

# SYSTEM OF REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES

MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL,  
PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE  
1991-92

TENTH LOK SABHA



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI

FIRST REPORT  
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE  
(1991-92)

(TENTH LOK SABHA)

**MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES  
AND PENSIONS**

**SYSTEM OF REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES**



*Presented to Lok Sabha on 13 December 1991*

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

*December, 13th 1991 / Agrahayana 22, 1913(S)*

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\* Shri V.N. Patil has resigned from the membership of the Committee on Estimates w.e.f.  
11th December, 1991

## INTRODUCTION

I, Chairman of Estimates Committee having been authorised to submit the Report, on their behalf, present this First Report on the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions-System of Redressal of Grievances.

2. The Committee undertook the examination of this subject as it concerns the public at large and also the citizens faith in the public administration apparatus.

3. The Committee considered the replies given by the Ministry of personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions to a detailed questionnaire issued on the subject where after the Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry on 18.9.1990. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry for placing before them the detailed written notes on the subject and for furnishing whatever information they desired in connection with the examination of the subject. The Committee also appreciate the frankness with which the officials shared their views, perceptions and constraints with the Committee.

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 12.11.1991.

5. The Report is divided into four Chapters. One Chapter each is devoted to—

- (i) Magnitude, nature and despersions of public grievances;
- (ii) Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances;
- (iii) Directorate of Public Grievances;
- (iv) Approches to redressal of public grievances.

6. The recommendations of the Committee as contained in the Report, dwell upon systemic, organisational and procedural aspects of public redressal grievances machinery as it exists. It also discusses various approaches that can be and need to be adopted in tackling of the problem of public grievances. In making such recommendations the Committee have been guided by the urgent need to ensure visible relief to the public through the public grievances redressal machinery.

7. Chapter-I of the Report highlights the magnitude and nature of problem of public grievances and reflects upon the absence of comprehensive analytical statistics relating to it. It also throws light on the past and existing machinery for redressal of grievances.

8. The Committee have *inter alia* recommended maintenance of basic data about the public grievance in the country in a more comprehensive manner to facilitate a systematic, realistic and critical analysis of public dissatisfaction about the functioning of Government Departments. Special focus on dealing with the problem in grievance prone Departments in the Ministries like Defence, Railways and Communications besides in Public Sector Banks has been suggested by the Committee. For toning up the public redressal machinery within the Ministries/Departments, delegation of greater powers to the Directors of Public Grievances besides involvement of Members of Parliament in studying the problem in different fields of public administration and in suggesting a simplified system of redressing public grievances are some of the important recommendations made in the Report.

9. Chapter-II of the Report discusses the organisational structure, role, functioning and monitoring mechanism of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. The Committee have called for making the Department an Officer oriented organisation and have, for this purpose, recommended induction of professional experts from open market for carrying out systemic studies relating to public grievances in order to fine-tune the Government policy in the matter. The Committee have also taken note of the existing lack of synergy between the efforts of the Department and those of various other Ministries/Departments towards redressal of public grievances. Need for time bound action on the recommendation of the Department by other Ministries/Departments has therefore been emphasized.

10. Chapter-III focuses on the role, functioning, scope and performance of the Directorate of Public Grievances in the Cabinet Secretariat. It also discusses various constraints faced by the Directorate. While suggesting that Directorate should, in due course, be accorded statutory status so as to function in an ombudsman like institution, a number of other recommendations have also been made by the Committee to make the Directorate effective. These include bringing more Departments under its purview, ensuring timely and mandatory submission to the Directorate of relevant records and information by other Ministries/Departments and timely action on its recommendations. The Committee have also called for encouraging personal hearing of complaints by the Officers concerned in the Directorate as well as in the Ministries.

11. Chapter-IV which dwells upon the approaches to redressal of public grievances viz. decentralisation of administrative and financial powers, systemic studies of grievance prone areas, improvement and simplification of cumbersome procedures, identification of the locus of decision making for enforcing accountability, soliciting of public cooperation, involvement of voluntary agencies, supervision of legal safeguards to the citizens against harassment by the Government Departments, attitudinal reorientation

and training of officers and staff besides modernisation of offices, strengthening of monitoring mechanisms and public awareness programmes. Among other things the Committee has asked the Government to consciously move away from the situation of excessive and cumbersome laws and have desired that drafting of statutes in other legislation should reflect concern for a common citizen who, at present, find the language of various statutes far too difficult to comprehend. The Report also suggests that Government should progressively shed responsibilities which do not fall within the traditional role of the state, in order to pay greater attention to the matters of public administration. However, where Government Departments need to engage themselves in distinctively service oriented and commercial activities, the citizen and their bodies ought to be given the right to initiate legal action against Government Departments under the Consumer Protection Act.

12. The Committee will also like the Government to make effective use of the electronic and other media in educating general public about the public redressal machinery available in various Ministries/Departments and to particularly enhance awareness about the role of Director of Public Grievances

13. The Committee would like to express their thanks to the Estimates Committee (1990-91) for taking evidence on the subject and obtaining valuable information thereon. The composition of the Committee (1990-91) is given at Annexure-V.

14. For facility of reference the recommendations/observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in consolidated form in Appendix of the Report.

NEW DELHI:  
*December 10, 1991*  


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*Agrahayana 19, 1913(S)*

MANORANJAN BHAKTA  
*Chairman*  
*Estimates Committee*

## CHAPTER 1

### MAGNITUDE, NATURE AND DISPERSION

#### A. Public Grievances: Magnitude, Nature and Dispersion

1.1 Public grievances in regard to Government arise from the working of different departments of Government and the application of different rules and procedures which those Departments are required to follow.

1.2 During evidence the Secretary, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions stated:—

“When the Government interacts with the people or the citizen there is always a grievance. The action of the Government may benefit somebody and may not be of any benefit to somebody else. Some people may feel that it should have been done in a different manner. The problem of grievance is very wide and very large in number because of the Government's working in all the different layers of administration.”

##### *(i) Magnitude*

1.3 The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, which functions under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, collects, every quarter, figures of grievances received by various Ministries / Departments and agencies of Government, grievances disposed of by them and so on.

1.4 Asked to furnish complete statistics of grievances registered by Government departments and the number of registered grievances actually settled, the Department in a written reply stated that 36, 62, 913 complaints / grievances had been received by different Ministries / Departments during the years 1986-87, 1987-88 and 1988-89. Out of these 31, 38, 659 complaints / grievances were reported to have been disposed of as indicated below:—

Year	No. of complaints received	No. of complaints disposed of.
1986-87	11,59,062	10,82,097
1987-88	12,34,341	9,95,323
1988-89	12,69,510	10,61,239
	36,62,913	31,38,659

1.5 In a Lok Sabha unstarred question No. 2064 dated 7.8.91 the Minister of State in the Ministry of personnel, Public Grievances and pensions stated:—

“According to information received from various Ministries / Departments, more than four lakh grievances were received during the 6 month period from 1st January to 30th June, 1991”

1.6 When asked to indicate a subject-wise, region-wise and department-wise analysis the Department in a written note furnished to the Committee stated that these grievances are too large in number as well as variety to permit such an analysis. When asked how then did the Government draw a strategy for redressal of grievances the Department stated that it was through periodic interaction with officials of the Ministries and Departments, as well as by an analysis of the grievances directly received, that an idea is formed of the areas of interaction between Government agencies and the members of the public which are grievance prone.

1.7 During evidence the Secretary, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions stated:—

“The magnitude of the problem is so vast. We are only doing it abit. As I said, the number of complaints taken up for being pursued by the Department of AR&PG came down to around 400 annually on an average. We can increase it. We can certainly follow it up. But still the number cannot be very large. It will again mean calling for the papers. Some of the papers will have to come from lower officers. Some of them too old cases and so on. This may, only proliferate work and some times delay in settling the cases.”

*(ii) Nature*

1.8 On the basis of analysis of the data available in the Department the major areas of the public grievances are as under:—

- (a) Complaints regarding delay in deciding a case (including delay in taking action / supplying information.)
- (b) Complaints against quality of services provided by Government agencies.
- (c) Complaints against harassment / misbehaviour by Government officials.
- (d) Settlement and payment of Family Pension. Death-cum-Retirement-Gratuity.
- (e) Complaints regarding levy of taxes / cesses / charges / duties.
- (f) Billing complaints.
- (g) Request for employment on compassionate grounds.
- (h) Complaints regarding Booking / cancellation refund.
- (i) Complaints relating to revenue matters.

