

CENTRAL ADOPTION RESOURCE AUTHORITY
(Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India)
R.K. Puram, New Delhi

Minutes of the 41st Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA).

The 41st Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) chaired by Sh. Anil Malik, Secretary, MWCD and Chairperson of the Steering Committee was held on 14th January, 2026 (Wednesday) at 03:00 p.m. in the Conference Hall of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Room No. - 602, 6th Floor, A-Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

2. The Chairperson, Member Secretary and other Committee Members were physically present except five members who attended the meeting virtually through video conferencing. The list of participants is attached.
3. At the outset, Member Secretary & CEO, CARA welcomed Chairperson of the Steering Committee and all the Members of the Committee. Chairperson requested Member Secretary & CEO, CARA to initiate the proceedings of the 41st Meeting of the Committee.
4. The Action Taken Report (ATR) on the Decisions on the Agenda Items of the 39th meeting placed at Appendix-A and on the Decisions on the Agenda Items of the 40th meeting placed at Appendix-B were discussed & approved.
5. The Steering Committee observed and opined the following :-
 - The CEO, CARA, while presenting the ATR in respect of identification of children by CARA, apprised the Committee of technical issues pertaining to the Mission Vatsalya portal. It was submitted that there are discrepancies in stakeholders' data, gross inconsistencies in the declared LFA children reports (including an unlikely reduction in the total number), non-availability of several reports, and non-synchronization or non-visibility of data across various stakeholders. Further, it was informed that the reports available on the portal have inaccurate data as the filters applied to data are dysfunctional or improper. It was also stated that it is due to these recurring issues on the portal that several challenges are being encountered on a daily basis in monitoring the identification of children for adoption and functioning of stakeholders following the migration of CARINGS to the integrated Mission Vatsalya portal;
 - It was decided that a joint meeting may be conducted with MWCD & CARA Officers along-with NIC Team by JS (AK) at the earliest to resolve IT related issues (Agenda No. 39.01 refers);

- The committee upheld the decision made by CARA committee constituted for examining the cases related to refund of adoption fees, i.e. '*...under no circumstances shall adoption fees be refunded in disruption or dissolution cases, as there is no provision of the same in Adoption Regulations, 2022*' Amendment in the Regulation in this regard was also proposed (Agenda No. 39.02 refers);
- Agenda item 41.03 was placed in the meeting for deliberation. (Agenda No. 39.03 refers);
- It was informed that the IMC meeting is scheduled for 15th January 2026 for further discussion in the matter (Agenda No. 39.04 refers);
- Common guidelines may be framed on the basis of line of action as followed by other Autonomous Bodies of the Ministry regarding the extension of medical facilities to serving & retired officials of CARA (Agenda No. 39.05 refers);
- As far as travelling allowances of outsourced IT staff is concerned, it was decided that the norms for the subject followed in the Ministry may be adopted by CARA (Agenda No. 39.06 refers);
- Clarifications were provided as sought by DoE, MoF in the matter (Agenda No. 39.07 refers);
- It was noted that the CARA Annual Report 2023-2024 has already been laid on the Parliament (Agenda No. 39.08 refers);
- Annual Accounts for 2024-25 were noted (Agenda No. 39.09 refers);
- The committee was of the view that CARA may examine if the Help Desk Services at CARA can be operated better through an outsourced service provider specialised in the said field. In this regard, services provided by NeGD to MWCD for number 1515 and other helplines numbers may be explored (Agenda No. 40.01 refers);
- In matter of hiring of Professionals & Support Staff through a GeM empanelled servicing provider, it was decided that the same may be engaged for a period of three years (Agenda No. 40.02 refers).

AGENDA ITEMS AND DECISIONS

PROGRAMME & POLICY MATTERS :

Agenda No. 41.01 : Approval of Annual Action Plan for Training & Awareness Activities, Outreach Activities and Media Activities for the year 2025-26.

