

## Effective Grievance Redressal : Heart of Good Governance

*K V Eapen*

SHARP, EFFECTIVE,  
FAST AND FLEXIBLE.



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**G**ood Governance is the key to a Nation's progress and an important step towards it is the simplification of procedures and processes in the Government so as to make the entire system transparent and faster. Further, the ever expanding provision of Citizen-Centric Online Services is one of the most important aspects of an efficient and effective public administration system as it leads to transparency and accountability in governance and also fosters equitable growth. Technology is, thus, both an empowering tool for citizens and a measure of accountability for the Government. Further, it is important to note that the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister is the emphasis on "Minimum Government and Maximum Governance".

At the same time, besides the change in procedures and processes and use of the empowering nature of technology, it is important to note that public grievances redressal is equally a very important component of a responsive administration. The grievance redressal mechanism of an organisation is its instrument to measure efficiency and effectiveness as it provides important feedback on the working of that organisation. The Government of India has established an internet based Centralised Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) to facilitate

all citizens to lodge grievances for redressal. CPGRAMS is a platform based web technology which aims to enable submission of grievances by the citizens from anywhere, anytime to the Ministries/Departments/ Organisations. Tracking grievances is also facilitated on this portal through a system generated unique registration number. Further, grievances received manually are also digitized and uploaded on the system. The system also enables Ministries/Departments to take appropriate action and upload the Action Taken Report (ATR) on it. This can be viewed by the citizens online with the help of the unique registration number.

At the same time, while dealing with public grievances, it is important to note that issues which do not fall within the scope of grievance redressal are those relating to sub-judice cases or any matter concerning judgment given by any Court; personal and family disputes; RTI matters; anything that impacts upon the territorial integrity of the country or friendly relations with other countries and correspondence which is in the nature of advice/suggestions.

### Public Grievance Mechanism in India

The Public Grievance Mechanism of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the President's Secretariat, the Directorate of Public Grievances (Cabinet Secretariat), Department of

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Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) as well as the Pensioners' portal have been integrated through the CPGRAMS. This enables grievances lodged at any of these entities to be transferred to the Central Ministries/Departments and State Governments online through CPGRAMS.

The DARPG is the policy making, monitoring and coordinating department for public grievances. Its mandate arises from the Allocation of Business Rules 1961. These rules have allocated the work relating to (a) redress of public grievances in general; and (b) grievances pertaining to Central Government agencies to DARPG. Further, grievances are required to be redressed in a decentralized manner by the Ministries/ Departments concerned under the Rules.

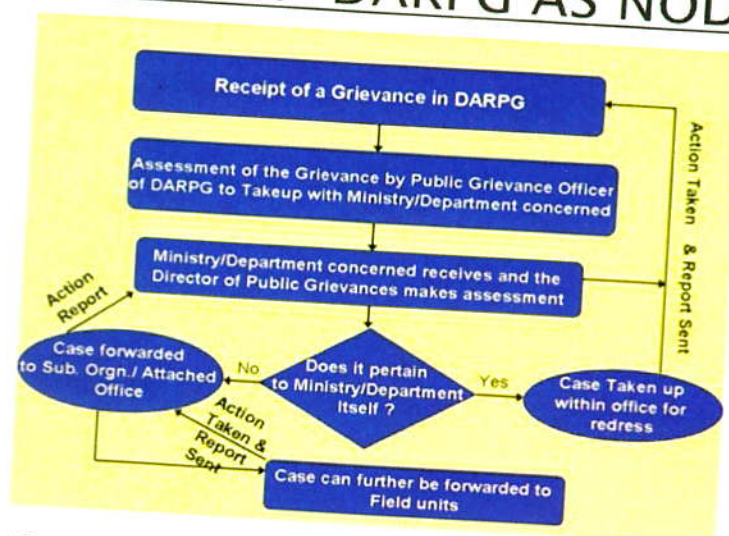
Nodal Officers for Public Grievances have been identified in each Ministry/ Department. Redressal of grievances is handled by various officials as per the internal work allocation in a Ministry/ Department. In addition, all Ministries/ Departments have been advised to ensure that a well-reasoned speaking order is given while disposing off a grievance. Each Ministry/Department/ Organization should also have a Director of Public Grievances, whom an aggrieved citizen can approach for redressal. Every Wednesday of the week has been earmarked for the purpose. A Dashboard has also been created on CPGRAMS for all the Heads of the Ministries/ Departments for accessing the relevant information pertaining to pendency of grievances in their respective Ministries/Departments and the subordinate Organizations affiliated to them.

