



New Labour Codes Empower Women with Greater Safety, Equality, and Workplace Flexibility

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Key Takeaways

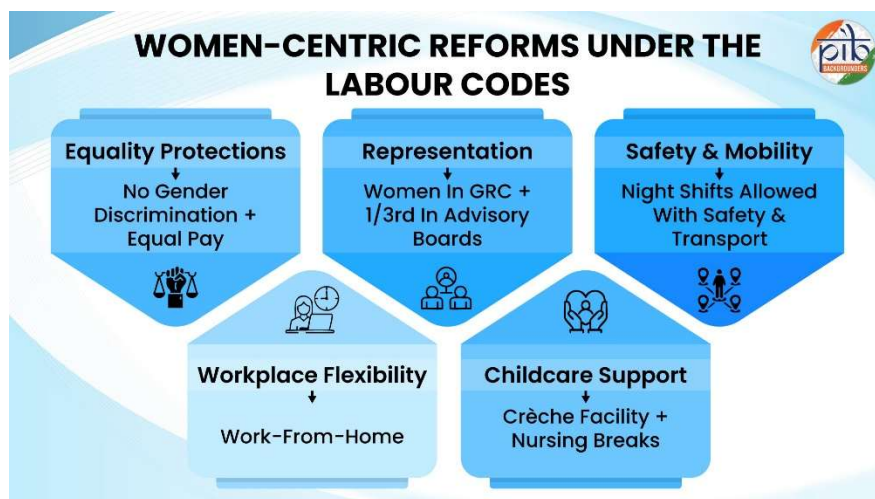
- The **Labour Codes** strengthen women's role in workplaces through greater representation in grievance and advisory bodies.
- **Enhanced maternity support** includes 26 weeks' leave, simplified certification, nursing breaks and mandatory crèche facilities.
- Women receive added **flexibility through work-from-home** options after maternity leave, wherever feasible.
- The Codes ensure **gender parity** with strict prohibition of discrimination and **guarantee of equal pay for equal work**.

Introduction

Women constitute a vital and growing segment of India's workforce, and the **new Labour Codes** mark a significant step towards creating a more inclusive, safe, and enabling work environment for them.

With progressive provisions on equality, maternity benefits,

workplace safety, and representation in decision-making bodies, the **Codes modernise labour regulations** to meet the needs of today's economy. These reforms not only **safeguard the rights of women workers** but also **expand opportunities by ensuring equal treatment**, and supporting their participation across all sectors, including night shifts and hazardous industries. Together, these measures **strengthen women's economic empowerment** and contribute to a more resilient and gender-balanced labour ecosystem.



The following provisions outline the key benefits extended to women under the new Labour Codes:

Representation of Women in the GRC

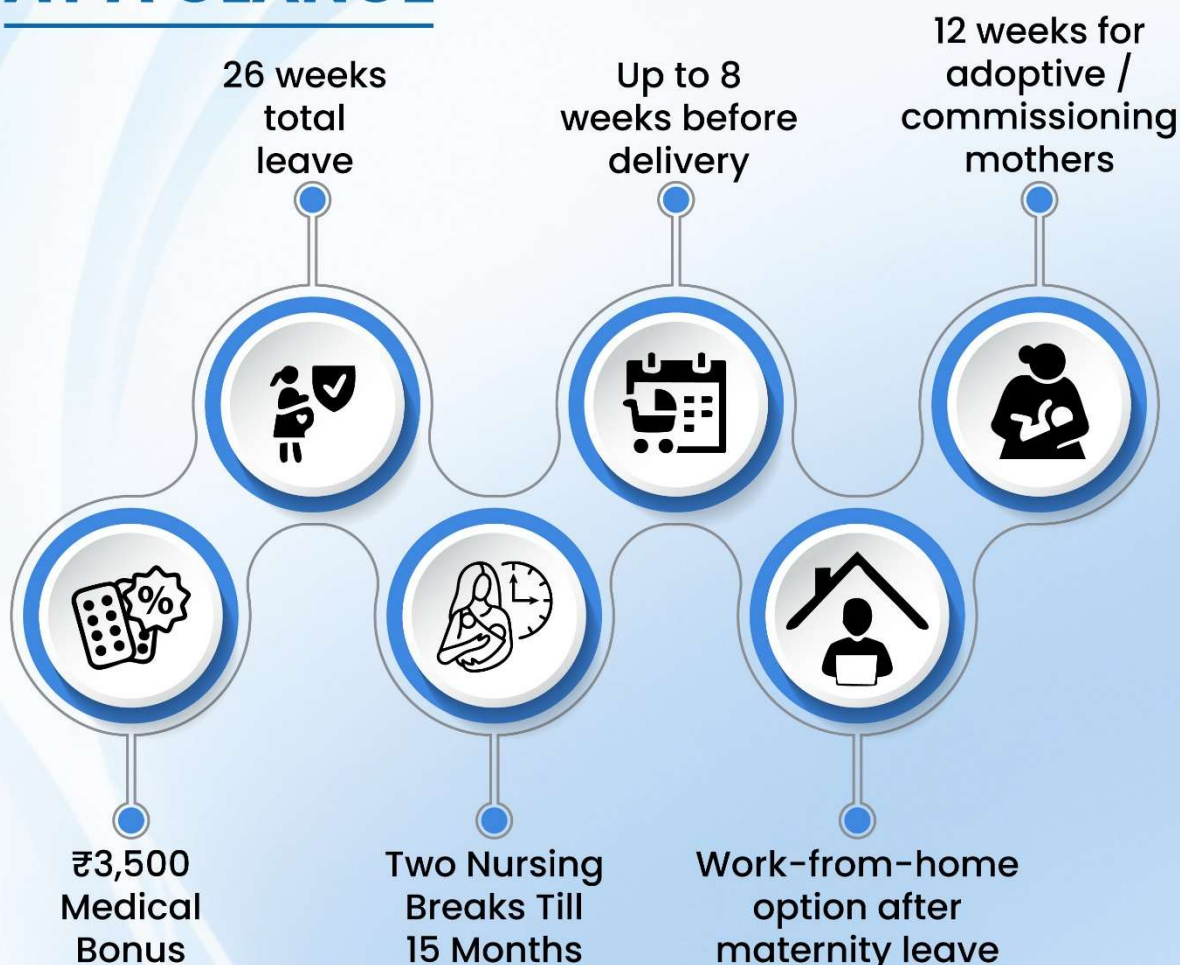
The Industrial Relations Code 2020 mandates adequate representation of women in the Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC), not less than their proportion in the total workforce of the establishment.

