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Socio-personal correlate of practices regarding self-defense among school going girls

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Abstract

Self-protection and self-defence are an important factor for a girl 's life especially in today's world. Girls face lots of problem from very early age even before they enter into teenage and they are restricted from doing many activities. Girls are taught to be courageous and are considered to belong to the weaker sex of the society. Self-protection and self-defence not only the way to protect themselves from danger but also tremendously boost their self-confidence. Girls have the basic right to feel safe and to be safe where they live and learn. A normal lock, a lighter, or a secure shelter-All these can prevent violence against girls in emergencies and can provide a sense of security in a time of increased vulnerability and stress. Self-defence is a protection, girls need to be powerful with some self-defense tactics to defend themselves. Girls should be trained to defend themselves in all situations right from schooling. This study was conducted with the aim to assess the association between socio-personal variables and practices regarding self-defense of school going girls of Udaipur, Rajasthan. The sample was selected purposively from four schools within the municipal limits of Udaipur city, having the similar infrastructural facilities. Standardized self-structured questionnaire was used to find out the practices regarding self-defense of school going girls. The findings of the study found that the type of locality, type of family, working hours of parents, type and size of friend group had no significant associations with practices regarding self-defense among school going girls. But there was significant association found between levels of practices regarding self-defense among school going girls by income of family.

Keywords: Practices, self-defense, socio-personal variables, sexual violence, safety and security

Introduction

“The day a woman can walk freely on the road at night, that day we can say that India had achieved Independence”

– Mahatma Gandhi

Although personal safety is a concern for everyone, multiple studies have shown that women fear crime more than men, which is due in large part to women's fear of sexual assault (Akar *et al.*, 2016; Alan and Cankaya, 2020; Alkan *et al.*, 2020) ^[1, 2, 3]. Violence against women, mainly sexual and domestic violence, is both prevalent and under-reported. India is plagued with rising concerns about violence against women (VAW), with high incidence of sexual harassment (National Crime Records Bureau, 2020 & National Family Health Survey-5, 2020) ^[7, 8]. An analysis across 161 countries revealed that worldwide, nearly 1 in 3, or 30%, of women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence or both (WHO, 2021) ^[9]. Most of the cases of violence generally happen during the day in which the woman is out of the home, alone for livelihood activities, without any family members being around. Surprisingly, in most of the cases the accused are the persons known to the victim from the neighbourhood or family. Generally, it is assumed that big threat for women is from unknown person than familiar one, but the fact is completely opposite. In today's context, she may be unsafe with dear and near ones (*Bhartiya Stree Shakti*, MWCD, 2017) ^[4]. Unfortunately, women in India have been a silent and helpless victim of violence against them as a result of patriarchal social system. There is enormous pressure to conform to social norms and traditional roles in the family. Women may feel safe and secure by learning self-defense techniques and carrying devices and weapons such as pepper spray, knives, and firearms. Research evidence found that in case of importance of learning self-defense and protecting themselves from danger, majority of girls responded that self-defense will be very helpful for them for their self-protection and majority of teenage girls think that carrying self- defense tools like pepper spray and petty knives with them will be

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very useful self-defensive techniques for them when they are alone outside (Keerthana *et al.*, 2020) [5]. For prevention and control of crime, women need to be aware of their self-defeating behaviour. They need to get trained for, ‘how to identify and protect themselves from the accused’, as most of the accused are in their close network of people. To prevent such situation, self-defense count as a great option. They should be made aware of the provision of services for the victims like counselling, free legal aid, financial benefit for their help and support. Self-defence is considered as the most important education that woman needs in the current world. In this context, the purpose of this research was to examine the association between socio-personal variables and school going girl’s practices regarding self-defense and in making decisions about their own protection in unsafe situation.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted in four government schools

located within the municipal limits of Udaipur city of Rajasthan to ensure optimum personal contacts for data collection. The sample for the study was comprised of 350 school going girls belonging to 6th, 7th and 8th classes of selected government (middle and higher secondary schools). The data were collected from sample by administering self-constructed structured scale consisted of background information and Awareness Scale regarding Self-Defence (ASSD). Then the data were subjected to frequency, percentages and chi-square analysis to measure association between background variables with levels of practices of school-going girls regarding self-defence.