6. The Adoption Regulations 2022, through Regulations 41(5) and 41(11) bind CARA to conduct training & capacity building programmes with all its stakeholders and carry out advocacy & awareness activities for promoting legal adoption in the country. In pursuance of the same, the Annual Action Plan of CARA for the FY 2025-26 comprising of Annual Training Calendar, Outreach Activities and Media Activities have been prepared.

7. It may be noted that CARA has already started conducting virtual trainings for its stakeholders and awareness campaigns. The detailed plan is placed at Appendix-C.

8. Steering Committee may please approve the same.

Decision :

9. The Steering Committee approved the Annual Action Plan for Training & Awareness Activities, Outreach Activities and Media Activities for the year 2025-26. The members of Steering Committee and the recommended persons shall be invited for the Awareness Programmes of CARA. Further, Legal Member of the Steering Committee suggested that CARA may like to invite SAAs and Legal Aid members to collaborate with it in its outreach activities for greater awareness of laws related to adoption.

Agenda No. 41.02 : Approval of proposal for revision of the CARA Internship Programme Guidelines.

Background :

10. The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), as a statutory body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has been conducting internship programmes to provide students with field-based exposure in matters related to adoption and child welfare. The existing Internship Programme Guidelines, which have been in effect for a considerable period, require revision to address evolving academic trends and institutional requirements.

Proposal :

11. A comprehensive review of the current guidelines has been undertaken and a draft comparative statement of proposed changes to the CARA Internship Programme Guidelines is annexed. The following are the key proposal for a proposed changes :-

- Revision of eligibility criteria for unpaid internship by excluding Class XII pass applicants and restricting eligibility to students pursuing Graduation, Post-Graduation, or Research programmes from recognized institutions;
- Removal of the condition requiring completion of two years of a degree course for eligibility to unpaid internships of 4-6 weeks duration.

- Expansion of eligible academic disciplines to include allied and emerging fields such as Public Policy, Child Rights, Child Development, and Media & Communication, in addition to existing disciplines;
 - Conduct of the paid internship programme throughout the year supported through a centralized online application mechanism on CARA's official website;
 - Enhancement of intake capacity for paid interns to a maximum of 10 and unpaid interns to a maximum of 15, subject to logistical feasibility;
 - Streamlining of the application process through creation of a dedicated online registration link on CARA's website;
 - Constitution of an internal Screening and Selection Committee within CARA for shortlisting and final selection of interns;
 - Incorporation of a termination clause to address cases of non-performance, non-compliance with guidelines, or breach of confidentiality.
12. Comparative statement of changes between existing and proposed internship programme guidelines at Appendix-D.
13. Steering Committee may please approve the same.

Decision :

14. The Steering Committee approved the proposal for revision of the CARA Internship Programme Guidelines. The Steering Committee recommended that the Statistical Adviser, MWCD may be included as a member of the Internal Screening and Selection Committee for the purpose.

Agenda No. 41.03 : Approval of Instituting Award for promoting adoption in the country.

15. A committee was constituted for the formulation of criteria for CARA Awards, as per CARA's OM dated 21/03/2025. The Committee identified the award categories, parameters of evaluation. The report of the Committee is submitted as Appendix-E.

16. The recommendation of the Criteria Committee may be accepted and the Selection Committee for "CARA Stakeholder Awards" may be constituted.

17. Steering Committee may please approve the same.

Decision :

18. The Steering Committee made further suggestions relating to identification of parameters, selection of awardees, procedure for shortlisting of nominees etc. and opined that the matter may be further examined.

19. It was further observed that CARA may incentivize SAA and other stakeholders through such awards rather than rewarding SARAs on a standalone basis.

Agenda No. 41.04 : Ratification of the decision of CARA on Requirement of Consent in various circumstantial forms of Relative and Step-Parent Adoption matters under Adoption Regulations, 2022.

