE TRAINING FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN DELHI

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### Abstract

This paper explores the role of self-defense training (SDT) in enhancing personal safety for young women in Delhi, offering actionable recommendations for individuals and communities. It highlights key insights into physical techniques, mental preparedness, and effective awareness strategies such as workshops, social media campaigns, and educational collaborations. The research uncovers the persistent safety concerns faced by young women and the societal norms influencing their engagement with SDT. While safety, skill acquisition, and empowerment motivate participation, barriers like limited awareness and cultural constraints persist. The study emphasizes the need for tailored interventions to foster inclusivity and accessibility. Additionally, the Delhi Police plays a significant role through SDT programs, emergency helplines, and community outreach initiatives. Their collaborations with organizations and educational institutions amplify efforts to create a safer environment.

**Keywords:** Self-defense training, Women's safety, Empowerment, Gender-based violence

### Introduction

In contemporary society, ensuring the safety and security of women has become an increasingly critical issue, especially in urban areas like Delhi, where incidents of violence against women persist despite efforts to curb them. Women and girls are among the travelers for different purposes like work, education, religious institutions for worshipping, market or shopping purposes, health centers, recreation centers, visiting others, and other important economic and political activities (Choudhary et al., 2018). Public spaces, encompassing streets, parks, community areas, dump grounds, and open spaces, serve as the backdrop for countless interactions and activities. However, for many women, these spaces also represent sites of potential danger, where the risk of harassment, assault, and violence looms large. In such environments, women often feel vulnerable and exposed to various forms of gender-based violence. Despite efforts to address these issues through legislation and public awareness campaigns, the persistence of violence against women reinforces the need for more proactive and empowering solutions.

Self-defense training gives women access to a new set of assertive and combative responses to various forms of intimidation and threat along the continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988, McCaughey, 1997). The concept of self-defense goes beyond physical techniques; it encompasses a holistic approach to personal safety that involves awareness, assertiveness, and the ability to assess and respond to dangerous situations effectively. Self-defense training prepares women both mentally and physically for potential assaults (Follansbee, 1982), by providing them with opportunities to learn, observe, and practice physical, social, and cognitive skills through the use of role-plays, discussion, and simulation exercises (Cummings, 1992, Peretz, 1991, Thompson, 1991). Through self-defense training, women can develop confidence in their ability to protect themselves, thereby reducing their vulnerability to violence. Moreover, self-defense empowers women by shifting the focus from victimization to empowerment, instilling a sense of agency and autonomy.

The issue of personal safety, particularly for girls and women, is a matter of global concern, underlined by alarming instances of sexual assault and violence against them. According to data from the National



Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) spanning from 2021 to 2024, incidents of sexual violence have remained persistently high, emphasizing the urgent need for effective preventive measures. In response, self-defense training has emerged as a proactive measure, equipping women with the skills and confidence to protect themselves in potentially dangerous situations.

Despite its potential, there has been limited research examining the long-term impact of self-defense training on girls and women. However, recent years have seen increased focus from both government programs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly in school and college settings, highlighting a growing recognition of the importance of such initiatives. To address this gap it is important to explore the motivations of young women participating in self-defense training and assessing the lasting effects on their lives.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Safety and Development**

Development is a multidimensional concept encompassing progress across various aspects of individual, societal, and economic well-being (Sen, 1999). While development spans social, economic, environmental, and political domains, ensuring safety falls primarily under social development (Choudhary, Kidwai, & Alam, 2018). Addressing safety concerns alongside self-defense training contributes significantly to fostering a secure social environment, particularly for young women.

Enhancing safety aligns with broader social development goals by creating communities where individuals, especially women, can live without fear (Bramhankar & Reshmi, 2021). Research suggests that initiatives promoting personal safety positively impact social cohesion, resilience, and community well-being (McCaughey, 1997). While this study primarily emphasizes social and personal development, it also considers gender equality, cultural dynamics, and community engagement as interrelated dimensions (Hollander, 2014). By promoting personal safety, such initiatives strengthen the social fabric, fostering empowerment and collective responsibility. Creating a secure environment enables individuals, irrespective of gender, to thrive, underscoring the far-reaching impact of safety-oriented interventions (Ozer & Bandura, 1990).