It is also important to note that the Prime Minister also monitors/reviews the pending grievances of one or more Ministry/Department every month under the Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) platform.

### Disposal Rate

During the last three years, while

## EXTERNAL GRIEVANCE REDRESS MACHINERY-DARPG AS NODAL



the total number of grievances has increased, it is as important to note that the disposal rate has also improved. The disposal rate (including pendency from the previous year) for grievances relating to Central Government Organizations during the three calendar years (as on November, 2017) are as follows:

Year	Receipts	Disposal	% Disposal
2015	1049751	797453	76
2016	1479862	1229428	83
2017 (Nov'17)	1728194	1601544	93

(Source: CPGRAMS Data)

In order to have a single pan India Public Grievance Redressal System, and to ensure that the citizen's experience is satisfactorily uniform, it is necessary that the State Public Grievance Redressal Systems also need to be integrated with CPGRAMS. The State related grievances lodged on CPGRAMS can then be handled in an integrated and effective manner because, while many States are using CPGRAMS, some States have their individual grievance redressal mechanisms. The CPGRAMS is nationally linked to all the State Governments. It is important to

note that State Government related grievances received in CPGRAMS are only forwarded to the concerned State Government for redressal, but are not monitored by the Centre. The CPGRAMS with local language interface, has so far been launched in 9 State Governments/ Union Territories, namely, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Punjab and Puducherry.

### New Developments

A new, revised, more citizen friendly updated version of the CPGRAMS software with additional features like horizontal transfer of grievances among Ministries/ Departments, bulk disposal of similar grievances, one time registration to avoid duplication of complaints, escalation of unresolved complaints to higher authority, multiple forwarding, local language interface, etc. is in the offing.

Further, a person can lodge a grievance on the PG portal through the Common Service Centre located in his area by paying a nominal fee. A toll free facility for receiving reminders regarding pending grievances is also being introduced. A Mobile App which allows lodging and tracking of public grievances on android based mobiles was launched in October 2015 and it



can be downloaded from the PG portal. Besides, a new Mobile App with some added features has been developed which is more user-friendly. This has been integrated with Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG).

### Grievance Analysis

For effective public grievance redressal, an important tool is regular analysis of public grievances received in order to help identification of the problem areas in which modification of policies and procedures could be undertaken. The aim, as always, is to make the delivery of services easier and more expeditious. There is need for review of existing policies/procedures to bring about systemic changes in order to reduce reasons for public grievances as far as possible.

Keeping the above in view, a Grievance Analysis Study was conducted through Quality Council of India for identifying grievance prone areas, undertake root cause analysis and to recommend systemic reforms in respect of top 20 grievance receiving Ministries/Departments/Organizations listed on the CPGRAMS portal. The Study identified 81 Reforms to be done for more effective grievance redressal and the Reports were duly circulated to

## Launch of Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

- ❑ Initial implementation - June 2007; established - 2008
- ❑ PG portal accessible at [www.pgportal.gov.in](http://www.pgportal.gov.in)
- ❑ Covers all Ministries/Departments of GOI
- ❑ Web based, therefore Ministries/Departments do not require separate server
- ❑ Also covers subordinate and attached offices within the Ministries and further field offices
- ❑ Reduction/elimination of correspondence time
- ❑ Allows integration of manual complaints with electronic complaints by scanning

the concerned Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations. A Project Management Unit (PMU) has been put in place for monitoring the reforms. Out of the 81 reforms recommended, 35 have been implemented by the concerned Ministries/Departments. Some of the notable reforms introduced are: automatic refunds on cancellation of Railway Tickets, Single Window Pension through disbursing Banks, intensive mechanized cleaning of coaches, e-verification of Income Tax Returns, expeditious Income Tax Returns upto Rs.50,000/-, etc.

A Grievance Analysis Study for next 20 Ministry/ Departments receiving bulk of the grievances was also undertaken and the reports recommending systemic reforms were released in August 2017. These Reports have suggested 100 systemic reforms for reducing grievances which would lead to better public service delivery.

