

## Lok Sabha Passes Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Bill, 2016

Lok Sabha has passed the **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016** which inter-alia includes increasing maternity benefit to woman covered under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 from 12 weeks to 26 weeks up to two surviving children in order to allow the mother to take care of the child during his/her most formative stage.

### Salient features of the Bill are as under—

- Maternity leave available to the working women to be increased from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for the first two children.
- 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.
- Maternity leave for children beyond the first two will continue to be 12 weeks.
- 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.
- The employer may permit a woman to work from home if it is possible to do so.

Every organization will be required to make these benefits available to the women from the time of her appointment.

### Impact

The Bill will have a positive impact on health and well-being of women workforce in the country. It will improve the work-life balance of women workers and will also be beneficial for the organization in terms of increased productivity of female employees. It will also increase women’s participation in the labour force thereby addressing the major problem of gender inequality in workforce participation.

### Background

The bill was presented in the Lok Sabha by Shri Bandaru Dattatreya, Hon’ble Minister of State (IC) for Labour and Employment, Government of India on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The Maternity Benefit(Amendment) Bill, 2016 has already been passed by the Rajya Sabha on 11th August, 2016. The Act will come into force only after the President’s

assent.

Please contact for any query related to this mail to Ms. Megha Kaul, Associate Economist at [megha@phdcci.in](mailto:megha@phdcci.in) with a cc to Dr. S P Sharma, Chief Economist PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Warm regards,

Dr. S P Sharma  
Chief Economist & Director-Research

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PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
PHD House, 4/2 Siri Institutional Area  
August Kranti Marg, New Delhi-110016  
Ph.: + 91-11-26863801-04, 49545454  
Fax: +91- 26855450, 49545451  
Email: spsharma@phdcci.in  
Website: www.phdcci.in

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**PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

PHD House, 4/2 Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi - 110 016 (India)

Tel. : +91-112686 3801-04, 49545454, 49545400 - Fax : +91-11-2685 5450 - E-mail : research@phdcci.in - Website : www.phdcci.in