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Q.

The child is father of the man:

As Ajay completed his Masters in Agricultural Technology, he knew exactly what he wanted to do next. He was going to go back to his farm and with his newly set up Agricultural <sup>venture</sup> Capital fund having received substantial investment - train and empower all the farmers, including his own father.

Values inculcated in him by his family, several sacrifices made by them to allow him to study undisturbed motivated him even further to take over the economic destiny of not only his family but village.

This is one example of a child becoming the father of the man - in the sense of enabling and empowering him economically. Not only economically but through several aspects, the father learns from the child. This is in essence implicit in the overall life cycle of human life.

## Lessons from childhood.

In a traditional sense, a child born into a family is looked after ~~after~~ by his parents; supported, well fed, educated, given shelter and taught most valuable lessons. The one imparting and providing these is associated with the 'father figure'. 'He who is able to bring up his child well fulfills his duty as a father' - is often cited in religious scriptures and societal norms.

When one thinks of his childhood, he is taken by feelings of SECURITY, comfort, peace - not just <sup>monetarily</sup> ~~mentally~~ but also learning and being taken care of can be associated with being a child.

The initial process of socialisation, building value system takes place at home.

For instance, not allowing the child to waste food by reminding him of millions who go hungry - builds sense of responsibility and awareness. Respect is again taught and re-inforced. Civic virtues are practised at home. Gender <sup>neutral</sup> ~~sex~~ segregation of work again builds stronger character.

These lessons are often not one way.  
Growing up is actually a two stakeholder approach of both children & parents.

### Child teacher as the teacher

At different stages, valuable lessons are taught by the children - who can be seen donning the role of 'father'.

Inquisitiveness begets many questions and there is continuous Education on part of the father. He is further exposed to new generational thought process and is able to widen his perspective. ~~For example a girl child asking her father various questions on science or non traditional aspects.~~

Socially, a girl child in many households opens up the door to gender neutrality by exposing or breaking traditional barriers, which probably her father unknowingly supported.

Greater societal awareness is instilled by simple reflections of children -

eg to treat all equally - play with everyone, including domestic help.

### Environmental consciousness

is further being generated through the young of today, Greta Thunberg being a prominent example. Where earlier parents would use diesel or petrol <sup>vehicles</sup> - today children encourage for electric vehicle, solar energy, own innovations.

### Economic well being and new modes

and avenues of finance are encouraged.

A farmer who would have traditionally stacked up his earnings in a cupboard or gone for excessive consumption - is again consciously made aware by children.

Even simple moral lessons in life

are taught by children - how to laugh, how to live for reasons beyond money, how to be attached and love unconditionally.

These lessons and continuous learning is given by the child.

## Security

### Child as the giver

Not just in aspects of learning, the child acts as the father even in providing security, stability, empowerment of the family specially in old age.

Through his own accomplishments that were enabled previously, he takes up roles, responsibilities, duties of the house. This sense of security that one is well taken care of is akin to that of the child while growing up.

In terms of economic security, social location, health, shelter, the life cycle is almost inevitable. Many businesses are also continued, eg. Roshni Nadar (HCL) or farms continued to be ploughed, handicrafts continued to be woven through children. Thus the child takes over the mantle and continues the legacy.

## Passing the Baton - how it actually fares?

Having seen the life cycle and how the child becomes the father of the man, one must ask, is this transition as peaceful and as simple?

A <sup>Hindi</sup> movie depicting the other side, Baghwan brought out the issues in this transition.

Many children who take up the position of authority in the houses also neglect their parents. In India it is believed as many as 70% of old aged people suffer from loneliness and abandonment.

In pursuit of economic goals, and continuous erosion of value systems, parents are not seen as vital members. Since they cannot always contribute economically to changing trends - most are left feeling unworthy.

This phase of transition in India, where <sup>in</sup> most of middle class households - parents sacrificed to give their all to their children - such contribution is not valued.

## Change is constant

As one reflects over the entire life journey, the most important part of anyone's life - historically or geographically - has always been the dimensions of parenthood & childhood.

Both these phases signify continuous learning from one another.

It is important that each is able to understand, appreciate, respect and contribute to overall growth.

The tilt however is towards learning from the child - whether new changes in society or even hard truths.

Towards making the path more comfortable, various efforts are needed by all stakeholders.

The child can become the father when he is enabled, educated

socially empowered, taught the right values and brought up impartially. As seen in our example, Ajay has come back to his village to renew his social bond, perform his duty and empower his former father to today's times.

Similarly for father to become the child and learn continuously, democratic principles is necessary to be imbibed. There also needs to be adequate social protection to reduce sense of dependency. Longevity dividend can be targeted, social circles maintained to allow for a peaceful transition.

Donning the role of fatherhood as understood as "provider and protector" as also as "teacher" is a unique aspect lived twice.

Q. Legislative Measures alone are not enough to ensure women's safety.

Anjali, then a young college graduate was one of the many greatly affected by the 2013 Nithhya Rape Case. She actively took part in many of the protests and ensured the coming out of the most stringent laws with respect to women safety.

However today she skims through the paper and still finds innumerable cases of violence against women mentioned religiously in columns as an everyday affair - and <sup>aware of the</sup> many that don't make it there.

Law has a unique sense of authority in a society and demands obedience of all members - however ~~why does~~ it still fail to arrest issue of women's safety in India.

In this essay, we shall delve into this contradiction, consider why it is important for overall growth, the challenges before it and some ways to overcome the same.

