

No. 1/PLCY/PG-88(7)

Government of India
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions
(Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances)

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Sardar Patel Bhawan,
Sansad Marg, New Delhi,
Dated the 1st March, 1988.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub:-Strengthening of Machinery for Redressal of Public Grievances.

The undersigned is directed to state that the Government has been considering for some time a design to strengthen the machinery for internal grievances redressal in order to make the administration more responsive to the needs of the people. After careful consideration, the President is pleased to decide that the internal Grievance Redressal Machinery in each Ministry/Department/Public Sector Undertaking/Autonomous Organisations may be set up as under:-

I. Meetingless Day

(i) Every Wednesday of the week shall be observed as a meetingless day in the Central Secretariat. Three hours (1000 hrs. to 1300 hrs.) on this day may be set apart for grievance redressal when all officers of the level of Deputy Secretary and above will remain in their offices and will receive and hear public grievances. No inter-ministerial meetings will be scheduled on a Wednesday. However, intra-ministerial meetings, which cannot be postponed, may be fixed on Wednesday after 1300 hrs.

(ii) All Ministries/Departments may also designate one day of the week as a meetingless day for their Subordinate/Attached/Field offices keeping in view their local requirements. Three hours on that day may be earmarked for receiving and hearing public grievances.

(iii) These instructions will be invariably observed except in cases where Parliamentary business requires an officer to be away from his office on Wednesday between 1000 hrs. to 1300 hrs. or in cases where urgent internal meetings cannot be delayed. In case an officer is required to be away from his office unavoidably during these hours, he may set apart three hours at any other time on Wednesday. The Secretary of the Ministry/Department may be apprised of the change in the schedule as soon as possible.

II. Integration of Grievance Redressal System into the decision-making process.

(i) Officers in each Ministry/Department at each level should deal with every matter in a fair objective and just manner.

(ii) The meetingless day has been prescribed to enable each officer to function as his own grievance redress agent. Grievance can be classified into two categories.

- (a) in the case of a grievance arising out of delay in decision or faulty implementation of any policy;
and
- (b) a systemic grievance arising out of the policy itself requiring modification of the policy.

A careful analysis and appreciation of the grievances should, therefore, not only lead to identifying problem-areas but also enable integration of the redressal of the grievance into the process of decision making policy formulation.

III. Grievance Officer

(i) Each Ministry/Department/Public Sector Undertaking/Autonomous Organisation may designate a full time Grievance Officer, known as the Director of Grievances. This Officer may be of the rank of not less than a Director/Deputy Secretary (or equivalent) and should be selected on the basis of a careful assessment of his aptitude and suitability for the job.

(ii) The Director of Grievances will be actively involved in the process of dealing with grievances.

Each Ministry/Department/Public Sector Undertaking/Autonomous Organisation may formulate a job-chart for the Director of Grievances. (A suggested job-chart is placed at Annexure)

(iii) The Director of Grievances will be vested with powers to call for files/papers connected with grievances pending for more than three months and to take a decision thereon with the approval of the Secretary of the Ministry/Department or Head of the Department/Organisation. He may also communicate the final decision to the aggrieved party.

IV. Staffing and Control

(i) The Director of Grievances and his staff may be selected out of the existing staff strength of the Ministry/Department through re-deployment. No new posts shall be created for setting up the Grievances Cell in any Ministry/Department.

(ii) The Director of Grievances shall report directly to the Secretary/Head of the Organisation. His relationship with the line-functionaries may be clearly defined. The procedures necessary for his effective performance may also be clearly indicated.

V. These instructions will come into force with effect from Wednesday, the 2nd March, 1988. All Ministries/ Departments are requested to implement these decisions and report in this regard to this Department latest by 15th March, 1988.

Hindi version of this Office Memorandum follows.

The receipt of this memorandum may kindly be acknowledged.