Results and Discussion

The results of Table-1 revealed that that there were no significant association between levels of components of practices regarding self-defense among school going girls by type of locality they were residing.

Table 1: Association of Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense among School going girls by Type of Locality (N=350)

S. No.	Type of Locality	Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense			Total	Chi-square (χ ²)	p-value
		Poor	Average	Good			
1.	Rural	4 (8.51)	21(44.68)	22 (46.80)	47 (100.00)	1.861 ^{NS}	0.761
2.	Urban	39 (13.08)	115 (38.59)	144 (48.32)	298 (100.00)		
3.	Slum	-	2 (40.00)	3 (60.00)	5 (100.00)		
Total		43 (12.28)	138 (39.42)	169 (48.29)	350 (100.00)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage, NS- Non significant

The results of Table-2 revealed that the majority of the school going girls belongs to nuclear and joint family type were having good practices level i.e. 46.77 per cent and 48.99 per cent respectively regarding self-defense whereas majority of the school going girls belongs to reorganized family having

average awareness level (60.00%) regarding self-defense. The result of the present study also found that, there was no significant association between levels of practices regarding self-defense among school going girls and the type of family they belong.

Table 2: Association of Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense among School going girls by Type of Family (N=350)

S. No.	Type of Family	Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense			Total	Chi-square (χ ²)	p-value
		Poor	Average	Good			
1.	Nuclear	29 (15.59)	70 (37.63)	87 (46.77)	186 (100.00)	5.373 ^{NS}	0.251
2.	Joint	14 (9.39)	62 (41.61)	73 (48.99)	149 (100.00)		
3.	Reorganized	-	6 (60.00)	9 (40.00)	15 (100.00)		
Total		43 (12.28)	138 (39.42)	169 (48.29)	350 (100.00)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage, NS- Non significant

The results of Table-3 found that, there was no significant association between levels of practices regarding self-defense

among school going girls and the working hours of parents.

Table 3: Association of Levels of Practices of Awareness regarding Self-defense among School going girls by Working hours of Parents (N=350)

S. No.	Working hours of Parents	Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense			Total	Chi-square (χ ²)	p-value
		Poor	Average	Good			
Father							
1.	< 8 hours	42 (12.76)	131 (39.81)	156 (47.42)	329 (100.00)	2.098 ^{NS}	0.350
2.	> 8 hours	1 (4.76)	7 (33.33)	13 (61.90)	21 (100.00)		
Total		43 (12.28)	138 (39.42)	169 (48.29)	350 (100.00)		
Mother							
1.	< 8 hours	8 (11.26)	28 (39.44)	35 (49.29)	71 (100.00)	0.094 ^{NS}	0.954
2.	> 8 hours	35 (12.54)	110 (39.43)	134 (48.02)	279 (100.00)		
Total		43 (12.28)	138 (39.42)	169 (48.29)	350 (100.00)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage, NS- Non significant

As per the results of Table-4, there was significant association found between income of family and levels of practices regarding self-defense among school going girls. The studies conducted by Kumar *et al.*, 2005 [6] explored that several factors have been considered as risk factors for the violence

against women such as younger age, poor socioeconomic status, and urban domicile and practices related to self-defense such as confidence while implementing self-defense techniques, ability to implement self-defense techniques, capability to tackle attacking situation using self-defense

techniques, response to harassing situations, creating public awareness, awareness about the surrounding and ability to protect herself successfully in dangerous situation make the women self-sufficient to handle any unsafe situation confidently. The result also revealed that the majority of the school going girls belongs to family with less than 25,000/- and more than 75,001/- income having good levels of

practices i.e. 52.85 per cent and 66.67 per cent respectively regarding self-defense whereas majority of the school going girls belongs to family with 25,000/- to 50,000/- and 50,000/- to 75,000/- income having average levels of practices i.e. 46.66 per cent and 45.00 per cent respectively regarding self-defense.

