

Central Adoption Resource Authority
Ministry of Women & Child Development
Government of India
R.K. Puram, New Delhi

Minutes for the 25th Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) held on 24th June, 2020 at 12:00 noon through webinar or online.

1. The 25th Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), chaired by Shri Ajay Tirkey, Secretary, MWCD (Chairperson of the Steering Committee of CARA), was held on 24th June, 2020 at 12.00 noon in which the Non-official members participated through webinar.
2. The Chairperson and Members as under attended the meeting in person/through webinar.

Chairperson

- (a) Shri Ajay Tirkey, Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India – Chairperson (Ex-officio).

Members

- (b) Ms. Aastha Saxena Khatwani, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – Member (Ex-officio).
- (c) Shri Sukh Lal Meena, Dy. Secretary (Finance), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi [Representing Shri Ali Raza Rizvi, Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – Member (Ex-officio)].
- (d) Shri R. Prasanna, Secretary, Deptt of WCD, Chhattisgarh [Chairperson SARA, Department of Women & Child Development, Government of Chhattisgarh, {Representing State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), Chhattisgarh}] - Member.
- (e) Shri Gaurav Singh, Programme Manager, SARA, UP [Representing Rajkiya Bal Greh, Rampur, UP – Government-run Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA)] – Member.

- (f) Dr. (Ms.) Prajakta Kulkarni, Founder/Director, Snehankur Adoption Centre, Naval Estate, Plot No.12, Sr. No.416/1, Nearby Sandeep Hotel, Ahmednagar-Pune Road, Kedgaon, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra 414005 [Representing NGO-run Specialized Adoption Agency (SAA)] – Member.
- (g) Dr. (Ms.) Meena Radhakrishna, Flat No. 535, ANTARA, Purukul Road, Guniyal Gaon, P.O. Sinola, Dehradun Uttarakhand 248003 [Adoptive Parent] – Member.
- (h) Ms. Aparna Bhat, A-11, LGF, Rear Side, Neeti Bagh, New Delhi-110049 [Advocate] – Member.
- (i) Shri Deepak Kumar, Chief Executive Officer, CARA – Member Secretary (Ex-officio).

Special Invitee(s)

- (j) Shri Manoj Kumar Singh, Director, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
- (k) Shri Chandkiran Chhoker, Sr. System Analyst, National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

3. At the outset, Chairperson, Steering Committee welcomed all the Members of the Committee on this meeting being held through webinar due to pandemic spread all over the country & the globe. He asked Member Secretary & CEO, CARA to start the proceedings of the 25th Meeting of the Steering Committee of CARA.

4. At the outset, Member Secretary CARA welcomed all the Members of the Steering Committee of CARA on this virtual meeting and recapped the Action Taken on the important actionable points/paras of the 24th Meeting of the Steering Committee of CARA held on 16th March 2020, which had been already circulated to the members along with the Agenda items for the current meeting.

Action Taken Report (ATR) on the decision on the Agenda Items of the 24th Meeting of Steering Committee held on 16/03/2020.

5. Action taken on the Agenda Items of the 24th Meeting of the Steering Committee of CARA held on 16/03/2020, are as under:-