Sd/-
(Avinash Kumar)
Director

Specimen job-description for the Director of Grievances in Ministries/Departments/Organisations

1. Job Title: Director of Grievances
2. Responsible to: Secretary/Head of the Organisation:
3. Main activities: *Decision making:* The Director of Grievances will take decisions on grievances which are pending for more than three months. Aggrieved parties who are not satisfied with redressal in subordinate/attached formation can approach Director of Grievances for a decision. In consultation with Secretary/Head of the Organisation, Director of Grievances can call for files/papers, if he feels so justified. All decisions on grievances will be taken after obtaining the approval of Secretary of the Ministry/Department or Head of the Organisation to whom Director of Grievances is responsible.

Management Information System: He will set up Management Information System (MIS) and evolve procedures which are necessary for monitoring the public grievances and their redressal. The MIS should be comprehensive and capable of generating meaningful data over a period of time.

Review and analysis: On the basis of the data made available to him through the MIS, the Director will identify areas of recurring grievances, analyse underlying cases, suggest commissioning of appropriate studies, where necessary, for systemic/procedural corrections, cause review of policies/procedures which are identified as sources of grievances. He should regularly inspect grievance machinery in attached/subordinate formations and undertake random sampling with a view to evaluating the quality of disposal of the grievances. He will prepare an annual report which would inter-alia, highlight responsiveness and accountability achieved at all levels.

Note: This is only general description of job chart. The Ministries/Department/Organisation will spell out a detailed job description as well as powers and responsibilities of the Director of Grievances. The procedure necessary for flow of information and interaction between the Director of Grievances and line functionaries should also be clearly indicated.

NO. 9/PLCY/PG-88(14)
Government of India
Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

Sardar Patel Bhavan, Sansad Marg,
New Delhi-110 001,
dated 27-6-88

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject:—Issue of Booklets/Pamphlets about facilities available for public.

The undersigned is directed to refer to this Department's Office Memorandum of even number dated 17.10.1985 (copy enclosed for ready reference) on the above subject and to say that there has not been adequate response from the Ministries about the issue of booklets/pamphlets, about the facilities available for the public and the procedure and manner as to how to obtain such facilities available with them or the organizations under them. It will be appreciated that if any facility/ies is/are available with the Ministry or an organization under it, it will be helpful to publish the details perhaps in the form of a booklet/pamphlet so that the public are properly informed about the available facilities and procedures about obtaining them and ensure that public approach the correct authority and follow the appropriate procedure. It is expected that such information with the public will minimize grievances from the public in their dealings with Government.

2. It is, therefore, requested that all Ministries/Departments may please identify the facilities available for public under them directly or under any organization under their control and make arrangements for publicity for the information to the public, outlining the details as well as the procedures to obtain such facilities. If a booklet/pamphlet has already been issued on any facility, two copies of the same may kindly be made available to this Department. It is further requested that information on the subject may please be furnished to this Department in the enclosed proforma.

Sd/-
(Ravi Kant Chopra)
Under Secretary to the Government of India

To
All Ministries/Departments

PROFORMA

Facility available for the public	Organisation under which this facility is available	Whether any booklet has been issued on the same	If not, when such booklet/pamphlet will be issued	If already issued year in which issued and whether it is proposed to update the same say after 3 yrs.	Remarks
1.					
2.					
3.					

NO. 39473/9 PLCY/PG-88(7)
Government of India
Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

Sardar Patel Bhavan, Sansad Marg,
New Delhi-110 001
Dated: the 20th September, 1988

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject:—Strengthening of Machinery for Redressal of Public Grievances.

The undersigned is directed to refer to this Department's OM of even number dated 1st March 1988 on the subject mentioned above and to state in addition to the appointment of Director of Grievances in the Ministries/Departments, all Ministries/Departments have to ensure that so far as the subordinate offices, zonal, circle offices, lower formation, public sector undertaking, autonomous bodies functioning under them are concerned, a suitable officer of an appropriate rank from amongst the officers of the concerned office should be designated as Grievance Officer in every such office whom any member of the public could approach for redressal of their grievances in respect of that office. The location of the Grievance Officer i.e. Room No. etc. should be displayed prominently in such offices so that public are made fully aware of the same.