Table 4: Association of Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense among School going girls by Income of Family (N=350)

S. No.	Income of Family	Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense			Total	Chi-square (χ^2)	p-value
		Poor	Average	Good			
1.	Less than 25,000/-	24 (9.75)	92 (37.39)	130 (52.85)	246 (100.00)	18.564**	0.005
2.	25,001/- to 50,000/-	11 (14.66)	35 (46.66)	29 (38.67)	75 (100.00)		
3.	50,001/- to 75,000/-	7 (35.00)	9 (45.00)	4 (20.00)	20 (100.00)		
4.	More than 75,001/-	1 (11.11)	2 (22.22)	6 (66.67)	9 (100.00)		
Total		43 (12.28)	138 (39.42)	169 (48.29)	350 (100.00)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage, **Significant at 0.01 level of significance

As per the results of Table-5, there was no significant association between levels of practices regarding self-defense among school going girls by type of their friend group. The result also found that majority of school going girls having

only girls and both boys and girls in their friend group having good level of practices i.e. 49.79 per cent and 44.76 per cent respectively regarding self-defense.

Table 5: Association of Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense among School going girls by Type of Friend group (N=350)

S. No.	Type of Friend group	Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense			Total	Chi-square (χ^2)	p-value
		Poor	Average	Good			
1.	Only girls	28 (11.42)	95 (38.78)	122 (49.79)	245 (100.00)	0.962 ^{NS}	0.618
2.	Both boys and girls	15 (14.28)	43 (40.95)	47 (44.76)	105 (100.00)		
Total		43 (12.28)	138 (39.42)	169 (48.29)	350 (100.00)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage, NS- Non significant

As per the results of Table-6, there was no significant association between levels of practices regarding self-defense among school going girls by type of their friend group. The result also found that majority of school going girls having

both small and large friend group having good level of practices i.e. 49.42 per cent and 47.16 per cent respectively regarding self-defense.

Table 6: Association of Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense among School going girls by Size of Friend group (N=350)

S. No.	Type of Friend group	Levels of Practices regarding Self-defense			Total	Chi-square (χ^2)	p-value
		Poor	Average	Good			
1.	Small (2-4 members)	13 (7.47)	75 (43.10)	86 (49.42)	174 (100.00)	7.806 ^{NS}	0.020
2.	Large (5-8 members)	30 (17.04)	63 (35.79)	83 (47.16)	176 (100.00)		
Total		43 (12.28)	138 (39.42)	169 (48.29)	350 (100.00)		

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage, NS- Non significant

Conclusion

In India, the cases of gender violence are common and many go unreported which makes self-defense a necessity for women more than ever. Learning the basic skills of self-defense is a necessity for girls. It is an obligation for teachers, parents and the wider community to provide an understanding of the concept of self-defense to girls from a younger age, because they may encounter an event that threatens their safety and others. Girls must be equipped with the ability to recognize dangerous situations and face unwanted events. In learning and mastering self-defense skills, girls can build self-confidence based on the fact that they can set goals and achieve them. Several laws in India have been constituted to protect women and young adolescent girls from physical, emotional and sexual harassment. However, lack of awareness about these laws is still widespread and it is important to increase awareness to make these laws more effective. Various awareness drives as well as self-defense training classes should be organized which not only significantly increase the level of knowledge among women

regarding their safety and rights but also boost the self-confidence of these adolescent girls to fight back when the need arises. Self-defense is one of the few interventions that take embodied empowerment as its focus and purpose. Unlike much safety advice which may limit women's freedom, self-defense seeks to expand it. Having compulsory awareness drives in schools regularly (where knowledge about the various laws and provisions can be formally disseminated) and incorporating self-defense training sessions in the school curriculum for adolescent girls can help empower girls in the future.

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