

**Headline:** New moms on office tours get an extra ticket for the nanny

**Description:** GCPL introduces a policy that allows new mothers to take a caregiver and children aged up to 1 year on necessary work related travel

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India Inc, recognising that women employees are also mothers, is flying the extra mile, so to say, in deciding to allow them the comfort of having their children with them on outstation tours or a nanny to take care of the travelling kids. While experts said such maternity policies help women to pursue their careers while attending to childcare, they also help retain senior female executives.

Among the companies implementing policies to support new mothers or those with small children are Godrej Industries and Associate Companies , Nestlé, ICICI Bank and Edelweiss Tokio Life. These companies offer benefits in various forms, including bearing travel cost for children, and their nannies, on official trips or providing an allowance to ensure comfortable travel during pregnancy.

Godrej Industries and Associate Companies, for instance, has come up with a policy that is designed to support the transition of new mothers back from home to work. Under it, the women can take along a caregiver and children up to the age of one year at the company's cost when leaving home on necessary work-related travel.

Mahnaz Shaikh, Diversity Head and Inclusion, Godrej Industries and Associate Companies and HR head for India and SAARC at Godrej Consumer Products Ltd., explained that the intent of the policy was to support mothers, who might still be breastfeeding, in not missing out on

official travel. “We received feedback from young mothers who, on resuming work after a maternity break, wished to take their children and a caregiver on important work travel,” Shaikh said. “We understood the need of mothers to be close to their children at such times.” The definition of what constitutes necessary work travel has been left to the discretion of the manager and the function head, but includes team offsites that are necessary for the women in their reintegration.

Nestlé India similarly allows women employees with children aged up to one year to take official trips along with the child and an additional person. The cost is borne by the company.

Two years ago, ICICI Bank introduced a travel accompaniment policy for women managers with children up to three years old. Under the policy, the employees are provided the cost of travel and stay of the child and a caregiver, who could be a family member or nanny.

On its part, Edelweiss Tokio Life offers an allowance, which is essentially a travel allowance, to women during the full pregnancy period. The company’s chief human resource officer Vikas Bansal said the amount permissible was INR 45,000 for women working in metro cities and INR 32,000 for those in non-metro cities across all levels. “Travel is difficult during pregnancy and women are generally required to take extra care. This allowance emphasises the need for a safe and comfortable travel during pregnancy,” said Bansal.

Such policies are beneficial to both employees and employers. In its research on high-potential female employees in the tech sector, Catalyst, a global nonprofit working to expand opportunities for women and business, established that a woman tended to be loyal and stayed at an organisation that took care of her needs when she needed it the most.

Catalyst India senior adviser Shachi Irde said, “Policies such as these cost little for the employer, but bring peace of mind to the employee. Her contribution at work can be significantly higher since she does not have to worry about rushing back home or about who is minding her child.” Most companies usually manage these requests on a need basis. “It is good to know that policies are being formulated for general implementation,” added Irde.