

Government of India

Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016 passed in the Parliament

The Lok Sabha has passed the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016 today. The Bill had already been passed by the Rajya Sabha during the Winter Session. With this, the Bill stands passed in the Parliament.

The Bill seeks to amend the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 to provide for the following:-

- (i) Maternity leave available to the working women to be increased from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for the first two children.
- (ii) Maternity leave for children beyond the first two will continue to be 12 weeks.
- (iii) Maternity leave of 12 weeks to be available to mothers adopting a child below the age of three months as well as to the “commissioning mothers”. The commissioning mother has been defined as biological mother who uses her egg to create an embryo planted in any other woman.
- (iv) Every establishment with more than 50 employees to provide for crèche facilities for working mothers and such mothers will be permitted to make four visits during working hours to look after and feed the child in the crèche.
- (v) The employer may permit a woman to work from home if it is possible to do so.
- (vi) Every establishment will be required to make these benefits available to the women from the time of her appointment.

The Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt. Maneka Gandhi thanked the Minister for Labour and Employment, Shri Bandaru Dattatreya for taking up the demand of lakhs of women across the country and for having steered the Bill through Rajya Sabha as well as the Lok Sabha. In her message to the working women, Smt. Gandhi congratulated the women who are planning to have a child and has stated that the Ministry of Women and Child Development will continue to work for the empowerment of women.

The amendments in the Bill were taken up following the request by the WCD Minister to the Hon’ble Labour Minister to bring about these changes so that a working woman gets time to exclusively breast-feed her child for 6 months after the birth. This period also enables the working mother to recuperate herself before she goes to back to work. In her communication to the Labour Ministry, the WCD Minister had also highlighted the concerns of commissioning and adopting mothers who also require maternity leave.