Background :

20. The issue regarding requirement of consent of biological parents in certain relative and step-parent adoption cases particularly those involving custody disputes or practical difficulties in obtaining consent from one of the biological parents due to circumstances such as separation, estrangement, absence of judicial custody orders unwed mothers, ex parte divorce decrees, missing or untraceable parents, and acrimonious parental relations etc. which was examined in detail by CARA was presented to the Steering Committee. The presentation included examination of **Judicial Precedents** of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and various High Courts on issues relating to guardianship, custody, parental consent, and welfare of the child and the legal principles emerging therefrom. The Steering Committee was apprised that legal clarification and taking decision in this matter was necessary in order to :-

- (a) To ensure standard interpretation and application of the Adoption Regulations, 2022 across jurisdictions.
- (b) To prevent procedural delays and avoidable litigation in bona fide adoption cases.
- (c) To safeguard the best interests of the child, this is the paramount consideration under law and international conventions such as the UNCRC & Hague.
- (d) To provide clear regulatory guidance to field functionaries, courts, and adoptive families.

21. The Committee was further apprised of the judicial precedents and legal framework based on which pending cases at CARA were disposed off.

S. No.	Situation	Legal Position	Policy Clarification & Decision in CARA
1.	Unwed mother/ child born outside marriage	<i>ABC (2015); Ashok Kumar (2024) (Madras HC)</i>	Consent of mother alone sufficient; father's consent not required.
2.	Custody with one parent; other has only visitation rights.	<i>Vivek Singh (2017) (SC)</i>	Consent of custodial parent sufficient; visitation parent's consent not needed.

3.	Divorce/ separation without orders	custody	<i>Githa Hariharan (1999); Roxann Sharma (2015) (SC)</i>	Consent of parent with de facto custody acceptable; subject to CWC certification/ Court validation if disputed.
4.	Ex parte divorce decrees		General principle: decree valid unless set aside	Consent of custodial parent as per decree is sufficient.
5.	One biological parent untraceable/ missing		Sec. 108 Evidence Act; <i>Githa Hariharan (1999) (SC)</i>	<7 yrs: CWC/ Court to decide; >7 yrs: presumption of death → adoption can proceed with surviving parent's consent.
6.	Customary/ social marriages/ divorces without documentation		<i>Shabnam Hashmi (2014); (SC) Lily Thomas (2000) (SC)</i>	JJ Act framework applies; affidavits + community certification + CWC scrutiny required.
7.	One parent refuses consent/ acrimonious parental relations		<i>Vivek Singh (2017) (SC)</i>	Consent of custodial parent sufficient.

Proposal :

22. (i) The Steering Committee may kindly ratify the stand taken by CARA regarding the requirement of consent in various forms of relative and step-parent adoptions, as detailed in the foregoing paragraphs and based on the judicial precedents and statutory framework examined.
- (ii) It is further proposed that future cases of similar nature may be dealt with by CARA following the same interpretative approach, to ensure uniformity, legal soundness, and child-centric application of the Adoption Regulations, 2022 read with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (as amended in 2021).
- (iii) The Steering Committee may also consider and deliberate upon any additional procedural mechanisms or policy directions that may be required to strengthen decision-making in such matters and ensure consistency of practice across jurisdictions.

Decision :

23. Based on the stand taken by CARA on case-to-case basis, the committee ratified the decision of CARA on Requirement of Consent in various circumstantial forms of Step-Parent Adoption matters

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Regulations, 2022. In cases of Divorce/ separation without custody orders (S.No. 3, 'Stand Taken by CARA'), Committee observed that Consent of parent with de-facto custody shall be acceptable; subject to only CWC Certification / Court Validation, if disputed.

ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCE MATTERS :

Agenda No. 41.05 : Approval of draft Annual Report of CARA for the year 2024-25.

24. As per Section 71 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (as amended in 2021), the Authority shall submit an Annual Report to Central Government in such a manner as may be prescribed and the Central Government shall cause the Annual Report of Authority to be laid before each House of Parliament. Further as per Section 69, Sub-Section 3(b) of the J.J. Act 2015, the Steering Committee of CARA shall have to approve the Annual Budget, Annual Accounts and Audit Reports, as well as the Action Plan and Annual Report of the Authority.

