

SELF DEFENCE FOR WOMEN:

Self-defense and self-protection are an important priority for women. The most common crime to happen to a woman is rape, but it is more about a feeling of dominance from one person over another rather than actual sex. According to statistics, the majority of rapes are perpetrated by men who women know. Assault on women is also a common crime because assailants assume women will be more passive and not fight back; this has to do with stereotypes of women. The best way for women to fight back against crime is to prevent it from happening by avoiding being alone or being in badly lit areas. However, getting into such situations is sometimes inevitable.

The majority of rapes occur in the victim's home. According to the Bureau of Justice, almost 40 percent of all rapes take place in the female victim's home. In the event that rape prevention fails—such as by avoiding problem areas or making sure a woman is never alone—the best chance for survival is to fight back. Fighting back is not just necessary, but it is a moral right because protecting one's self is paramount. The rest of the article will discuss why self-defense is important, some tools and techniques for effective self-defense, and information on gun use.



DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES:

Violence against women is a complex social problem ultimately large scale social changes will be needed before violence against women can be stopped. Empowerment based self-defense training can provide an immediate and effective antidote for sexual violence.

IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM:

Self-defense, especially for women, is of utmost importance in the kind of the world we live in today. Women, usually referred as the weaker sex, are considered easier targets. In a country like India where the cases of gender violence are on rise, out of which many go unreported, self-defense for women has become a necessity more than ever.

Rape, molestation, kidnapping and murder are the most common forms of crime against women in India. The women in India are also vulnerable to acid attacks and eve-teasing. The mindset of the people, including the victim and the spectator, is to ignore and just let it go. But, what we, as the responsible citizens of an independent country, fail to realize is that these instances of harassment can flare up into other bigger heinous crimes against women. And that is when the importance of learning self-defense techniques for women is felt.

Various studies have shown that the criminals tend to choose their targets when they (the potential victim) are unaware of the surroundings. Hence, it is time that each woman became vigilant and totally aware of the surroundings.

The women should be aware of the strategies to be adopted under different adverse circumstances. For example, if you're alone at home during such an attack, you should hurriedly run to kitchen to find chili powder and knives to use them as weapons.



REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Rosé and Koss (2001) report that the majority of rape prevention programs devote little or no time to victim resistance strategies despite evidence of their effectiveness in resisting sexual assault. The clearest benefit of self-defense training for women is that it teaches them to use the most effective means to reduce their risk of rape (Heyden, Ange Jackson, & Ellner, 1999). Schewe (2002) reports, "there is strong evidence concerning the types of strategies that are effective in deterring an attacker," Women's self-defense training attempts to teach women the skills and strategies that are consistent with rape resistant behavior. To date, there are no longitudinal studies on the efficacy of self-defense training in successfully resisting rape (Ullman, 2002); however, there are a number of studies that have examined short-term effects, psychological benefits, and outcomes of self-defense training (Cummings, 1992). Ozer and Bandura (1990) assessed the impact of a self-defense course in which participants (n=43) mastered the physical skills to defend themselves successfully against unarmed sexual attackers.

Women received 5 sessions, each 4-½ hours long, over a period of 5 weeks. The self-defense training used was a mastery-modeling program in which the instructor modeled various skills to disable an attacker and subjects practiced the techniques until they mastered them. These initial skills were then transferred into specific potential threat situations and the subjects had to deliver the techniques at full force and disable the attacker. The attacker was an instructor wearing a fully padded suit. Subjects in this study were additionally taught attitudinal and verbal skills for interrupting coercive or harassing behavior. The researchers determined that training women in physical self-defense skills significantly enhanced their levels of self-efficacy regarding their interpersonal ability to handle harassment or coercion, their ability to engage in a variety of activities, and their ability to effectively physically defend themselves. The training reduced participants' perceptions of vulnerability to sexual victimization and increased their ability to distinguish safe from risky situations. Weitlauf, Smith, and Cervone (2000) examined the broader psychological impact of self-defense training on women's efficacy beliefs, assertiveness, and aggression. Based on Ozer & Bandura's (1990) research on perceptions of self-efficacy, these researchers sought to understand how self-defense training affected women's beliefs about themselves as efficacious in their abilities to defend themselves, and also to explore the possibility of the development of generalization effects as a result of improving perceptions of self-efficacy. Weitlauf and colleagues (2000) utilized a 16-hour physical self-defense program that addressed resistance to assault on three levels: emotional and psychological resistance, verbal resistance, and physical resistance. Participants (n=80) in this research experienced a significant change in self-efficacy both on task-specific measures (e.g. self-defense self-efficacy) and on more global measures of general self-efficacy.

