

# THE CORE COMPONENT OF FORGIVENESS: ANASAKTI AS A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF FORGIVENESS IN INDIAN MARRIED COUPLES

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**ABSTRACT**--The popular notion for creating a successful marriage is love, passion, chemistry, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, friendship, and gentleness. However, the concept of dispassion has yet not been evaluated in this light which has been mentioned in the Indian texts such as Bhagavad Gita. As the divorce rates in India are increasing at a rapid rate, it becomes crucial to understand the unique unexplored qualitatives' that are essential to resolve conflicts in marriage. Thus the Indian concept of Anasakti and Forgiveness were used as potential variables for exploration in this study on Indian marital couples. Enough research has happened on what creates a good marriage but what are the qualities that one needs to individually cultivate to resolve conflict. In this light forgiveness and Anasakti have been studied in relation to each other in the present investigation. The study was conducted using standardized tools on Anasakti (Asakti-Anasakti Scale) and Forgiveness (The Heartland Forgiveness Scale) on a sample of 100 marital couples. The sample was selected from Delhi NCR on working professionals who were in a consistent wedlock for 5 to 15 years. The couples were briefed about the study and the respective questionnaires on Anasakti & Forgiveness were administered. Mean, correlation and regression analysis were calculated to understand relationship between Anasakti & Forgiveness. Results: Anasakti significantly predicts Forgiveness ( $r=-.545$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) in Indian marital couples yet it does not indicate any difference on the two variables in context of gender.

**Keywords**-- Non-attachment, Forgiveness, Marriage.

## I. INTRODUCTION

For Indians marriage is a venerated amalgamation of two souls. It is a very crucial social institution in India. Now with the transition in time, the concept of marriage has lately evolved as per contingency of couples today. Since Indian women today have multiple roles that include their involvement in family as a unit, their responsibility towards economic workforce has also gained momentum, these factors have yet not cultivated the responsibility of men towards domestic help and reproductive life. Women, today thereby assume multiple responsibilities as a daughter, wife, mother, worker and member of the family whereas on the other end men consistently have one

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responsibility of being the provider for the family. So, these multiple encumbrances on women impose adversities on them making them sensitive and vulnerable.

Marriages today in our society have gone for a swirl due to the inflexibility and adjustments in couples. Indian concept talks about Anasakti that has no literal conversion in western philosophy. It is a concept of East that talks about sustenance of mind and balance in relationships. Non-attachment is the English equivalent of Anasakti the lies closest to its literal Hindi meaning. The Bhagwad Gita talks of Asakti-Anasakti in great length.

Chapter 5, Verse 21 states “When an individual is detached to extraneous connections, he/she finds happiness & solace within his/her self”.

A person high on Anasakti manifests wisdom, magnanimity and tenderness whereas an Asakt individual is controlled by external situations that inturn lead to fear, apprehension and suffering. Anasakti and marital quality are significantly related to each other as people high on Anasakti perceive a better sense of marital bliss and understanding. As The Bhagwad Gita purports, having higher attachment and Rajsick (passion) tendencies leads to craving and sufferings.

Fortunate couples are on top of the ladder in affinity, appreciation and amiableness thereby contributing to the accomplishment of their marriage. D’souza and Campbell, 2015 articulated the fundamentals to happy marriage as the jubilant mingling of heart & head that needs comprehension, devotion, affection and persistence for a couples functioning together.

Over time the accustomed joint family structure has disposed an approach to nuclear family structure in cities and towns. And a large number of women are working or establishing their own businesses. Large number of urban women no longer bank upon their spouses for financial security, husbands these days are sharing household chores & gender equality is gaining momentum and is gently changing.

Marriages today work on the fundamental of change your attitude and be happy when life pulls you away as said by Dr Greg (1999) in one of his articles talks about adjustment and accommodation in each other’s space. which can further be supported by a longitudinal course of research by Karney, Benjamin R; Bradbury, Thomas N the authors found out that the quality and sustainability of marriages depends of the partners’ ability to adjust and accommodate each other in their respective life circle and routines.

In this regard forgiveness becomes an important variable of research to understand how it can be developed in marital relationships. Forgiveness is the approach to non-attachment. If you learn to detach from your notions no need of forgiveness shall arise. Hindrances to forgiving include a feeling that if an individual forgives, he/she is no longer prolonged in seeking vindictiveness or collecting vengeance for the transgression (Worthington, 2005). McCullough (2008) states that forgiveness and inadequacy for forgiveness or retribution seeking are congenital human responses to being on the accepting end of a breach. Forfeiture through vengefulness may act as an obstruction for the delinquent to commit the offense again, perhaps towards a peculiar possible victim.

