

# Forgiveness among adolescent girls living in shelter home

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**Abstract-** This study focuses on the level of forgiveness among adolescent girls living in shelter home and those living with parents. Sample comprised of 25 adolescent girls living with parents and 25 adolescent girls living in shelter home, age from 13-19 years. For this purpose The Heartland forgiveness scale (HFS) was used and It was found that the level of forgiveness is high among girls living with parents and low among girls living in government shelter home.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**A**dolescence, transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10 and 19.

Erik Erickson (1902-1994) Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood which extends from 12-20 years. During this period the individual attains puberty leading to many changes. These changes have enormous implications for the individual's sexual, social, emotional and vocational life; that is why Stanley Hall has rightly described this period as a "period of storm and stress".

These changes make the individual to find an identity, which means developing an understanding of self, the goals one wishes to achieve and the work/occupation role. The individual craves for encouragement and support of caretakers and peer groups. If he is successful he will develop a sense of self or identity, otherwise he will suffer from role confusion/ identity confusion.

A child is not born with values. They are developed through the process of socialization by parents, teachers, society and community. There is a need to make children learn from their foundational years to respect, value, forgive and being thankful for every little thing they are gifted with.

Some are fortunate those who get families to protect them but few are unfortunate who run away from their houses and sometimes their families leave them such children become a part of institutions that provides temporary arrangements for homeless people like women, children etc called shelter home. The children sometimes run away from their families due to the societal pressure, personality issues, etc and due to personal problems, abuse, negligence, at-risk or abandoned by their families, parents or guardians children are sent to the shelter homes.

Homelessness is a major issue in India. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines 'homeless' as those who do not live in a regular residence due to lack of adequate housing, safety, and availability. Poverty, unemployment, and lack of affordable housing are commonly recognized causes of

homelessness. These risk factors can be exacerbated by personal vulnerabilities such as [mental and substance use disorders](#), [trauma and violence](#), [domestic violence](#), child marriage, rape, justice-system involvement, sudden serious illness, divorce, death of a partner, and disabilities.

Very often, the home is a space of violence and with this reality, shelter homes are supposed to be the safer alternative available to these adolescents. Adjustment is also a major issue with adolescent who run away from their own homes. Shelter homes provide Child Friendly Atmosphere & Space, Safety & Security, Deal with grievances, etc.

In India, The women and child development ministry had come up with the guidelines drafted by the NGO Child Helpline in 2013 before the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

Adolescence is a time when a child's unique identity emerges. Until adolescence, a child basically fulfills the will of his parents. However, as an adolescent naturally separates from his parents, he develops his own distinct personality. Forgiveness is the main aspect of their personality.

In this complex stage of life, Forgiveness which has to do with letting go of Grievance, perhaps the most complex of the letting go's. It's difficult for child and parent to journey through adolescence together without experiencing three needs for forgiveness along the way, each of which can be hard to give and get – forgiveness of others, forgiveness from others, and forgiveness of self.

The study of forgiveness is specifically important in adolescents because this is the period of learning to accept responsibility, let go of things, building healthy conviction, optimistic attitude, better relationships with self and others and fulfilling lives which might make them self-motivated, free from negativity.

**Forgiveness** is the intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense, let go of negative emotions such as vengefulness, with an increased ability to wish the offender well. In any event, forgiveness occurs with the victim's full recognition that he or she deserved better treatment, one reason why Mahatma Gandhi contended that "the weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong person.

According to Thompson and colleagues, Forgiveness is freeing from a negative attachment to the source that has transgressed against a person. McCullough et al., 1998, forgiveness reflects increase in pro social motivation toward another such that there is - Less desire to avoid the transgressing person and to harm or seek revenge toward that individual, Increased desire to act positively toward the transgressing person.

Robert Enright, defined forgiveness as “ a willingness to abandon ones right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward who unjustly hurt us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her” (Enright and freedman, 1998). **Tangney and Colleagues** Tangney model suggests that the giving up of negative emotions is the crux of forgiving process.

### **Cultivating forgiveness**

**Forgiving another person-** in the most typical category of forgiveness, in this model in which forgiveness is a goal, the first step is to promote a non-distorted, realistic appraisal of the relationship of the two people. The second step is the attempt to facilitate a release from the bond of ruminative, negative affect held toward the violating (transgressing) partner.

Finally the third step is to help the victimized partner lessen his or her desire to punish the transgressing partner. Overtime, forgiveness makes it possible for the hurt and the outpouring of negative feelings to diminish-especially for the victimized partner. Likewise, the treatment enhances the empathy for the transgressing partner, and the therapist tries to make both people feel better about themselves (Gordon & Baucom, 1998).

**Forgiving Oneself-** A clinician will be alerted to the potential need for forgiveness of the self when a client is feeling either shame or guilt. In this regard, shame reflects an overall sense that “I am a bad person”. As such, same cuts across particular circumstances, and it reflects an all-encompassing view of the self as powerless and worthless.

