

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

Minutes of the 39th Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA).

The 39th Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) chaired by Shri Anil Malik, Secretary, MWCD and Chairperson of the Steering Committee was held on 06th January, 2025 (Monday) at 04:00 pm in the Conference Hall of MWCD, Room No. 602, 6th Floor, A-Wing, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

2. The Chairperson, Member Secretary and other Committee Members were physically present. Four members 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 39th Meeting of the Committee.
4. The Action Taken Report on the Decisions on the Agenda Items of the 38th meeting placed at Appendix-A was discussed and approved. It was suggested that steps may be taken to increase the tenure of Child Welfare Committee from 3 years to 5 years.

AGENDA ITEMS AND DECISIONS

PROGRAMME & POLICY MATTERS :

Agenda No. 39.01 : Identification of children.

5. After brief introduction with the members, CEO, CARA raised the issue related to identification of children and the activities taken up by the identification cell set up at CARA. PowerPoint Presentation was shared with all the participants.
6. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1003/2021 has given directions vide order dated 20/11/2023 particularly for identification of children in CCIs in five categories i.e. Orphan, Abandoned, Surrendered, No Visitation and Unfit Guardian/Parents as well as determination of their legal status. In compliance with the above order the following communications were issued to the states/UTs –


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- D.O. letter dated 01/12/2023 to Chief Secretaries/Administrators of the States and UTs regarding various directions of the court including identification of children languishing in CCIs identification of Children in five categories (Orphaned Abandoned, Surrendered, No Visitation, Unfit Guardian /Parents).
- D.O. letter dated 27/03/2024 issued to Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of WCD/SW of all States/UTs.
- Letter dated 29/05/2024 issued to District Magistrates for identification & LFA status of Children.
- D.O. letter dated 19/07/2024 issued to Principal Secretaries for identification of children, filling up of vacant positions and setting up of SAAs, adherence to timelines, expeditious LFA process.
- D.O. letter dated 10/08/2024 issued to Chief Secretaries of States/UTs regarding expeditious Legally Free for Adoption (LFA) process.
- D.O. letter dated 05/09/2024 issued to Administrative Secretaries of States/UTs regarding expeditious Legally Free for Adoption (LFA) process.
- Letter dated 04/11/2024 issued to DMs regarding Legally Free for Adoption.

7. An Identification Cell has been set up at CARA with 16 personnel (Advisors – 2, Professionals – 06, Executive Assistant – 02, DEO – 06) and started functioning since July 2024, primarily with the following objectives:

- to ensure registration of all children less than 18 years of age in CCIs who are falling in five categories on CARINGS.
- to carry out regular monitoring & evaluation of database of children.
- to coordinate with district level authorities to determine legal status of children in timelines and addressing delays.
- to ensure data updation on CARINGS by state and district level authorities regarding stakeholders as well as children's profile.

8. An exhaustive exercise and rigorous monitoring by Identification Cell is being carried out in coordination with State & District Level Authorities to identify children in CCIs in five categories, their registration on CARINGS portal and to review all children by concerned Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) for their restoration, rehabilitation and issuance of Legally Free for Adoption (LFA) certificates in such cases where there are no claimants.

9. The data on CARINGS is given below :-

Stakeholders			
	Before (as on 01.04.2024)	After (as on 20.12.2024)	Achievement
Specialized Adoption Agencies (SAAs)			
Establishment of SAAs	495	698	(+) 203



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and their registration on CARINGS			
No. of districts covered by SAA	390	588	(+) 198
Other Stakeholders on CARINGS portal			
Child Welfare Committee (CWCs)	480	665	(+) 185
District Child Protection Units (DCPUs)	750	756	(+) 6
Chief Medical Officers (CMOs)	594	679	(+) 85
Child Care Institutions (CCIs)	6150	5198	(-) 952*

**It was observed that many CCIs were closed in recent years. Therefore, through regular follow-ups stakeholders were prompted to update CCI/ children residing in CCIs details on CARINGS. This exercise helped in providing correct representation of CCI as well as children pending for action.*

(2)	Children	2024-25 (up to 20.12.2024)
	Children available in five categories	13861 (O-2453, A- 3621, S-2034, NV-2207, UG-3546)
	Children declared legally free (LFA), (OAS Children)	2504 (Normal-2193, Special Needs-311)

(3)	Adoption Statistics (2024-25 as on 20.12.2024)				
	In-country		Inter-country		Total
	OAS Children (RI)	2243	OAS Children (OCI)	57	
	OAS Children (NRI)	36	OAS Children (Foreign)	160	
	Relative Adoption (RI)	378	Relative Adoption (NRI/OCI)	21	
	Step Adoption (RI)	193	HAMA (NRI/OCI)	27	
	Foster Adoption (RI)	22	Other cases	3	
	Total	2872	Total	268	3140

