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Child and Maternity Care Benefits- A Boon to Working Women for Social Protection

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Abstract:

Societal structure is throwing away more responsibilities to working women than men. Women are more responsive in maintaining Family and children. Even though the responsibilities are shared by men in some classes, the women were not fully and equally shared their burden of work both at their personal and official work-life. The structure and nature of the works of the women were diverse in nature. Even now we can take our rural villages as our examples, where both women and men are working at farming fields or at construction fields that the women also have to do the entire works at their home after their works from outside for earning and the other gender may not be forced to do the home works as women do. It is actually our conventional attitude of Mind in the society. In fact, the Income of the women is also varied in different sectors. In general not all the women are getting same income for the same work as men gets. This is where the differences were found. Apart from that, not all the sectors and organizations are giving equal benefit for working women in all aspects especially in child and maternity care benefits. There are differences among the states in implementing the same benefits to working women. For example some states and their institutions are allowing women workers of some cadres to take child care leave for two years, study leave for one year and so on. Some state institutions are not allowing the women to benefit out of the schemes for women. There are framing their own laws and they approve on their own with their bodies. These sorts of differences in availing existing benefits are also the great burden to working women. And even from state to state the natures of child care and maternity benefits are different. But our Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is focusing on improving the maternal and child health by 2015. Therefore the government of India is taking serious effort to provide uniform and maximum benefits to all women through the Child Care and Maternity Benefit Scheme. The present study aims to analyze the available child care facilities and maternity benefit schemes in India and the also tries to reveal the factors associated with the promotion of social protection for working women India through these schemes. A cross sectional study was conducted among the women benefited under child and maternity care facilities.

Keywords: Maternity and child care, working women, millennium development goals

1. Preamble

Society breaks the nature of works to the genders. Now a day's women are equally talented and are powerful for doing works as the men do. However, women are enforced to do family related works like housekeeping, child caring, cooking and the related activities apart from their outside works. Due to this situation they could not maintain their health properly. Unfortunately work-life balance is always needed to live without pressure. Both government and private sectors are now seriously taking efforts to maintain the quality of work life balance of their employees. Under these circumstances, maternity and child care facilities provided by the Government through separate acts are really a boon for the working women in all the sectors.

2. Relentless Obstructions

Social protection is nothing but all the time the entire sectors are obligatory for women employees. They are the conditions of skills, strengths, resources, supports in individuals, families, and a community which helps the people to deal with stressful events more effectively and also to remove the risks in their life. For protecting women employees' government, family, and society as a whole takes constant efforts. There are no uniform policies for all the working women to avail the benefits in a same way under these schemes. Even from state to state the maternity and child care benefits schemes are different. The central and state government laws are also different in its implementation for the same schemes. In this situation, the government has fixed one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of India as improving the maternal and child health by reducing maternal mortality rate to 109 per 1,00,000 live births by 2015.

3. Divergence in Implementation

Child and maternity care facilities are not implemented uniformly in all over the world. Of course it may vary for different countries. But within the country also we can find the differences in its accessibility. In India, states and union territories are following different

legislations according to their convenience. As per the Maternity benefit act 1961 almost all the organized sectors have to implement and extend the benefits to the women. But very few private organizations are providing full benefits as per laws. People are compensated with awfully little benefits. Some of the private organizations are comes under organized sector but they were not put into practice the entire benefits of maternity benefit act and its amendments.

In recent times, the Bihar State Power Holding Company Limited (BSPHCL) and its associated companies provides a total of 180 days in a year as maternity leave to women employees working as against the existing 90 days. Instantaneously, the male employees also get the paternity leave of 15 days. Greater part of the corporate sectors are using different kind of strategies for the sustainability of skills and knowledge of the women employees working in their company and According to a latest study conducted by law firm Slater & Gordon amongst 500 managers, indicated that 40% of the companies are avoiding hiring women workers especially the women in child bearing age up to 30 years. Nearly 50 % of the women are employed after 35 years only due to this maternity and its related leaves. These studies shows the private organizations are not entirely keen in offering maternity and child care benefits. In 1999 by notification under Central Civil Services (Leave) Rule 551 (A) of the Central Government gave the provisions for paternity leave for a male Central Government employee (including an apprentice and probationer) they were granted paternity leave for 15 days during the time of his wife's delivery i.e. before 15days or upto six months from the date of delivery. This rule is applicable for only male employees in government services.