Decision of Steering Committee During the 24 th Meeting	Action Taken Report
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<p>Agenda No. 24.01(a): Position Paper on the Recommendation of the Sub-Committee.</p> <p>Decision: One of the key recommendations was to discuss on lack of checks and balances in HAMA's which are available under the JJ Act 2015. Secretary WCD advised that the efficacy of adoptions under HAMA can only be analysed if there is an analysis of the cases of placement of children under HAMA, for which a database is required. Since HAMA is not being administered by MWCD, the issue may be discussed with Ministry administering HAMA. He advised that concerned Division in the Ministry may put up a detailed note on the subject, and if need be, the same may be forwarded to the Ministry of Law & Justice. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee on this issue may be moved on file.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that action on the Position Paper on the recommendations of the Sub-Committee, which was related to the Hindu Adoption & Maintenance Act, which was to be prepared and submitted to the Ministry, has been complied with and the Ministry would be taking needful action on that.</p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.01(b): Review of extending relaxation to the PAPs who have lost their child by giving them referrals on priority on compassionate grounds.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee decided to take expert opinion and review the same in the next Steering Committee meeting.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that there was a discussion whether we should extend the provision of relaxing the PAPs who have lost their only child by giving them referrals on compassionate grounds. He informed that we have received opinion of many of the experts and has taken those as part of the Agenda and we will be discussing it in this meeting.</p>
<p>Agenda No.24.01(c): Review of provision of six months ante date seniority being given to single female prospective adoptive parent above 40 years of age.</p> <p>Decision:</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed this item was discussed in the National Consultative Workshop on 14 Jan 2020. These were also discussed in the previous Steering Committee meeting. He informed that there were discussions on this item and this item has been taken as part</p>

<p>The Committee decided to take expert opinion and review the same in the next Steering Committee meeting.</p>	<p>of Agenda and will be discussed in this meeting.</p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.01(d): Provisioning of State specific list of PAPs from the North Eastern region in order to place the children within the region to ensure their adoption in similar social-cultural environment.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee decided to have a separate meeting for taking views of other States & Stakeholders on this issue.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that the issue was also raised by North Eastern Region in the National Consultative Workshop on 14 Jan 2020 that PAPs of NE Region should be given priority in adopting the children from their region because of similar socio-cultural environment and if it can't be placed with PAPs from NE States, then the children may be given to PAPs of other States. On the specific directions of the Hon'ble Minister, this was discussed in a separate meeting held on the same date i.e. 14 Jan 2020. This issue has also deliberated on many times. It is not restricted to North Eastern Region and will have wider ramification. We had also meetings organized with the States & the SARAs and taken their inputs. <i>So a proper decision would be taken after wider consultation in this regard.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.01(e): Review of Medical Examination for Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs).</p> <p>Decision: The Committee decided that the format should be simple with the essential tests required to be conducted. Only those parameters or health conditions, including psychological health should be evaluated and recorded, which will have a bearing on the suitability of the PAPs for undertaking adoption. The recommended formats vetted by medical experts may be placed in the next Steering Committee meeting.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that as decided in the 24th Meeting of the Steering Committee, the draft standard format for Medical Examination of Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) has been prepared and referred to medical experts from the AIIMS who are in NOC Committee of CARA, for vetting. He also informed that we have not received the comments of the medical experts due to lockdown. <i>As soon as it is received, it will be placed before the Steering Committee and a circular will be issued in this regard.</i></p>

<p>Agenda No. 24.01(f): Regarding stipulation of financial criteria for eligibility of Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs).</p> <p>Decision: The Committee decided to form a Sub Committee consisting of the Steering Committee Members, for looking into this issue and giving recommendation. JS (ASK), Ms Aparna Bhat, & Dr. Meena Radhakrishna (if she is available) shall be part of the Sub Committee.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that as per the decision of the Committee, a Sub Committee was formed. A virtual meeting of the Sub-Committee chaired by the Joint Secretary (ASK) was conducted recently to discuss the financial criteria for eligibility of the Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs). Other members viz. Dr. Meena Radhakrishna and Ms. Aparna Bhat participated in the said meeting. He informed that JS would apprise about it to other members of the Committee later in the meeting.</p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.01(g): Mandatory Counselling of Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) during preparation of Home Study Report (HSR).</p> <p>Decision: The Committee in principle agreed with the proposal of counselling of PAPs and advised to get a module developed for tests of PAPs, by the Sub -Committee already constituted for training of the Social Workers.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that the issue of mandatory counselling of Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) during preparation of Home Study Report (HSR) was discussed during the National Consultative Workshop held on 14 Jan 2020. In the 24th Meeting of the Steering Committee, it was decided to get a training module developed for tests of PAPs. In this regard, a Sub Committee chaired by Dr. Rajesh Sagar of AIIMS has already been notified. Dr. Meena Radhakrishna is also one of the Members of the Sub Committee. This Sub Committee already had one meeting and a draft module has been shared by Dr. Meena Radhakrishna yesterday only and after review, <i>the final report will be placed before the Steering Committee.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.01(h): Request for provision on CARINGS for the PAPs, who did not receive any referral for three years, to consider their original preference category, even if their eligibility regarding age has changed at the time of</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that as per the decision taken in the 24th meeting of the Steering Committee regarding provisioning on CARINGS for the PAPs who did not receive any referrals for three years, to consider their original preference category, a circular has</p>

