



Webinar Report
on
Addressing the process of Adoption amid current
Pandemic Situation and the Importance of
Establishing SAA – CCI linkages to facilitate
Adoption of Older Children

Organized by
Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

Abbreviations

CARA	: Central Adoption Resource Authority
SARA	: State Adoption Resource Agencies
SAA	: Specialised Adoption Agencies
DCPUS	: District Child Protection Unit
CCI	: Child Care Institutions
CDPUS	: Child District Protection Officer
ICPS	: The Integrated Child Protection Scheme
CWC	: Child Welfare Committee
PAPS	: Prospective Adoptive Parents
ACM	: Adoption Committee Meeting
CARINGS	: Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System
HSR	: Home Study Report
MER	: Medical Examination Report
CCC	: Child Care Corpus
BERA	: Brainstem evoked response audiometry
OAE	: Ototacoustic Emissions testing

Introduction

CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies. The current Pandemic has had an effect on the Adoption Program. The Adoption program currently in the country is largely dependent on the digital interface and virtual meeting.

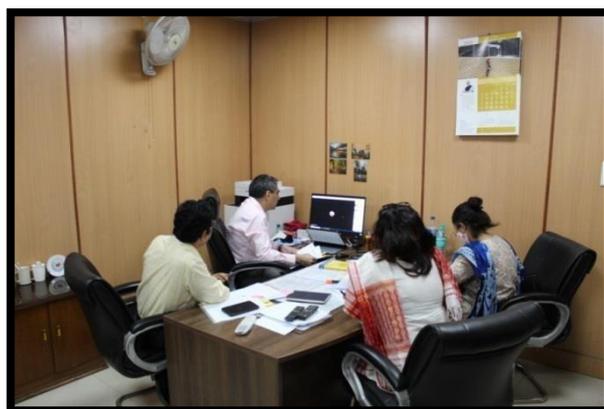
CARA has organized a Webinar dated 28.07.2020 on “Addressing the process of Adoption amid current Pandemic Situation and on the Importance of Establishing SAA- CCI linkages to facilitate Adoption of Older Children” at 11:00 A.M-1:00 P.M. The Webinar was attended by Smt. Anuradha S. Chagti, Joint Secretary Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shri. Manoj Kumar, CEO, CARA & Director, Women and Child Development and the State Adoption Resource Agencies from all the States and Union Territory also participated in the Webinar. A total of 84 participants attended the webinar.

The objective of conducting the webinar was to :

- Address the process of Adoption amid current Pandemic situation and way forward.
- Address the importance of SAA-CCI Linkages and addressing the gaps and Challenges.

I. Setting the Agenda by Director, CARA

Shri. Sanjay Barshilia, Director CARA expressed his gratitude to Joint Secretary and CEO CARA for their presence in the webinar and welcomed all the State Adoption Resource Agencies from all the States and Union Territory for participating in the webinar amid the pandemic and requested CEO, CARA, Manoj Kumar Singh to address the participants in the webinar.



II. Welcome Address by CEO CARA & Director, MWCD

Shri. Manoj Kumar Singh, CEO CARA & Director, MWCD expressed his gratitude to Joint Secretary for her presence in the webinar and welcomed all the stakeholders for participating in the webinar. He shared that the pandemic has undoubtedly affected the adoption program and CARA has also initiated several measures to overcome these challenges by issuing advisories that provide relaxations and extensions considering the timelines. He appreciated the role played by SARA and emphasized that a lot more has to be done. He stated



that Hon'ble PM has emphasized the

importance of self-sufficiency and resilience in strengthening our role and responsibilities similarly all the SARAs need to revisit their roles and responsibilities in wake of current situation and strengthen themselves as per the provision laid down in Section 67 of the JJ (Care and Protection Act, 2015) and proactively participate in the adoption program and develop a mechanism to strengthen adoption program and rehabilitate children with a loving family.

III. Remarks by Joint Secretary, MWCD

Smt. Anuradha S Chagti, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development expressed her gratitude to all the Stakeholders for participating in the webinar. She stated on the importance of adoption program in rehabilitating children in need of care and protection. She emphasized the role of stakeholders like CARA, SARA, SAA, CWC, DCPU in providing a child with an opportunity of growth, survival and development by placing them in families



which will mould them to a productive asset for the nation. She emphasized that amid such pandemic we need to focus on our vision and convert the challenges in opportunities and make them the new normal. She highlighted that the role and support of stakeholders' are needed for the successful implementation of the adoption program.