(4)	Cleansing of data of Children (2024-25)	
	Category	Total
	18 years +	13008
	Transferred to another SAA/CCI	2220
	Restored with family	2862
	Runaway	8
	Deceased	73
	Double/multiple registration (Hide)	60
	Total	18231



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(5) Outreach/Review Meetings with CWCs, DCPUs, SAAs/CCIs				
States / UTs	Total no. of Districts	No. of Districts covered		
		By Physical	By Virtual	Total
35	767	32	373	405

10. This is for the information of the Steering Committee.

Decision :

11. Noted. It was directed to send a D.O. letter to States/UTs *at least twice a year from CARA*, informing about the pendency and other relevant issues on adoption to all the States/UTs so that they can focus on the vital issues to increase the number of adoptions in the country.

Agenda 39.02 : Refund of Adoption Fees in Specific Cases.

12. CEO, CARA raised the issue related to refund of adoption fees in specific cases. A brief discussion was held by members.

Background

13. Under the Adoption Regulations, 2022, there is no clear provision to refund adoption fee, once parents return children to the agency/CCI for various reasons. Lack of clarity leads to confusion among stakeholders and in certain cases grievances are registered.

14. Proposal of refund of adoption fee depending on various situations is placed here below :-

Category	Situation	Conditions for Refund	Proposal
1.	Disruption Cases : Adoption ends prior to issue of Adoption Order	Child is responsible for disruption. Parents are responsible for disruption.	In first condition, fee to be refunded. In second condition, fee not to be refunded.
2.	Dissolution Cases : Adoption ends after the adoption order is issued.	Irrespective of issues either at child's or parent's end.	Refund of fee may not be considered.
3.	Special Needs Cases : Parents have encountered some medical issues in child either during PAFC or post-adoption.	PAPs registered for a normal child.	Adoption fee may be refunded once certified by CMO

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4.	Miscellaneous Cases : Situations caused by errors or lapses by stakeholders or technical glitches.	MER is not updated Child is deceased during PAFC Technical Glitches	Refund the fees after case assessment
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15. The Committee opined that the issue required stakeholder consultations before a decision can be taken.

Decision :

16. Noted. It was decided that a Committee chaired by CEO, CARA may decide the matter on case to case basis. CEO CARA may finalise the composition of the Committee.

Agenda No. 39.03 : Instituting award for promoting adoption in the country.

17. All members emphasised that there is a lot of scope to promote adoption in the country and accordingly, CARA should take up initiatives. PowerPoint Presentation was shared with all the participants.

18. The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has the potential to significantly improve India's adoption process. To achieve this, CARA could adopt several strategies, including strengthening identification and assessment of children, promoting family-based care models, encouraging adoption of special needs and older children, building capacity, leveraging technology, policy advocacy and strengthening post-adoption support. These strategies would include robust monitoring and data management, promoting family-based care models, enhancing the foster-to-adopt pathway, and promoting family-based care models. By implementing these strategies, CARA can create a child-centric, transparent, and equitable adoption system that transforms the lives of vulnerable children.

19. Instituting award in certain categories to stakeholders working in adoption field will incentivize promotion of Legal adoption in the Country.

20. The process of identifying the awardees, parameters of evaluation and categories are under process.

21. The same is placed for approval in-principle.

Decision :

22. Approved in Principle. The Committee agreed to provide only recognition and a certificate and no financial rewards to the winners.



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Agenda No. 39.04 : Having a central registry for all adoptions under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA), 1956.

23. After brief introduction with the members on HAMA related issues, CEO, CARA spoke about the legislations in force i.e. JJ Act and HAMA, for adoption and related matters.

24. Section 56 (3) of the JJ Act 2015 (as amended in 2021) mandates that “nothing in this Act shall apply to adoption of children made under provisions of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA), 1956. Further, Section 64 of the JJ Act, 2015 (as amended in 2021) provides that “Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, information regarding all adoption orders issued by the concerned District Magistrate, shall be forwarded to Authority on monthly basis in the manner as provided in the adoption regulations framed by the Authority, so as to enable Authority to maintain the data on adoption.”

25. While both HAMA and the JJ Act address adoption, they operate independently of each other and cater to different contexts and populations. The prevalence of open and direct adoptions under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956 (HAMA) is indeed common, especially between known couples, whether they are relatives or otherwise. While these adoptions may not require extensive formalities, they can lead to legal complications later particularly concerning property rights or succession rights within the family. Challenges often arise when such adoptions are contested in court, especially if there are no registered documents to substantiate the adoption.

26. It may be noted that CARA had recommended inter-alia that only relatives may be allowed to adopt under HAMA to UCC committee in the year 2023. Copy of same is attached at Appendix-B.

