

# Adopting a noble idea

## From giving maternity leaves for adopting a kid to setting up childcare centres—IT cos do it all

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NEW DELHI

KARISHMA Sharma, an executive with a Bangalore-based IT major, is on an adoption maternity leave for a month. Recently, she adopted a girl child after doctors advised her against having a second child. Believe it or not, her company was quick to offer maternity leave, even for adoption. And this is not a one-off case.

Employees of IBM are being offered, apart from maternity (12 weeks) and paternity leaves (five days), extra maternity leaves to employees up to a month in cases of adoption. An adoption deed or order by a court, followed by an approval from a senior, would allow an employee enjoy four weeks with the adopted child to create bonding.

On the maternity front, policies in IT/ITeS companies tend to score over other sectors. If maternity leaves aren't sufficient, a female employee can take up to a year of leave

agencies, travel with spouse to onsite locations et all. Employees can take time off from their regular work schedules to pursue or dedicate their time to other activities. For working parents, who have less time to spare for childcare, in-house crèches within organisations are not the only option. Under its global Work/Life Fund, IBM has partnered with professional childcare centres across cities to provide everything from infant care to after-school boarding.

Similarly, Mind Tree has a programmed known as 'Babies Day Out', wherein young mothers are allowed to bring their babies to the workplace in a specific area, connect their workstations from there only and watch their babies grow while the babies are kept occupied through a slew of activities.

It's not just childbirth and care which companies are concerned about. Qualcomm's Vacation Donation Programme allows co-workers to donate vacation time within a certain limit to an employee in

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without pay as she copes with motherhood. "We have employees who have availed of maternity leaves over six months," says Global Logic people development & employee services AVP Iti Kumar. "We also have cases where due to maternity cases, we have allowed women employees to work for limited hours in the company."

While maternity leave and leave of absence are available, often employees have a need to gradually scale down on to a full schedule at work. Cisco allows employees to choose assignments, which allow for such a gradual transition, instead of being in a binary 'at work' or 'off-work' situation. Referred to as 'on-ramp' and 'off-ramp', women employees 'on-ramp' can focus aggressively on their careers while opting to 'off-ramp', when required, by reducing workloads. SAP Labs India goes one step further. It provides support to employees who choose to come to work in the last two months of pregnancy. They can also use a company car to take away the stress and discomfort resulting from daily travel to work.

Infosys' policy on extended leave covers areas, such as parenthood, illness, higher education, adoption of children, family ex-

the event of a catastrophic personal circumstance faced by the employee. "As we continue to grow worldwide, we are constantly monitoring our employee satisfaction across regions and cultures," says Qualcomm India South Asia president Kanwalinder Singh. "A key objective is to ensure employees all over the world, experience the free spirited, entrepreneurial culture that fosters innovation, execution and partnership."

It's not just employees and their families that organisations care for. Companies now have policies that address the growing trend of employees to give back to their communities. In many cases, companies have designated a certain number of paid hours that workers can use towards charitable efforts. "Our community empathy policy provides our employees the opportunity to be involved in community development, and other charitable initiatives. During this period, the company provides monetary support as well as the option to return to work after successfully completing their initiatives," says Infosys Technologies HR senior VP and group head Nandita Gurjar.