### **2.2 Gender and SDGs**

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a comprehensive global framework for addressing critical challenges and promoting sustainable progress by 2030. Among the 17 interconnected goals, SDG 5—Gender Equality—explicitly targets the elimination of discrimination, violence, and exploitation of women and girls in both public and private spheres (United Nations, 2015). The research topic, *Self-Defense Training in Enhancing Personal Safety among Young Women*, directly aligns with SDG 5 by addressing violence against women through proactive safety measures.

Empowering women extends beyond physical safety; it involves fostering confidence, resilience, and agency (Hollander, 2014). Self-defense training equips young women with the skills needed to navigate public spaces safely, thereby reinforcing gender equality (Brecklin & Ullman, 2005). Access to safety is fundamental to achieving gender parity, as it ensures equal rights and opportunities for women to move freely without fear (McCaughey, 1997). Additionally, research on self-defense training and its role in reducing violence can contribute to future gender equality indicators, further supporting SDG 5. By focusing on women's empowerment and safety, this study underscores the necessity of proactive interventions in achieving a more equitable and just society.

### **2.3 Personal Safety**

Personal safety is a fundamental human right that serves as the foundation for individual well-being



(United Nations, 2015). It encompasses various dimensions, including physical protection, psychological security, and digital safety (Hollander, 2014). Ensuring the personal safety of young women is particularly critical, given their heightened vulnerability in public and private spaces (Bramhankar & Reshmi, 2021). Women's safety extends beyond preventing harm; it involves empowering them with knowledge and skills to recognize and respond to potential threats (Brecklin & Ullman, 2005). Physical safety entails protection from violence, while psychological security includes freedom from fear, harassment, and stress (McCaughey, 1997). In the digital era, safety concerns also involve cyber threats and online harassment, which have been rising in India (NCRB, 2022). Providing young women with self-defense training and responsible digital literacy can enhance their ability to navigate public and online spaces securely (Ozer & Bandura, 1990).

The significance of personal safety is not confined to individual well-being; it has broader implications for community resilience (Choudhary et al., 2018). Secure individuals contribute to thriving communities, fostering a collective sense of trust and inclusivity (Sen, 1999). Ensuring women's safety enables them to pursue education, careers, and civic engagement without the constraints of fear (Hollander, 2014). By addressing safety concerns, societies can promote inclusivity and create environments where women can fully participate in social and economic development (Brecklin, 2008).

#### **2.4 Personal Safety in Indian Context**

Women's safety remains a global concern, yet each country presents unique challenges (United Nations, 2015). In India, societal norms, legal enforcement gaps, and emerging cyber threats complicate the issue (Bramhankar & Reshmi, 2021). According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 26% of married women aged 15-49 have experienced spousal violence (Bramhankar & Reshmi, 2021). Additionally, the rise in cybercrimes against women underscores evolving safety threats (NCRB, 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a combination of legal reforms, public awareness campaigns, and empowerment initiatives like self-defense training (Hollander, 2014).

Urban environments such as Delhi pose specific risks due to crowded public spaces, insufficient infrastructure, and deep-rooted socio-cultural barriers (Choudhary et al., 2018). The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports that Delhi registered the highest rate of crime against women in India (144.4 per 100,000 population), significantly surpassing the national average of 66.4 (NCRB, 2022). In 2022 alone, 4,45,256 cases of crimes against women were registered, reflecting a 4% increase from the previous year. The majority of these cases involved domestic violence (31.4%), kidnapping and abduction (19.2%), sexual assault (18.7%), and rape (7.1%) (NCRB, 2022).

These statistics highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions (Brecklin & Ullman, 2005). Addressing safety concerns in urban settings requires improved public infrastructure, better law enforcement, and increased awareness programs (McCaughey, 1997). The growing recognition of self-defense training as an empowerment tool offers a promising solution to enhancing women's safety in such high-risk environments (Hollander, 2014).

The intersection of safety, gender equality, and self-defense training underscores the urgent need for proactive measures to empower women. Ensuring personal safety is fundamental to fostering inclusive and resilient communities. As this review highlights, self-defense training offers a tangible solution to enhancing women's security, aligning with global sustainability goals such as SDG 5: Gender Equality (United Nations, 2015). While challenges remain, integrating self-defense training into broader social development initiatives can contribute to long-term gender empowerment and societal well-being.

### **3. METHODS**



The study was undertaken to understand the role of self-defense training on personal safety among young women. It aimed to explore the perceptions, motivations of young women taking self defense training and identify the challenges and barriers faced by young women taking training.