<p>revalidation of HSR.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee advised to follow the Regulations and the circular may be reconciled as per the Regulations.</p>	<p>been issued in this regard and the decision of the Steering Committee has been complied.</p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.01(i): Need for revamping of CARINGS with easier navigation and access to the customised information from the database. Further, the system needs to be intelligent with periodic critical alerts to the stakeholders.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee decided to discuss this as last agenda item with the NIC representatives.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed this could not be presented in the last meeting. NIC had discussed this issue and an update has been given by them to JS (ASK) yesterday. <i>The Steering Committee shall be appraised regarding the progress.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.01(j): Provision of Root Search.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee decided to follow the provisions of Regulation 44 of the Adoption Regulations, 2017.</p>	<p><i>CEO CARA informed this issue has been communicated to NIC to make a module, especially for the adoptees living in foreign country and seeking route search.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.02: Information regarding Adoption Fee & its utilization.</p> <p>Decision: The Chairperson directed that it be finalised immediately and placed in the next Steering Committee meeting.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that JS had a final meeting & decision taken in this regard. <i>We will be receiving final direction in this regard and based on the decision, a circular will be issued.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.03: Information of constitution of Sub-Committee of Resource Persons for the Training of Legal Professionals on Adoption related issues.</p> <p>Information:</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that a Sub Committee of Resource Persons for Training of Legal Professionals on Adoption related issues, has been constituted and notified. This Sub Committee chaired by Ms. Aparna Bhat, has already had two meetings.</p>

<p>The Steering Committee in its 23rd meeting held on 15 Nov 2019 (Agenda Item No. 4) had decided to constitute of Sub-Committee of Resource Persons for the Training of Legal Professionals on Adoption related issues. Accordingly, CARA has constituted a Sub-Committee of Resource Persons for the Training of Legal Professionals on Adoption related issues vide Office Memorandum dated 07 Feb 2020. Copy of Office Memorandum had been circulated to the members at F-13 of the agenda (pages 166-168). This is for information of the Steering Committee.</p>	<p>He also informed that a training module is also being prepared. <i>The Steering Committee shall be updated on the progress/completion of the Module.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.04: Information of constitution of Sub-Committee of Resource Persons for the Training of Mental Health Professionals on Adoption related issues.</p> <p>Information: The Steering Committee in its 23rd meeting held on 15 Nov 2019 (Agenda Item No. 8) had decided to constitute of Sub-Committee of Resource Persons for the Training of Mental Health Professionals on Adoption related issues. Accordingly, CARA has constituted a Sub-Committee of Resource Persons for the Training of Mental Health Professionals on Adoption related issues vide Office Memorandum dated 20 Feb 2020. Copy of Office Memorandum had been circulated to the members at F-14 of the agenda (pages 169-170). This is for information of the Steering Committee.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that a Sub Committee of Resource Persons chaired by Dr. Rajesh Sagar, for Training of Mental Health Professionals on Adoption related issues, has been constituted. <i>The Sub Committee would be preparing the Module, progress of which shall be communicated to the Steering Committee.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.05: Approval of revised RE for 2019-2020 & BE for</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that it was decided that we will move a file for</p>

