

主旨: Give Views

Name:
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Comments:

I would like to give some views on encouraging woman to work and to enhance fertility rate. I am a working mother with a half year old new born son.

The matter of child birth is not only individual problem but it also affect the entire society as a whole. It will affect the demography of the city, and the city cannot sustain if the fertility rate is low. As such it is definitely necessary and beneficial to the society for the government to develop family support policy. From my own experience and experience from my peer group, the workplace policy is one of the most important consideration in deciding whether / when to give birth to a child. I think it is important for government to spend much more effort to develop / promote a family friendly culture in the industries and employers. The following should be considered:

(1) Mothers should not be deprived of their right to breastfeed their child, the most natural and normal way for feeding the baby. (According to WHO suggestions, "Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended up to 6 months of age, with continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age or beyond"). For working mothers who cannot directly breastfeed their babies, it is a physical need to regularly express the milk (at least every 4-5 hours) in order to keep the milk and to prevent mastitis). As such, the government should establish statutory break time for nursing mother during office hour. Also, the employers should strive to provide reasonable facilities for milk expression, e.g. lockable room etc. I know that many employers would say that this will increase their cost etc. However, similar to statutory maternity leave, the policy is necessary because it is not for the benefit of the whole society - decrease in medical expenses due to healthier children/ grown ups due to breastfeeding, enhancing woman to work etc.

(2) To extend the maternity leave to at least 12 weeks or more, and provide opportunities for extended no paid maternity leave for up to 3 months or longer - this is to in line with developed countries,

(3) Government should explore fund scheme to SMEs or all employers for promoting family friendly policy - consider the WoW / FlexiWork Fund by Singapore government.

(4) Explore fund / incentives scheme for subsidies to SMEs for women taking maternity leave - e.g. subsidies on temporary replacement. The effect of loss of manpower is higher in smaller company but if it affect equal opportunities among employers, then consider to extend the fund to all corporations.

(4) promotion of flex-hour work, Start from government departments

(5) provide more decent facilities for breastfeeding in government buildings e.g. wanchai government buildigns

(6) Campaign on promoting family friendly corporations

