

Healing Hands, Entrepreneurial Hearts: The Rise of Precious 30 Days in Malaysia's Maternal Care Industry

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Prologue

"I can't let this fall apart." Kalaivani's hands trembled as she refreshed the news feed another confinement center had shut down, another mother left without support. It was early 2020, and the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic loomed large over Malaysia's healthcare system. Her phone buzzed incessantly with anxious messages: "Are you still open?" "What if I need help?" "Can you still care for my baby?"

She stood in the quiet of her postnatal care center in Klang, reflecting on the journey that began with a dream to honor motherhood through holistic healing. Over 2,000 mothers had passed through these doors since 2015, each leaving stronger, more confident, and nurtured.

But now, uncertainty threatened everything. With movement control orders (MCO) enforced nationwide, operations were suspended, staff furloughed, and revenue streams halted overnight. Doubt crept in: Am I strong enough to carry this? Then came the memory the first cry of a newborn, the tearful smile of a recovering mother, the warmth of herbal baths that soothed both body and soul. "No," she whispered. "This isn't the end. This is why I started. Care doesn't close."

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Disclaimer

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That night, amidst fear and fatigue, Kalaivani Rajeswaran made a decision not to retreat, but to adapt. From physical center to mobile service model; from in-house stays to home-based care delivery; from traditional practices to digitally enabled education Precious 30 Days began its transformation. What emerged was not just survival, but evolution: a resilient, scalable, and socially impactful enterprise rooted in compassion and innovation.

Introduction

Motherhood is often celebrated as one of life's most profound experiences yet behind the joy lies a period of immense physical, emotional, and psychological vulnerability: the postpartum phase. In Malaysia, as in many developing nations, this critical window remains under-prioritized within mainstream healthcare systems, leaving new mothers to navigate recovery with fragmented support, conflicting advice, and limited access to professional care. Traditional confinement practices persist, but they are frequently delivered informally, without standardization or integration with modern medical knowledge. At the same time, urbanization, changing family structures, and rising maternal health awareness have created growing demand for structured, holistic, and evidence-based postnatal services.

It is within this complex landscape that social entrepreneurs like Kalaivani Rajeswaran are redefining maternal care not merely as a service, but as a movement rooted in cultural respect, clinical excellence, and compassionate innovation. Her enterprise, Precious 30 Days Postnatal Care Centre, exemplifies how entrepreneurial vision can converge with traditional wisdom and modern healthcare to address systemic gaps in women's health.

Founded in 2015 and now operating six branches across Selangor, Precious 30 Days has emerged as a pioneering model in Malaysia's maternal wellness sector. By integrating Ayurvedic and Malay traditional healing methods such as herbal baths, therapeutic massages, belly binding, and "bertungku" with scientifically informed nutrition, lactation consulting, mental health support, and newborn care, the center offers a comprehensive 30-day recovery program that prioritizes both body and mind. Beyond direct care, it empowers women through its Postnatal Academy, which trains and certifies caregivers, fostering economic independence and professionalizing an otherwise informal industry.

Profile of Company

Precious 30 Days Postnatal Care Centre is a women-led social enterprise based in Klang, Selangor, Malaysia, established in 2015 by Kalaivani Rajeswaran. The company operates within the maternal wellness sector, offering comprehensive postnatal care services during the critical 30-day confinement period following childbirth. Unlike conventional maternity services limited to medical check-ups or short-term stays, Precious 30 Days provides an integrated model combining traditional healing methods with evidence-based modern practices. Its mission is to empower mothers physically, emotionally, and mentally during one of life's most transformative phases.

The center offers a range of services, including:

1. Personalized maternal recovery programs
2. Infant care and monitoring
3. Traditional and therapeutic massages (e.g., Ayurvedic and Malay urutan)
4. Herbal baths using neem, turmeric, and holy basil
5. Belly binding techniques for abdominal support
6. Lactation consultation and breastfeeding workshops
7. Nutritional meal planning grounded in cultural traditions and scientific research
8. Psychological counseling for postpartum depression and anxiety

With six branches across Selangor and a team of 16 certified professionals, including nurses, midwives, nutritionists, and therapists, the organization has served over 2,000 mothers. In addition to direct care, it runs the Postnatal Academy, launched in 2019, which has trained more than 150 women in postnatal caregiving, creating employment opportunities and fostering community empowerment.

Precious 30 Days distinguishes itself by adhering to a full 30-day recovery framework, rejecting shorter 7- or 10-day packages common in the industry. The founder believes that true healing requires time, consistency, and intentional nurturing a philosophy embedded in every aspect of the business.

During the pandemic, the company pivoted to offer mobile and home-based care, ensuring continuity of service while maintaining safety protocols. This agility solidified its reputation as a trusted, adaptive, and client-centered enterprise.

Bridging Tradition and Modernity in Postnatal Care

One of the central challenges in Malaysia's postnatal care landscape is the tension between traditional beliefs and modern medical advice. Many new mothers receive conflicting guidance from elders advising strict food taboos to doctors recommending evidence-based diets. At Precious 30 Days, this gap is addressed through a culturally sensitive integration of Indian, Malay, and contemporary health practices. For instance, the center incorporates Ayurvedic postnatal massage using warm sesame oil to improve circulation and reduce muscle stiffness, alongside clinical wound care for Caesarean section patients. Similarly, the traditional practice of bertungku (hot water splash therapy) for vaginal deliveries is explained in physiological terms to reassure mothers about its benefits in stimulating blood flow and uterine contraction.