## Legislative Measure: A stepping stone

As put forward by proponents of Positive law theory - law that is enacted by sovereign authority has to be obeyed by the citizens. This law acts as the framework as to how the society ought to be - incorporating punishments for the violators and ensuring deterrence.

It is thus an essential part of capturing INTENT of people, expressing their ASPIRATION of what a future society for them should be.

As further elaborated by Aquinas, law should be in consonance with natural law and also consistent <sup>and</sup> simple.

With all these incorporations, legislative measures are the first stepping stones towards the goal of ensuring women's safety.

However, even this very first step has not fulfilled its objectives with continued cases of crime.



lack of sensitivity of officials offer no more barriers. Numerous cases have been reported where proactiveness or even responsiveness of the Police could have averted crimes.

Cases of stalking are not taken seriously and the girl is sent back with theories of everything that she ought to bear some 'responsibilities' and protect 'honour of her family'.

Even with zero FIR made possible, cases are not reported - eg. one seen in Hyderabad where the family was sent on multiple trips while their daughter was raped and burnt alive.

These infrastructural issues hinder the effective implementation of even Reporting the cases. The further tribulations of the Judiciary - adds to the overall agony.

The low conviction rate provides gateway to criminals to walk away without any charges.

The long period of case study, costs involved, and lack of sensitivity of lawyers again question the girl's decision of seeking justice.

The supporting bodies of forensic investigation, <sup>neutral</sup> Media scrutiny are also lacking to provide the congenial environment, of proper justice administration.

These Institutional & Infrastructural challenges are combined ~~by~~ with Mindset of society: where women are still treated as commodities, meant for objectification and gratification, lower status in houses all leading to perpetual rise in crimes against women — even with legislations in place.

Women's safety: Sacrificial duty

Having seen the putting in place of legislations but still lack of effective outcomes, it becomes important to understand the value of women's safety.

If one were always subject to threat of life and dignity - that would amount to actual denial of Right to life itself. The Indian Constitution has reflected its stand towards equality through Article 14, 15 as well as 19 and 21. Through Fundamental Duties, it has further placed an obligation on all citizens to protect dignity of women.

~~Various~~

Adequate safety: at home, workplace, public space is key to overall growth of society and economy.

With safe homes: women are able to voice their opinion, exercise their agency, make decisions on all that matters to them. They are ensured of their self worth. This also has a long lasting impact on children, who <sup>make</sup> take up the next generation through values imbibed today.

Economically, if women are ensured adequate protection, there will be larger participation in workforce (present: 23.5%). As IMF predicts, India's GDP can increase by 27% with women participation.

A Harvard study brought out that women in Boards have contributed higher <sup>to</sup> Returns on Equity.

Politically as well - with women's participation: multiple issues can be put on the table. Study by Esther Duflo in Panchayati Raj Institutions spoke of greater focus on sanitation, health, education where women were in charge.

Ethically it is everyone's moral duty to respect all human lives and ensure full contribution by women members. We cannot let only 'vishwavidins' of yesterday like Gargi, ~~to~~ Maitri remain as legacy but keep adding to the list.

The need for adequate women's safety is thus well documented and understood.

It is also seen how legislative measures though enacted with good intent and authority - fall short of required results.

We can thus now discuss what measures should be taken?

### Bridging the Gap: ~~the~~.

With legislations in place, EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT of the same is the need of the hour.

Women self help groups can be mobilised, theatres set up in local languages and appropriate notification in fairs and communities can help generate awareness.

Details of the Act should also be put out in sufficient ~~to~~ quality and simplified language.

Police force are the first interface between society and the government. Their role has to be strengthened to act as Frontline Helpers in all cases of distress. Not only should they be alert and vigilant, but also sensitive. Appropriate training should be made available. Investment now will bear life long dividends.

Lady Constables must be available at all stations - they should be in touch with various commissions, like women welfare, Human Rights to enable a comprehensive response.

As suggested by J.S. Verma Committee ⇒ Sexual Offenders Registry should be prepared and updated regularly.

Police presence at nights can also to a great deal help avert crisis.

Wider community involvement should be encouraged, eg. setting

up Mohalla committees, sort of moral policing.

Mechanisms should be made available to allow for registration of complaints without acknowledgement of intruder - to protect identity and safety. for eg. at kirana wallahs, hospitals.

Institutional capacity needs strengthening - Judiciary: special courts established, timely disposal of cases, greater sensitisation.

The forensic team should be enlarged to have presence at all places.

Technology can be effectively used, eg. DNA, call records, CCTV.

The most important intervention has to be at SOCIETAL and ATTITUDINAL level. Value based education is the proper institutionalised mechanism to impart morals. Religious organisation can also be used to inculcate essential values among members.

Continuous campaigns by all stakeholders will bring steady returns.

This societal impact can be created through all institutions of family, education, media where primacy of women's safety is highlighted.

"Men for change" can be the required movement to bring holistic development in society leading to overall women empowerment.

**Mari Shakti : epitome of New India**

With such persistent efforts, women safety can be ensured at all fronts by all members with first step of legislation already enabled.

Initiatives like SHE Team in Hyderabad is praiseworthy as also apps developed by different states to ensure helpline availability.

Even the Railway recently

came out with new measures  
guaranteeing safety during  
travel. Uber and such travel  
apps have also installed an emergency  
feature. All these complement the  
legislation along with media initiatives  
like #MeToo, movies highlighting lacunae  
and greater societal awareness.

With this, India's women can  
safely and with <sup>over-</sup>due right enjoy  
their Right to Life.