<p>2020-2021.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee approved the proposed sub head wise utilisation of funds and advised to surrender the additional amount taken in the RE for hiring of the office space. As regards purchase of office space for CARA at 'World Trade Centre', Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi, the Committee advised to move the proposal on file for obtaining approval.</p>	<p>having our own space in the World Trade Centre, which we have already prepared and file submitted to the Ministry. But due to lockdown, there has been no further process. He also informed that he has spoken to Special Secretary & FA in this regard just before the lockdown in the month of March 2020 and we had suggested that we can move forward in this and he suggested that an EFC is to be conducted in this regard. But due to lockdown, it is pending. This is for information of the Steering Committee.</p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.06: Presentation on CARINGS by NIC.</p> <p>Decision: It was decided that NIC should present the details sought at para 33 above to the JS in-charge CARA. NIC was informed that they should function as facilitator and service provider in the development of CARINGS. CARA has the responsibility as implementer.</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that discussions were held with the JS (ASK) and it has been decided to work on the pending issues. <i>NIC-CARINGS team would give an update on the same before the next Steering Committee meeting.</i></p>
<p>Agenda No. 24.07: (Additional Agenda Item) regarding Bombay High Court matter in the Foreign Adoption Petition No.41 of 2019, directing CARA to further improve the procedure related to issue of NOC in cases of Inter-country adoption.</p> <p>Decision: The Committee advised to show the draft affidavit to the Legal member of the Steering Committee & NOC Committee and take action on the direction of the Court as advised by the Legal member of the Steering Committee and as approved by the</p>	<p>CEO CARA informed that based on the Bombay High Court order, there were two points, first, we have to make Terms of Reference for NOC Committee Members. We have taken it as an Agenda now in the present Steering Committee meeting. We have to respond through Affidavit to the Bombay High Court. It was decided that the affidavit will be filed with the approval of the JS. <i>File in this regard, has been moved for approval of the JS and it will be filed in the Hon'ble Court after it is received from the Ministry.</i></p>

JS in charge CARA.	
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6. JS (ASK) informed that there was a meeting with Dr. Meena Radhakrishna and Ms. Aparna Bhat for discussing the issue of fixing financial criteria for the PAPs. After the discussion, it was decided to further review the issue as to how best the interests of children can be protected while ensuring their placement with adoptive families, without any discrimination based on the financial capabilities of the PAPs. *She further stated that the final view of the Sub-committee is still not formalised and the recommendations shall be placed before the Steering Committee in due course of time.*

7. JS (ASK) updated on the cases under process in the Ministry. *Regarding the proposal for purchase of building in the World Trade Centre at Naroji Nagar, New Delhi, she intimated that an NOC from the Ministry of Urban Development & Directorate of Estate may be required for processing the case for EFC. She advised CARA to do the needful.*

8. Regarding Bombay High Court case, JS (ASK) informed that the file is under process and the approval shall be given to CARA for filing the affidavit in the Court.

9. Further, JS (ASK) informed that the contention of giving priority to the PAPs from NER in cases of adoption of children from NER has been a very long pending issue. If we take the decision to give Regional or State wise priority, other States may also seek similar provision to be made. *She informed that this issue is to be deliberated with the States for their comments.*

10. JS (ASK) gave an update on the adoption laws under the two Acts i.e. HAMA and JJ Act, 2015. This is also under review by a Parliamentary Committee and many other stakeholders have been consulted by the Committee. *As far as the paper on HAMA is concerned, she informed that since the Act is being administered by MoL&J, the proposal shall be sent to the Department of Legislative Affairs after taking approval of the Hon'ble Minister WCD.*

11. JS (ASK) further informed about the circular placed on the website of CARA seeking suggestion from public for simplification of the adoption process. On some of the important issues, comments have been received from seven of the experts in the field of adoption, wherein they have expressed their views clearly and the same shall be discussed as agenda during the current meeting.

However, she recommended that views of the SARAs may also be taken on these before Steering Committee takes a decision.

Agenda Items and Decisions

Programme Matters:

Agenda No. 25.01: Approval of Revised TOR of the NOC Committee

12. CEO CARA informed that this agenda item is about filing compliance affidavit in Bombay High Court in the light of the Hon'ble Court directions in Foreign Adoption Petition No. 41 of 2019.