Nutritionally, the center reinterprets traditional Indian confinement diets often restrictive in vegetables due to cultural taboos by blending them with modern nutritional science. Meals include nutrient-dense ingredients like dal soup, turmeric milk, fenugreek-infused dishes, and high-fiber grains, all designed to boost lactation, immunity, and energy levels. By validating cultural heritage while aligning with medical best practices, Precious 30 Days creates a safe space where tradition enhances rather than hinders recovery.

Addressing Gaps in Awareness, Access, and Mental Health Support

Despite growing awareness of maternal wellness, many Malaysian mothers remain underserved. A key issue identified by the founder is the lack of structured education about postnatal recovery. Most public health systems focus on antenatal and delivery care, leaving the postpartum phase under-prioritized. Mothers often return home without clear instructions on self-care, infant feeding, or emotional well-being. This knowledge gap leads to confusion, stress, and sometimes preventable complications such as severe fatigue, malnutrition, or untreated postnatal depression.

Precious 30 Days addresses this through its Post-Natal Masterclass Series, which includes modules on:

1. Newborn handling and hygiene
2. Breastfeeding techniques and troubleshooting
3. Emotional wellness and mindfulness
4. Physical rehabilitation exercises
5. Moreover, the center employs certified counselors who conduct regular mental health screenings. Given the stigma surrounding mental illness in many communities, especially among South Asian populations, these services are delivered discreetly and empathetically.

Accessibility remains a challenge, particularly for low-income families. While premium pricing reflects the quality of care, the center offers flexible payment plans and collaborates with NGOs and religious organizations to subsidize care for marginalized groups.

Professionalization of Informal Care Work and Women's Empowerment

Another significant issue lies in the informal nature of postnatal caregiving in Malaysia. Historically, confinement nannies (mak bidan or confinement ladies) operate without formal training or certification, relying solely on experience. However, today's educated mothers increasingly demand caregivers with verifiable credentials and professional standards.

Precious 30 Days responds by setting new benchmarks in workforce development. All staff members hold certifications recognized by Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran (JPK), including SKM Level 3 in Therapeutic Massage and TTT certification. The founder herself is a Certified Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, Traditional Malay Medicine Practitioner, and lactation consultant.

Through the Postnatal Academy, the company trains aspiring caregivers in:

1. Anatomy and physiology of postpartum recovery
2. Safe newborn care practices
3. Hygiene and infection control
4. Communication and emotional intelligence

Graduates gain not only skills but also dignity and economic independence. Several have gone on to start their own micro-enterprises or join hospitals and clinics as specialists. This initiative exemplifies how social entrepreneurship can uplift women at multiple levels both those receiving care and those delivering it.

Sustainable Growth Through Innovation and Strategic Expansion

As a growing enterprise, Precious 30 Days faces the dual challenge of scaling impact while preserving quality. To ensure sustainability, the company has adopted a multi-pronged growth strategy centered on branding, diversification, collaboration, and franchising. First, digital marketing plays a crucial role in building trust and visibility. Through Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, the brand shares educational content, real client testimonials, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of daily operations. Authentic storytelling fosters emotional connection and positions the brand as both expert and empathetic.

Second, service diversification allows customization based on individual needs. Packages vary by duration, intensity, location (center-based vs. home-based), and specific concerns such as C-section recovery or mental health support. Additional offerings include online parenting webinars and tele-counseling. Third, strategic collaborations with obstetricians, pediatricians, nutritionists, and government-linked institutions enhance credibility and ensure alignment with national health guidelines. The center has conducted training programs for HRDC-certified courses and partnered with Malaysian Hindu Sangam to promote maternal literacy.

Finally, the company is exploring franchise development to expand beyond Selangor. Plans include launching branded postnatal care kits containing herbal oils, belly binders, dietary guides, and supplements for use at home, extending the care continuum beyond the 30 days. This innovative business model demonstrates how purpose-driven entrepreneurship can achieve both financial viability and social impact.

Epilogue

“When care is delivered with courage, it doesn’t just heal a mother it transforms a generation.”

As each mother walks out of Precious 30 Days, she carries more than her newborn she carries strength regained, confidence restored, and knowledge gained. What began as a personal calling for Kalaivani Rajeswaran has blossomed into a movement: one that honors the sacredness of motherhood while challenging outdated norms and systemic gaps. In the face of a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, and deep-rooted cultural barriers, Precious 30 Days did not merely survive it evolved. By merging ancestral wisdom with entrepreneurial vision, the enterprise has redefined what postnatal care can be: holistic, inclusive, professional, and empowering.

Looking ahead, the dream extends beyond six centers. It envisions a Malaysia where every mother regardless of income, ethnicity, or geography has access to dignified, high-quality postnatal support. Where traditional healers are respected yet trained. Where mental health is normalized. Where women are not expected to “bounce back” but are given the time, space, and resources to heal fully. Because at Precious 30 Days, care doesn’t stop after childbirth it begins, and continues, with purpose.

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