2. As regards the question of handling of employees' grievances by Director of Grievances in a Ministry/ Department, it may be clarified that if the officer designated as Director of Grievance also happens to be an officer working in the Personnel/Administration Division, there could be no objection to his handling employees grievances as well. However, if he is not an officer working in the Administration/Personnel Division, it will not be desirable to entrust the work of redressal of employees' grievances to him.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of the O.M.

Sd/-
(Ravi Kant Chopra)
Under Secretary to the Government of India

To

All Ministries/Departments

Sardar Patel Bhavan,
Sansad Marg, New Delhi
Dated: 29th November, 1988

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject:— Need to tone up the functioning of Government Offices-Prompt Redressal of Public Grievances.

It has been observed that while interacting with the Ministries/Departments, their attached and subordinate offices and particularly the field offices, the common man faces various type of difficulties, which perhaps can be avoided by taking suitable remedial measures. Some of these difficulties are indicated below:-

1. The head of office and other officers are not available even on the day fixed for meeting the public on the plea of other urgent work.
2. Officers do not adhere to office timings and are not available during the working hours and even at the appointed time when an appointment has already been fixed. Sometimes even PAs are not aware as to when the officers will be available with the result that visitors have to wait indefinitely causing them much inconvenience.
3. Personal staff and junior officials keep the phones busy with their personal conversation with the result that officials' phones are kept engaged and the public cannot have access to offices on telephone.
4. While performing public duties, Government servants are sometimes discourteous and, instead of functioning as public servants, they often display a show of authority.
5. There is a long time-gap in fair typing of the letters after approval by an officer with the result that the replies to applications/petitions are delayed.
6. Sometimes clear-cut decisions are not communicated to the petitioner, and whenever deficiencies in the decisions are pointed out, considerable time is taken in replying to the same by the concerned officers.
7. While rejecting the petition, the Rule(s), if any under which the same has been rejected is/are not indicated with the result that the petitioner does not know the basis of the decision and, in case of negative decision, may harbour a sense of grievance.
8. There is tendency to shield the lower officials when any complaint is made against them to higher officers.
9. Time-limits have not been fixed for action/reply on various requests received from the members of the public with the result that the common man has to wait indefinitely for action reply on his request. This often leads to a sense of grievance against the Government.

While some of the difficulties relate to inadequate supervisory control, lack of discipline in the offices and observance of procedures, a few relate to behavioural approach of the officers towards the public. It is requested that an all out effort should be made to remedy the deficiencies in working of Government offices at all levels so that there is positive improvement in functioning of Government offices and the difficulties faced by common man are mitigated and his grievances attended to promptly and sympathetically. It may be recalled that under “A Responsive Administration”—Point 20 of the Twenty point Programme, 1986, prompt and sympathetic attention to public grievances is an important ingredient.

Action taken in this regard may be intimated to this Department in due course

Sd/-
(Ravi Kant Chopra)
(Under Secretary to the Government of India)