13. It was decided by the Steering Committee in its 24th Meeting to show the draft affidavit to the Legal member of the Steering Committee & NOC Committee and take action on the direction of the Court as advised by the Legal member of the Steering Committee and as approved by the JS in charge CARA.

14. CEO CARA informed that action has already been taken in compliance to the directions of the Hon'ble Court and draft response had been prepared and placed in the last Steering Committee Meeting, wherein it was decided that inputs would be taken from Ms. Aparna Bhat and other members of the NOC Committee. The draft ToR of the NOC Committee has been finalised after seeking inputs from NOC Committee Members & Legal Member of the Steering Committee as decided during the last meeting. The same is placed at **F-2 (Pg/C 12-19 of the Agenda)** circulated). He further informed that the draft Terms of Reference for NOC Committee has now been made in a comprehensive manner. Responsibilities of each member, i.e. the medical expert, expert from social work, the legal member and the administrative member of CARA, have been elucidated at para 5 of the ToR. Further, he informed that it had also been circulated and the Steering Committee for comments, in case any, and the members had no comments to offer. The members of the Steering Committee were asked regarding their views on the ToR and all members agreed to it.

Decision:

15. *The ToR for the NOC Committee was approved by the Steering Committee CARA shall be issuing it as an OM.*

Agenda No. 25.02: Seeking Suggestions on Pertinent Issues Related to Adoption

16. CEO CARA informed that in the 24th Steering Committee Meeting of CARA held on 16 March 2020, it was decided to seek opinion on the key issues enumerated in the succeeding paras, which were highlighted during the National Consultative Workshop organized by CARA on 14 Jan 2020. Hence, comments and recommendations on these issues were solicited from members of various sub-committees of CARA, keeping in line the principles of the “best interest of the child” as defined in Section 2(9) of the J.J. Act 2105. Based on the directions of the Hon’ble Minister, views were also received from our website. The opinion of the experts have been received and collated [placed at **F-3 (Pg/C 20-52 of the Agenda)**].

Issue 1: Review of extending relaxation to the PAPs who have lost their children by giving them referrals on priority on compassionate grounds.

Conclusion of experts:

All the experts are against giving referral to PAPs on priority basis who have lost their child. Also, most of the experts suggest PAPs to undergo counselling to overcome the grief and to prepare themselves to welcome a “new” child, who cannot be a replacement of their lost child.

(a) Dr. (Ms.) Prajakta Kulkarni, Snehankur Adoption Centre agreed with the conclusion of the experts. She added that grief counselling was required to prepare the PAPs before they can be extended referral of children for adoption.

(b) Shri R. Prasanna, Secretary, State Govt of Chhattisgarh agreed with the conclusion of the experts.

Issue 2: Review of the Immediate Placement portal and the provision of reserving a child directly from it.

Conclusion of experts:

IP portal needs is recommended to be reformulated into high priority/high scrutiny placements with an SOP having following provisions:

1. Preparation of PAPs as well as Older Child with adequate counselling sessions by parenting experts, therapists, trauma specialists.
2. Assessment of PAPs as well as Child by Mental Health Professional.

(c) Shri R. Prasanna, Secretary, State Govt of Chhattisgarh agreed with the conclusion of the experts.

(d) Ms. Aparna Bhat agreed with the conclusions of the experts. She also

suggested for a system which would facilitate placement of older children in foster care with families who want to adopt older children. This would enable proper assessment of the PAPs and facilitate their integration with the family before adoption is considered.

(e) Dr. Radhakrishna suggested that parents who want to adopt older children should be screened first for their preparation for adopting older children. Further, she informed that the older child may not be ever ready to go for adoption, unless they have proper interaction with the families over a period of time.

