

Maternity support for women

Shram Shakti (1998) highlighted the plight of women workers in the unorganized sector and recommended maternity support.

Infant milk substitutes, Feeding bottles and Infant Foods (Regulations of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act introduced in 1992.

WOMEN'S WORK ROLES

1. Perform multiple roles – domestic, economic (paid or unpaid) childcare/care of sick elderly

Remain invisible as workers due to defective definition (Human Dev. Rep, 1990)

Women work 25% longer hours than men, 15 hours more a week in rural India (Human Dev. Rep, 1990)

Study on childcare strategies

(Arulraj and Samuel, 1995)

Studied 950 mothers belonging to unorganized sectors in TN

Four types of care strategies identified

Childcare at work spot (25%)

Childcare at centres (29%)

Childcare at home by others (36%)

Care at home by mothers (10%)

Workspot not conducive for breastfeeding

31% stopped working exclusively for breastfeeding

Women's multiple work roles & management of breastfeeding (Narayanan, 1997)

1. 969 respondents, 35% with infants between 0-4 months, 65% with infants 5-12 months
2. Four types of work, domestic, childcare, unpaid family labour, paid work
3. In 0-4 month group, 25% resumed domestic work in first month. In 5-12 age group all had resumed.
4. Paid work – among 0-4 month group 33% dropped out of work, 25% not yet resumed, 43% resumed
5. In 5-12 month group 50% had resumed work by 4 months.

Breastfeeding study contd....

In 0-4 month age group

All mothers were found to breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding had not been given up for work.

Strategies adopted were dropping out of workforce, changing jobs and place of work.

Financial loss offset by borrowing or starving.

In 5-12 month age group

80% continued with breastfeeding. 83% infants cared for by family members. 17% of those who worked outside carried their infants to workplace.

Existing provisions for maternity

For the organized sector

1. The Maternity Benefit, 1961 (applicable to govt, non-govt owned factories, mines, plantations, shops and establishments which employ a minimum of ten or in some cases 20 workers). Paid maternity leave of 12 weeks plus one month in case of illness arising out of premature delivery, miscarriage etc. Nursing breaks – two breaks per day till child is fifteen months old.
2. The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 (applicable to factories). 12 weeks of wage at daily rate in case of sickness, 6 weeks & one month.

Legislations relating to creches

Factories Act (1948) workers	minimum of 30
Plantation Act (1951) workers	minimum of 50
Mines Act (1952) Beedi and Cigar workers 50workers	no specification minimum
Contract Labour (1970) Inter State Migrant Workers Act (1980)	minimum of 20 minimum of 20

Second Labour Commission Report

1. Childcare also responsibility of other parent, family and society
2. Labour Legislation should include provision for 20 or more workers irrespective of gender
3. 15 crore women living below poverty line and 5-6 crore children under 6 years belong to groups where mothers have to work for sheer survival.
4. Childcare provisions relieve her one of her multiple burdens, creates time and space and work opportunities for her.
5. Provision of childcare results in 50% enhancement in the productivity of mother, as well as lower morbidity and better growth of child

TN FORCES CHARTER ON MATERNITY ENTITLEMENTS

1. All women who become mothers shall be entitled to maternity support services.
2. Financial support shall be sufficient for 120 days, withdrawal from work from date of child birth.
3. Rate of calculation of support from prevailing daily wages and shall be regularly revised.
4. For women in organized sector, Maternity Benefit Act with full employer liability shall be applicable to all govt, non govt and autonomous corporations.

Charter contd.....

5. For women in private or non govt.organized sector, in establishments employing at least 10 persons, the ESI Act with shared liability shall be mandatory.
6. For those in unorganized sector entitlement shall be provided by the authorities in the industry, occupation, concerned with shared liability.
7. For others in the unorganized sector, and for self employed shared liability shall be provided on a regional or district basis, by authorities.

Charter continued...

8. For non-employed & unpaid family workers, National Maternal Assistance scheme, shall be provided with full State liability at the lowest prevailing minimum wage rate with no discrimination in eligibility.
9. Umbrella legislation of an enabling and harmonizing nature for all of the above, shall be developed.
10. Non-financial support services such as the following to be provided with incentives for provision
 - creches and child-friendly workplaces, flexible timings, or carry-home work, adequate health services and counselling for mothers of infants, counselling for unions, families and employers of mothers of infants with special reference to men, information dissemination and counselling through media.