To

All Ministries/Departments

B. G. Deshmukh

मंत्रिमंडल सचिव
CABINET SECRETARY
NEW DELHI
5th December 1988

D.O. No. 39457/39/2/87-PG

Dear Secretary,

It has been observed that often Government employees seek outside help for the redressal of their grievances relating to service matters. This is despite the fact that Rule 20 of the CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964, specifically prohibits a Government employee from bringing political or other outside influence to further his interests in respect of service matters. It is felt that recourse to outside influence is taken because sometimes Ministries/Departments/Offices are not able to attend to service matters of Government employees in time and in a manner which is just as equitable. Perhaps, there is also a feeling among Government employees that if they approach the Government through outside influence, the results might be quicker and more effective; whereas in the normal course even a just and legitimate grievance may not be always looked into with fairness and promptitude. This is probably due to the fact that in many Government offices either there is no formal institutionalized arrangement to redress the genuine grievances of the employees; or even where there is some arrangement, there is no organized system of monitoring of grievances to ensure their fair and timely redressal. It is, therefore, felt that if the Government employee is assured of fair and impartial treatment and timely action on his requests and claims in service matters, he would hardly have any need to approach any outsider. In fact, some service matters which have to be attended to by the Government offices in the normal course and which can cause lot of difficulties to the Government employees, related to normal service matters, like completion of service records, timely drawal of increment, issue of correct seniority lists, fair promotion, proper medical facilities, transfer at the end of school session, provision of residential accommodation in accordance with the approved criteria, grant of timely pensionary benefits, etc. If the administrative response for compliance with such matters is adequate and prompt, the majority of case of Government employees resorting to outside influence for furtherance of their service interests will not arise. But, apparently, it is not so in many cases.

2. Recognising the importance of the subject and the concern of the Government for ensuring maximum welfare of its employees, it is considered necessary that all Ministries/Department of the Government as well as the office under their administrative control should set up an institutionalized arrangement for dealing with the grievance of staff, sympathetically and promptly. Some of the major Department like Railways, Defence and Posts, have already made such arrangements and these arrangements are proving fairly effective. Other Ministries and Departments should also make similar arrangements.

3. Though any set up for redressal of staff grievances will, perhaps, differ from one Ministry to another, and from one office to another, keeping in view the nature, functions and size of the Government offices, it is necessary that any such redressal machinery should have certain essential features, as incorporated in the attached Annexure.

4. It is further suggested that nodal Ministries, like the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Urban Development, who look after medical facilities and allotment of accommodation for all Government employees, should establish adequate grievances redressal machinery where a Government employee can approach for redressal of his grievance about the matters which are dealt with in these Ministries.

5. I shall be grateful if action taken in the matter is intimated to me by 31st January, 1989.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(B.G. Deshmukh)

As per list attached

Encl.: as above

Essential features for setting up of Grievances Redressal Machinery for Government Employees working in Ministries/Departments/Offices of the Government of India.

1. Every Ministry/Department/Office should designate a Staff Grievances Officer (SGO) in the Ministry/Department and also in their attached and subordinate, regional/zonal offices to deal with grievances of the employees working in the respective organization. Though in small organizations, the Head of Office or any officer of a comparative status could function as Staff Grievance Officer, in a Ministry/Department an officer of the level of Deputy Secretary/Director should be entrusted with such work and designated as Director (Staff Grievances).
2. Director (Staff Grievances/Staff Grievance Officer should make himself freely available to hear the grievances personally, at least once in a week, at fixed timings. Similarly, the secretary in the Ministries/Head of Departments/Head of offices should make himself available once in a month, at fixed timings when employees could meet him in person for redress of their grievances.
3. Every grievance from the staff should be registered and if a final decision is not possible within a fortnight, an acknowledgement should be sent to the applicant along with an indication as to when he can expect a final reply.
4. SGO/Director (Staff Grievances) should be specifically charged with the work of monitoring the grievances and ensuring that timely action is taken on the same. As a matter of general rule, no grievance should pend beyond the limit of three months.
5. As far as possible, a self-speaking answer should be given while replying to the grievance submitted by a Government employee.
6. It should be the duty of every official to deal with the staff matters in a fair, impartial and speedy manner. Where Rules and Regulations have already been laid down by the Government, the same should be applied uniformly. Discretion, where permissible, should be used in a limited number of cases and in a manner which does not lead to dissatisfaction among other employees.
7. Existing arrangements pertaining to matters like completion of service documents, drawal of annual increment, preparation of Seniority Lists etc. which are necessary for promotion to higher grades should be continuously reviewed, and delays avoided so that employees do not have to undergo hardship in service matters.
8. In other service matter like transfers, postings in difficult areas, etc., clear-cut norms should be prescribed. For example, laying down a limit of 2-3 years for posting in a difficult areas, ordering routine periodical transfer only at the end of the school session and providing uniform opportunities for deputation training, etc.
9. Meeting of the Selection Committees/Departmental Promotion committee should be held regularly and a select list/approved list of officials approved for promotion prepared in advance so that when an official is transferred or retires and the vacancy is to be filled up by transfer or promotion, the same is done promptly without affecting the work or efficiency of the organization concerned. This will also ensure that opportunity of timely promotion to an official next in line is not delayed or denied which otherwise could give rise to a grievance.
10. For requests of various kinds from the staff on personnel matters, like seeking admission to join educational institutions, for grant of leave, request to leave station, advances for medical attendance/traveling allowance, festival advance for purchase of a motor-car/motor-cycle, etc. issue of