(f) Dr. (Ms.) Prajakta Kulkarni, Snehankur Adoption Centre suggested that in case we are thinking of giving priority to PAPs of North Eastern Region for adoption of children from NER, we may consider the same atleast for older children from all other states, as the language barrier makes it difficult for the older child to get integrated with adoptive families resulting in disruptions in many cases. The Chairperson clarified to her that in the matter of giving priority to NER PAPs in adoption of children from NER, no view has been made so far by the Ministry and the Steering Committee and the proposal is still being examined.

Issue 3: Review of the provision of six months ante date seniority being given to single female prospective adoptive parent above 40 years of age.

Conclusion of experts:

All the experts suggest that no special treatment be given to single female PAPs over 40 years of age as it is discriminatory against other PAPs, and not in consonance with the principle of best interest of the child. Furthermore, a male, female, single, married all have been kept at the same pedestal by Law, and are entitled to be treated as equals.

(g) Shri R. Prasanna, Secretary, State Govt of Chhattisgarh agreed with the conclusion of the experts.

Decision:

17. It was decided to seek comments from the SARAs of the State Governments/UTs so that final decision can be taken by the Steering Committee in the next meeting.

Agenda No. 25.03: Sitting Fee for Members of Sub-committees set up by CARA.

18. CEO CARA informed that CARA apart from the Statutory Committees has few sub-committees in place which has constituted with the approval of the Steering Committee. However, sitting fees for the experts hasn't been stipulated. These committees/sub-committees have to put in lot of time and effort in preparing reports, manual, training modules, curriculum etc.

19. CEO CARA informed that different organisations have different rates of honorarium for outside experts for attending as a member of the committee. However, honorarium is being paid to members of NOC Committee & Medical Experts Committee of CARA as under:-

NIPCCD	CARA
NIPCCD is paying @ 2500/- per meeting for committee member for all kinds of meetings i.e. DPC, Research Advisory Committee, Sexual Harassment Committee, Grievances Committee, Screening Committee etc.	NOC Committee sitting fee is @1000/- per hour with a maximum amount of Rs. 4000/- (Ref: Approved by Secretary, WCD on 9/5/2012.)
It is also paying guest speakers/resource person @1500/- for 1-1/4 hours and Rs. 2000/- for 2 hours and Rs. 3000/- for full day. (Ref. OM dated 14 th Dec. 2018)	As far as an honorarium to a Resource Person for attending training programme is concerned, Rs. 3000/- per session has been fixed with a maximum possibility for taking two sessions during any training programme.

20. CEO CARA therefore proposed that we may adopt the pattern already prevailing in CARA in case of NOC Committee Members for all Sub-committees which means sitting fee @1000/- per hour with a maximum amount of Rs. 4000/- for a single sitting as approved earlier by the Ministry. (Ref: Approved by Secretary, WCD on 9/5/2012.) All such meetings may be concluded within the approved time frame and the honorarium/fee may be restricted up to maximum of six sittings per quarter irrespective of the fact that the meeting may be either physical or virtual. CEO CARA also proposed that in addition to the above, a one-time honorarium may be considered to the Chairperson of the Committee for preparation of the report, which may be Rs 5000/-. If approved, the above norms may also be applicable in case of non-official members of all the Committees/Sub-committees of CARA.

Note: Subject to the condition that the amount of such fee/ honorarium shall not exceed the amount of fee/ honorarium prescribed under various Acts/ Rules for which separate orders exist.

मनोज कुमार सिंह / Manoj Kumar Singh
सी.ई.ओ., कारा / CEO, CARA
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21. Dr. Meena Radhakrishna informed that she has done the work voluntarily and the term of the Sub-Committee for Training being chaired by her is almost over. However, she has stated that she has no objection to the proposal.

22. Mr. Prasanna and Dr. Prajakta Kulkarni agreed to the proposal and stated that honorarium may be paid as being proposed.

23. Dr. Meena Radhakrishna also raised the matter regarding payment of honorarium/travel charges to Resource Persons of the Training Sub-committee. CEO CARA informed that CARA releases advance to State Governments for all the training programmes which includes the honorarium and travel reimbursements required to be paid to the Resource Persons. He requested to share the list of reimbursements so that the State Govt. may be requested to clear the dues at the earliest. It was also intimated to the Steering Committee, that the State Govts. give the Utilization Certificate (UC) to CARA after the training for the advance given to them.