Most marital relationships have phases of confrontation in which faith is ruptured and is in need of reformation. Forgiveness is a psychological aid that grants this repair and revives the relationship to the condition it was prior to the misdeed occurring.

Individuals with insecure attachment styles reported decreased relationship satisfaction and have more strife in attempting reconstruction of painful experiences that may occur between spouses in a romantic relationship than those with secure attachment (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; Fincham, 2000)

Forgiveness or Forbearance is the capacity to bear with the misdeeds of others, without feeling the obligation to retaliate. Through forgiveness, an individual heals the emotional damage generated by others that would otherwise aggravate and disturb the mind. Worthington (2005)

Worthington (2005) articulated two forms of forgiveness as Emotional forgiveness and Decisional forgiveness. Researches have indicated that people with insecure attachment styles may be less likely to form hearty and effectuate adult love relationships and these individuals with anxious attachment style may be vulnerable, sensitive and needy in their relationships (Ainsworth et al.1978) whereas those with avoidant attachment styles may feel deserted, isolated, rejected and less likely to reach out to their spouses for support in times of dejection in marital relationships.

In relationships, people with insecure attachment styles may experience feelings such as a absence of trust in self and others, fear of intimacy, social avoidance, or obsession over being close to their partners (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998).

## II. METHODOLOGY

### Aim:

To study Anasakti as a predictor of Forgiveness in Indian married couples.

### Objective:

To study Anasakti as predictor of Forgiveness in Indian married couples.

### Hypothesis:

Anasakti will significantly effect Forgiveness in husbands' and wives'.

### Sample:

Married Couples=100

### Sample Description:

There were 100 married couples included in the study (50 couples in the marital age bracket of 5-10 years and 50 couple in the marital age bracket of 10-15 years). All individuals were at least graduates and with minimum one child. The forms were administered with consent of the couple for pure research purpose. The age range of participants was 25-45. Data was collected from urban population belonging to middle socio-economic strata in Delhi NCR region- Noida, Faridabad, North Delhi, Central Delhi, East Delhi, South Delhi and Gurgaon.

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| Males   | 100 |
| Females | 100 |

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Age Range         | 25-45 Years of Age   |
| Years of Marriage | 5-15 Years In marriage<br>(5-10 years)      (10-15 years)<br>50 couples      50couples |

Tools Used:

| Tool Name                   | Authors Name                                     | Number of Items | Reliability       |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|-------------------|
| Test for Asakti-Anasakti    | Bhushan&Jha                                      | 40              | Test-retest 0.87  |
| Heartland Forgiveness Scale | Laura Y. Thompson, C. R. Snyder and Lesa Hoffman | 18              | Test –retest:0.82 |

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

A correlational research design is the one which determines whether data from two or more variables drawn from the same sample, share a relationship and the extent of the relationship. It also gauges the predictive efficacy of independent variables in dependent variables. Such a design then applied to this study would determine whether Anasakti would predict Forgiveness in Indian married couples.

#### *Procedure*

The couples were briefed about the nature and purpose of the study and the selected tools were explained and administered on both the partners present as per their time of convenience. Each form consisted of a brief introduction to the test, general instruction, a consent form and demographic details. Participants' doubts were clarified from time to time. After collection of data mean and standard deviation for the total score was calculated. Cut off score for high and low levels of Anasakti, Forgiveness were calculated using Mean  $\pm$  ½ Standard Deviation method. Then the data was run for Statistical Analysis using SPSS 24.

#### *Descriptive Analysis*

Descriptive analysis consisting mean, standard deviation, percentages were calculated for all variables to understand nature and distribution of scores among couples. Husbands & wives scores were distributed into high and low and average levels of Anasakti & Forgiveness using Mean  $\pm$  ½ Standard Deviation method.

### ***Inferential Analysis***

#### ***Correlational Analysis***

Bivariate correlation was performed for both the variables to investigate the nature and degree of relationships between them, namely- Anasakti & Forgiveness of the couples to address the hypothesis.