25. Accordingly, the draft Annual Report of CARA for the year 2024-25 is placed as Appendix-G before the Steering Committee for approval please.

Decision :

26. Subject to correction of data contradictions and sensitive details, the committee approved the draft Annual Report of CARA for the year 2024-25.

Agenda No.41.06 : Approval for adoption of corrections/ amendments in Recruitment Rules, 2018 of CARA.

27. Recently, an approval has been accorded by the Hon'ble Minister, WCD for amendments in Recruitment Rules, 2018 of CARA. Copy of the said correction/ amendments is attached at Appendix-H. As per Section 69(3) of the JJ Act and Para 5.3 of the Rules & Regulation of CARA (Appendix-I), the Steering Committee is competent to adopt the same.

28. Steering Committee may please approve the same.

Decision :

29. The Committee approved the adoption of corrections/ amendments in Recruitment Rules, 2018 of CARA.

Agenda No. 41.07 : Approval of Annual Accounts for the financial year 2024-25.

30. As per Section 69(3)(b) of the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Steering Committee of CARA shall approve the Annual Accounts which has to be produced before the C&AG for audit every year. The


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Internal Audit of the books of Accounts has already been completed for the year 2024-25 by the C&AG empanelled auditor.

31. It is submitted that an amount of Rs. 30.015 crores had been approved as the RE 2024-25 by MoWCD. The breakup of the same is as follows :-

GIA (Salary)	:	Rs. 4.14 crore
GIA (General)	:	Rs. 8.11 crore
GIA (Capital Assets)	:	Rs. 17.67 crore
GIA (NER)	:	Rs. 0.095 crore

32. The details regarding the grant received and grant utilized under the above mentioned heads are as follows :-

Amount in Rupees				
Sr. No.	Head	Grant Received	Grant Utilized	Grant Unspent
1.	GIA (Salary)	4,14,00,000.00	4,14,00,000.00	-
2.	GIA (General)	8,11,00,000.00	8,11,00,000.00	-
3.	GIA (Capital Assets)	17,67,00,000.00	17,67,00,000.00	-
4.	GIA (NER)	9,50,000.00	9,50,000.00	-
	TOTAL	30,01,50,000.00	30,01,50,000.00	-

33. It is also submitted that the provision of amounting Rs.14,44,210/- and Rs.10,39,338/- has been booked in the books of accounts as Provision of Gratuity and Provision of Earned Leaves respectively on the basis of the Actuarial Valuation.

34. The Annual Accounts/Financial Statement for the year 2024-25, which was prepared and certified by the Chartered Accountant (C&AG empanelled auditor) is placed at Appendix-J for the approval of the Steering Committee of CARA and for onward submission to C&AG for SAR Audit.

Decision :

35. The Committee approved the Annual Accounts for the financial year 2024-25 subject to the detailed examination of these accounts and specific remarks/recommendations of AS (F&A), MWCD.

Agenda No. 41.08 : Approval of RE for FY 2025-26 and BE for FY 2026-27.

36. As per Rule 15.1 of of Rules & Regulations of CARA 2018, in the month of September every year, the Member Secretary & CEO shall send the Budget Estimate for the ensuing financial year before the Steering Committee

Accordingly, the proposal for RE 2025-26 and BE 2026-27, which has already been submitted to the Ministry, are tabulated below for approval :-

(Rs. in Crore)		
BE 2025-26	Proposed RE 2025-26	Proposed BE 2026-27
14.49	31.45	22.95

37. The proposal for RE 2025-26 and BE 2026-27, which has already been submitted to the Ministry is placed at Appendix-K.

Decision :

38. The Committee directed CARA to re-check the figures with regard to utilisation certificates submitted to the Ministry.

Agenda No. 41.09 : Any other item with the permission of Chair.

39. The Committee was informed by Dr. Jyoti Dogra Sood that she is in receipt of a PMO study on revision of HAMA Act, 1956 which could be shared with CARA. MS&CEO, CARA requested the member to share the study report with CARA.

