



RESOURCES FOR MANAGING MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH IN INDIA

Pregnancy and motherhood the happiest moments in a woman's life. But it is true that while they bring joy, they can also be accompanied by anxiety, depression, mood swings and emotional stress.

This is even more relevant in India where many women hesitate to talk about mental health due to stigma, lack of awareness or limited access to care. However, support systems are growing, and several resources can help women manage maternal mental health during pregnancy and after childbirth.

Many Government initiatives have strengthened access to mental health care. The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) and District Mental Health Programme provide counselling and psychiatric services at many government hospitals and medical colleges.

Tele-MANAS, the Government of India's national mental health helpline, offers free tele-counselling support in multiple languages, making professional help more accessible. Under maternal health programmes like RMNCH+A and initiatives integrated with antenatal care, many public hospitals screen women for emotional and psychological challenges during pregnancy and the postnatal period.

Specialised institutions such as NIMHANS, AIIMS and state medical universities also run maternal mental health clinics, offer therapy and conduct awareness programmes. Many urban hospitals now provide perinatal psychiatry and counselling as part of routine maternity care. Women can also approach registered psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors through hospital OPDs or verified healthcare directories.

Non-governmental organisations and mental health foundations play a crucial role as well. Community



health workers, especially ASHA and ANM workers, also increasingly help identify emotional distress in mothers.

Digital platforms have also eased access to help. Tele-consultation apps, credible mental health websites and online therapy services offer privacy and convenience. Support groups, both online and community-based, provide a safe space for mothers to share experiences, reduce isolation and gain confidence. Many maternity hospitals and child-care centres also run parenting and postpartum support sessions.

Another aspect, and no less important, are personal support systems. Family involvement, partner support, rest, proper nutrition, realistic expectations and open conversations about emotional wellbeing can significantly reduce stress. Women experiencing persistent sadness, anxiety, sleep problems, hopelessness or difficulty bonding with their baby can seek help easily.

However, what is most important is to realise that maternal mental health deserves the same care as physical health. With growing awareness, expanding services and supportive networks, women in India now have effective options to seek help, heal emotionally and embrace motherhood.