#### ***Linear Regression***

Linear Regression was carried out using independent variable Anasakti and dependent variable Forgiveness of the couples. This technique was applied to identify the predictive capacity of Anasakti on Forgiveness. This step allowed us to explore the degree of variance in the dependent variable which could be attributed to the independent variable.

#### ***Analysis of Results***

The result was computed using Predictive Analysis Software (PAWS Statistics, version 24) widely known as SPSS. Frequency Analysis was conducted to check if there were any discrepancies in data entry, minimum and maximum values were checked. Values were corrected wherever necessary. The data was subjected to Pearson Correlation, and Linear Regression Analysis.

## **IV. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS**

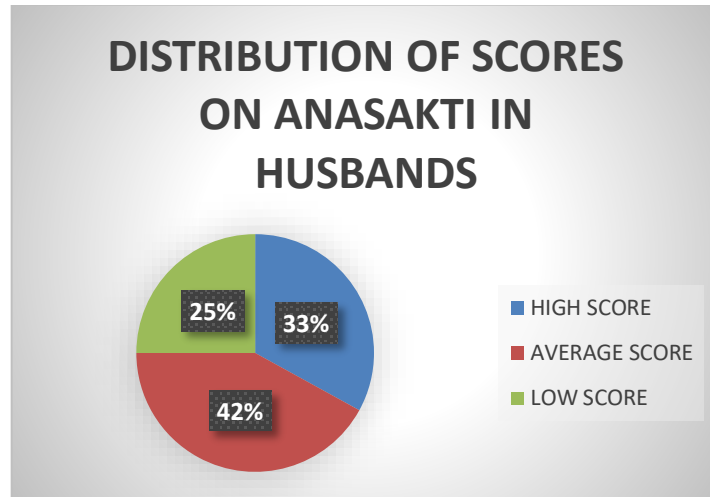
#### ***Distribution:***

The present study was conducted on 100 couples. The mean and SD of Anasakti and Forgiveness is presented below.

| Variable    | Mean  | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|-------|--------------------|
| Anasakti    | 86.00 | 15.85              |
| Forgiveness | 85    | 12.65              |

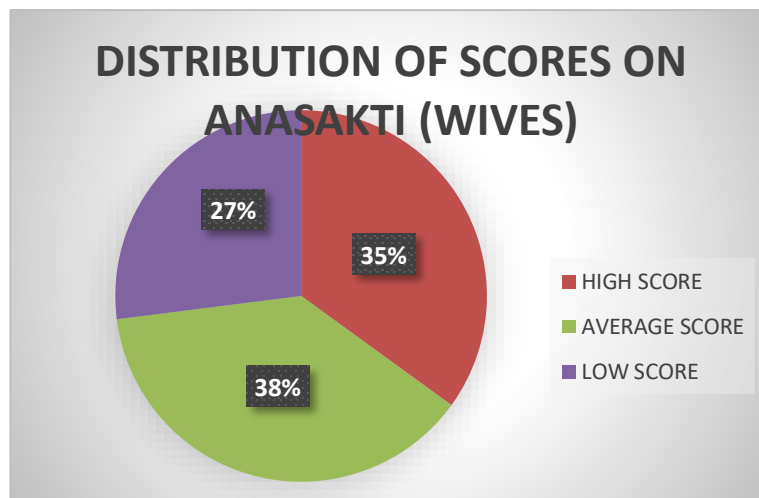
The mean for Anasakti for couples is 86.00 and SD is 15.85. The mean for Forgiveness for couples is 85.00 and SD is 12.65.

### 1.1 Distribution of Pie Charts



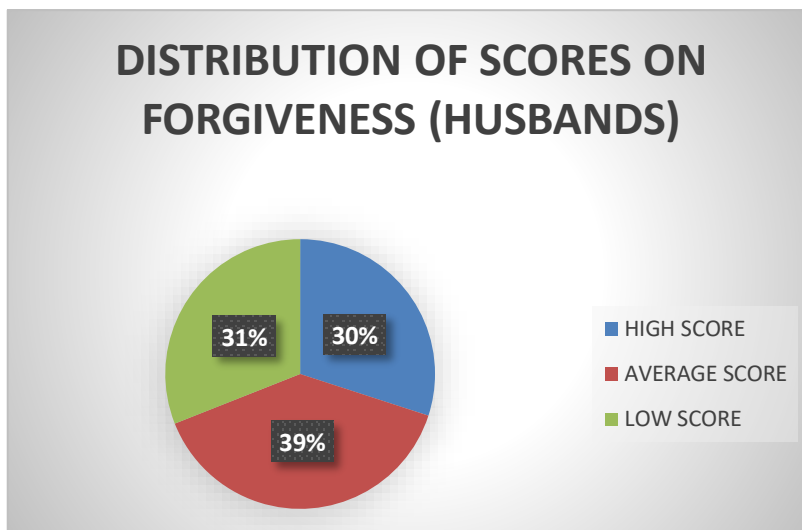
**Figure 1:** depicts percentage distribution of husbands score on Anasakti