### 3.1 Objective

- To study the role of self-defense training on enhancing personal safety among young women in Delhi.

#### Specific Objectives

- To analyze the perceptions of young women regarding personal safety in Delhi.
- To explore the motivations of young women taking self-defense training.
- To identify the challenges and barriers faced by young women taking training.
- To understand the changes in the life of young women through self-defense training programs.

The study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is characterized by its focus on exploring and understanding complex phenomena through an in-depth examination of individuals' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited for investigating multifaceted topics such as the role of self-defense training in personal safety. By engaging directly with respondents and capturing their perspectives in their words, qualitative research enables a comprehensive exploration of the underlying motivations, challenges, and impacts associated with self-defense training.

### 3.2 Locale

The study was conducted in Delhi, with a population of approximately 33.8 million. Delhi was selected as the locale for this study due to its significant population density and the prevalence of urban lifestyle factors contributing to the need for personal safety measures among young women. Additionally, according to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Delhi has recorded the highest number of cases of crimes against women at 14,158 among the 19 metropolitan cities of India in 2022. The presence of various organizations, including governmental and non-governmental entities, offering self-defense training programs underscores its suitability. Notably, the Delhi Police has been instrumental, initiating self-defense training for young women since 2002, focusing on imparting martial arts techniques and self-defense training to gain practical skills, thereby rendering it an ideal locale for this study.

### 3.3 Sampling

Purposive sampling was utilized as the sampling technique for the study. This non-random sampling technique allows for the selection of respondents who have undergone self-defense training within the stipulated time frame, ensuring the relevance of their experiences to the study.

The sample size for the study was determined to be 40 young women who have completed self-defense training provided by Delhi Police or other NGOs. This sample size was deemed appropriate to obtain comprehensive insights of the experiences and perceptions from the young women regarding personal safety and the efficacy of self-defense training. The inclusion criteria for the study consisted of young females aged between 18 to 25 years, who had completed a self-defense training program for a minimum duration of 2 months, with certification provided by Delhi Police/organization. Additionally, respondents needed to have undergone their self-defense training between the years 2018 to 2023. These criteria were established to ensure a homogeneous sample and to focus the study on young women who had recently engaged in formal self-defense training.

### 3.4 Tools

Data collection primarily involved conducting in-depth interviews with the selected respondent. These



interviews were carefully structured to explore relevant themes and topics related to self-defense training and personal safety among young women in Delhi. In this study, in-depth interviews were chosen as the primary tool for data collection. The open-ended nature of in-depth interviews encourages respondents to express themselves freely, providing rich, detailed accounts of their experiences related to self-defense training and personal safety. This approach allows researchers to gain a nuanced understanding of the topic under investigation, capturing intricacies and subtleties that may not be apparent through quantitative methods alone. Additionally, the use of in-depth interviews enables a comprehensive exploration of respondent's experiences, motivations, challenges, and the impact of self-defense training on personal safety among young women in Delhi, providing rich, context-specific data to for future interventions, policies, and programs aimed at enhancing the safety and well-being of young women in urban settings.

### **3.5 Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

Given the qualitative nature of this study, a thematic analysis approach was employed to analyze and interpret the data collected through in-depth interviews. This method facilitated the identification of patterns, themes, and trends embedded within the dataset, thereby elucidating profound insights into the influence of self-defense training on personal safety among young women in Delhi. Microsoft Excel, as a pivotal tool, has been utilized for making comprehensive code sheets. These code sheets served as a repository wherein respondent's responses for each query were meticulously logged based on themes. To enhance clarity and comprehension, tables and figures were curated to effectively collate and present the data, thus providing a visually compelling narrative of the study's findings.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

- The researcher took proper care of ethical concerns by explaining the purpose of the study and ensuring informed consent to the respondents.
- The respondent participation was voluntary, and they were not compelled to answer any questions by which they felt uncomfortable.
- The respondents were assured about the confidentiality of their information and their shared data would only be used only for the purpose of this research and academic purposes.
- The interview sessions were conducted ensuring the privacy of the respondents as per their convenience and comfort.

## **4. RESULTS**

The study examined the role and efficacy of self-defense training programs on enhancing the personal safety of young women. Through specific objectives like analyzing perceptions, exploring motivations, identifying challenges, and understanding changes, the research aimed to provide valuable insights into the role of self-defense training.

