

Report on the Pre-adoption Workshop (In collaboration with SARA, WB)

Jointly organized by Indian Society for Sponsorship and Adoption (ISSA) and Atmaja: The Association of Adoptive Parents On 26 february, 2022, at ICMARD Building, Scheme-VIII (M, Block- 14/2, Bidhannagar Rd, Ultadanga, Kolkata, West Bengal 700067

Twelve pre-adoptive parents (PAPs) attended the workshop.

The day's proceedings began at around 11:10 AM with welcome address by Soumeta Medhora (ISSA), Supriya Sarkar (SARA) and Swapan Naskar (Atmaja) followed by a session on introduction of the participants and the resource persons. Then, Gautam Gupta gave an excellent start-off by outlining the differences between having biological child and child by adoption and how two converge.

The first discussion meeting in the morning session, led by Nilanjana Gupta, described the desire for 'parenthood' overcoming the hesitation and apprehension related to adoption. This followed the plan with one Atmaja representative meeting with each couple to listen to them and understand their preparedness for adoption. The narration by Subir Mukherjee, Sheemantika Nag, Dipankar Patra, Subha Mukhopadhyay and P K Chattopadhyay on their experience, understanding and approach to create the bonding seemed to have moved the participants. Soumeta Medhora gave detailed description on the procedural and legal steps, while Subir Banerjee pointed out the psychological, medical and nutritional concerns and needs. A play-act session arranged by the ISSA-SARA team enacted a mock adoption meeting, to be held after the referral and before adoption is approved, enthralled all present and has been much appreciated. Then the PAPs were delighted to meet one of our children, Ahana Pritha Nag, who also spoke on their experience. Finally, Swapan Naskar discussed the issue of disclosure. The open forum, led by Sheemantika Nag and Subir Mukherjee, basically collected individual opinions and feedbacks from the participants with more spontaneous discussion.

The end had to come at around 5:00 PM with closing remarks by Soumeta Medhora and Swapan Naskar and thanks to each other.

According to the feedback, all the participants seemed to have enjoyed and benefitted from the workshop; they also appreciated the need of such workshop. Most of them felt that the organization of the workshop was good pointing out that the interactive sessions were most helpful while appreciating the sharing of experience by the adoptive parents. They also felt positively about the sessions on procedural/legal steps, medical concerns and disclosure. Special mention for the play-act session and the meeting with the adoptee was the highlight of almost all the feedback. Some of them remarked that such meetings may be organized more often.

Finally, we like to express our sincere thanks to SARA for supporting this event and looking towards its continuity in future.