40. Ms. Madhurika Jain suggested that CARA may consider cases of such PAPs who are facing difficult circumstances, such as the demise of their only child, who are willing to adopt older and hard-to-place children but exceed the prescribed composite age limit, by exercising the powers of the Relaxation Committee of the Authority under Regulation 63 of the Adoption Regulations, 2022, on a case-to-case basis. During the deliberations, Dr. Jyoti Dogra Sood also referred to her positive opinion already conveyed to CARA in such cases subject to fulfilment of other eligibility criterion. It was observed that the Relaxation Committee of the authority may be expanded beyond three members as mentioned under Regulation 63 of the Adoption Regulations, 2022.

41. It was noted that the CARA Helpdesk need to be revamped and more options may be explored in line with other call centres operating in and catering to similar Government sectors, for real-time resolution of grievances. It was further stated that the grievance redressal system template approved/ used by Cabinet Secretariat can be explored.

42. Sh. Rakesh Kathuria suggested that PAPs who do not have any child can be given priority in the system over those PAPs who have a child. He further submitted a list of suggestions to streamline the functioning of adoption framework.

43. The meeting was concluded with the vote of thanks to all the participants.

Annexure

List of participants in the Forty-First (41st) Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) was held on 14th January, 2026 (Wednesday) at 03:00 p.m. in the Conference Hall of MWCD, Room No. - 602, 6th Floor, A-Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

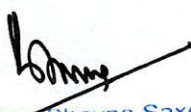
1. Sh. Anil Malik, Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – Chairperson (Ex-officio).
2. Sh. Ajeet Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – Member (Ex-officio).
3. Sh. Chandresh Kumar Yadav, Secretary, Women Empowerment & Child Development, Government of Uttarakhand, Uttarakhand Secretariat, 4, Subash Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand - 248001 [Representing State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), Uttarakhand] – Member (through VC mode).
4. Sh. Dinesh Mishra, Superintendent, Rajkiya Bal Sanrakshan Ashram, 10/3, Murai Mollaha, Chhavani, Indore, Madhya Pradesh - 452001 [Representing Government run Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA)] – Member (through VC mode).
5. Sh. Rakesh Kathuria, Joint Secretary, Sewa Bharti (Unit-II), B-2/2, Mianwali Nagar, Rohtak Road, New Delhi - 110087 [Representing NGO run Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA)] – Member.
6. Ms. Madhurika Jain, 6B/6, Sirifort Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi – 110049 [Representing Adoptive Parent] – Member (through VC mode).
7. Ms. Meghaa Varma Mahindro, M-197, 3rd Floor, Greater Kailash - II, New Delhi - 110048 [Representing Adoptee] – Member (through VC mode).
8. Dr. Jyoti Dogra Sood, Professor of Law, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi, Chhatra Marg, Art Faculty, University Enclave, Delhi – 110007 [Representing Advocate/Professor] – Member (through VC mode).
9. Ms. Bhavna Saxena, Member Secretary & Chief Executive Officer, Central Adoption Resource Authority, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, West Block VIII, Wing IV, 1st Floor, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110066 – Member Secretary (Ex-officio).

Special Invitee(s) :

1. Sh. Rajneesh Mohan Singh, Director (CW-III), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi.
2. Sh. Ashok Kumar Verma, Under Secretary (CW-III), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
3. Sh. Chandkiran Chhoker, Joint Director (IT), National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

Officer(s) of CARA :

1. Ms. Pushpa Rawat, Director (Programme), CARA.
2. Dr. (Ms.) Shashi Bala, Joint Director, CARA.
3. Ms. Richa Ojha, Deputy Director, CARA.
4. Ms. Poonam Sharma, Deputy Director, CARA.
5. Sh. Sachin Kumar Gupta, IFO, CARA.
6. Sh. Nandresh Nigam, Advisor (ID Cell), CARA.
7. Ms. Himani Nautiyal, Advisor (ID Cell), CARA.


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