### **4.1 Profile of Respondents**

The study included 40 young women from Delhi who completed self-defense training (SDT) between 2018 and 2023, with all respondents being students at the time of the study. Previous research has shown that self-defense training is particularly impactful for young women, fostering confidence and enhancing personal safety (Hollander, 2014; Brecklin & Ullman, 2005).

### **4.2 Perception About Personal Safety**

Findings indicated that 55% of respondents perceived their environment as moderately safe, while 30% felt safe, and 15% considered their surroundings unsafe. Studies suggest that women's safety perceptions are influenced by both environmental factors and personal security measures, highlighting the need for





proactive self-defense training (Choudhary, Kidwai, & Alam, 2018).

### ***Travel During Nighttime and Concerns Over Time***

57.5% of respondents believed girls should only go out alone during daylight, 32.5% felt girls should go out alone regardless of the time of day, and 10% advocated for stricter safety measures. These perceptions align with existing research, which emphasizes that public safety concerns often restrict women's mobility, reinforcing gendered limitations in urban spaces (National Crime Records Bureau [NCRB], 2022).

### ***Safety Measures and Awareness of Helpline Numbers***

Findings showed that 60% of respondents did not use personal protection items like pepper spray, while 32.5% reported using such items. Prior research underscores the importance of self-defense training in equipping women with protective strategies, including the use of safety tools and awareness of emergency resources (Brecklin & Ullman, 2005).

Additionally, while 63% of respondents were aware of women's helpline numbers (e.g., 1091, 1098, and 112), 33% lacked such awareness. Limited knowledge of helpline numbers suggests gaps in public awareness initiatives, emphasizing the need for better outreach (NCRB, 2022).

## **4.3 Motivations and Challenges**

### **Sources of Information**

Friends were the most common source of information about self-defense training (38%), followed by teachers (25%) and family members (18%). The role of peer influence and educational institutions in promoting self-defense aligns with previous studies that highlight the effectiveness of such networks in fostering awareness (McCaughey, 1997; Hollander, 2014).

### ***Motivation to Join Self-Defense Training***

Self-motivation was the primary factor influencing participation in SDT programs (40%), followed by encouragement from friends and family (25% each). Research confirms that personal safety concerns, peer support, and familial encouragement are key drivers in women's engagement with SDT (Ozer & Bandura, 1990; Thompson, 1991).

### ***Difficulties Faced by Respondents***

Among respondents, 18% reported difficulty learning self-defense techniques, while 15% cited time management issues. Additionally, 10% of respondents experienced societal barriers, including gender norms and cultural expectations, which aligns with studies on traditional societal constraints limiting women's participation in SDT (Peretz, 1991).

### ***Social Attitudes and Family Consideration***

The majority (80%) of respondents reported supportive family environments that encouraged participation in SDT. Research suggests that familial support is crucial for sustaining women's involvement in empowerment programs (Kelly, 1988).

### ***Openness of Young Girls Towards Such Training***

While 80% of respondents believed young girls were open to SDT, 20% recognized barriers such as social stigma and lack of awareness. These findings echo studies highlighting cultural and societal influences on women's willingness to engage in self-defense training (McCaughey, 1997).

### ***Reasons for Girls Not to Choose SDT***

Barriers to SDT participation included lack of family support (45%), time constraints (23%), lack of



awareness (20%), lack of interest (8%), and cultural norms (5%). These findings align with existing research that identifies gender norms, safety concerns, and accessibility issues as common deterrents (Sen, 1999).

#### 4.4 Effectiveness of Self-Defense Training

##### Self-Defense Training Program Undertaken

The majority of respondents (75%) completed SDT within 2-4 months, with Delhi Police serving as the primary training provider (95%). Research has highlighted the role of law enforcement agencies in conducting safety programs, though accessibility remains a challenge (Choudhary et al., 2018).

##### Techniques

Findings indicated that 45% of participants preferred a combination of verbal assertiveness and physical defense techniques, while 23% focused on escape strategies. Prior studies confirm the effectiveness of a multifaceted approach in self-defense training (Hollander, 2014; Cummings, 1992).

##### Factors for Joining SDT

Safety concerns (48%) were the primary reason for joining SDT programs, followed by an interest in acquiring defense techniques (25%). Research confirms that self-defense training is often motivated by concerns about public safety and personal empowerment (Brecklin & Ullman, 2005).

