



Compassion,
Dignity and Respect -
Core to Human
Experiences

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Dr Pramod has been a member of the Fernandez medical team since 1994 and took over as the Head of the Department of Neonatology in 2001. In 2009, he became a full-time working director of Fernandez Hospital. As the Head of Neonatology, he introduced several innovations and best practices that set Fernandez apart. These innovations include introducing a Kangaroo Mother Care ward at Fernandez in 2004 and establishing a Human Milk Bank in 2007. After taking

charge as the CEO of Fernandez Foundation in 2019, he has played a seminal role in establishing Fernandez Child Development Centre, which cares for children with special needs. Dr Pramod completed his MBBS from the Government Medical College, Bellary, and his MD in Paediatrics from Kasturba Medical College, Manipal.

Purpose is the heart of the experience

Digitality may completely dominate all aspects of our lives, including healthcare. Yet, the importance of human touch in a doctor-patient interaction cannot be diminished or taken away. This experience continues to be fundamental to Fernandez's way of offering maternal and childcare.

We are strong advocates of natural birthing and midwifery in line with our purpose. Alarmed by the high maternal and neonatal mortality rates in the country, Fernandez began the first in-house professional midwifery educators training way back in 2011. Midwifery care not just reduces maternal and infant mortality rates but also significantly lowers caesarean section rates. Today, we offer midwifery care to help promote and support women with natural birthing in a high-volume "client" load.

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In a successful pilot in Telangana, nurses working in public hospitals trained in midwifery by Fernandez Foundation are helping to increase normal births and reduce caesarean sections. They also ensure that women have a birth companion and enjoy respectful maternity care. This initiative attracted the attention of the central government. As a result, we are one of India's 14 National Midwifery Training Institutes that offer midwifery training to both state and central government.

Values - the driving force

We strive to ensure every woman we are privileged to serve experiences dignity, respect, and compassion.

Dignity is about empowerment. We ensure that our midwives and obstetricians spend time with every woman one-on-one to understand their birth preferences. We put women at the centre of their birthing journey by supporting them with choosing a birth companion and birth positions of comfort. Respectful maternity care is at the heart of all the services we offer. Privacy during birth is every woman's right. Today, our three hospitals have individual birthing rooms for every woman regardless of her socioeconomic status, thus ensuring equitable care across the board.

We don't address women birthing with us as "patients". They are mothers-to-be or women who are pregnant. We believe that calling them patients would treat pregnancy as a disease.

Integrity is about doing things that are right for mothers and babies. For example, babies with low birth weight need special care, which is initially provided as intensive care in a critical care unit. Once they stabilise, they need to be kept warm.

Enabling the right experiences by doing things differently

To provide high quality, evidence-based and respectful care for mothers and babies, we evaluate and adopt approaches aligned with our core values.

Specialisation with dedicated departments: Our core focus rests with the care of the mother and her newborn. We have a team of midwives, obstetricians, anaesthetists, and paediatricians round the clock to ensure safe birthing and newborn care. To help mothers and babies better, we have specialised departments such as low-risk obstetrics, high-risk obstetrics, multiple pregnancies, and foetal medicine, which experts lead.

We firmly believe that newborn care should be within maternity units and that the mother and her baby should never be separated. Our Tertiary Neonatal Intensive Care units eliminate the need to shift the baby out for medical care.

The other area we are passionate about is children with special needs. The awareness and incidence of Neuro Development Disorders (NDD) is increasing. Not many centres offer the entire spectrum of expertise - that is, Evaluation to Therapies under one roof and that too at an

Conventionally, they are kept in an incubator that entails not only higher costs but also keeps babies separated from their mothers for days. We believe in Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) technique, where babies are wrapped to their mothers' chest with a special broad strap. This skin-to-skin contact keeps them as warm as they would be in an incubator. Additionally, it makes babies physiologically more stable, enables them to bond better with their mother, have fewer serious infections, go home sooner, and breast-feed better and longer. Studies have shown that KMC babies catch up with their normal growth rate faster than babies kept in incubators. More importantly, the mother is fully involved in the care of her baby. The psychological and emotional impact on the mother helps her cope better and reduces her anxieties.

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affordable cost. To fulfil this need, we set up Fernandez Child Development Centre with Divi's Foundation for Gifted Children (DFGC).

Fixed salaries for our physicians:
Unlike the general trend, we decided to have our teams on fixed salaries. There are no incentives based on how many procedures one performs. This makes working in teams and following evidence-based practices easy. There is a clear understanding of protocols at every level, thus enabling uniformity and standardisation of care.

Investing in our people: We have over 2,400 employees, with 78% being women. We encourage / sponsor our employees (at all levels) to pursue higher skills or education.

We ensure every woman who walks into our hospitals has consistent experience of respectful care, beginning from admission to discharge.

Organisation culture

Our organisational culture ensures there is no ambiguity in our employees about our core purpose, which helps us connect better with our customers. New doctors, irrespective of their expertise, are mentored by senior consultants on the job before they are on their own.

Some approaches that are unique to Fernandez are:

Clinician-led: We are a clinician-led organisation. Clinicians are integral to all non-clinical departments like quality, administration, purchase, and operations. This ensures that clinical care and safety are not compromised. For example, if it is a pharmacological product, it goes through a committee that evaluates its efficacy based on research evidence. While we encourage organic growth in leadership, we do have lateral entries to bring in fresh ideas.

Processes and transparency:

We ensure every woman who walks into our hospitals has consistent experience of respectful care, beginning from admission to discharge. There is transparency through a customer's journey via honest and detailed communication. Deviations from a protocol need to be justified and discussed in an open atmosphere for future learning.

People and ownership-driven culture:

We have an ownership driven culture. We operate a reasonably flat organisation structure, with no bureaucracy and ensuring an open-door policy. We encourage teams to step up and take ownership. We pride ourselves on creating a welcoming space for everybody. We focus on both the personal and professional growth of every team member.

Practice what we preach:

The leader, Dr Evita Fernandez (Chairperson, Fernandez

Foundation), a leading Obstetrician, has converted a successfully running private limited company (hospital) valued at a few hundred crores into a not-for-profit foundation promoting midwifery.

Our clinical research focuses on finding cost-lowering treatment options for mothers and newborns. Cost-lowering does not mean lowering standards of safety and quality.

Our mission is to make pregnancy and childbirth safe for every pregnant woman as an organisation. We achieve this by offering the collaborative midwifery model of care where the midwife is the primary carer. Obstetricians and allied specialists are called in wherever needed. Thus healthy women and women with complex medical or surgical needs are cared for by a close-knit protocol-driven team of professionals.

Fernandez Hospital, which began in 1948 with two beds, has grown into three IP facilities, with over 100 beds each, two OP facilities, and contributes to over 10,000 births every year. Our journey has been long and rewarding. Generations of mothers and babies continue to come to us, purely based on trust built painstakingly by word of mouth. Our unwavering focus will always remain respectful, equitable and compassionate care. The revenue will inevitably follow.