27. CARA has collected information on number of adoptions completed under the HAMA from States. It has been observed that a significant number of adoptions are being finalised under HAMA. As far as data on domestic adoptions undertaken under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) is concerned, total 20403 (2021-2023) adoptions have been completed through registered deeds during the three years, as per data received from States/UTs. In fact, large number of adoptions under HAMA are not registered.

28. A central registry for all adoptions under the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) could prevent undocumented adoptions, ensure child welfare, ensure transparency and accountability and aid in better planning & also arrest illegal adoptions.

29. In order to develop a Plan of Action in the matter, it is proposed to have an inter- ministerial consultation with Ministry of Law & Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs & Ministry of Women & Child Development.



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30. The same is placed for in principle approval.

Decision :

31. Deferred. HAMA is not within the purview of MWCD as the Act is allocated to M/o Law & Justice as per Allocation of Business Rules. It was suggested *that* CARA may further examine the matter after holding discussions with DOLA. AS(TG) will lead the process.

ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL MATTERS :

Agenda No. 39.05 : Extension of existing medical facilities to the retired officials of CARA and their dependents.

32. CEO, CARA briefed the members about the medical facilities available at CARA and the grievances of the staff particularly for non-eligibility of retired persons.

33. The Steering Committee in its 38th meeting (Agenda No. 38.06 refers) decided that CARA will submit information from five/six Central Statutory/ Autonomous Bodies regarding available medical facilities extended to their serving as well as retired employees. The case will be re-examined accordingly and resubmitted before the committee.

34. As per the decision, CARA sent the request letters to eleven organisations through email as well as speed post for providing information regarding existing medical facilities in the office for regular (serving as well as retired) officials including their dependents. Copies of letters addressed to other organisations are placed at Appendix-C. In response, they have received replies from six organisations. Details & copies of letters are placed at Appendix-D.

35. CARA has 37 sanctioned posts, out of which 22 officials (both regular and deputationists) are in position and efforts for filling up the vacant posts are under process and so far 09 officials have retired.

36. Ministry has taken the initiative for providing CGHS facilities to the regular and retired employees of CARA (DO letter dated 28/02/2024 issued by former Secretary, MWCD to Secretary, MHFW and MWCD's letter dated 02/07/2024 issued by Under Secretary, CW-III, MWCD to Secretary, MHFW). Recently, one more DO letter dated 22/08/2024 was issued by Secretary, MWCD to Secretary, MHFW. Copy of letter is placed at Appendix-E. For this, so far no response has been received by the Ministry.

37. Keeping in view of the above, it is proposed that we may extend the existing medical facility to the retired officials of CARA including their dependents on reimbursement basis till such time CGHS facilities get approved and made available for the regular as well as retired employees of



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CARA. The budget requirements would be met from regular budget and no additional budget is required.

38. Steering Committee was requested to approve the existing medical facilities to be extended to the retired officials of CARA including their dependents, as an interim measure.

Decision :

39. Deferred. Matter to be processed on file for approval of the Ministry and subsequently it should be placed for approval of Steering Committee in accordance with the provisions of the Section 69(3)(c) of the JJ Act, 2015.

Agenda No. 39.06 : Considering travelling allowances in respect of CARINGS staff for official tours.

40. CEO, CARA raised the issue related to travelling allowances in respect of CARINGS staff for official tours. She informed that while terms and conditions related to travelling have been approved for other professional staff, the CARINGS staff have been left out.

41. The staffs of above team need to travel out of Delhi for imparting trainings to stakeholders of CARA as resource persons. While CARINGS is being revamped along with Mission Vatsalya, a lot of capacity building activities would be required for stakeholders. It may be mentioned that while making proposal for above team the due allowances could not be mentioned eventually in the guidelines as well as in GeM bid. It becomes hard to define their eligibility when they need to travel as resource person and this issue comes before office as an undesirable challenge.

42. In this regard, ToR of different Government bodies like NITI Aayog and MoHFW have been examined and found that such staff are eligible for facilities @ Pay Level 6. Accordingly, Developers/Software personnel engaged against CARINGS may be considered travel and other facilities at par with Pay Level 6.

Decision :

43. Deferred. Matter to be processed on file for approval of the Ministry.

Agenda No. 39.07 : Establishing of Secretariat of MS&CEO, CARA [a Joint Secretary (Pay Level : 14) Level Officer], creation of one post of Principal Private Secretary, Gr. A (Pay Level : 10), one post of Steno Grade "D", Group C (Pay Level : 04) and two posts of MTS (Pay level : 01).