First Session- "Addressing the process of adoption amid the current pandemic situation:

Shri. Sanjay Barshilia, Director CARA highlighted the impact of COVID on children and the economy. He stated that CARA has issued advisories and circulars in the last three to four-month keeping in mind the current ongoing pandemic which will guide the stakeholders to productive action. He stated that the focus of the advisories was on two aspects. One part focused on safeguarding the welfare of children placed in institutions for interim care and protection secondly, he emphasized on the effective action that has to be initiated



concerning Prospective Adoptive Parents. He stressed on the need to upload the data of children on CARINGS within the stipulated period which will prevent illicit practices. Further, he highlighted that the stakeholders should adhere to Regulation 6 of the Adoption Regulations, 2017 for preparation of SIR, the advertisement has to be published without any delay and the coordination needs to be done on email. He focused on the importance of technology as an enabler amid this difficult time. He encouraged SARA to use ICPS network like utilization of Aganwadi workers in the adoption Program. He directed the stakeholders to ensure proper coordination with the police and shared that if the police verification fails to be received within 60 days it will be deemed to be given. He spoke on the crucial role of the Child Welfare Committee in the adoption program. He emphasized that during this Pandemic the

physical visit to CWC needs to be avoided and all the CWC meeting has to be promoted virtually and timely orders need to be passed and rigorous use of email has to be encouraged. The State Government should instruct the DCPU and CWC that they should make provision for the online sitting of Child Welfare Committee. He also emphasized that in the absence of requisite infrastructure the State government can support the child welfare Committee by giving a space which will help in expediting the process of adoption. He also directed all the Stakeholders that the social media platform should not be used for communication it should be restricted only for information. The orders can be passed and it can further be scanned and communicated by using emails. He also emphasized that precautionary measures social distancing has to be practised. In case of surrendering the child like surrendering by minor or unwed mother the female members of the CWC need to be present and the identity of the parents will be kept confidential. He requested all the stakeholder to use technology as an enabler in the best interest of the children.

Dr J. Pati, Joint Director, CARA welcomed all the stakeholders in the webinar and highlighted the importance of inter SARA coordination in the best interest of the children and Prospective Adoptive Parents. He shared that every District has a social worker and for successful completion of HSR these social workers need to be reimbursed actual expense. He stated that the circular issued by CARA also highlight the need to conduct webinars with DCPUs, CWC and SAAs. He stressed that SARAs has to take ownership to communicate with the stakeholders at all levels. The importance of establishing linkages with JJC and expedite in disposing of court cases. He highlighted that the best practices adopted by each state need to be shared and replicated. He then opened the floor for discussion.



Shri.Sanjay.Barshilia, Director CARA supported Joint Director's input and shared that for inter SARA coordination a platform in WhatsApp has also been created where information such as advisories, circulars or any other information can be exchanged. Training with other stakeholders needs to be organized. He highlighted that SARA needs to inspect the SAAs to ensure smooth functioning. He shared that for the successful implementation of Adoption program relaxation in preparation of HSR has been provided for 90 days but one physical visit needs to be conducted by social workers and the subsequent meeting has to be done virtually. Tele counselling should be encouraged. He shared that for conducting the MERs unnecessary visits to the hospital can be avoided, however, samples of children can be collected if possible. He updated that the child Referral has been restarted and weekly one referral is going Extension to all the PAPs has been provided ending on 30th July. No further referral will be given unless a pressing situation arises. ACM has to be conducted virtually documents can be shared online only when the PAPs is deemed fit they can come and take the children in Pre-adoption foster care. Further, SARAs needs to coordinate with the register general and expedite court proceeding virtually and address the pendency and resolve the same. The same goes for issuing Birth Certificate and issuing the passport. He directed the stakeholders to follow the advisories issued in case of intercountry adoption.

Presentation by States

I. **Andhra Pradesh SARA** –The State highlighted the technical issues in the CARING

Portal.

The State was asked to take the screenshot of the same and sent the mail to in-country AD and Data Analyst, CARA for resolving the issue.

II. **Assam SARA** – The state shared that they have written to register general of the concerned State concerning court pendencies. She also stated the reason for the delay is due to the transfer of Judges. She requested CARA to look into the matter.

Shri. Sanjay Barshilia, Director, CARA stated that the court has to dispose of the adoption petition within two months as per the Adoption Regulation, 2017. However, CARA will write to the Registrar General, High Court to take necessary intervention in the matter.