(j) Matters relating to welfare of Scheduled Castes / Tribes and other backward classes.

(k) Matters relating to payment of compensation.

(l) Request for employment assistance.

1.9 The Ministry in a written note to the Committee stated:

"The more sensitive sections of the public whose grievances get highlighted are the Urban educated people whose grievances relate mainly to non-availability of civic amenities, levy of taxes / cesses / charges / duties, billing, refund of dues, delay including delay in taking action / supplying information. The other sensitive sections are applicants for government facilities and house owners in municipal areas."

*(iii) Dispersion*

1.10 The Ministries / Departments which predominate in the receipt of public grievances are:

Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Railways

Department of Posts

Department of Telecommunications

Department of Economic Affairs

(Banking Division).

**B. Past and Existing Machinery for Redressal**

1.11 In April, 1965 the Government decided that every Ministry should make adequate arrangements to deal with grievances of the public and establish institutional arrangements for public relation including the appointment of whole time Complaints Officers to deal with the grievances of the public. It was also decided that there should be an officer in the Ministry of Home Affairs to be designated as Commissioner for Public Grievances (CPG), whose function would be the coordination and review of the work of the Complaints Officers in various Ministries / Departments and officers under them. Accordingly, on Feb. 7, 1966 an officer of the rank of Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs was appointed as Commissioner for Public Grievances (CPG).

1.12 Pending consideration of the question of the appointment of a Lok Ayukt at the Centre, as recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission, the full time post of CPG was abolished w.e.f. July 4, 1967 and thereafter the work of CPG was looked after by a Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs in addition to his other duties. After creation of the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms in 1973 in the Ministry of Home Affairs, the work of the former CPG was handled by Secretary, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms assisted

by PG Section in the Vigilance Division. This arrangement continued till March, 1985. In March, 1985 the Status of the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms was raised to the level of a fullfledged ministry constituting three departments, namely, Department of Personnel and Training, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare.

1.13 Explaining the handling of Public Grievances by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, the Department in a written note stated that on the one hand this alignment of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances rests on the rationale that it would provide a closer and integrated view of the inadequacies of the administrative system that give rise to grievances and, on the other hand, show how the administrative machinery could be adopted to the changing environment.

1.14 The present organisational set up for redressal of public grievances is as follows:—

(i) *Internal Grievance Redressal Machinery within each Ministry/Department*

Internal Grievance Redressal Machinery is now in existence in most Ministries/Departments of the Central Government. An officer of the rank of Deputy Secretary or above has been designated as Director of Grievances.

(ii) *External Grievance Redressal Machinery in the form of monitoring by Department of AR&PG*

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in its capacity as a nodal agency in matters relating to public grievances, acts as an external monitoring agency. It reviews periodically the performance of Ministries/Departments with respect to redressal of public grievances. The grievances received in this department are sent to the concerned departments for appropriate action and those which are of serious nature are selected for a logical follow up. A direct reply to this effect is sent to the complainant.

The main functions of the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances is stated to be formulation of policy for administrative reforms and coordination of issues relating to redress of public grievances in general and Central Government agencies. The Public Grievances Wing of this Department is primarily and overwhelmingly concerned with grievances pertaining to the Work of the Ministries/Departments and other agencies of Government as well as public sector undertakings.

*(iii) An independent Grievance Redressal Authority under the Cabinet Secretariat.*

The Directorate of Public Grievances under the Cabinet Secretariat takes up complaints revived from the public and examine the same by calling for relevant files from number of designated Ministries/Departments and makes recommendations to the concerned Ministries/Departments.

To start with only four Ministries/Departments namely Railways, Posts, Telecommunications, Banking Division under Department of Economic Affairs were entrusted to the Directorate. Recently, three more Ministries— Urban Development, Civil Aviation and Surface Transport have also been added to their charge.

The distinctive feature of the Directorate is that the recommendations made by it are expected to be acted upon almost invariably by the concerned Ministry or Department, after obtaining suitable orders from the Minister or the Secretary, as the case may be.

#### **C. In-house Grievance Redressal**

1.15 In Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure contains the following provisions regarding handling of public grievances:

##### **“116. Handling of Public Grievances—**

(1) Delays in the movement of papers concerning public grievances will be checked at decision making levels.

(2) All officers of the level of Deputy Secretary and above will redress public grievances pertaining to the divisions under their charge. They will view public grievances with sympathy and make special efforts to decide on such cases expeditiously. They will individually acknowledge follow-up and redress complaint cases which come to them. In the acknowledgement letters a specific time-limit proposed for redress will be indicated.

(3) The Director of Grievances, appointed in each department will monitor the disposal of grievances by the concerned departmental officers”.

1.16 However, the Minister of state in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in an unstarred question in Lok Sabha on 7th August, 1991 stated :

“The average rate of disposal of grievances received in various Ministries and Departments during the last three years (1987-88 to 1989-90) was more than 75 per cent of the total”.

1.17 The Director of Grievances in most of the Ministries/Departments has been vested with powers to call for papers/files relating to grievances which are pending disposal for more than three months. He is expected to take decision in such cases with the approval of Secretary/Head of the Department of the Ministry/Department concerned.

1.18 The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances in its capacity as a nodal agency in matters relating to redress of public grievances reviews the performance of various Ministries/Departments through periodic review meetings of Directors of Grievances. In these meetings action taken by the Ministries/Departments on the instructions issued by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances in the matter of strengthening of grievance redressal machinery, toning up of administration, facilities available for public, issue of booklets/pamphlets, grievances appearing in newspaper columns etc. is discussed.

1.19 This Department also undertakes the inspection/evaluation of the grievance redressal machinery as existing in Ministries/Departments. The Department in a note furnished to the Committee stated that the system laid down by it for redressing public grievances by it which provide for appointment of Director, Grievances in each Ministry/Department with powers to requisition files relating to grievances pending for more than three months, does not appear to have very effectively worked mainly because the Secretaries whose orders have to be obtained by the Directors of Grievance for granting any relief to the complainant are usually busy handling policy and other substantive matters and, therefore, find little time for this work.\*

1.20 The Committee were informed during evidence by the Department that there was no mechanism for monitoring cases in exercise of power referred to above. However, during periodic meetings with officials of various Ministries/Departments and organisations, this question was being raised with them and from the replies received in course of these exchanges it appeared that the exercise of such powers had been sparing. This was probably unavoidable, because the Director of Grievances, not being conversant with the details of a case has primarily to depend upon the officials who deal with it. However, cases of such disposal have been occasionally referred to in course of discussion. But no separate figure was being maintained by this Department.

1.21 The Department in a written note stated that "In July 1989, all Ministries/Departments were requested that the grievance columns in newspapers should be regularly examined by the Ministries/Departments/agencies of the government, with a view to picking up cases which relate to them and taking remedial action on them in a time bound manner.

#### **D. Feedback from Public**

1.22 With a view to strengthening internal grievance redressal machinery and as also to making it more responsive to the needs to the common man it has been decided that every Wednesday of the week shall be observed as

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\* At the time of factual verification, the Ministry stated, "the Department has stated that while this is done from time to time the Department has no mechanism for monitoring such cases."

a meetingless day in the Central Secretariat. Three hours (10.00 hrs. to 13.00 hrs.) on this day are set apart for grievance redressal when all officers of the level of Deputy Secretary and above are available in their office to receive and hear public grievances. The Ministries/Departments have also been instructed to designate one day of the week as a meetingless day for their subordinate and attached/field offices, keeping in view their local requirements. On the meetingless day members of the public can meet senior officers without prior appointment.

1.23 Some of the offices having large public dealings, like the Protector of Emigrants, have fixed more than one day in a week on which the senior officers of the organisation are freely available to meet the members of the public in person with a view to attending to their grievances.