As by the Central Civil Service (Leave) Rules, 1972 in India defines that, relating to maternity care working women in government sectors are entitled to get six months maternity leave. After forty years also it has not been implemented uniformly in all the state and central government institutions/organizations. Recently during 2011 only, the maternity leave was extended to 6 months from three months in Tamilnadu. This is how the differences exist from state to state and in union territories.

While noting the childcare leave, women employees in government sector are permitted to take 2 years child care leave at any stage of their child, until the child attains 18 year old. Recently the 7th pay commission also recommends granting first one year leave with full payment and next one year leave with 80% payment. This is also not executed in all the government sectors uniformly. Different legislations among the states perform differently against these benefits and in private sector there is no such a kinds of leaves to women employees. According to the recent study made by Ranjana Kumari, Director of the Centre for Social Research, New Delhi for National Commission of Women reveals that, there is unfairness against women employees during prenatal and postnatal period was widely prevalent in the corporate sector in India. These evidences list the variations.

4. Governmental Effort for Maternity and Child Care (M & CC)

Improving maternal health, reducing maternal mortality ratio, leave and payment of salary are integrated in to the maternity benefit scheme implemented by the government of India. As per the Millennium Development Goal India (MDG) Country Report, it was found that, over the year the maternity related deaths are dramatically declined to more than 50 % i.e. approximately from 1, 00,000 maternal deaths per year (1991-01) to 44,000 deaths (2011-13). This shows the positive sign of implementation maternal benefit schemes.

Through National Health Mission (NHM) the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is working to address reproductive, maternity, infant, adolescent and child health issues. Under this ministry numbers of maternity and child development programmes have been executed. Some of the currently running programmes are Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), 2005 a cash transfer scheme, "Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram" (JSSK), 2011 to gets rid of out of own expenses for both pregnant women and sick neonates. It includes the free treatment and pre and postnatal difficulties, the Referral Transport (RT) facilities, mother and child tracking system (MCTS) and facilitation centres, organizing Monthly Village Health & Nutrition Days (MVHND) at Anganwadies, Quality training for the nurses, doctors and health workers and Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), 2010 for cash Rs. 6000/ are the maternity benefit programmes for the first two live births for the pregnant women.

The women are entitled to get 12 week's i.e.84 days of maternity leave as per the maternity benefit act, 1961. Upto May, 2011 three months of maternity leave was granted to women employees in all sectors as per legislation. But only in government sectors it was implemented. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is also working for increasing the period of maternity leave to eight months or 32 weeks. The maternity act similarly enforces nursing breaks for women after returning from delivery to duty and these breaks are given in addition to the regular interval till the child reaches 15 months. The Union government is now working for increase the maternity leave from existing 12 weeks to 26 weeks to women employed in private sectors. For Infants six months of breast feeding is required for the child to live with good immunity and good nutritious status. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Labour, Trade Unions and International Labour organizations are collectively joined hands to increase the maternity leave up to eight months, and this will recompense their work life balance.

5. Rationale of Child Care

Child care is combined care of both mother and the child. Any way childhood is more important, sensitive and vulnerable stage for future development of the child. The child is learning from the fetus stage and moreover the childhood experiences determine the personality of the Individuals. The healthy and happy life of the childhood depends on appropriate motherhood. Mental growth and development of the child will be more, when they have social protection in their childhood age. Currently most of the children are nurtured by care providing centers; children fail to perceive the family setup, affection, love and care of the parents and other family members. The working women almost lost their energy at their working place, after their work hours they have to work for their family, household activities and other works related activities at the same time children's expect their mother's kind attention during their presence at their home. But unfortunately, the working mothers could not extend it as their children's expectations. Slowly the

children's may also lose their bindings' with their parents. Slowly these sort of practices compelling to open more number of old age homes for parents and child care centers for children.