III. **Chattisgarh SARA** – The State updated the authority about the action initiated at their end to expedite court proceedings that they have written a letter to the Registrar General, High Court of the concerned State and has addressed their issues concerning expediting the court cases pendencies. He highlighted the problem faced by Vijaywada PAPs regarding the extension date 30th July. He stated that SARA has also written to District Collector to expedite in legally freeing the children and majority of children in their State are legally free. The effort of SARA was acknowledged and appreciated by the Authority.

IV. **Bihar SARA**- The State has updated that ACM is been conducted virtually and children have also matched. He highlighted the issue that as their State has imposed complete lockdown so, inter-State parents are facing problem in taking the child in pre-adoption foster care

The state also raised issues regarding those children above 6 years and are transferred to CCIs but on CARINGS they cannot be automatically transferred to the CCI linked with the SAA

Director, CARA stated that in the case of inter-State adoption the SARA has to build good coordination and communication with the other SARA. If one State is in complete lockdown then the PAPs has to follow the lockdown. The SARA can communicate the same information to the Authority and the PAPs can be given extension. But, if the PAPs comes with all the undertaking and necessary precaution and their status is marked as safe in Arogya Setu then the child can be handed to them in pre-adoption foster care

Concerning the issue of children above 6-year transferred in the CCIs and their status on CARING portal improvement in CARINGS is under progress.

V. **Delhi SARA** – The state highlighted that concerning court pendencies, the same has been communicated to the Registrar General, High court. However, in evidence-based case hearing virtual court hearing is not possible.

Director, CARA stated that the authority has also taken initiative and has communicated the same with Judiciary to expedite the process of Adoption. He also shared that in the state of Delhi few PAPs have been given the date 08.08.2020 for hearing and we need to follow up such cases which will help us further.

VI. **Gujarat SARA** - The State shared the PAPs who are affected by COVID has requested to increased the timeline for HSR even after 90 days. She also shared that the district court has asked the SARA not to file a petition as they feel Adoption is not an essential matter.

Director, CARA stated that the authority has asked the State to communicate the matter via mail and the authority will assess the same and take the decision. Concerning the issue of petition Director, CARA has emphasized that the SARA needs to communicate and coordinate with Juvenile Justice Committee and Registrar General, High Court of the concerned State and hold a meeting with them and sensitize them on the importance of expediting Adoption Program.

VII. **Karnataka SARA** - The state updated that a Government order has been issued to all the CDPUs as Taluk Child Protection officer and are utilizing Anganwadi worker in the Adoption process. The SARA highlighted that all the SAAs have children exceeding its capacity but the salary of aayas are limited and hence it has to be revised or either the number of aayas has to be increased. The SARA also enquired regarding the utilization of Child Care Corpus fund.

Director, CARA stated that regarding Aayas salary the revision has to be done at the level of ICPS. Regarding the utilization of CCC fund, it is under the consideration of Ministry and the final approved guidelines will be shared.

- I. Karnataka SARA also updated that they have conducted the training of DCPUs and SAAs and has come up with a comprehensive family need assessment checklist that is used during the virtual adoption committee meeting and has been shared with SAAs which has helped in streamlining the adoption committee meeting. It is also a part of Social worker handbook
- II. Recommended undertaking from the families even local families as a safeguard during the time of COVID legally cleared by the legal person and has COVID clauses in the best interest
- III. Requested CARA to provide an exemption to Inter-State PAPs regarding quarantine
- IV. Smt.Radha Nagesh stated that that the flow chart is in progress regarding the role played by the Airport Authority in respect of an adopted child

Director, CARA appreciated the initiative by the Karnataka State and asked the State to share the same with other States. Regarding the second aspect that the child should be brought to Airport, he disagreed to the same and said the parents need to build a bond with the child and to connect with him so, they can come and pick. However, inter SARA Coordination is a must for smooth implementation of the Adoption program

VIII. **Maharashtra SARA** - The State updated that ACM is taking place virtually and has written to Registrar General, High Court to expedite the adoption program. However, most of the government hospital in Mumbai have COVID, the OPD is also open but taking the children to the hospital is risky so, the MER may be delayed. She also highlighted that many of hospital does not have a specialist for BERA Test

Director, CARA stated that the SAA needs to avoid unnecessary visit to the hospital and if possible the sample of the children should be collected. He stated that BERA Test is not mandatory but in case there is a problem it can be conducted but OAE should be done.