In contrast, guilt taps a situation- specific negative self-view, for example, “I did a bad thing” (Tangy, Boone, & Dearing, 2005). A person who feels guilt has a sense of remorse and typically regrets something that he or she has done. To correct for such guilt, some sort of reparative action is warranted, such as confessing or apologizing. The process of helping a person to deal with shame is a more difficult one for the helper than is the treatment for guilt. This follows because shame cuts through more situations than the single situational focus of guilt.

Self forgiveness has been defined as “a process of releasing resentment toward oneself for a perceived transgression or wrongdoing” (DeShea & Wahkinney, 2003).

**Forgiveness of a situation-**Forgiveness should be applied only to people, not to inanimate objects such as tornadoes (Enright, 1998).

Letting go is the part of moving forward so as to have hope in life (Snyder, Lopez et al., 2004)

## II. METHOD

### **Rationale-**

Increasing negativity in the present Scenario is taking youths away from a virtuous living. Youth Violence has a serious and lifelong impact on person’s physical, psychological and social functioning (WHO, 2015). The sample selected Adolescence is a time when emerging young adults question their identity. The adolescence are rapidly getting involved in anti-social elements such as rape, theft, murders, etc. therefore there is a need for studying the impact of living environment on pro social behaviors. Keeping all this in view an attempt has been made to investigate impact of living environment on adolescence so as to make them

aware about the benefits of both parental support and virtuous living and to contribute in research done on relationship between living environment and virtues.

## III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are as follows:-

1. To assess the level of forgiveness among Adolescent girls living with parents as compared to those living in shelter home.
2. To assess the forgiveness among self, others and situation.

### **Hypothesis-**

1. The level of forgiveness will be high among girls living with parents as compared to those living in shelter home.
2. The level of forgiveness of self, others and situation will be high among girls living with parents in comparison to those living in shelter home.

### **Design-**

The design used in the present study was: Descriptive

### **Sample-** Purposive.

A total number of 50 adolescent girls were taken for this study. It was assured that 25 of them had been living in shelter home since five years. Purposive Sampling is also referred to as judgment, selective or subjective sampling is a non-probability sampling, it starts with the purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose.

#### Tools used-

1. The Heartland forgiveness scale (HFS) was used, first developed in 1998, and the current version was finalized in 1999. It is answered using 7-point rating scale. It is an 18 items trait measure of forgiveness. Items 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 17 are reverse-scored. A total forgiveness score is derived by summing the numbers given in response to items 1 through 18 (using the reverse scores for items 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17. There are six items to tap each of the three types of forgiveness- self, other or situation- and respondents use a 7-point rating scale (1= almost always false of me to 7= almost always true of me). Scores on HFS have correlated positively with scores on other forgiveness measures; people scoring higher on HFS also show more flexibility and trust, as well as hostility, rumination, and depression. Designed to assess person’s dispositional forgiveness. Can be completed with paper and pencil or computer. Convergent validity and satisfactory internal consistency reliability. Strong test-retest reliability.

## IV. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 1: Showing descriptive statistics of variable, forgiveness.**

variable	Number of items	Scale range	Scale mean	Obtained range		Obtained mean		Obtained S.D.	
				Girls living with parents	Girls living in Shelter Home	Girls living with parents	Girls living in Shelter Home	Girls living with parents	Girls living in Shelter Home
Forgiveness	18	18 - 126	72	72-92	61-82	82.00	71.50	6.27	4.21

The number of items in the scale used for assessing forgiveness was 18. The scale range was 18 as minimum and 126 as maximum on that mean. Therefore the scale mean was 72. The obtained range was 72 and 61 as minimum and 92 and 82 as maximum therefore the obtained mean was 82 and 71.50.

Since the obtained mean is much higher than the scale mean, this shows that the level of forgiveness is high among girls living with parents and hence the first hypothesis that the level of forgiveness will be high among girls living with parents as compared to those living in shelter home has been proved.

**As there are six items to tap each of the three types of forgiveness- self, other, or situation-and respondents use the seven-point scale (1-Almost always false of me to 7-almost always true of me), scores on the HFS have correlated positively with scores on other forgiveness measures; people scoring higher on the HFS also show more flexibility and trust, as well as less hostility, rumination, and depression.**

The hypothesis made in this regard that the level of forgiveness of self, others and situation will be high among girls living with parents has been proved, when the scores of the three domains- the forgiveness of self, others and situation were calculated it was found the level of forgiveness is high in all the domains of girls living with parents as compared to those living in shelter homes.

It is also stated in the studies that- Forgiveness of others and forgiveness of self have been associated with less depression (Lawler et al., 2005; Toussaint, Williams, Musick, and Everson-Rose, 2008), stress (Berry & Worthington, 2001), and anxiety (Subskoviak et al., 1995), as well as increased physical health (Lawler-Row, Karremans, Scott, Edlis-Matityahou, & Edwards, 2008), life satisfaction (Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwkerk, & Kluwer, 2003), and hope (Rye et al., 2001).

And girls living with parents were found more happy and satisfied with their lives.

95 British families (mothers, fathers, and their 12- to 16-year-old children) completed questionnaires about their forgiveness twice over the course of a year. The findings, Parents who were more forgiving *toward* their children at the start of the year tended to receive greater forgiveness *from* their children at the end of the year.

