

Need for mandatory recruitment of trained psychologists in hospitals to deal with Postpartum Depression (PPD) diagnosis and treatment-Laid

SHRI SHAFI PARAMBIL (VADAKARA): There is an alarming increase in the cases of mothers affected by postpartum depression. Postpartum depression (PPD) is a psychological illness that affects women after delivery and continues for a year. Since most hospitals do not have the facility to diagnose PPD, women do not acknowledge the seriousness of their condition, and go untreated. Untreated PPD is harmful to both the mother and the newborn. The symptoms include severe mood swings, depressive episodes, aversion to feeding the child, disinterest in doing personal upkeep, insomnia, feelings of dissociation from the self, extreme helplessness, etc. In the extreme form of PPD, mothers hallucinate about their children and feel that somebody might harm them. She may eventually pin the blame on the infant, leading to the killing of her child. In India, PPD is one of the most underdiagnosed and untreated disabilities and one of the important reasons for infant death. Recent statistics show that approximately 22% of mothers suffer from PPD in India. In South Indian states, it is 26%. The Government should make it mandatory for each hospital to hire the services of trained psychologists with expertise in PPD diagnosis and treatment so that all mothers can access the service after delivery.