24. JS (ASK) also agreed to the provision as a matter of honouring the effort put in by the members of the Committee/Sub-committee.

Decision:

25. *The Committee agreed to pay honorarium for members of all Committees/Sub-committees a sitting fee @1000/- per hour with a maximum amount of Rs. 4000/- for a single sitting. Further the sittings fees shall be capped at maximum of six sitting in a quarter. Grant of one-time honorarium of Rs. 5,000/- to the Chairperson of the Committee for preparation of the report, apart from normal sitting fee, was also agreed to.*

26. *The Committee advised CARA to take up the matter of pending honorarium and travel reimbursements of the Training Sub-committee resource persons separately with the States and update be taken from the States by 05th July 2020.*

Agenda No. 25.04: Information regarding Adoption Fee & its Utilization

27. CEO CARA informed that it has been felt necessary to frame consolidated guidelines on Adoption fee and its utilisation for the all stakeholders. In this regard, a proposal has already been sent to the Ministry for approval based on earlier decision of the Steering Committee. Details of the same are placed at **F-5 (Pg/C 59-67 of the Agenda)** for information of the Steering Committee. Once the guidelines are finalised, the same would be disseminated to SARAs and the SAAs/CCIs would be able to utilise the adoption fee strictly for the welfare of children.

28. JS (ASK) opined that this fund should be used judiciously and for the welfare of the children only like their medical expenses & medical insurance, expenditure on their development activities apart from legal expenses incurred during the adoption with the capping already notified. *She informed that CARA will be advised on these issues shortly by the Ministry based on which CARA shall issue a circular under the provisions of Regulation 46 of the Adoption Regulations, 2017.*

Decision:

29. *It was decided that the circular in this regard will be issued by CARA, under the provisions of Regulation 46 of the Adoption Regulations, 2017, based on the advice given by the Ministry.*

Agenda No. 25.05: Review of Medical Examination of PAPs - for information

30. CEO CARA informed that in the National Consultative Workshop on Child Adoption organised by CARA on 14th Jan 2020 at Teen Murti Bhawan Auditorium, Delhi, Ms. Bino Bala, Deputy Director, Department of Social welfare, Government of Manipur suggested that there should be some kind of mandatory medical tests prescribed for Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) registering for adoption to have better scrutiny of the eligibility and suitability of the PAPs.

31. He also informed that CARA had earlier received a letter dated 07/08/2019 from Government of Tripura, Directorate of Social Welfare & Social Education, Tripura, for providing a format for preparation of Medical Examination Report (MER) for Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) and the response of the same was sent vide letter no. 58- 37/2019/CARA/Tripura dated 22/08/2019.

32. CEO CARA further informed that a draft format for Medical Examination of PAPs (MEP) was prepared and was submitted in the 24th Steering Committee Meeting, wherein it was decided that the format should be simple with the essential tests required to be conducted. Only those parameters or health conditions, including psychological health should be evaluated and recorded, which will have a bearing on the suitability of the PAPs for undertaking adoption.

33. He informed that in this regard the medical experts from AIIMS have been requested to review the format and give its recommendations. The same has been pending due to the unavailability of the medical experts during the current pandemic situation.

Decision:

34. It was decided to request the medical experts from AIIMS to share its recommendations by 05 July 2020.

Agenda No. 25.06: Recommencement of Adoption Programme in the light of Covid-19.

35. CEO CARA informed the measures undertaken by CARA with respect to the adoption programme during the ongoing lockdown announcement by the Government of India due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial advisories were received from the Ministry and the Government of India on 18 March 2020 & 19 March 2020. Accordingly, CARA issued Circulars from time to time for managing/ regulating In-country and Inter-country adoptions in the light of the advisory. Relevant details placed at **F-6(Pg/C 68-87 of the Agenda)**. He also informed that 19th March was the last referral which was given before the lockdown and prior to commencement of the lockdown. But when the situation was not very conducive, we had stopped it.