1.24 Some of the Departments like Posts, Telecommunication hold Lok Addals, from time to time wherein the senior officers of the Department hear personally the grievances from members of the public with a view to providing prompt relief. Similarly some organisations hold Open Houses.

1.25 Reminders from the Complainants about their grievances provide some feedback. The meetingless day has further improved the feedback system of the department. Many complainants who are not able to get their grievances redressed come and meet senior officers in the Department and explain in person the fate of their complaints/grievances.

### Conclusion

1.26 The Committee, being conscious of the axiom that redressal of public grievances is an inseparable part of the governance, find it distressing that the index of public satisfaction with the activities and services of Government agencies has been so low as to necessitate creation of a separate Department under the Ministry of Personnel and Administrative Reforms in order to attend to an exceedingly high volume of over one million grievances/complaints against of functioning of Central Government Departments and other related agencies. The Committee are further surprised to find that up to 1985 the Government had not taken due cognizance of mounting public dissatisfaction about the functioning of Government Departments/Agencies. They also deprecate the absence of comprehensive analytical statistics about the nature and dispersal of public grievances. The Committee therefore, find that as a result of this situation the Department of Administrative Reforms and public grievances, in their assessment of prevalence and nature of public grievances have to rely mostly on their inter-action with the representative of different departments besides a very small sample of about 400 complaints as against total inflow of over one million complaints in a year.

1.27 The Committee find that there is no set system of maintaining Department wise, subject-wise, region-wise and state-wise details of public grievances. They have been informed that the grievances were too numerous in number as well as in variety to permit such an analysis. The Committee are not able to appreciate this argument as such an analysis should be possible at the sectional level where from the basic statistics ordinarily originates.

1.28 The Committee note that grievances mostly relate to delays in

deciding cases regarding payment of dues, mis-behaviour by public servants, poor quality of service, over-assessment of taxes etc. The Ministries of Defence, Railways, Communication and Public Sector Banks appear to be most grievances-prone departments. The Committee are of the view that if the above assessment is realistic it should be possible for the Government to undertake a concerted drive in these departments so as to considerably bring down the volume of grievances.

1.29 The Government has established a three tier machinery for redressal of public grievances. While the overall responsibility for formulation of policy and coordination and monitoring of individual Ministries/ Departments in regard to the redressal of public grievances rests with Department of Administrative Reforms and public grievances in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, at the operative level there are Directors of Grievances in each Ministry/Department. At the apex level there is a ombudsman-like functionary designated as Director of public grievances who function as a part of the Cabinet Secretariat.

1.30 The Committee have also been informed that the instructions exists for each Ministry to observe every Wednesday as a meetingless day so that senior officers are available for attending to the public grievances. While the Committee appreciate the wisdom of this arrangement, are disappointed to note that, monitoring by of Administrative Reforms and public grievances, is confined to the generality of public grievances. They are also disappointed to note that there appears to be no effective mechanism for monitoring the treatment given to individual cases of public grievances. Under these circumstances the Committee find it all the more distressing that the Directors of grievances in the Ministries/Departments are not able to function effectively owing, partly, to their limited understanding of different problems posed in public grievances. A serious handicap suffered by him is that he is not competent to grant any relief to the complainant without the prior approval of Secretary of the Ministry/Department. Taking note of the general pre-occupation of Secretary level officers with various matters including those related to policy, the Committee are inclined to view this as a major short-coming in the system of redressing public grievances. They are however unable to understand why officer at the Secretary level cannot afford to set apart a specific day every fortnight or month for attending to public grievances cases. The Committee do not understand why Directors of grievances have not been vested with sufficient powers to enable them to give relief in atleast cases of routine nature.

#### Recommendations

The Committee therefore make the following recommendations:—

1.31 The Government should maintain statistics in regard to public grievances on a comprehensive scale. Distinction between long pending complaints and recent complaints should be maintained. Further the Department of public grievances should pick up a larger sample of

**grievances/complaints for detailed examination and follow up action so as to draw more realistic conclusions about the nature and prevalence of public dissatisfaction with the Government Departments.**

**1.32 The data about public grievances may be maintained, Department-wise, Subject-wise, Region-wise and State-wise so as to facilitate a systematic and critical analysis of public dissatisfaction as well as adoption of suitable corrective measures.**

**1.33 The Government should lay special emphasis on redressal of grievances of those Ministries/Departments which have relatively larger public dealing and are, therefore, grievance prone. Immediate consultations should be initiated particularly with the Ministries of Finance, Department of Revenue and the Banking Division, Defence, Railways and Communications to evolve appropriate strategies for minimising public grievances in these Ministries/Departments.**

**1.34 Instructions may be issued to all Secretaries to Government of India advising them to devote at least one or two days in a month exclusively for redressal of public grievances. Also appropriate powers may be delegated to Directors of public grievances in Ministries/Departments for granting immediate relief to the complainant. The official position and status of Directors, grievance may be suitably upgraded wherever it is likely to make him more effective. The Committee recommend that the complaint should be acknowledged and a receipt of the same be given to the complainant.**

**1.35 A system should be evolved in each area of the public administration where by complaints are duly acknowledged and progress made in their settlement reported periodically to the complainant.**

**1.36 Each Ministry/Department may set up a small committee headed by a Member of Parliament and the concerned Secretary as its member-secretary, to study the volume of public grievances and to suggest a simplified system of disposing public grievances. Appropriate guidelines should be issued by the DARPG for constitution of such Committees.**

**1.37 Vigorous efforts may be made to ensure that complainants feel encouraged to approach heads of Government organisations for settlement of their problems before routing their complaints to public grievance machinery.**

## **CHAPTER II**

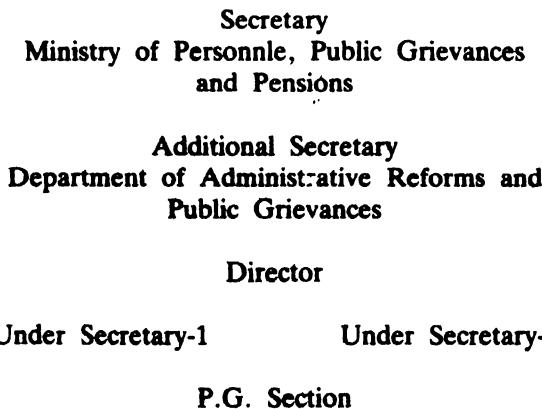
### **DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES**

**2.1** The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) is working as an external machinery for redressal of public grievances since its creation in March, 1985. The main functions of the Department are indicated in the Appendix.

**2.2** The grievances received from the public are studied and analysed. Except for a small proportion of these grievances, the representations/complaints are forwarded by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances to the Ministries/Departments concerned. The small proportion, which is selected for monitoring, is also forwarded to the Ministry/Department concerned, but the course taken by that representation/complaint is monitored in the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. The monitoring system through the external agency has also to depend heavily upon the Ministries/Departments concerned with the substantive issues of the grievance/complaint. It has been further stated that the Public Grievances Wing in DARPG, cannot take any substantive decision by way of redressal of grievances as it is only a monitoring and recommendatory agency, besides being responsible for formulation of policy and guidelines.

#### **A. Organisational Structure**

**2.3** The organisational chart of DARPG (PG Wing) is as follows:



**2.4** The Department in a written note stated that the Administrative Reforms Wing was already in existence to which the PG Section was transferred by the Department of Personnel & Training in March, 1985

along with the staff handling the work. For supervisory direction, the PG Wing is placed under a director in the Department.

**2.5** One Under Secretary deals with complaints relating to the State Governments while the other deals with complaints relating to Central Government Departments and Ministries.

**2.6** About the rationale behind such an organisational structure the Department stated the numerous variety of cases are referred to the Ministries/Departments by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances to take actual steps for redressal. This Department can only frame policy or lay down guidelines applicable to all Ministries, Departments and organisations of the Government of India. Within the parameters of these general guidelines, specific measures of procedure and method have to be worked out by each unit in the light of the nature of the activity it is responsible for. With that end in view, the present organisational structure has been devised and the manpower has been kept at a low level.

**2.7** The Department also stated that in the nature of things, even if the organisation was much larger than what it is, it would not have been able to directly redress public grievances over such an extensive area of Government's functioning. The main purpose is to find out the need for systematic changes, if any, and suggest appropriate measures for such changes, to the concerned agencies of Government.

