

## India Update for October, 2016

During September, we had one family travel to India to bring their new daughter home and are doing great. This now leaves us with 3 families that are still in the court process. One family was required by the judge to attend their court hearing but the good news is that the court order was to be issued immediately.

We recently received only one proposed match (instead of the typical 2) for a family that had been registered under the old process. We reserved this match for the family; however, the orphanage withdrew the match the following day with no explanation. This is something that CARA said is out of their control so the family will remain at the top of the list for a new match soon.

Last month, I attended the National Council for Adoption Conference (NCFA) where Barker and a few other agencies hosted Mr. Deepak Kumar, who is the new CEO of CARA. Mr. Kumar was very open to all of our questions and suggestions.

Some items discussed were:

- Upcoming new guidelines should be in place very soon. There doesn't seem to be major changes, but the authority of CARA is to increase to oversee the entire process of the adoptions.
- There should be an additional waiting child page added to the website that will show profiles of children ages 5 and up with minor to moderate needs and this will be visible to agencies for matching with potential families. You can learn more about the new waiting child page here: [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160928/jsp/frontpage/story\\_110647.jsp#.WBItPyOrKM9](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1160928/jsp/frontpage/story_110647.jsp#.WBItPyOrKM9)
- All matching of children is done by the computer. Mr. Kumar acknowledged that there are many more orphans than what are being reflected in the database. He said this is due to orphanages not obtaining licenses and/or not entering children into the database. We shared our experiences with information on the children not being complete and being inaccurate and he agreed that CARA staff should review the files before the documents are uploaded.
- There is no way for the computer system to show where a family is on the waiting list. Other agencies have shared that their referrals have slowed down in recent months, which has also been our experience. There is no longer a limit on the number of families that can be registered each month (under the old system, only 50 new registrations were allowed each month).
- The court system in India is completely separate from CARA, which limits the role and authority of CARA in the processing of these cases. CARA is intervening and assisting in the difficult cases as well as trying to educate the lawyers and judges on the adoption laws and procedures. Mr. Kumar pointed out that lawyers are often paid on a per-appearance basis so it is to their advantage to drag cases out. He suggested that agencies could insist on the SAA hiring experienced lawyers and also only paying on a per case basis, however it is not clear how we can do this in practice.

Warm regards,

Betty