### Award Scheme

The DARPG has also launched an Award Scheme as an incentive for recognising outstanding performance in redressal of public grievances through issue of Certificate of Appreciation on a quarterly basis. The Scheme not only takes into consideration the number of grievances disposed by the Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations, but also the feedback of the petitioners whose grievances have been closed. Till now, 21 Certificates of Appreciation have been issued. During 2016-2017, certificates of appreciation were issued to 12 Ministries/Departments.

In addition, a Public Grievance Call Centre has been made operational with effect from February 2016 for reminding concerned officials of the top 40 Ministries/Departments/Organizations receiving bulk of the grievances, for expeditious disposal of grievances pending for more than two

The screenshot displays the CPGRAMS portal interface. At the top, it identifies itself as the 'PORTAL FOR PUBLIC GRIEVANCES' brought to you by the 'Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances'. The main heading reads 'Welcome to Online Public Grievance Lodging and Monitoring System'. Below this, there is a 'CITIZEN CORNER' box with links for lodging grievances, reminders, and status checks. A 'Login for VLE' option is also present. The left sidebar contains various links such as 'About Us', 'Grievance Redress Mechanism', 'Guidelines for Redress of Public Grievances 2010', and 'Directors (Nodal Officers) of Public Grievances in GoI'. At the bottom, there is a QR code for downloading the mobile app and a footer with contact details and a disclaimer.



months. This Call Centre makes about 20,000 to 22,000 calls per month.

Frequent review meetings are being held in the DARPG for monitoring pendency / disposal of public grievances. During 2017, five review meetings were held and 66 Central Ministries/ Departments have participated in the same.

### Citizen's Charter

The Citizen's/Client's Charter, is another tool for good governance. This is a written declaration by a Government department that highlights the standards of service delivery that

it subscribes to, the availability of choice for consumers, avenues for grievance redressal and other related information. It is a set of commitments made regarding the standards of service which it delivers. Though it is not enforceable in a Court of Law, the Citizen's/Client's Charter is intended to empower citizens and clients so that they can demand committed standards of service and avail remedies in case of non-compliance by service provider organisations. The basic thrust of the Citizen's/Client's Charter is to render public services citizen centric by making them demand driven rather than supply driven.

There is a portal <http://goicharter.nic.in> on which the Citizens Charter of Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations of the Central Government and State Governments have been uploaded.

Ultimately, the aim of these initiatives is to build trust with the citizen through effective and speedy redressal of the grievances in order to pave the way for good governance. The effort to usher in an era of Sushasan (सुशासन) has begun on a very promising note. However, it is also important to understand that governance is an area where the citizen too has a specific role to play at every given point. □

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### 1st PIO-Parliamentarian Conference

The First PIO-Parliamentarian Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in New Delhi on January 9, 2018.

141 Members of Parliament and Mayors of Indian descent were invited to attend the conference. At a media briefing, the Secretary CPA & OIA, Ministry of External Affairs said that people of Indian Origin (PIO) have contributed considerably to the economy and social upliftment of the countries in which they lived. Languages like Hindi, Bhojpuri, folklore such as Ramayana, literature from India, traditional cuisine etc. have not only survived but are flourishing in these countries as Indian migrants in these countries were determined to preserve their traditions, norms and customs. By a rough calculation there are over 270 people of Indian descent sitting in various parliaments and occupying various positions starting from the Head of Government, Head of State, Ministers as well as the Speakers and then the Members of Parliament. The conference was organized in keeping with the Prime Minister's endeavours to persuade PIOs to connect with India and avail of any opportunities India offered them.



Highlights of the Prime Minister's speech at the inaugural session of the PIO-Parliamentarian Conference.

- While many people may have left India over the course of hundreds of years, India continues to have a place in their minds and hearts.
- It appears as if a Mini World Parliament of Indian origin is gathered in Delhi today. He noted that persons of Indian origin are today Prime Ministers of Mauritius, Portugal and Ireland. He added that persons of Indian origin have also been Heads of State and Heads of Government in many other countries.
- The global impression about India has changed over the last three to four years. He said the reason for this is that India is transforming itself.
- PIOs are like permanent ambassadors of India, wherever they reside,
- The Government believes that NRIs are partners for India's development. He said that NRIs have an important position in the Action Agenda till 2020, drafted by the NITI Aayog.