## **B. Role**

**2.8** The Department in a written reply has stated that its role in the redressal of public grievances pertaining to the entire spectrum of activities of the Government of India is limited, but nonetheless relevant and significant. It makes policy prescriptions and suggestions for restructuring of different organisations of the Government of India which is a continuous process in the light of developing situation. It has given the framework of an institutional mechanism for (a) - consolidating within the organisation the total number of grievances received during a specific period of time; (b) - for orienting the work of the organisation to the redressal of these grievances; and (c) - for creating an awareness among all units and members of the organisation, of the fact that public grievance redressal, and more importantly, the forestalling of the possibility of giving rise to grievances, are an important area of attention for the organisation.

**2.9** Explaining further the Ministry stated that for discharging its functions, the Department maintains liaison and conducts periodic dialogue with the Ministries at the Centre and also with State Government. The role of the Department is essentially catalytic in nature, the main thrust of

reform having to come from within the Ministries/Departments themselves.

2.10 The Committee enquired as to how the existence of the Public Grievances Wing in the Department could be justified in view of the fact that each Ministry/Department has an in-house mechanism for redressal of public grievances and also when this wing had no powers to grant interim relief. The Ministry in a written reply stated that it does not appear feasible for any single organisation to redress grievances substantively in the diverse fields of Government's activities. It is only a small number of glaring cases in which an external organisation can practicably provide relief - a task which is being performed by the Directorate of Public Grievances.

2.11 While explaining the role of the Department during the oral evidence the Secretary of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions stated:—

“Our role is to attend to two things according to the Allocation of Business Rules. These are to frame policy and guidelines and to provide coordination on issues of redressal of public grievances pertaining to Government in particular. Our Department's role is to help the Government in framing policies which lead to quicker satisfaction of people who have grievances.”

2.12 He further added:—

“A few studies, a few recommendations are not going to completely solve the problem but this is a continuous process. It is the positive element which leads, in the long run to remedial measures and grievances are to a large extent obviated and reduced. We lay down policies and do the co-ordination being the nodal department.”

2.13 In this context the Secretary further stated:—

“We are not doing only post-office type of work. We have to think how we can tackle the remaining number of grievances too. This is an important thing for which some nodal point should be there in the Government to know about the existing mechanism and how it is functioning. Certain feed-back should be there. We are the only machinery in the Government, however small it may be, that give the Government and the Minister who is in charge of it some feed back of what is happening.”

### C. Functioning

2.14 The Ministry in a written note stated that while the generality of complaints/grievances of the public received by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances are referred to the concerned Ministers/Departments for appropriate action the small number of grievances taken up with the Ministries/Departments concerned are regularly followed up till a final decision is taken and communicated to the complainant. These are reviewed by this Department every month.

2.15 When asked about the type of complaints selected for follow up and disposal, the Ministry in a written reply stated that the Department normally picks up such cases for follow up with the concerned Ministries/ Departments as are serious in nature or are indicative of the occurrence of injustice to the complainant or call for systemic changes and changes in rules and procedures contributing to speedier and more efficient interaction with the public or client groups. As for cases reckoned to be serious, the tendency has been to take up such ones as are different in kind from the ones taken up in previous years. Such cases provide a ground for selection of areas of study by this Department.

2.16 The Secretary of the Department during the oral evidence further stated:

**“Each year we pick up different areas of complaint to understand the nature of complaint and the reasons why these complaints have come about so that we can see whether any systematic change can be brought about or any procedure or method of handling the cases can be improved upon.”**

2.17 Regarding the proportion of grievances picked up for follow up the Ministry stated that no pre-conceived proportion is maintained between the number of grievances received and the number of grievances picked up for monitoring by this Department.

#### **D. Monitoring Mechanism**

2.18 The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances has no authority or mechanism at its disposal to ensure actual and prompt redressal of grievances which fall within the functional jurisdiction of the various Ministries.

2.19 There is no system of individual test check by this Department. It is not so structured as to be able to take up this responsibility.

2.20 Explaining the mechanism adopted for reviewing implementation of instructions, the Ministry in a written reply stated that there are two broad ways of carrying out the instructions given by this Department:

- (i) Periodic meetings with officials of Ministries/Departments
- (ii) Quarterly report received from them.

2.21 Besides this whenever instances of glaring injustice come to notice of this Department the officials of this Department also informally get in touch with the officials of the concerned organisation for ensuring quick action on the subject matter concerned.

2.22 The Ministry have also stated that it has no authority to take any punitive action for violation or non-fulfilment of its instructions. It can only urge and plead, formally and informally, with the authorities of the concerned organisations.

### **E. Studies Undertaken**

2.23 In reply to another question the Ministry in a written reply stated that there is no instrumentality available with this Department to monitor the implementation of recommendations made by it in various studies conducted under its auspices. The concerned departments or agencies are expected to do it on a continuing basis. However, this Department does try to find out from time to time what is the status of the recommendations made by it and accepted by the concerned departments or agencies. One such exercise was made in September-October, 1989. 28 studies were picked up at random from the studies conducted by this Department since 1985 and a tabulation made of the number of recommendations made, the number accepted wholly or partially and the number acted upon, wholly or partially.

2.24 It was observed that out of a total number of 470 recommendations only 123 (26.2%) had been accepted and implemented. Another 18 such recommendations *i.e.* 3.8% were implemented with modifications while 44 (9.4%) were not implemented even after their acceptance. Even though the number of recommendations not accepted at all is only 39 (8.1%) a large number of these *i.e.* 246 (52.5%) were still under consideration.

### **F. Scope for Improvement**

2.25 The Ministry in a written note stated that constraints in redressal of public grievances are numerous as well as diverse in nature.

2.26 In many spheres of Government's work involved in providing to the public some service or the other like transport, distribution of essential commodities and so on, there is often (a) a large gap between demand and supply which creates many distortions in the delivery system and causes dissatisfaction to the members of the public. This also creates conditions congenial to malpractice and corruption. Apart from these (b) lack of infrastructure, (c) difficulty in timely communication between the decision-making levels and executive agencies, (d) inadequately trained manpower are certain other factors giving rise to public grievance. Further, (e) lack of motivation, (f) lack of discipline, are also major contributory factors to the prevalence of public dissatisfaction.

2.27 Further explaining the extent to which Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances is equipped for evolving a policy on redressal of public grievances the Ministry in a written note stated that to the extent there can be a common approach to redressal of public grievances, originating from the large variety of work done in different organisations of the Government of India, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances is by and large sufficiently equipped to evolve this approach and policy underlying it.

2.28 When asked as to the need of additional inputs in terms of human resources and administrative powers required to make the role of

Department more effective, the Ministry in a written note stated that in consideration of the pros and cons it appears that any significant enlargement of the Department may not serve the purpose in view. It is only likely to set a trend of centralisation of authority for disposal of grievances, which will run counter to the declared objective of decentralisation in the decision-making process in all branches of the Government of India.

2.29 It must nevertheless be stressed that there is much room for this Department to play more effectively the role that has been enjoined upon it under the Allocation of Business Rules, and that for this purpose, it needs to be strengthened considerably. It is not so much the size of the organisation or the number of persons that work in it, that is being mentioned. The strengthening should take the form of an institutional arrangement for induction of greater expertise and professional skill.

2.30 Presently, except for a handful of middle level officials and members of the clerical staff, all echelons of the Department are manned by persons brought on deputation for short periods of 3, 4 or 5 years from various Ministries, Departments and agencies of the Government of India. In the first place, the levels from which such deputation takes place are not high enough to create conditions congenial to specialisation. Usually, people are drawn from the ranks of UDCs, SOs and their likes. In the second place, the study of organisation, procedure and method of various constituent agencies of the Government of India is increasingly becoming a specialised job with increasing specialisation in the agencies of the Government of India. It is, therefore, necessary to build up, over a period of a few years, strong expertise in clearly identifiable, broad sectors of Government, which can permanently or for a long enough time, be available to the DAR&PG for studying, with a greater degree of professionalism, the problems of various agencies of Government. For this purpose, it is necessary to raise the general level of officers and men being deputed to this Department and also for periodic recruitment, directly from the open market, of professional expertise. This is specifically recommended for the levels of Under Secretaries, Senior Analysts as well as Junior Analysts.

