

Parental Benefits in Norway

Introduction:

A low level of female labour force participation is a major labour market challenge in the country. The competing demands of motherhood and job market can necessitate trade-offs for women. While most countries have paid maternity benefits, paternity or parental benefits are less common. Norway has a system of paid parental leave.

Intervention:

In Norway, shared and flexible parental leave is provided, with minimum number days reserved for the mother and father. The parental leave is 49 or 59 weeks long with 15 or 19 weeks reserved for each parent respectively. The parents can avail either 49 weeks with 100 per cent coverage or 59 weeks with 80 per cent coverage. The three weeks before the birth is reserved for the mother. In addition, a lump-sum grant of NOK 83,140 per child is given at the time of birth or adoption. Pregnancy benefits can also be availed if the employee cannot work for example if the work involves working with hazardous substances or is physically strenuous and the employer cannot allocate you alternate tasks. These benefits can be availed from the point at which you stop working until three weeks prior to birth.

Impact/Learnings:

The shared parental leave offers flexibility to the parents to share the childcare responsibilities more evenly, thereby promoting gender equality and improving women's participation in labour force. The maternity leave in India is governed by the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 which provides for 26 weeks of paid maternity leave for women. The paternity leave benefit while under consideration, has been adopted only for central government employees as per which the employees can avail 15 days of paid paternity leave. India can modify the existing policy and adopt flexible parental leave instead of maternity or paternity leave, where the leave is shared between the parents, and with flexible benefit plans.

Source: European Commission, Norway - Benefits for pregnancy, birth and adoption, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1123&langId=en&intPageId=4704>