They believed themselves to be more competent and reported significant increases in assertiveness. An extension of this research was conducted in order to further examine the generalization effects of the self-defense training. After completing a 16-hour self-defense course, participants (n=125) experienced increased self-defense self-efficacy, increased perceptions of sports competencies, and improved coping skills. However, participants did not evidence significant changes in levels of assertiveness or in global perceptions of self-efficacy (Weitlauf et al., 2001). The authors assert that women's self-defense training not only enhances women's beliefs about their ability to physically defend themselves in assault situations, but also positively influences other life domains. The research supports positive outcomes for women who participate in self-defense training (Ozer & Bandura, 1990; Weitlauf et al., 2000; Weitlauf et al., 2001). Resistance training emphasizes women's agency and ability to resist victimization (Rozee & Koss, 2001). It is effective in preparing women to know how to respond appropriately in crisis situations (Fein, 1993), and teaches girls and women to use the most effective means available to reduce their risk of being raped (Heyden et al., 1999). Self-defense training has been demonstrated to improve levels of confidence, assertiveness, and perceived self-efficacy (Cummings, 1992; Fein, 1993; Gidycz, Layman et al., 2001; Ozer & Bandura, 1990; Quinsey & Upfold, 1985). Additionally forceful verbal and physical responses to assault situations clearly enhance rape avoidance (Ullman, 1997). The goals of women self-defense training are to: "(1) to identify the realities and myths regarding sexual assault and violence against women; (2) to provide information that will support the basic attitudes and attributes of self-defense, including assertiveness, awareness, self-reliance, confidence, and physical fitness; (3) to establish ways for students to learn how to identify threatening and high-risk situations; (4) to provide skill-building activities that incorporate mental, vocal, and physical self-defense techniques; (5) to provide strategies for specific situations that may occur on campus; and (6) to provide information about resources available to women who have been or may be abused or assaulted" (Cummings, 1992, p. 185). Rentschler (1999) purports that additional goals of women's self-defense training are to change women's relationships with their bodies to make their inherent fears of violence manageable and to enact women's rights and abilities to defend themselves. Women's self-defense training encourages the participants to uncover their own personal power and agency (Fein, 1993) and view themselves as valuable and worth fighting (McCauley 1997)



PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES:

Both the primary and secondary sources of data are used for the purpose of the study. Questionnaire method and participant observation methods are used to elicit the opinions of the respondents. A sample of 50 students is taken to assess the impact of self-defense training program.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

- Participants' confidence increases after undergoing self-defense training program.
- Participants' confidence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem last for a considerable period of time.
- Though no difference in skill level, recent trainees have a higher level of confidence than those who have not participated in a course for a while.
- Participants report improved assertiveness, personal safety, and self-perceptions.
- Participants report increased physical safety and a reduction in fear-motivated avoidance behavior.
- Symptoms of anxiety and depression are significantly reduced.



DONE BY: GOVERNMENT DEGREE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN BEGUMPET
N.SIRI CHANDANA-B.A JOURNALISM FIRST YEAR
ROSHNA PATWARI-B.A JOURNALISM FIRST YEAR
PRIYANKA THAKUR-B.A JOURNALISM THIRD YEAR
BHINDHYA RATHORE-B.SC THIRD YEAR
SAI VARSHITHA -B.SC THIRD YEAR