2.31 The Ministry further added that in determining the structure and size of this Department the following further consideration too seems to be relevant. Under the terms of the Allocation of Business Rules the focus of this Department's attention is on organisation, method and procedure; but in practice, the Department has gone much beyond the limits of these subjects. In real life, issues pertaining to organisation, method and procedure cannot often be dissociated from issues of substantive policy, personnel management and a host of other factors. For example, when the organisational setup for the Integrated Child Development Programme is studied, the investigating team can hardly confine itself to questions of organisation, method and procedure. Questions of finance, accounting,

transport, even engineering may come to impinge themselves upon the former issues. In view of this, it will be advisable for the Department to extend formally the scope of its studies and build up specialised cells dealing with each broad functional area of government.

2.32 The Department further suggested that each such cell should be a combination of personnel drawn from specialised organisations of Government on long term basis and recruits from the open market. But even this is not enough. The cadre of specialists should be supplemented by personnel who have multi-disciplinary experience. In operational terms this means, the higher levels of the Department should continue to be manned by persons who have had multi-functional experience. An exclusive reliance on persons having expertise only in specified fields is likely to cause distortion in the formulation of policy and programme. Besides, if exclusive reliance on professional expertise in specific fields is to be placed, then there are many specialised organisations of Government itself which are available and there would be no need for a Department like AR&PG. The *raison d'etre* of the Departments lies in the fact that it can address itself to specific problems of one functional area or the other with the advantage of a larger perspective gained from experience in multi-functional work. This provides the much needed holistic approach to specific issues.

2.33 The quality of interaction between the Department and other Ministries, Departments and organisations of the Government of India leaves much to be desired. The interaction that takes place periodically between this Department and other Ministries and Departments tends to be treated merely as routine. Many Ministries and Departments are usually represented by levels that are too low to make any effective statement or analysis. Often inexperienced officers are sent to take part in the meetings held by this Department. A simple and practicable remedy may be to designate in each ministry or department a senior officer, say, of the rank of Joint Secretary or Director, who must invariably interact with this Department in all matters pertaining to organisation, method and procedure and larger issues of administrative reforms. This will help this Department identify important problem areas in each organisation that needs studying.

2.34 From time to time, commissions and committees are set up by Government to study diverse aspects of administration, economic, developmental or otherwise. These special groups study areas which are, more or less, co-terminus with the areas supposed to be dealt with by this Department. yet this Department does not come to be involved in their work. The result is multiplicity of approach, often running at cross purposes. There should be an institutional arrangement for invariably involving officials of this Department at the appropriate level of such a commission or committee.

## Functions

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances is the apex body of the Central Government in the field of administrative reforms and public grievances. Its main functions are:

- formulation of policy for administrative reforms.
- Providing management consultancy services to organisations of the Central and the State Governments, public sector undertakings and local bodies.
- promotion and development of management services in Government.
- dissemination of information on administrative practices and modern management techniques.
- policy and coordination of issues relating to redress of public grievances in general and grievances pertaining to central government agencies; and
- identifying deficiencies in the system to minimise grievances.

## Conclusion

2.35 The Committee note that the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has a significant though limited role in the redressal of public grievances. It acts both as a nodal agency of the Government in regard to policy on redressal of public grievances as also a catalyst in effecting systemic changes towards more sensitive public administration. The Committee however, note that it has no direct or substantive say in the actual redressal of individual grievances as a consequence of which size of its organisation has been kept small. In this regard the Committee are inclined to agree with the view expressed by the Department that a larger organisation with a larger and direct role in redressal of public grievances would tend to create a super-department which is not in congruity with the Constitutional scheme of things. They also realise that a centralised machinery of redressal would be an altogether impracticable proposition in a situation where public grievances are large in variety, complex, in nature and diverse in their source.

2.36 In this context, the Committee have been informed by the Department that for enabling it to play the role enjoined upon it under the Allocation of Business Rules more effectively, the Department would need to be strengthened in the form of an institutional arrangement for induction of greater expertise and professional skill. This, the Committee understand, would help the Department in building up strong expertise in clearly identifiable broad sectors of Government and thus study, the

problems of various agencies of Government with greater degree of professionalism.

2.37 The Committee note that as a nodal agency the Department not only helps in shaping government policy in regard to public grievances but also issues various instructions to Ministries/Departments. It is an admitted fact that people at large do not hold a good opinion about the functioning of Government discrepancies and are often victims of procedural delays, indifferent attitude of persons in avoiding to their grievances and even harassment. Through these instructions and with the help of various systemic studies the Department can promote general awareness and sensitivity towards public grievances among the Government officials at large. The Department has, however, no punitive authority to check non-observance of such instructions by individual Ministries/Departments. The Committee, are disappointed by the helplessness which the Department faces in this regard. The Committee feel that the Department of Public grievances can play a significant role in changing this situation. They are dismayed to note that the quality of Department's interaction with other Ministries/Departments is not as could be desired in as much as that other Ministries/Departments fail to ensure their effective participation the meetings held by the DARPG. Committee cannot but take serious view of this apathy amongst Government Departments towards matters relating to public grievances.

2.38 The Committee appreciate the strategy adopted by the Department in concentrating on systemic studies so as to reorient public administration at various levels and in various fields of governmental activity towards better public satisfaction. They have also been informed that the main thrust of reforms in specific procedures and practices followed is by and large left to the initiative of individual Ministries/Departments. The Committee are inclined to believe that there exists a lack of synergy between the efforts of the DARPG and those of various Ministries /Departments as can be inferred from the fact that only 26% of various recommendations made by DARPG for systemic changes and procedural reform have been accepted, and 9.4% of these was not implemented even after acceptance, while over 52% of such recommendations were stated to be still under consideration. The confidence in the usefulness of these studies is further shaken by the fact that DARPG is not even aware whether or not the recommendations made by it and already accepted by different Ministries/ Departments, have been implemented in reality.

#### Recommendations

The Committee make the following recommendations:—

2.39 The staffing pattern of the Department of public grievances may be reviewed to make it more officer oriented and to facilitate periodical induction of professional experts from the open market.

2.40 The Government should issue strict instructions to all Ministries/

Departments to ensure that officers not below the rank of Joint Secretary take part in the meetings convened by Department of public grievances. In fact each Ministry/Department should designate specific officers of appropriate level for this purpose.

2.41 Government at the highest level should deliberate upon the existing lack of synergy between the efforts of DARPG and those of various other Ministries/Departments towards redressal of public grievances and evolve a mechanism under which study reports made by DARPG are examined and acted upon by other Ministries/Departments with full seriousness. It should also be ensured that such examination is carried out in a time-bound manner and a final view about the acceptance of these study reports taken expeditiously.

2.42 The recommendations made in the DARPG study reports should be implemented within an appropriate but fixed time limit. In cases where these are not acceptable the reasons there for should be reported within a reasonable time.

## CHAPTER III

### DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

#### A. Directorate of Public Grievances (Cabinet Secretariat)

3.1 The Directorate of Public Grievances (DPG) was set up in April, 1988 as an independent grievance agency under the Cabinet Secretariat to take up complaints received from public to examine the same and make recommendations to the Ministries/Departments entrusted to the Directorate. The Directorate has got the authority to call for and examine the files of the Ministries/Departments concerned to see whether the subject matter of a grievance has been dealt with in a fair, objective and just manner and whether a decision containing reasons has been communicated to the complainant within a reasonable time.

3.2 During the oral evidence, the Secretary, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions explained the role of the Directorate as follows:

"The Directorate of Public Grievances is in the nature of something like an Ombudsman and they pursue individually bad cases which are referred to them. They have been given charge of seven Ministries which are dealing with the public on a large scale."

3.3 Elaborating further in a post-evidence reply, the representative of the Ministry of Personnel, Pensions and Public Grievances stated that the establishment of the Directorate of Public Grievances in 1988 was the first step towards introduction of an ombudsman like institution in India. It does not, however, enjoy a statutory status, nor is it a watch-dog body of Parliament like the Ombudsman in Scandinavian countries or like the British Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. It is purely a part of the executive branch of Government and its existence has been given recognition in the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules.

