Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Discuss the significance of maternity benefits as a component of social security and gender equality in India's labour market. Examine the challenges in their effective implementation.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 05/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Maternity protection, labour rights, gender equality, social security, Maternity Benefit Act 1961, workplace discrimination, informal employment, employer compliance, childcare facilities, women workforce participation

Model Answer

Introduction

Maternity benefits are essential for protecting women's health, employment security and economic participation. They recognise maternity as a social responsibility rather than merely an individual burden.

Significance of Maternity Benefits

Health and Dignity: Paid maternity leave enables women to recover from childbirth and care for newborns.

Employment Security: Legal protection against maternity-related dismissal reduces workplace discrimination.

Gender Equality: Maternity benefits support women's continued participation in the labour market.

Child Welfare: Adequate maternity leave promotes early childcare and maternal-infant well-being.

Implementation Challenges

Many women in informal employment lack effective access to statutory benefits. Some employers may avoid compliance because of financial costs or inadequate awareness. Workplace discrimination and weak grievance-

redressal mechanisms further restrict access.

Way Forward

India should strengthen labour inspections, awareness campaigns and accessible complaint mechanisms. Social insurance-based financing, childcare facilities and better protection for informal workers can improve coverage.

Conclusion

Effective maternity protection is essential for inclusive economic growth. A supportive workplace environment can advance both women's empowerment and social justice.

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