The above pie chart depicts percentage distribution of husbands score on Anasakti. 33% of husbands have a high score and are Asakt individuals, 42% of husbands have an average score on Asakti-Anasakti individuals and 25% husbands have a low score and are Anasakta individuals.



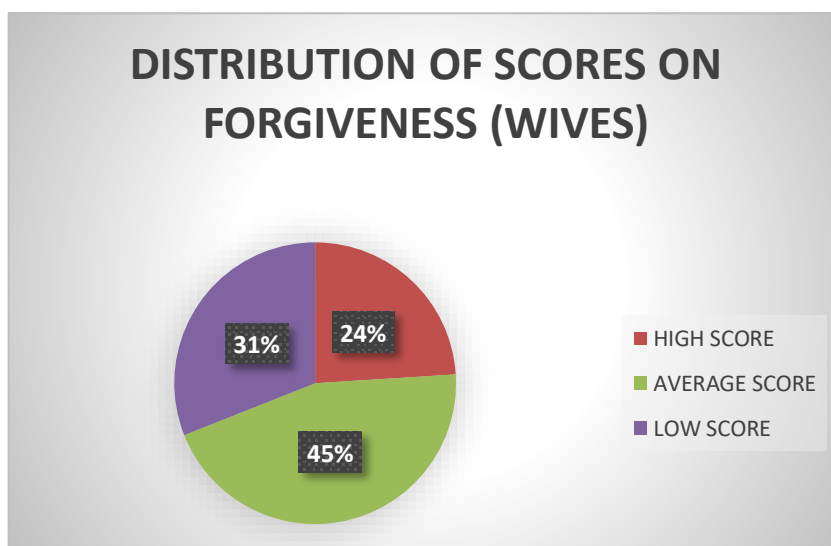
**Figure 2:** depicts percentage distribution of wives score on Anasakti

The above pie chart. 35% wives have a high score and fall under the category of Asakta individuals, 38% wives have an average score on Asakti-Anasakti and 27% wives have low score and are high on Anasakti.



**Figure 3:** depicts percentage distribution of husbands score on Forgiveness

The above pie chart depicts percentage distribution of husbands score on Forgiveness. 30% husbands have a high score, 39% of husbands have an average score and 31% husbands have a low score on Forgiveness.



**Figure 4:** depicts percentage distribution of wives score on Forgiveness.

The above pie chart depicts percentage distribution of wives score on Forgiveness. 24% wives have a high score, 45% wives have an average score and 31% wives have low score on Forgiveness.

Inferential Analysis:

**Table 1:** Intercorrelation matrix for Anasakti, Forgiveness.

| VARIABLE | Anasakti | Forgiveness |
|----------|----------|-------------|
| Anasakti | 0        | -.545**     |
| N        | 200      | 200         |

|             |     |         |
|-------------|-----|---------|
| Forgiveness |     | -.545** |
| N           | 200 | 200     |

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level(2-tailed).

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level(2-tailed).

The above table enlists the intercorrelation of Anasakti and Forgiveness. Anasakti is correlated to Forgiveness ( $r=-0.545^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

**Table 2:** t-test: It shows significance of difference between the means on Anasakti and Forgiveness between husbands and wives.

| Variable    | t     | Sig. |
|-------------|-------|------|
| Anasakti    | -.525 | .815 |
| Forgiveness | 1.780 | .720 |

The above table shows the significance of difference between the means on Anasakti, Forgiveness between husbands and wives. The t value for Anasakti ( $t = -.525$ ,  $p=.815$ ), Forgiveness ( $t = 1.780$ ,  $p=.720$ ).