3.4 In a written reply furnished after evidence the Department stated that the Directorate is in a position, to provide and has in fact provided, substantive relief to the members of the public who have agitated their grievances before it. Its location at a supra-departmental level (Cabinet Secretariat) and its being a part of the executive branch of the Government has provided an advantageous position to the Directorate. This has helped in the speed and quality of disposal of grievances received by it.

## **B. Scope and Procedure**

**3.5** Explaining the procedure followed by the Directorate during the oral evidence, the Secretary of the Directorate of Public Grievances (Cabinet Secretariat) stated:-

"The Cabinet policy resolution says, considering the gravity of grievance, we have the power to pick up any grievance, call for report, files and records from the concerned Ministry. Thereafter we make such recommendations as we think fit. Again, the Cabinet resolution says, ordinarily (not invariably) these recommendations shall be accepted, provided the decision of the concerned Ministry has not been taken at the level of the Minister. If the Minister has taken a decision, I cannot interfere."

**3.6** The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in a written note stated that the Directorate takes up for investigation grievances after satisfying itself about the bonafides of the complainants and the gravity of the subject matter of the grievance. Where a grievance has not been so dealt with in a fair, just and objective manner, it makes suitable recommendations which, as a rule, are to be adopted by the Ministries/Departments concerned. The Directorate does not, however, concern itself with policy matters or matters which relate to service conditions (excluding those relating to terminal benefits like gratuity, GPF), commercial contracts or cases which are *sub judice* or where *quasi-judicial* procedures are prescribed for decision-making.

**3.7** Drawing a comparison with the actual functioning of in-house grievance redressal mechanism in Ministries/Departments the Directorate of Public Grievances. Stated that the grievances taken up for investigation by it are examined and processed *ab initio* at the officers level, thus ensuring independent, fair and objective consideration to these grievances.

## **C. Performance**

**3.8** The Directorate receives between 300 and 350 grievances per month. It is necessary that the initial screening process should be properly organised as this pre-investigation will enable the Directorate of Public Grievances to take up only those cases which are of patently hard nature and are within its resources to handle.

3.9 The number of grievances received and disposed of since the inception (25.3.1988) of the Directorate and the number of grievances outstanding upto 31.5.90 is as follows:—

Year	No. of grievances received	No. of cases brought forward from pre. year	Total number of cases	No. of cases transferred	Total number of cases disposed	No. of cases pending at the end of the year
1988-89	2453	—	2453	920	1299	234
1989-90	5623	234	5857	3448	1890	519
1.4.90 to 31.5.90	493	519	1012	295	298	419
<b>Total</b>	<b>8569</b>			<b>4663</b>	<b>3487</b>	<b>419</b>

3.10 Out of 3487 complaints disposed off from 1988-89 and upto 31.5.1990 only 1612 were accepted and in respect of 1264 cases no action was called for; 611 cases were rejected.

3.11 The Department stated that the grievances indicated as transferred were not taken up for investigation the subject matter of these grievances fall outside the purview of the Directorate of Public Grievances. These were, therefore, transferred to the organisations concerned.

3.12 Regarding the average time taken for the disposal of grievances the Directorate of Public Grievances (Cabinet Secretariat) stated:—

3.13 Record of the time taken in disposal of important cases has been kept. The table below gives the time spans in which 1365 such grievances were disposed of:

Between 1-3 Months	Between 3-6 Months	More than 6 Months
702	461	202

3.14 An illustrative list of recommendations made by the Directorate of Public Grievance, which have been accepted by the Ministries/Departments concerned have been placed at Annexure (OE Annexure I).

3.15 When asked about the percentage of repeat grievances and grievances about complaints not receiving any or time bound assistance, the Directorate of Public Grievances stated that grievances of the same functional areas are received from different complainants. Instances where a complainant not satisfied with the disposal of his initial complaints repeats it are rare. No record of such repeat grievances is, however maintained.

3.16 In a reply the question to whether there is a system of personal

meetings for settlement of grievances the Ministry stated that so far as the Directorate of Public Grievances (Cabinet Secretariat) is concerned, they sometimes organise meetings in their Directorate with the Officers of the concerned ministries/organisations and to these meetings the complainants are also invited to explain their grievances in person.

3.17 While explaining its performance the Directorate of Public Grievances stated that during its existence of about 2½ years, the Directorate has been able to persuade Central Ministries/Departments to not only to provide redress of the individual grievances investigated and found genuine by it, but also to introduce some systemic changes and amendments/rationalisation of certain Rules.

#### D. Removal of Constraints

3.18 The Directorate has highlighted some difficulties which militate against its effectiveness, the major among them being delay in making available to it the relevant files and reports by the Ministries/Departments/ Organisations complained against.

3.19 Elaborating this during the oral evidence, the Secretary of Directorate of Public Grievances said:—

“Although the Administrative Ministry is supposed to send us files within six weeks, sometimes it takes six months. We run into a grey area if a Ministry decides to be tough and not to co-operate with us. What can I do? I just bring such matters to the notice of the Cabinet Secretary. In fact, I have brought them to the notice of both the Secretary to the Prime Minister Cabinet Secretary. The Cabinet Secretary sent a D.O. letter to the concerned Secretaries.”

3.20 The Directorate informed the Committee that according to the existing instruction reports/files are required to be sent within six weeks and the recommendations implemented within 30 days. There is a slippage in these schedules.

3.20A During evidence the Secretary, Directorate of Public Grievances (Cabinet Secretariat) quoted the following examples in this regard stated:

“The Calcutta Telephones did not send the records for nearly a year and the Member, Telecom Board wrote to the General Manager and he is still unable to get it from his own General Manager. We are still endeavouring to get a particular file from Delhi Development Authority. Papers do not come. We sent them a list of pending grievances on which we have not received reports. The Vice-Chairman sent the reply saying that “We have answered some of those complaints, only so many remain pending and we shall look into them.”

**The Secretary further added:**

"It is not a question of his answering. We must be satisfied that the complaints have been adequately dealt with. We run into a grey area if a Ministry decides to be tough and not to cooperate with us."

3.21 The Ministry in a post evidence reply furnished to the Committee stated that for enhancing further the effectiveness of the Directorate of Public Grievances, the following measures can be considered:

*(i) Jurisdictional Issues*

3.22 Government by the terms of its Resolution of 25th March, 1988 has broadly defined the jurisdiction of the Directorate and has explicitly excluded certain matters from its jurisdiction. There are, however, certain grey areas in which clarification may be needed. Commercial contracts have been excluded from the purview of the DPG. Interpreted in a narrow sense this term should exclude the complaint of a telephone subscriber or a bank customer or the life assured. Surely, this was not the Government's intention although these three instances involve, in a way, a contractual relationship. It again needs to be clarified whether grievances against non-acceptance of requests for financial accommodation by the nationalised banks should or should not be entertained. These grey areas are the cause of concern and difficulties because the dealings of Government offices and organisations with citizens can and do in many instances take the form of contractual transactions.

*(ii) Adequate Resources*

3.23 The staff provided to the Directorate in April, 1988, when only four Ministries/Departments were allotted to it, continues to be the same, although three additional Ministries/Departments and Insurance Companies were added to it later. Spreading of efforts of a given number of officers over a wider area, has, despite best efforts, led to some dilution in the quality of investigation of grievances.

3.24 Rightly, the Directorate has been structured on an officer-oriented pattern. These officers are aided by computers rather than ministerial staff. However, there are certain repetitive and mechanical chores like despatch, comparison, filing, etc. on which the officers should not waste their time and such jobs can as well be attended to by a few members of the ministerial staff at a much lower cost.

3.25 Therefore, the Directorate may be provided, at least, the following staff for effectively discharging its present level of responsibilities:

(i) Desk Officer	2
(ii) Steno Grade 'D'	2
(iii) L.D.C.	2
(iv) Messengers	2

*(iii) Strict adherence to time schedules*

3.26 The speed and quality of disposal of grievances by the DPG depends heavily on the observance of prescribed time schedules by the Ministries/Departments in sending their files/reports and implementation of the Directorates recommendations. According to the existing instructions, reports/files are required to be sent within six weeks and the recommendations implemented within 30 days. There is a slippage in these schedules. The Secretaries of the Ministries/Departments should be made squarely responsible for ensuring strict observance of the instructions on the subject and should earn the displeasure of Government where they have failed to comply with these instructions.