36. Now the Authority has to recommence the adoption programme and may need to revise the protocol for undertaking the processes in the present scenario of global pandemic. For this, two webinars were organized on 22nd May 2020 and 26th May 2020 with SARAs as well as some of the stakeholders and experts in the field of adoption. Details are placed at **F-7 (Pg/C 88-99 of the Agenda)**

37. CEO CARA further informed that Adoption referral has begun w.e.f. 15th June 2020 and in this regard one advisory has been issued on Child Care Safeguards to be followed by the respective stakeholders. **F-8 (Pg/C 100-102 of the Agenda)**. He further informed that CARA has requested the State Governments to approach the respective JJ Committee of the High Court to let the Family Courts & District Courts know that adoption cases should also be taken on priority as the Courts are open for dealing with priority cases. He further informed that during the referral cycle on 15th June 2020, 359 children were referred to PAPs, including 07 to Inter-country PAPs. Thereafter, during the next referral cycle on 22nd June 2020, about 300 children have been referred to PAPs. He informed that looking into the present situation, few changes have been done. The stipulated the period of completion of HSR has been increased to three months from one month so that the PAPs & SAA get more time to complete it due to the travel restrictions. The referral cycle is also being executed on a weekly basis, instead of two referral cycles per week. The reserving time has also been increased from 48 hours to 96 hours for the PAPs to have more time to gather further information, in case required, before taking a decision. Even the Adoption Committee meeting for matching and acceptance has been facilitated with initial virtual meetings recommended to enable completion of the process in the prevailing situation of restricted movements

and the matching & acceptance period has also been increased from 20 days to 30 days. Further, he informed that CARA would be flexible in further extending the matching period on case to case basis in case requested by the PAPs. He also informed that further advisories may be issued as per requirement based on the situational analysis from time to time.

38. The members were asked for their comments or suggestions, if any, but the members didn't have any further suggestion.

Decision:

39. *Informed.*

Agenda No. 25.07 (Additional Agenda Item): Approval of Accounts for the Financial Year 2019-20.

40. CEO CARA informed that with the permission of the Chair, for placing the Agenda for approval of the Annual Accounts. As per Section 69(3)(b) of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Steering Committee of CARA has to approve the Annual Accounts which has to be produced before the C&AG for audit every year. He also informed that we need to do an internal audit of the accounts by a C&AG empanelled auditor first, which has been done. Due to lockdown, CARA could manage to get the audit done from its Internal Auditor M/s Gopal Chopra & Associates, an empanelled auditor of C&AG, just before the Steering Committee meeting. It was further intimated that the same auditor had done the internal audit last year as well. The Financial Statement for the Financial Year 2019-20 was presented before the Steering Committee. As per the normal timelines, the same is required to be presented to C&AG before 30th June 2020 with the approval of the Steering Committee. CEO CARA also submitted that the final audit of the account is done by the C&AG.

41. CEO CARA further informed that some of the points which were highlighted by the Internal Auditor, and have to be taken cognizance of, are unsettled advance of Rs.11.00 crores with NFDC, DAVP (now Bureau of Communications), CPWD (Rs.0.87 crore), etc; unsettled advances amounting to approximately Rs. 1.00 crore given to States for training programmes; pattern of investment which is required to be done for the corpus of leave salary & gratuity for the employees (decision on this is pending at the level of the Ministry).

42. Dy. Secretary (Finance) MWCD informed that some columns of investment, interest, income from royalty have been left blank by putting a dash, which doesn't give a clear picture and either Nil or NA be used as applicable.

Decision:

43. *It was advised that CARA should incorporate the suggestion made by DS (Finance) and also circulate the Financial Statements to all the members of the Steering Committee to look at it, since it wasn't circulated with the agenda earlier. Comments, if any be incorporated, and it may be approved through circulation.*

44. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

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