##### Influence of SDT

Self-defense training positively influenced 50% of respondents by increasing confidence and empowerment. Additionally, 28% became more aware of their surroundings. Studies support these findings, emphasizing SDT's role in enhancing women's self-efficacy and situational awareness (Ozer & Bandura, 1990).

#### 4.5 Push and Pull Factors

Self-defense training offers individuals the opportunity to acquire essential skills and knowledge to protect themselves in various situations. The decision to join such programs is influenced by a combination of pull factors, which encourage participation, and push factors, which may act as barriers. Understanding these factors is crucial for comprehensively addressing the motivations and challenges associated with self-defense training.

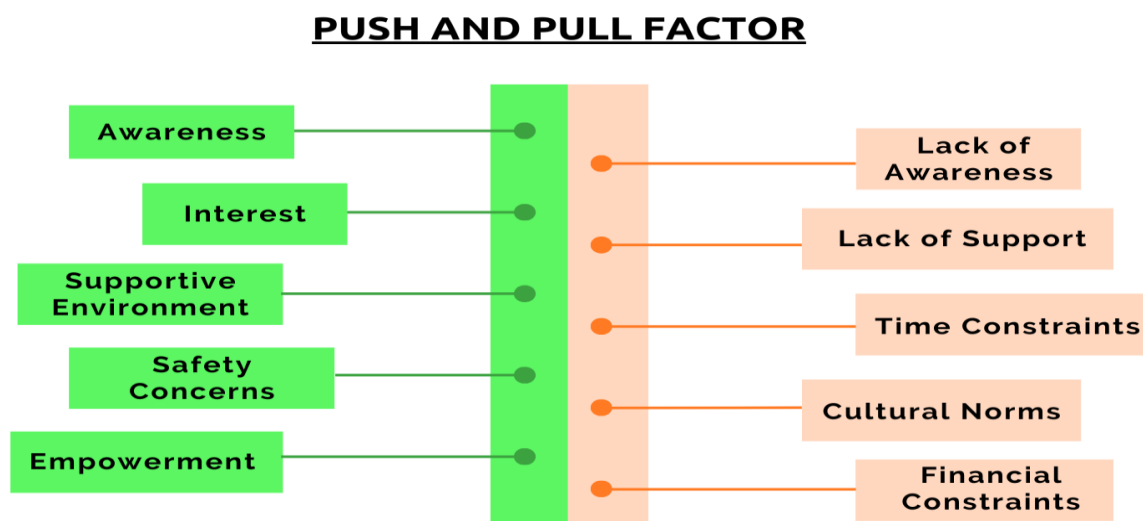


Figure 1: Push and Pull factors



### **Pull Factors for Joining Self-Defense Training:**

- 1. Awareness:** Increased awareness about the prevalence of safety challenges, such as harassment and assault, creates a pull towards self-defense training. Understanding the importance of being prepared for potential threats motivates individuals to take proactive steps to enhance their safety.
- 2. Interest:** Genuine interest in learning self-defense techniques serves as a pull factor, driving individuals to seek out training opportunities. The curiosity to acquire new skills and knowledge contributes to the decision to participate in self-defense training.
- 3. Supportive Environment:** A supportive environment, including encouragement from family, friends, and teachers, acts as a pull factor for joining self-defense training. Positive reinforcement and encouragement bolster individuals' motivation to engage in such programs.
- 4. Safety Concerns:** A significant pull factor for joining self-defense training is the pervasive concern about personal safety among young women. The desire to feel more secure and capable of protecting oneself motivates individuals to enroll in such programs.
- 5. Empowerment:** Self-defense training is often perceived as a means of empowerment, allowing individuals to feel more confident and in control of their own safety. The prospect of gaining empowerment through learning practical defense skills attracts respondents to these programs.