3.27 There is no appeal against the recommendations of the DPG and these are to be adopted by and large. Instances, however, do arise where the Ministries/Departments find it difficult and/or inconvenient to adopt the relevant recommendations. A mechanism for resolving such differences (for example, compulsorily taking such cases before the Committee of Secretaries presided over by the Cabinet Secretary) needs to be adopted.

3.28 On a written note to the Committee it was further stated by DPG that ultimately, it will be necessary to set up a statutory organisation for the redress of public grievances with adequate statutory powers for procuring relevant records from Ministries and other public organisation and for ensuring strict and punctual compliance with decisions taken.

**E. Interaction and Co-ordination with DARPG.**

3.29 When asked as to the need and extent of coordination between the DARPG and DPG with a view to evolving a common and comprehensive policy approach on redressal of PG the Ministry stated that, the interaction between the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Directorate of Public Grievances has so far been quite frequent and adequate, even though informal. Each organisation comes to know what the other is doing and what should be the issues of interaction between the two. This has been significantly facilitated by compatibility of approach and outlook on the part of the personnel involved. This is not a dependable system in a long term view of the matter. Some institutionalised arrangement is, therefore, called for. The Ministry further stated that both the organisations feel that they should report to each other periodically, say, once in three months, on the major developments that have taken place within the organisation. For example, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, which is responsible for framing policy and laying down guidelines applicable to all ministries, departments and organisations of the Government of India including those handled by the Directorate of Public Grievance should every quarter send a report to the Directorate indicating the policy issues dealt with and

guidelines issued by the Department which pertain to individual ministries and departments (the Directorate of Public Grievances in any case received all general guidelines and policy decisions) as well as the new grievance-prone areas which in the opinion of this Department need to be taken up for intensive study. The Directorate of Public Grievances on its part can report to this department its major findings in the cases it takes up for disposal. This will help this Department keep its priorities for studying grievance-prone areas in line with the findings of the Directorate.

3.30 The Directorate of Public Grievances has suggested that public grievances pertaining to a few more organisations may be transferred to its jurisdiction. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances agrees to this. In addition to the above mentioned organisations, the responsibility for handling grievances relating to the issue of passport, handled by the Passport Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, may also be given to the Directorate of Public Grievances.

3.31 In this context the Ministry further stated according to the current dispensation, no public grievance is handled by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances that pertain to the Departments and agencies falling within the jurisdiction of the Directorate of Public Grievances. As a result, most public grievances relating to the Department and agencies assigned to the Directorate, tend to go unnoticed or unattended to by this Department in the context of it exercises for designing policy and guidelines or studying grievance-prone subjects. So far, this deficiency in the system has not created any perceptible problem since the distribution of functions between the two organisations has been given effect to only a shortwhile ago. However, now that considerable extension of the Directorate's sphere of jurisdiction is being suggested, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances will be in the dark about the nature of grievances which arise from the work of a large number of Ministries, Departments and organisations. It will thus be denied the data required for devising policy and guidelines applicable to the entire organisation of the Government of India.

### Conclusion

3.32 The Committee note that Directorate of Public Grievances has been functioning since 1988 from within the Cabinet Secretariat under an Officer of the rank of Secretary to Government of India. They have been informed that the role of this agency is to examine public grievances of gravity as well as cases of patently hard nature. The Directorate also ascertains whether such cases have been dealt with by individual Ministries/Departments in an independent, fair and objective manner and provides swift and substantive relief to the complainant. The Committee have also been informed that the recommendations made by the Directorate are more or less binding on the Ministries/Departments who are expected to not only provide redress to

individual grievances but to also initiate systemic changes and amendments of relevant rules wherever so desired by the Directorate. The Committee, however, are dismayed to find that the Directorate has been facing considerable difficulty in obtaining necessary cooperation from individual Ministries/Departments, in whose absence the Directorate can not succeed in making any impact, whatsoever. This has created a situation which is patently grim. The Committee would like to emphasise the importance of adhering to stipulated time limits in making necessary files and other record available to the Directorate of public grievances and also in implementing its recommendations.

3.33 The Committee find that the Directorate receives around 300 to 350 grievances every month and that during the three years period ending 31st May, 1990 it had dealt with 8569 complaints. While 611 of these cases complaints were rejected only 1612 cases were decided favourably. It would thus appear that despite initial scrutiny of grievances to ascertain the bona fide of the complaints the Directorate has been able to decide not more than 25% of the total number of cases accepted by it during the last three years. In the opinion of the Committee this is not a happy score for an institution which has been set up to create a sense of confidence amongst the public in regard to functioning of Government as a whole. In this context, the Committee is also not impressed by the fact that according to the statement of the Directorate itself in almost half of the number of cases the actual relief has been given after lapse of 3 months. The Committee would like this situation to be improved upon so that redressal of grievances is actually seen to be swift. In this context, the Committee are inclined to view sympathetically the requirement projected by the Directorate in respect of certain number of ministerial staff to support an otherwise officer oriented organisation.

3.34 The Committee are disappointed to note that the Directorate has kept no record of grievances which may have been repeated either by the same individual or in respect of the same Ministry/Department.

3.35 The Committee find that certain matters such as those relating to policy, service conditions, commercial contracts or cases which have been decided at the level of the Minister or are sub-judice do not fall within the purview of the Directorate. In this regard the Committee are unable to understand why commercial contracts have been kept outside the purview of the Directorate when Government is involved in a large variety of commercial activities which impinge on every aspect of the ordinary citizen's life. They also find it difficult to accept that matters relating to policy should be left untouched even though these might result in a grievances.

3.36 The Committee find that the Directorate of public grievances has been set up through a Cabinet Resolution and accorded a supra-departmental position by suitably amending Government of India

(Allocation of Business) Rules; yet it is not a statutory body. Intended to be the most effective tier of the machinery for redressal of public grievances it has been conceived as an ombudsman-like institution though not exactly on the pattern on which such institutions function in Britain and the Scandinavian countries. The Committee therefore, cannot but express their concern at the inherent limitation in its constitution. Even though they are inclined to agree with the contention of the Government that by remaining a part of the Executive the Directorate does enjoy certain degree of advantage, yet the Committee find that the jurisdiction of the Directorate is limited and its sweep insignificant as against the huge number of public grievances regularly pouring into government offices.

#### Recommendations

The Committee make the following recommendations:

3.37 All secretaries to Government of India should be made personally responsible for prompt action in matters relating to public grievances particularly in regard to availability of relevant record to Directorate of public grievances, and the action upon the recommendations made by the Directorate.

3.38 There should be an institutionalized mechanism for resolution of difference of opinion between the Directorate of public grievances and other Ministries/Departments so as to make sure that the effectiveness of Directorate is not lost in inter-ministerial wrangles.

3.39 The existing time lag in granting relief to the complainant need to be reduced and for this purpose the Directorate of public grievances should be sanctioned the ministerial staff necessary to support an otherwise officer oriented organization.

3.40 The practice of giving personal hearing of the complainant by the Directorate of public grievances as also by the Ministry/Department concerned may be given due encouragement so as to make the entire process of grievance redressal quick and purpose oriented.

3.41 A record of the nature, source and magnitude of grievances which tend to get repeated should be maintained to gauge the on the ground effectiveness of grievance redressal machinery or measures.

3.42 The Government should re-examine the desirability of keeping matters relating to policy, service conditions, commercial contracts or cases which have been decided at the Ministers level or cases which are sub-judice, outside the purview of Directorate of public grievances. The Committee should be informed about the result of such re-examination.

3.43 Keeping in view the actual intensity of Public Grievances in different Ministries/Departments more Ministries/Departments should be brought under the purview of the Directorate of public grievances.