**Table 3:** Linear Regression Analysis:Anasakti as a predictor Forgiveness in husbands' and wives'(Total).

| Variable                          | t      | $\beta$ | F      | df | p    | R                  | R <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|----|------|--------------------|----------------|
| Anasakti & Forgiveness (Husbands) | 19.084 | -.0465  | 27.041 | 98 | .000 | .465 <sup>a</sup>  | 0.216          |
| Anasakti & Forgiveness (Wives)    | 23.47  | -.0627  | 63.64  | 98 | .000 | 0.627 <sup>a</sup> | 0.394          |

Results indicate that Anasakti ( $R=.465^a$ ,  $F= 27.041$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) explained 21.6% variance in predicting Forgiveness in the case of husbands. Anasakti further explained 39.4% variance in predicting Forgiveness in the case of wives'.



## V. DISCUSSION

Indian scriptures speak of Anasakti (Non-Attachment) as a channel to maintain equanimity in relationships. There is no literal conversion of the word Anasakti in the western philosophy, however the ancient Indian scripture The Bhagvatam Talks about Asakti- Anasakti in length. The current study aims to assess the predictive efficacy of Anasakti in Forgiveness and explores the relationship in context of Indian marriage.

As observed from the pie charts, the predominant sample of husbands was found to have more Anasakti than wives, whereas wives are more forgiving than husbands. However the t values indicate there was no significant difference between the two genders on Anasakti and Forgiveness. This means that gender does not impact the ability to forgive or practise non-attachment in marital relationships, yet Forgiveness is considered as a mainstay element of a successful marriage (Worrington, 1994). Acting without assumption is the stance to Forgiveness.

Table 1 indicates the inter correlation matrix between Anasakti and Forgiveness. Anasakti is correlated to Forgiveness ( $r=-0.545^{**}$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) i.e. low score on Anasakti leads to higher Forgiveness and a higher score on Anasakti leads to lower forgiveness as a low score indicates inclination towards Asakti(attachment). As per Swami Chinmayananda (1975) Asakti creates a chain of adverse ramification and the Bhagvatam describes it as an induced sense of attachment whereas Anasakti is free from desire, passion and vengefulness. Anasakti deals with upheavals of life without psychological slavery on any circumstance therefore it is recognised as the key to true happiness and liberation. Non-attachment (Anasakti) is not the renunciation of affection. It is actually an enlargement of the secured relationship without any craving or apprehension.

As observed from result Table No 3 Anasakti ( $R=.465^a$ ,  $F= 27.041$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) explained 21.6% variance in predicting Forgiveness in case of husbands. Anasakti further explained 39.4% variance in predicting Forgiveness in case of wives'. Thereby, Anasakti is found to predict Forgiveness in husbands' and wives'. If an individual is attached to his or her own beliefs' and sufferings' they find it difficult to forgive. Forgiveness requires compassion and whole heartedness and detachment provides the foundation for healings between the partners. Forgiveness is a determined and arbitrary process that involves a voluntary shift from negative to positive emotions through a determined choice through articulation, morality and compassion (Strelen & Covic, 2006). The amplitude to seek and grant forgiveness is one of the most cogent factors that arbitrate forgiveness in a marital relationship. An individual has to be responsible for taking charge of his/her life for moving forward. Couples who practice forgiveness can eliminate the toxic hurt and shame that they carry against each other. Factors such as parenting, religious beliefs and traumatic childhood experiences indicate the extent of Forgiveness in a marital relationship. The presumption that Forgiveness is the bottom-line of an affluent marriage strengthens the importance of developing interventions in marriage, especially for marital infidelity, that lay hands on Forgiveness (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2005).

The Bhagvatam talks about Anasakti and Forgiveness as eternal qualities. Forgiveness is a consecrated quality of the enlightened people. At the root cause of marital conflict is the endless tussle between the husband and wife to conform to each other's expectation and desire. Failure in this regard leads to resentment, separation and divorce. Hence, the role of forgiveness and non-attachment becomes relevant for this discussion.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Forgiveness is an approach to Non- attachment. If an individual does not fix to his or ideas one does not have to yearn for Forgiveness. When we start identifying to our idea of our partner we start clinging on to him or her and thereby creating the burden of expectations that leads to atrophy in a relationship. Investing of oneself devotedly, intellectually and piously into marital relationships provides a sense of concern and healthy alliance between the partners yet it involves their understanding of their own respective journeys. An individual's attachment and adherence to his own beliefs and misery leads to unforgiveness in him or her whereas Forgiveness requires benevolence and whole-heartedness and non-attachment provides the groundwork for healing in spouses.

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