Maternity Benefit Bill, 2016

Issues

Women

- World Health Organisation recommends that children must be exclusively breastfed by the mother for the first 24 weeks to improve their survival rates
- Absence of adequate maternity leave and income security leads to women dropping out of the labour force
- On the other hand it is argued it Could adversely affect women job prospects.

Child

- World Health Organisation recommends that children must be exclusively breastfed by the mother for the first 24 weeks to improve their survival rates
- It is beneficial for the health of child

Changes

- The Bill extends maternity leave for all women to 26 weeks
- However, a woman with two or more children will be entitled to 12 weeks of maternity leave
- This maternity leave should not be availed before eight weeks from the date of expected delivery
- Bill makes it mandatory to provide 12 weeks of maternity leave to:
  (i) a woman who legally adopts a child below three months of age; and (ii) a commissioning mother
- The Bill requires every establishment with 50 or more employees to provide for crèche facilities within a prescribed distance
- An employer may permit a woman to work from home, if the nature of work assigned permits her to do so

World Scenario

- In 25% of the countries, maternity benefits are paid solely by the employer
- In 16 % of the countries, maternity benefits are financed by a combinations of funds from the employer and the government
- In 58% of the countries, cash benefits are provided to pregnant women through national social security benefits
- In the remaining 1% of the countries, there was no provision for maternity benefits

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