### **Push Factors for Not Joining Self-Defense Training:**

- 1. Lack of Awareness:** Limited awareness about the availability and benefits of self-defense training programs can deter individuals from seeking out such opportunities. Without adequate information, individuals may not recognize the value of acquiring self-defense skills.
- 2. Lack of Support:** A lack of support from family, peers, or societal norms can act as a significant push factor, discouraging individuals from pursuing self-defense training. Without encouragement or backing from their social circle, individuals may feel reluctant to enroll in such programs.
- 3. Time Constraints:** Balancing training sessions with other commitments, such as education or work responsibilities, can be challenging. Time constraints act as a push factor, making it difficult for individuals to prioritize self-defense training amidst their busy schedules.
- 4. Cultural Norms:** Cultural norms and expectations may discourage some individuals, particularly women, from participating in activities perceived as unconventional or assertive. Societal pressures to conform to traditional gender roles can act as a barrier to joining self-defense training.
- 5. Financial Constraints:** Financial barriers, such as the cost of enrollment fees or purchasing necessary equipment, can serve as push factors for not joining self-defense training. Economic considerations may prevent individuals from accessing these programs, particularly if they perceive them as financially burdensome. Self-defense training serves as a vital resource for empowering individuals and enhancing their safety and confidence. By recognizing and addressing both pull and push factors, stakeholders can better support individuals in accessing and benefiting from self-defense training opportunities. Creating a supportive environment, raising awareness, and addressing logistical and economic barriers are essential steps in ensuring that individuals can make informed choices and actively engage in self-defense training programs.

### **4.6 Long Term Impact and Sustainability**

Self-defense training (SDT) programs have emerged as vital tools in empowering individuals, particularly women, to navigate safety challenges and assert their rights effectively. In this section, we delve into the long-term impact and sustainability of SDT initiatives, exploring how they shape behavioral changes,





daily practices, empowerment, community engagement, and advocacy efforts. By examining individual narratives and broader trends, we aim to elucidate the enduring influence of SDT and identify strategies for enhancing program sustainability. Through these insights, we seek to underscore the importance of ongoing investment in SDT initiatives to foster a culture of personal safety and empowerment.

### **Sustained Behavioral Changes**

The study revealed sustained behavioral changes among respondents following self-defense training (SDT). Despite initial challenges, such as maintaining increased confidence and awareness, many respondents successfully preserved these changes over time. Strategies employed to sustain behavioral changes included regular practice of learned techniques and ongoing self-reflection on safety behaviors.

A story of Nandani (name changed), an undergraduate student living in Delhi, reflects on her continued behavioral changes. She narrates:

"Since completing the training, my confidence has remained high, and I'm more aware of potential dangers, especially when I'm out alone. However, it hasn't been without challenges. Sometimes, the fear creeps back in, but I remind myself of the techniques I learned to stay composed."

### **Impact on Daily Practices**

Self-defense training (SDT) had a significant impact on the daily practices of respondents. Many integrated learned techniques into various contexts, such as commuting, socializing, and leisure activities. Respondents reported utilizing strategies learned during training to enhance their personal safety and navigate potentially risky situations effectively.

A story of Yashi, a postgraduate student currently pursuing post graduation from, Delhi University, shares her experience:

"Self-defense training has become a part of my daily routine. Whether I'm commuting or socializing, I find myself applying the techniques I learned. It's reassuring to know that I have the skills to protect myself in various situations."

### **Empowerment**

The influence of self-defense training (SDT) on empowerment among respondents was profound. Through acquiring self-defense skills, respondents reported increased confidence in asserting their rights and boundaries in different environments. This newfound empowerment positively affected their interactions and decision-making processes.

A story of Asha (name change), a passionate member of the sports society pursuing her bachelor's degree from a government university, unfolds as she discusses her newfound empowerment," she begins.

"The training has empowered me to assert my boundaries and rights confidently," she reflects. "Now, I navigate safety challenges with a sense of resilience, changing the way I approach interactions and decision-making in all environments."

### **Community Engagement and Advocacy**

Respondents emerged as advocates for personal safety within their communities following self-defense training (SDT). Many shared their experiences and knowledge gained from training with peers, family members, and wider community networks. Their advocacy efforts contributed to raising awareness and promoting personal safety measures among others.

A story of Kalaki (name changed), an undergraduate student in Delhi and a dedicated team leader of her self-defense training group, highlights her advocacy efforts and unwavering commitment to personal safety:



“I’ve actively shared my experiences and knowledge with friends and family, tirelessly encouraging them to prioritize personal safety in every aspect of their lives. Additionally, recognizing the need for broader community engagement, I’ve wholeheartedly dedicated myself to organizing and leading impactful community workshops aimed at raising awareness about the vital importance of self-defense training. Witnessing the transformation and empowerment of others through these efforts brings me immense fulfillment and further fuels my passion for advocating for a safer environment for all.”