44. CARA has one sanctioned post of MS&CEO CARA in pay level : 14 who functions as HOD of CARA. Right from issuance of Recruitment Rules of CARA 2018, the post of MS & CEO CARA is functional. Since 2018 none in the regular pay level : 14 has operated as CEO CARA. Ms. Bhawna Saxena,


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(IPS 1996) has taken over as MS & CEO CARA, who is a regular JS Level officer in pay level 14. CARA has no back up of competent staff in its sanction strength to officiate as personal staff of CEO CARA. An independent and competent secretariat as per the protocol of the setting up of secretariat of a JS level officer is required. Steering Committee was therefore requested to approve in principal the creation of posts as proposed below :-

Secretariat of the office of CEO, CARA	Proposed for Creation as per Standard Composition of Secretariat of JS Level officer in MWCD	Sanction of Personal staff for O/O JS and equivalent as per DoPT OM No. 15/1/2014-CS.II(A)(ii) dated 12/09/2017 (Appendix-F)
Joint Secretary, Pay Level : 14	PPS : 01 (Group A Pay Level : 10) Steno Grade "D" : 01 (Group C Pay Level:04) MTS : 02 (Group C Pay Level : 01) (Rtd. Govt. official may be hired till such time sanction and appointment is made)	PPS : 01 (Group A Pay) PS : 01 (Group A Pay) Steno Grade D : 01 (Group C)

Decision :

45. Approved in Principle. It was decided that file may be initiated by CARA for creation of the post of PPS and Steno and sent to the MWCD at an early date. However, till such time, retired Government official may be hired on short term vacancy as per the guidelines of DOPT and DOE. (Refer 8.2 (f) of Rules and Regulation of CARA 2018). Permanent incumbent (PS) who is on deputation shall be recalled immediately.

Agenda No. 39.08 : Approval of draft Annual Report of CARA for the year 2023-24.

46. The draft Annual Report comprising Audit Report and Annual Accounts of CARA for the year 2023-24 was placed before the committee.

47. As per Section 69, Sub-Section 3(b) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (as amended in 2021), the Steering Committee of CARA may approve the Annual Budget, Annual Accounts, and Audit Reports, as well as the Action Plan and Annual Report of the Authority.

48. Moreover, the Annual Accounts of CARA for the year 2023-24 have already been approved by the Steering Committee in its 38th Meeting held on 31/07/2023 (Agenda No. 38.09 refers).



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Decision :

49. Draft Annual Report was Approved. Members were requested to provide suggestions (if any) till 13th January 2025 which may be incorporated in the Annual Report. However, it was agreed that if no remarks/ suggestions were received by 13th January 2025, the draft annual report of CARA 2023-2024 would be treated as approved and adopted by the Steering Committee.

Agenda No. 39.10 : Approval of RE for FY 2024-25 and BE for FY 2025-26.

51. 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 2024-25 and BE 2025-26, which has already been submitted to the Ministry, are tabulated below for approval :-

(Rs. in Crore)		
BE 2024-25	Proposed RE 2024-25	Proposed BE 2025-26
11.40	33.76	25.85

52. The proposal for RE 2024-25 and BE 2025-26, which has already been submitted to the Ministry is placed at Appendix-H.

Decision :

53. Approved.



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List of participants in the Thirty-Ninth (39th) Meeting of the Steering Committee of Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) was held on 06th January, 2025 (Monday) at 04:00 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. Nitishwar Kumar, Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – Member (Ex-officio).
3. Ms. Preeti Pant, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – Member (Ex-officio).
4. 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).
5. Sh. Dinesh Mishra, Superintendent, Rajkiya Bal Sanrakshan Aashram, 10/3, Murai Mollaha, Chhavani, Indore, Madhya Pradesh - 452001 [Representing Government run Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA)] – Member (through VC mode).
6. Dr. Sudha Sehgal, Sewa Bharti (Unit-II), B-2/2, Mianwali Nagar, Rohtak Road, New Delhi - 110087 [Representing NGO run Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA)] – Member.
7. Ms. Madhurika Jain, 6B/6, Sirifort Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi – 110049 [Representing Adoptive Parent] – Member.
8. Ms. Meghaa Varma Mahindro, M-197, 3rd Floor, Greater Kailash - II, New Delhi - 110048 [Representing Adoptee] – Member. (through VC mode).
9. 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).
10. 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. Ms. Kamini Kapil, Senior Director, National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
2. Sh. Navendra Singh, Director (CW-II), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
3. Sh. S.B Pandey, Deputy Secretary (CW-III), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
4. Sh. Chandkiran Chhoker, Joint Director (IT), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

Officer(s) of CARA :

1. Dr. Jagannath Pati, Director (Programme), CARA.
2. Dr. Shashi Bala, Joint Director, CARA
3. Ms. Richa Ojha, Deputy Director, CARA.
4. Sh. Ram Saran, IFO, CARA.
5. Sh. Nandresh Nigam, Advisor (Identification Cell), CARA.
6. Ms. Ritu Chawla, Data Analyst, CARA.



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