Decades ago our own Indian culture especially in South Indian culture the childhood and motherhood periods were happier. But now a day's everything are distorted and working women feels these periods are more challenging, tensed, and more pressure full. Ultimately people living for nothing, everyone must give value for their kinship and the family system especially joint family system, which is almost exhausted from our society. To reimburse happiness and protective maternity and childcare period joint family structure is most important. Under these circumstances the Maternity and child care benefits are boon to the working women.

6. Methodology Adopted

the present study was carried out among the working women (after their delivery period) in the post-natal period, who are working in different Government, Quasi government, Private-Organized and Private-Unorganized sectors in and around Tiruchirappalli District, Tamil Nadu, India for applying a cross sectional study. This kind of research is used to snapshot the results at a particular point of time and inspect one variable in different groups. Simply, this technique was used to gather information. The information may then be used with other methods to investigate the relationship that is observed. Followed by, the Descriptive analysis with Simple random sampling technique was used to explain characteristics of a population being studied. The sample size for the present study is 175. Self-structured Questions were used and data was collected from the working women to find out the frequencies and percentage.

7. Social and Demographic Facts

The Social-demographic facts of the present study includes age, education, working sector, income, and marital status, type of family and number of family members, postnatal period, existence of child care facilities, and maternity and child care leave availed. The study also focuses factors responsible for promoting social protection which includes income, health, safety, empowerment, equity, social justice, availability of resources, Individual and Institutional support, social connection, emotional stability, relational skills, problem solving skills, partners support, caring adults and positive peers.

8. Deliberations of Results

A total 175 postnatal working mothers in various sectors were included for the present study.

Variables	Categories	Frequencies	%
Age in years	<19 years	35	20%
	20-30 years	83	47%
	>30 years	57	33%
Education Level	Primary and Middle School Level	28	16%
	High and Higher Secondary Level	45	26%
	UG and PG Level	64	37%
	Phd and above	38	22%
Income Group	< 10000	42	24%
	10,001 - 30000	84	48%
	>30,001	49	28%
Marital Status	Married	145	83%
	Unmarried	8	5%
	Widow	10	6%
	Divorced	12	7%
Type of family	Nuclear	105	60%
	Joint	42	16%
	Scattered	28	24%
No. of family members	<5	110	63%
	5-10	20	11%
	>10	45	26%

Table 1: Social and demographic variables
Source: Primary data collected by the researcher

Table -1 shows the result of the social and demographic variable of the respondents in the study area. It is clear that the majority of the respondents (47%) are between the age group of 20 to 30 years. As for as educational levels are concerned 37% are belongs to UG and PG Level education, most of the respondents (48%) belong to the income group of 10,001 – 30,000 and majority of the respondents (83%) are married, it is remarkable to note that 60% of the responds are leading nuclear family and 63% of the responders are having less than 5 members in their family.