### **Sustainability of SDT Programs**

Ensuring the sustainability of self-defense training (SDT) programs is crucial for fostering a culture of personal safety among young women in Delhi. Efforts to enhance accessibility, affordability, and effectiveness, such as integrating programs into educational curriculums and offering subsidized classes, are essential for long-term impact and continued availability of SDT programs.

A story of Geeta (name changed), working as a sales associate in Delhi, who underwent four months of self-defense training, sheds light on sustainability:

"Accessibility to self-defense training programs is crucial for long-term impact. While affordability remains a concern for some, efforts to make these programs more accessible, such as integrating them into school curriculums or offering subsidized classes, could enhance their sustainability and effectiveness."

These were some of the contextual factors emerging from the stories. Self-defense training (SDT) programs have emerged as vital tools in empowering individuals, particularly women, to navigate safety challenges and assert their rights effectively. In this section, we delve into the long-term impact and sustainability of SDT initiatives, exploring how they shape behavioral changes, daily practices, empowerment, community engagement, and advocacy efforts. By examining individual narratives and broader trends, we aim to elucidate the enduring influence of SDT and identify strategies for enhancing program sustainability. Through these insights, we seek to underscore the importance of ongoing investment in SDT initiatives to foster a culture of personal safety and empowerment.

## **5. DISCUSSIONS**

Young women, who are often vulnerable to safety concerns and may benefit from acquiring self-defense skills during their formative years. The high educational attainment among the respondent underscores the potential for education to serve as a platform for promoting empowerment and self-efficacy, factors closely linked to participation in SDT programs. respondents' perceptions of personal safety highlight prevalent safety concerns among young women in Delhi. Despite the majority perceiving their environment as moderately safe, a significant proportion still feel unsafe or express concerns about safety challenges such as harassment and assault. Motivations driving young women to enroll in SDT programs are multifaceted, with safety concerns, interest in learning new skills, and empowerment emerging as prominent factors.

The effectiveness of SDT programs is evident in the reported impacts on respondent confidence, awareness, and ability to respond to threats effectively. The majority of respondents reported feeling more confident and empowered after undergoing SDT, indicating positive psychological outcomes. Additionally, the application of self-defense skills in real-life situations underscores the practical utility of SDT in enhancing personal safety and resilience. Identified push and pull factors provide valuable insights into the facilitators and barriers influencing young women's decisions regarding SDT participation. Safety concerns, interest in learning new skills, and empowerment serve as pull factors that motivate individuals to enroll in SDT programs. Conversely, lack of support, time constraints, and cultural norms act as push factors that may deter participation. Recognizing and addressing these factors is essential for promoting equitable access to SDT and empowering young women to take proactive steps



towards their safety.

Several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of SDT programs for young women in Delhi. Firstly, targeted awareness campaigns and community engagement initiatives are needed to promote SDT and dispel misconceptions surrounding it. Secondly, efforts should be made to address systemic barriers such as time constraints and lack of support through flexible program structures and outreach initiatives targeting families and communities. Additionally, integrating SDT into educational curricula and leveraging digital platforms for training delivery can help reach a wider audience and promote long-term behavioral change.

For individuals interested in self-defense training (SDT), the study findings provide valuable advice from respondents who have undergone such training. Respondents shared valuable insights on how to start self-defense training (SDT). Many stressed the significance of promptly enrolling in a self-defense program, advocating for proactive initiation without delay. Additionally, a substantial portion emphasized that SDT encompasses not only physical techniques but also mental preparedness and confidence-building. They underscored the importance of acknowledging the psychological aspects of self-defense to effectively handle threatening situations and assert personal boundaries confidently. Furthermore, some suggested attending workshops, utilizing online tutorials, or practicing with friends as effective strategies for initiating SDT. These diverse recommendations highlight the multifaceted nature of beginning the journey into self-defense training, offering individuals a range of approaches to explore based on their preferences and circumstances. By engaging in collaborative learning environments and practicing with peers, individuals can enhance their skills in a supportive and interactive manner, fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual empowerment.

In addition to offering advice for individuals interested in SDT, respondents also shared insights into effective strategies for creating awareness about SDT within communities. Organizing community workshops and seminars, leveraging social media campaigns and online resources, and engaging with schools and educational institutions emerged as key approaches to raising awareness about SDT and empowering individuals to take proactive steps towards enhancing their personal safety and well-being. Through these diverse approaches, stakeholders can contribute to the creation of safer and more empowered communities.

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