LPC, issue of 'no-objection certificate' transfer of GPF balance, transfer of service documents, etc., time limits for completion of action should be fixed within which, as far as possible, the personnel/administration section should complete the action so that the applicant does not have to waste time on unnecessary enquiries or personal visits to the concerned sections. As far as possible a week to two weeks should be the outer limit for deciding all such routine matters.

11. Nodal ministries like the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Urban Development etc., which look after the medical care and residential accommodation of all Government employees, should make specific arrangements for redressal of employees' grievances relating to medical facilities and allotment of accommodation, and designate an officer of appropriate rank as Director of Grievances (Medical Care) and Director Grievances (Residential Accommodation) who should meet Government officials and hear their grievance once in a week at fixed timings, like other Directors (Staff Grievances).

No. 9/PLCY/PG-89(7)
Government of India
Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

Sardar Patel Bhavan, Sansad Marg,
New Delhi-110 001.
Dated: 26-6-1989

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject:—Evaluation/Inspection of the Grievances Redressal Machinery in various offices.

The undersigned is directed to say that Point 20 of the Twenty-Point Programme, 1986, lays emphasis on a responsive administration. It emphasizes, inter-alia, the prompt and sympathetic attention to public grievances. It may be stated here that all the Ministries/Departments were requested to strengthen their public grievances redressal set-up vide this Departments' letter No. 9/PLCY/PG-88(7) dated 1-3-88 and it has been found that many Ministries/Departments have taken steps accordingly. With a view to ensuring that the grievance redressal machinery in the various offices etc. should be periodically evaluated/inspected, say once a year, a questionnaire has been prepared which is expected to help Ministries/Departments to undertake such evaluation/inspection. A copy of it is enclosed with the request that Ministries/Departments may make use of it.

2. It is further requested that a report on evaluation/inspection stating *inter-alia*, the number inspection carried out by the Ministry/Department/Organisation and brief results of the same may be sent to this Department at the end of the year, by the month of April.

To
All Ministries/Departments

Sd/-
(Nivedita Prantharthiharan)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

QUESTIONNAIRE*

Proforma for the evaluation of grievance redress machinery in Ministry/Department of: _____

1. A brief note on the existing grievance redress machinery i.e. the procedure for processing of grievances received from public and the details of officials/sections generally responsible for dealing with those grievances in the Ministry/Department.
2. How is the progress on grievances monitored? Give details of register/diary, if any, being maintained for the same.
3. Computerization: (If Computer facility is available)
 - (a) Which areas of processing relating to public dealings have been computerized?
 - (b) Is the disposal of public grievances being done through computer? If nopt, is there scope for computerizing the system.
4.

<i>Total No. of grievances (from all sources) during last 12 months</i>	<i>Disposed of</i>	<i>Carried forward</i>
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*Note: This Questionnaire has been subsequently modified, Refer page 69.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES

5. Follow-up the O.M. dated 1-3-1988:

(a) Has an officer been designated as Director of Grievances in the Ministry/Department? If yes, give his particulars, (Name, address, telephone no. etc.)

