

Report on the Pre-adoption Workshop held on 14 March 2020

Venue: Nabajeevan, P41 Metropolitan Co-operative Housing Society, Kolkata 700105

Jointly organized by
Indian Society for Sponsorship and Adoption (ISSA)
and
ATMAJA: The Association of Adoptive Parents

Nine pre-adoptive parents (PAPs) attended the workshop. In order to meet the expenses, a nominal fee of Rs. 500.00 per PAP was charged. The registration folder contained the following items: (1) Welcome letter from Atmaja, (2) Schedule of the day, (3) Information sheet, (4) Questionnaire, (5) An article on disclosure, (6) Medical information sheet, (7) Feedback form and (8) Pad and pen.

The day's proceedings began at 11:30 AM with a warm-up game and followed according to the schedule with nice introduction by Soumeta Medhora and Swapan Naskar. Then, Gautam Gupta gave an excellent start-off by describing adoption as a problem, turned into joy and then a special challenge of parenthood. The first discussion meeting in the morning session, led by Nilanjana Gupta, considered difficulties faced for not having a child to highlight 'role deficiency' leading to desire for 'parenthood', not so much for 'giving birth'. The second one followed the plan with one Atmaja representative sitting with each couple to listen to them and understand their preparedness for adoption. The narration by Subir Mukherjee, Sanjay Sikdar, Piya Naskar and Prasun Ganguly 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 with help from Supriya Sarkar from the Directorate of Child Rights and Trafficking, while Subir Banerjee pointed out the medical and nutritional concerns and needs. Another discussion session formed two groups for the ladies and the gentlemen separately with an attempt to understand the gender-specific issues and concerns. Finally, Swapan Naskar discussed the issue of disclosure. The open forum basically collected individual feedbacks with more spontaneous discussion. The end had to come at around 5:30 PM with closing remarks by Soumeta Medhora and Swapan Naskar and thanks to each other.

According to their entries in the feedback form, all the participants seemed to have enjoyed and benefited from the workshop; they also appreciated the need of such workshop. Most of them felt that the organisation 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. All of them remarked that more time (possibly two days) could be devoted to such workshop, while some of them felt that such workshop should be arranged for their parents and other family members also.