IX. **Mizoram SARA** - The state shared that they are working in collaboration with the state department and collateral District. However, in case of interstate adoption preadoption foster care was a problem during the initial time. The post-adoption followup has become a challenge in case of inter-State adoption and the report are

delayed

Director, CARA stated that a feature for post-adoption follow up will be developed on CARINGS for intercountry

X. **Odisha and Rajasthan SARA** have shared the same issues as the State of Chattisgarh However; Rajasthan has raised the important issue of installing Cradle at the tehsil level and a point for a cradle should be made available at maternity homes, District hospitals.

XI. **West Bengal SARA** has shared the same issue related to MER and utilization of CCC fund. Further, they have raised the important issue the need to address the interest of those children with parents with mental needs and are staying in the asylum.

Director, CARA stated that a medical board needs to be constituted in this matter headed by government doctor wherein the parents' condition will be assessed and the decision will be then taken. He also stated that a circular has also been issued in this regard which is available at CARA website for reference

The first session ended on a positive note where Director CARA urged the stakeholders to share the best practices implemented by them and circular issued by any state in the CARA –SARA group.

Session –II “Importance of establishing SAA – CCI Linkages.

Director, CARA facilitated the second session and invited Ms Vinita Jha, Assistant Director, In-country and Data Analyst Ms Indu Vermani to share their inputs. Ms Vinita Jha expressed her gratitude to the stakeholders for their presence and stated that her inputs will be focused on policies matter. She highlighted the process of linking of CCI with SAA was directed by Supreme Court yet a lot has to be done to bring children in the adoption program. She highlighted the data that currently 5,830 CCIs are registered and 5,554 are linked 286 CCIs are yet to be linked. She highlighted the figure State and District wise. She emphasized that DCPUs and SAA have to take ownership of the same. Ms.Indu Virmani highlighted that there is mismatching of data and the DCPUs needs to look into it. For technical issues, the SARA can communicate the same to the Authority.



Issues Shared by the States

All the SARA shared that from the CARINGS portal the non-functional CCIs have to be removed. Maharashtra SARA highlighted that a strong linkage has to be created between SAA and CCI and it does not include open shelter home and observation home

Director CARA highlighted that all the children who are shown in such CCIs have to be transferred only then these CCIs will be delinked. He emphasized that the DCPUs

and SAA need to take ownership in establishing SAA – CCI Linkages.

Odisha SARA highlighted that currently, they have 166 older children in the age group 12-18-year-old and has requested all the SARA that the same can be communicated to those PAPS in different State who are interested in adopting older children.

The Union Territory of **Dadar** has highlighted a special case of COVID affected PAP seeking the extension. He shared another case where the PAPS biological child is a special need child and it won't be possible for both the parents to come and take the child.

Director, CARA stated that in genuine cases of extension, the SARA needs to communicate the same to the authority by providing justifiable reasons which will be considered by the authority. In the second case, the PAPS can submit the report of the biological child then the single PAPS can come and collect the child in case of interstate adoption coordination has to be established at SARA level.

Sikkim SARA highlighted that the border of Sikkim is closed so, can the children of Sikkim only be adopted within the State of Sikkim by giving the PAPS the preference

Director, CARA stated that parents give preference and the program of adoption is based on the principle of seniority. If the state has parents whose seniority is maintained and gives preference then only the child can be provided to them. However, amid such pandemic extension to the PAPS can be given in case of a lockdown.

Uttar Pradesh SARA – The state highlighted that in the CARINGS portal we need to add one more category in the sex column. He shared that sometimes the court put pressure to provide a deed.

Director, CARA appreciated the state for raising the important point of adding a column in CARING Portals and stated that deed is not mandatory.

Important Pointers

- I. Use of technology in the Adoption Program
- II. SARAs and DCPUs need to take ownership and expedite the process of adoption
- III. Ensuring counselling for every child
- IV. Rehabilitation of older children should be the aim
- V. Interstate SARA coordination has to be established
- VI. Best practices need to be shared and replicated
- VII. Concerning court pendencies coordination with Registrar General, High Court of the concerned State needs to be ensured.

Shri. Manoj Kumar Singh, CEO CARA, & Director, MWCD congratulated all the Stakeholders for making the webinar a success and stated that the Ministry of Women and Child Development will coordinate with the Ministry of law and justice towards the importance of adoption program.

The Webinar ended with a vote of thanks by Shri. Sanjay Barshilia, Director, CARA and Joint Director Dr J. Pati who emphasized that the sessions were fruitful. However, the SARA needs to rehabilitate older children by establishing SAA – CCI linkages and give attention to the important need of counselling to avoid disruption. The DCPUs need to act in the best interest of children.