(b) Has the Director of Grievances been vested with powers to call for files/papers in respect of grievances pending for over 3 months and to take a decision to settle the same with the approval of the Secretary. If yes, a sample of the 3 such cases may be mentioned.

(c) Have grievance officers been designated in the offices/organizations under the control of the Ministry/Department? If yes, give their particulars.

(Name, address, telephone No. etc.

6. (a) Does the Ministry/Department and all offices under its control observe the weekly 'meetingless day' and have three hours been assigned for hearing the Public Grievances by the officers of the level of Deputy Secretary and above.

(b) If so, how many members of public, on an average, visit these officers on an assigned day for having their grievances redressed?

GENERAL

7. Please enumerate the services/activities of the Department/office involving direct interaction with the public.

8. (a) Has the Ministry/Department fixed time norms for disposal of applications/request for services/activities which bring the public in contact with the Ministry/Department? If yes, attach copy of each of such booklets/pamphlets.

9. Has the Ministry/Department issued any booklets/pamphlets to publicise the services available for these public and also to educate the citizen on how to avail of these service? If yes, attach copy of each of such booklets/pamphlets.

10. Do all applications/proformas intended for public use contain full instructions for filling in, clearly indicating all the documents required with the applications? 2/3 samples?

11. Which are the different areas of public contact where no objection certificates are needed? Enumerate and also state whether a review was made in the recent past. Whether these are absolutely necessary or can be done away with.

12. Has the Ministry/Department undertaken studies to simplify rules, regulations and procedure for reducing avoidable contact points with the public so that service could be rendered without number of the public calling at the office.

13. Identify the areas where affidavit or certificates by gazetted officers are needed from public. Has any review been made to replace these with self statements/certificates?

14. Has the Department identified areas of recurring grievances? If yes, indicate a few "grievance prone areas" and also indicate the studies undertaken thereon.

15. Any special measures taken to look into the grievances of

(i) Scheduled Caste/Tribe

(ii) Women

16. Take a sample of PG Cases from the following time frames: 1-2 months, 3-6 months, 6 months-1 year and over 1 year. Find out the different categories into which long pending cases fall and the reasons for delay in setting the issues. Cull out grievance-prone areas from these.

17. (a) A brief note on the observations made during the visits to Ministries/Departments by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances team

(b) Suggestions for improvement

No. 58847/9/PLCY/PG-89(10)
Government of India
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances

Sardar Patel Bhavan, Sansad Marg
New Delhi,
Dated the 27th July, 1989

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject:—Public Grievances appearing in the columns of newspapers-need for prompt attention.

As is well-known, Point 20 of the Twenty Point Programme, 1986, enjoins upon the Government to make the administration more responsive and with that end in view, institutional arrangements are to be made for attending promptly and sympathetically to public grievances. A number of newspaper run a grievances column in which they publish grievances received from the members of the public on matters arising from their interaction with various Government agencies.

While it is presumed that all Ministries/Departments take cognizance of such grievances with a view to redressing them, it is necessary to assess the effectiveness of these measures and to take further steps for establishing an institutional mechanism for attending to public grievances so received. Towards this end, it is requested that all Ministries/Departments and other agencies of Government may take the following steps:—

The Grievances column of the newspaper should be regularly examined by each Ministries/Departments/ agency of Government to pick up cases which relate to it. Quick action should be taken for redressing these grievances on a time bound basis. The complainant should be quickly informed of the action taken by way of redressal, where such redressal can be given within a month's time. Where redressal is likely to take longer, in interim reply should be sent to the complaint explaining the steps taken and assuring that further necessary action is being taken in the matter. Such a course of action will go a long way towards establishing the public's confidence in the effectiveness of the grievances redressal machinery of the Government agency.

It will be advisable to make a quarterly review of grievances received through the newspapers and action towards their redressal.

Kindly acknowledge the receipt of this O.M.

Sd/-
(R.D. Samplay)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

To

All Ministries/Departments of Government of India (Standard List)