“This finding supports the notion that children learn forgiveness behavior modeled by their parents,” Maio and his colleagues explained. Therefore the hypothesis made in this regard that, “The level of forgiveness will be high among girls living with parents” is accepted.

**Table 2: Showing mean and t-value of Forgiveness**

	Mean		Combined S.D.	S.E.D	t-value	Interpretation
	Girls living with parents	Girls living in Shelter Home				
<b>Forgiveness</b>	<b>84.08</b>	<b>78.76</b>	<b>5.46</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>3.48**</b>	<b>significant</b>

- ✓ Value on 45 df is 0.05 level is 2.02 and 0.01 is 2.69
- ✓ Value on 50 df is 0.05 level is 2.01 and 0.01 is 2.68

The t- Value of Forgiveness 3.48\*\* is significant at both the levels.

Table 2 depicts the significance of the mean differences in various variables between girls living with parents and girls living in shelter home t-testing was done between the score of girls living with parents and the girls living in shelter home. The mean score of girls who are living with parents is found to be 84.08 and for girls who are living in shelter home it is found 78.76. It shows that the girls living with parents has higher mean. S.D value is 5.46 and S.E.D value is .1.53. After that t-value was calculated that is 3.48. It is checked on 45 and 50, it is significant on both the level 0.05 and 0.01. It shows that the girls who are living with parents are more likely to forgive others more than the girls who are living in shelter home. This result can be further supported by the studies of –

- Hope, 1987; Maio et al., 2008; McCullough & Worthington, 1994 found that forgiveness is considered important in the successful maintenance of relationships (Hodgson & Wertheim, 2007), especially during the ruptures caused by transgressions and hurts.
- (Fincham & Beach, 2002) found that the process of forgiving others has been shown to enhance the relationships of intimate couples, families, communities, and nations (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000).
- Homelessness is one of the most pressing social problems today. Society has responded to the problem with the creation of homeless shelters. Yet, the nature of the operation of the shelter is not defined. This study explored the operations of two single adult homeless shelters to understand how they operate in addressing the problem of homelessness. The study identified two different types of services, one called “house” and the other “home.” House services provided basic food, shelter, and linkage to social services, which fulfilled the basic definition of the problem of homelessness as

defined by the Institute of Medicine. Home services provided the basic services of house but also went one step beyond by providing these services within the context of a supportive environment, thus creating informal social supports. The study discusses the implications of each of these modalities in addressing the problems associated with people who are homeless as well as the differences in policies and structures which contribute to one shelter providing house and the other home services.- [Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless](#), Bruce D. Friedman

- As no studies have been done in Indian setting regarding this topic it can be said that the following result is due to-
  - The girls of shelter home are not fortunate to live in the friendly and co-operative atmosphere whereas girls living with parents have access to it.
  - The Caregivers of Shelter home are not sensitive enough to fulfill the basic needs of girls living there and they lack sense of understanding towards them.

#### V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of present study was to explore Forgiveness and its importance in adolescent years. It is specifically important in adolescents because this is the period of learning to accept responsibility, building healthy conviction, optimistic attitude, better relationships and fulfilling lives which might make them self-motivated, ambitious, open to new opportunities challenges and empower their performance in various pursuits of life and learning forgiveness for self, others and situation will enrich this feeling. In Today's modern world, the blind race for money, power and success is leading young people adopt wrong path in the course of accomplishment of their goals (Ahmad & Siddiqui, 2009). The young adults are rapidly getting involved in anti-social elements such as rape, theft, murders, etc. therefore there is a need for studying the impact of living environment on pro social behavior.

The scholar with the longest track record in studying forgiveness is Robert Enright, who defined forgiveness as "a willingness to abandon ones right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward who unjustly hurt us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her" (Enright and freedman, 1998)

It is crucial to that the forgiving person develop a benevolent stance towards the transgressing person. As he puts it as "the fruition of forgiveness is entering into loving community with others" (Enright & Zell, 1989).

It was an interesting experience to gain the knowledge about adolescence, their issues and challenges and interact with adolescent girls specially those living in shelter home and it was seen that there is a needs to work on enhancing the feeling of forgiveness as it enhances the well-being of a person. There is a need to inculcate and enhance feeling of forgiveness among them as from childhood they are taught to be rational and responsible and successful. To forgive others and move forward in life is very important because one cannot carry over his or her past as it is very difficult and causes harm to their personality as well as life goals are not achieved. There is a need to work on it effectively. There is also a need to sensitize the staff members of shelter home.

#### VI. IMPLICATIONS

Such types of studies are the needs of the hour. There is a need from childhood that the child be taught to "to forgive self, others and the situation". Results of the study cannot be generalized as the sample size is very small. For the generalization of the result large sample size can be taken. Data collection through psychometric devices in this study can be supplemented with qualitative data. It can also gain through interview technique. Limited variables are undertaken in this study, so more variables can be undertaken to enrich the data. The study can also be done to explore the gender differences using other variables.

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