- **Ensures women workers have a fair voice in workplace** dispute resolution.
- Women's perspectives help **address issues more comprehensively and sensitively**.
- **Women employees feel more secure** raising concerns when represented by peers.
- Matters such as workplace **harassment, maternity rights, and safety can be better handled**.
- **Balanced representation** fosters fairness, reducing discrimination and conflicts.

Maternity Benefits

As per the **Code on Social Security**, to be eligible for **maternity benefits**, a woman must have worked in an establishment for at least 80 days in the 12 months immediately preceding the expected delivery. **Eligible women receive maternity benefit equal to their average daily wages** for the duration of the leave. The **maximum period of maternity leave is 26 weeks, of which up to 8 weeks may be taken before the expected date of delivery**. Additionally, a woman who legally adopts a child below three months of age, or a "**commissioning mother**" (a biological mother who uses surrogacy), **is entitled to 12 weeks of maternity benefit** from the date of adoption or from the date the child is handed over.

MATERNITY BENEFITS AT A GLANCE



Work from home

In case the work assigned to a woman is of such a nature that she may work from home, the employer may allow her to do so, after availing of the maternity benefit for such period and on such conditions as the employer and the woman may mutually agree.

Simplification of certification for proof of delivery, etc.

Proof of maternity-related conditions such as **pregnancy, delivery, miscarriage, medical termination of pregnancy, tubectomy operation, or illness** arising from such events may now be furnished through a form issued by:

- a registered medical practitioner,
- an accredited social health activist (ASHA),

- a qualified auxiliary nurse, or
- a midwife.

This provision, under Code on Social Security, simplifies the certification process, which under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 can only be obtained from a registered medical practitioner or a hospital or midwife.

Medical bonus

If the employer does not provide free pre-natal confinement & post-natal care, the **woman is entitled to a medical bonus of ₹3,500.**

Provision of Nursing breaks

After resuming duty post-childbirth, a **woman is entitled to two breaks during her daily work** for nursing the child **until the child attains the age of 15 months.**

Crèche facility

In every establishment where **50 or more workers are employed**, there must be a **crèche facility** either **separate or common** within a prescribed distance. The employer must allow **four visits a day by the woman to the crèche** which includes the rest intervals.

This provision—under **Code on Social Security and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, 2020**—supports working women with children below the age of 6 years. **Crèche facilities support working mothers by enabling childcare** at the workplace, helping women balance work and family.

Boost to female labour force participation

Women workers can work in all establishments for all types of work. They may also work at night, i.e. before 6 a.m. and beyond 7 p.m, with their consent, and the **employer is required to make adequate arrangements** for their safety, facilities, and transportation.

Allowing women to work across all establishments, including **night shifts with necessary safety** measures, promotes gender equality, expands employment opportunities, and supports **higher female participation** in the workforce.

Prohibition of Gender Discrimination

Employers shall not discriminate on ground of gender in matter relating to recruitment, wages, or conditions of employment in respect of the same work or work of a similar nature done by employees. Such a provision under **Code on Wages, 2019**:

- Ensures **equal pay for equal work**, removing unfair wage disparities based on gender.

- Expands protection to cover not just wages, but also recruitment and employment conditions, **ensuring fairness throughout the employment.**
- Promotes workplace equality, giving **women and men the same opportunities in hiring, pay, and treatment.**

Women's Representation on Advisory Boards

One-third members in the Central/State Advisory Board shall be women. Central/State Advisory Board shall give advice on fixation or revision of minimum wages, providing increasing employment opportunities for women, the extent to which women may be employed in such establishments or employments. This ensures **women's voices in policy-making**, leading to more inclusive and balanced employment policies. It helps design policies that **increase employment opportunities for women, promoting gender equality** in the labour market.

Conclusion

The progressive provisions under the **new Labour Codes collectively strengthen the women workforce** by ensuring equality and safety across all establishments by bringing gender parity. The codes through provisions like **equal pay for equal work, enhanced maternity benefits, crèche facility and non-discrimination in recruitment**, etc. will encourage **greater female participation** by permitting women to work in all sectors, including hazardous industries and **night shifts, with adequate safety measures.**

Increased representation of women in grievance redressal will also protect their interest. Overall, these reforms create a **more inclusive, secure, and empowering work environment for women, enabling them to contribute fully and confidently to India's economic growth.**

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