Variables	Categories	Frequencies	%
Postnatal period	After delivery upto < 1 year of Age of the children	30	17%
	After delivery 1 < 3 years age of the children	67	38%
	After delivery 3 < 5 of Age of the children year	55	31%
	Above 5 years of Age of the children	23	13%
Working Sector	State Government	35	20%
	Central Government	27	15%
	Quasi-Government	15	9%
	Private -Organized	65	37%
	Private –Un organized	33	19%
Existence of Child Care Facilities	Child Care Facilities (CCF) (i.e. insurance/feeding room/ crèches/day care centre/ play schools/ vaccination)are available in their working Environment	26	15%
	Child Care facilities (CCF) (i.e. insurance, crèches or day care centre, vaccination)are not available in their working Environment	132	75%
	Institution/Organization Facilitates Child Care Facilities (CCF), outside the working environment (i.e. insurance/feeding room/ crèches/day care centre/ play schools/ vaccination)	17	10%
Awareness about CCF and MB	Employer provides awareness about Child Care Facilities and Maternity Benefits(CCF & MB)	79	45%
	Employer does not provides any awareness about Child Care Facilities and Maternity Benefits (CCF & MB)	96	55%
Maternity and Child Care Leave availed	< 3 Months	93	53%
	3 to 4 Months	44	25%
	< 4 Months	38	22%
Social Protection	Child care facilities under maternity benefit scheme by the government provides social protection	82	79%
	Child care facilities under maternity benefit scheme by the government not provides social protection	93	21%

Table 2 :Available Child and Maternity Care Benefits

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher

Table– 2 shows the result of the child and maternity care benefit schemes related findings in the present study. Nearly 38% of the working women have 1to3 year’s aged children. 35% respondents are working in government sector and 56% are working in private sectors. It is noteworthy that 75% of the respondents said there is no child care facilitates in their working environment. It reveals that 55% of the respondents said they have not received any awareness about child care and maternity care benefits from their employers. While leave is concerned 53% of the respondents availed 3 months maternity leave and in conclusion it was noted that, 79% of the respondents expressed that, child care facilities under maternity benefit scheme confers social protection to the women employees.

9. Remarkable Result

Through by primary source of data collection i.e. Telephonic and face to face conversations with the respondents it was found that, Most of the respondents (56%) are working in private organized and unorganized sectors. Amongst them nearly 50% of them were not availed any kind of maternity benefits from their employers. In this same private sector, 10% of the respondents were treated well by their owners. And almost 40% of them were unknown the government norms for maternity and child care benefits. In contemporary times some private firms are using innovative leave approaches to retain their employees; they are bereavement leave for 7 days for the demise of their close relatives, half day leave for celebration of birthday and employee volunteering leave for one day which has been granted to participate in the charity purpose. Through these ways some private firms are encouraging their employees especially women Employees to participate more. As a result, women stand on their own, economically independence and also supportive to their family.

According to the national survey conducted during June, 2011 at Ireland on “women’s experiences at work during and after pregnancy” was strongly pointed out that there is an inequality among higher and lower grade women workers in the country. The higher ranked and designated women workers and their employed partners were enjoyed maternity and child care leave with extension without any obstructions. But the situations are worse in lower grade workers and they could not enjoy with the provisions. Due to requirement they used unpaid leave and they were returned to their work as earlier as possible then the higher grade women workers. But all women are same in front of law.

10. Limitations of the Study

As we know well that generalization of research results in social sciences are not justified, so the findings of the present study may not be generalized to other area. All the factors responsible for successful implementation of the child and maternity care benefits were not discussed. And some forms of personal communications are not directly discussed in the present study.

11. Conclusion

The present study found that, some women are supported by their spouse, family and relations and some are not having any support, few are unmarried but got child and some women workers families are scattered somewhere. These kinds of working women and their family problems are more deteriorated. They are only earning but not living. So, these kinds of focused problems may be taken for the future studies. Government may introduce uniform maternity and child care benefits for all the government and public limited companies, quasi and union territory governments and May also insists the private organizations to follow the same rule all over India. The present study reveals that, the maternity and child care beneficial programmes are really helpful for the working women who were already dumped by the society for various reasons but not accessible to them evenly. More than ever, for feeding their children and giving initial care for their infants, the maternity and child care leave are mandatory one. This is too accessible only by working women in government sectors and very few in organized private sectors. But for the other category of the women workers are also given the same kind of attention at this maternity and child care periods. These kinds of lifesaving benefits may not be compromised at any cost. Because the future generations, their attitude, skill and knowledge, and their behavior everything is framed by mothers at their valuable childhood periods.

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