**3.44 The Government should examine, de-novo, the question of converting Directorate of public grievances into a statutory authority on the pattern of ombudsman.**

## CHAPTER IV

### APPROACHES TO REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

#### A. Decentralisation

4.1 In a written note to the Committee the Ministry stated, that the grievances of the public in regard to functioning of Government Departments pertain to very large and complex spheres of Government's work—too large and various to be listed. The actual steps for redressal can ordinarily be taken only by the concerned Government department or agency. A central unit like the Department of Personnel and Public Grievances can only lay down general guidelines for all Ministries, Departments and agencies of Government. Within the parameters of the general guidelines, laid down by Department of ARPG specific measures of procedure and method have to be worked out by each unit in the light of the nature of the activity it is responsible for.

4.2 The Secretary during evidence stated:

"It is neither feasible nor practicable for a central or a single designated organisation to handle all the grievances because the grievance are of a very large variety. It will be difficult even if a central organisation tries to understand them. That will mean calling for all the files and papers and calling for comments of all the people who handle such type of grievances. Even if a body is set up, it will be cumbersome and would not result in public satisfaction. Therefore public satisfaction has to be at the point at which the people or the citizens meet the Government officers and if they are not satisfied, they can go one level above the person who handles this problem within the same department".

4.3 Regarding the need for effecting organisational changes in the Departments having public dealings, in order to improve the efficiency and capacity to provide public satisfaction, the Ministry in a note furnished to the Committee stated that the organisational changes in Ministries/ Departments having dealing with members of the public have been a continuous process.

4.4 Asked about devolution of responsibilities and delegation of administrative and financial powers at different levels of the hierarchy in the Department, the Ministry in a written reply stated that so far as the Public Grievance Wing is concerned, there is little or no room for any delegation of administrative or financial powers at different levels of the hierarchy. This Department cannot take any substantive decision by way of redressal of grievances and complaints pertaining to the work of various Ministries, Departments and agencies of Government. Substantive action has to be taken by the concerned Ministry, Department and agency of Government. Therefore, no exercise of financial or administrative power for disposal of grievances is involved.

### **B. Systemic studies**

4.5 The Ministry in a written note stated that, it is not feasible for DAR&PG to examine specific classes of grievances, much less individual grievances, that fall within the jurisdiction of these organisations. However, it takes up studies of systems in areas which are found to be grievance-prone so that by systemic reforms, the institutionalised mechanism of grievance redressal can be streamlined by the concerned organisation itself.

4.6 It also conducts studies on specific problems of administration which are either suggested to it by the client organisation or are selected by it suo-moto.

4.7 Asked whether any study has ever been conducted to find out the source and nature of public grievances in the country, the Ministry in a written reply stated that there has been no study conducted by Government specifically to find out the source, nature and magnitude of public grievances in the country. However the reports of the Administrative Reforms Commission had dealt with certain macro issues.

4.8 The public grievances pertain not only to the Government of India but also the State Governments, Union Territory administrations, local bodies and other representative institutions. No comprehensive study of all these grievances, whose number would run into lakhs, has been made. Nor may it be feasible to do so.

4.9 However, an illustrative list of studies of topics of direct concern to the citizen is mentioned in Annexure I.

4.10 The Ministry in their written reply to the query about effectiveness of studies of direct concern to citizens stated that in the course of study, a number of discussions are held with the officers concerned in the organisation under study. After completion of a study, the report is sent to the Ministry/Department/organisation concerned with the request to process the report and implement the suggestions/recommendations made in the report. Some illustrative examples of reforms brought about as a result of studies on topics of direct concern to the citizens are given in Annexure-II.

4.11 The Ministry have, however, added that the instructions and guidelines issued by Government for redressal of public grievances by Ministries, Departments and agencies primarily lay down the organisational structure of the grievance redressal unit to be set up by these organisations. They also deal with broad guidelines laying down time limits for disposal of grievances, prescribing interview with the complainants or aggrieved persons, as the case may be and so on. Instructions drawing special attention of all concerned are mentioned in Annexure-III.

4.12 When asked whether the Government reviewed work practices and procedures so as to reduce delay and to promote public satisfaction, the Ministry in a written reply stated that as a part of administrative reforms

review of work practices, procedures and office layouts is made periodically. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances also provides management consultancy services to various central government Ministries/organisations. It conducts studies so as to streamline procedures and methods of work for eliminating delay and promoting efficiency.

### C. Simplification of Procedures & Improvements

4.13 Asked whether Government has taken any steps to study changes in various statutes affecting the public so as to withdraw discretionary regulation in preference for non-discretionary regulations, reduce scope for public grievances and opportunities for harassment and corruption, the Ministry in reply stated that no one time exercise has been undertaken to examine provisions of the statutes which affect member of the public with a view to reducing scope for public grievances, the need for avoiding unnecessary and cumbersome procedures leading to the harassment of the members of the public is kept in view when bills are drafted and rules and manuals prepared. This is a continuous process. The Ministry informed the Committee that in recent years, a large number of steps have been taken to obviate harassment to the members of the public and the client groups. Thus, all Ministries and Departments have been making periodic exercises to simplify procedures, reduce the number of levels which examine an issue before a decision is taken and to identify the locus of decision-making so that account-ability can be established. All these are intended to reduce the scope of harassment to the members of the public and occasions for public grievance. The Department also stated that considering the need for continuous review of rules and regulations, the Manual of Office Procedure provide as follows:-

“152. Review of rules, regulations and manuals:-

- (1) Every section will maintain an up-to date list of rules, regulations and manuals administered by it and take action for their review.
- (2) Internal Work Study Unit will report the progress made in review of rules, regulations and manuals to the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances by 30th of April every year.

4.14 When asked about the Department achievements in this regard the Ministry stated that the role of this Department in the matter of simplification of rules and procedures, as part of administrative reforms, is only advisory in nature and the main thrust of reforms has to come from

within the administrative Ministries/Departments. It is, thus, for the Ministries/Departments concerned to examine and review rules and manuals framed for the conduct of their business from time to time, and to amend/modify them in the light of the experience gathered in the course of their implementation, with a view to reducing chances of harassment to the public. Some of the examples of simplification of rules introduced by various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are given in Annexure IV.

4.15 During evidence the Additional Secretary, DARPG informed:

"We have made a five-point action plan which provides for periodic simplification of procedures in the working of all Departments of Government and organisations under it for enforcement of accountability and so on. It is actually reviewed in the quarterly meetings. Roughly 1700 different procedures have been simplified by different Ministries, organisations which have been mentioned in the Annual Reports of the Department. For quicker decision making, we ensure that most of the cases in the Ministries and Departments of Government are not examined at more than two levels unless it is a major policy of the Government that is at issue. Annual action plans have been introduced for major areas of work. The plan seeks to quantify the task and lays down time limits for its performance. It also helps finding persons who should be held accountable for non-performance in a matter. These are some of the mechanisms which we have followed."

4.16 The Ministry in a written note stated that the reforms suggested in its study reports prepared by the PG Wing mainly relate to organisational structure and methods and procedures of work. The technical aspects of the work of Ministries/Organisations can best be taken care of by themselves and it is not feasible to cover these aspects in the studies undertaken by this Department. Similarly, the aspects of motivation and discipline also fall within the domain of the respective organisations. In some study reports, however, recommendations for providing suitable training to staff and instilling better discipline have been made.

#### **D. Public Cooperation**

4.17 To a query as to whether the government tried to seek cooperation of the public in general or through their representatives/associations in devising ways of providing timely and satisfactory services the Ministry explained as follows:

4.18 In December 1985, the Secretary in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions addressed letters to all Secretaries to the

Government of India advising them to involve voluntary organisations for revitalisation of the administration and to enlist such voluntary organisations as they would like to interact with. The Ministries and Departments were also asked to consider the feasibility of holding 'Open house' meetings to give an opportunity to the members of the public and user group to ventilate their grievance.

4.19 In 1986, Several ministries involved in a big way with the affairs of the public, were advised to set up Standing Committees of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA). Such Standing Committee are to act as apex body for:

- (a) giving periodic feedback on programmes under implementation;
- (b) serving as sounding board for new ideas; and
- (c) concretising the manner in which the voluntary organisations can supplement official action.

4.20 When asked whether there has been positive response in this regard the Ministry gave the following details:

4.21 The following Ministries/Departments have responded stating that they would benefit from institutional interaction with voluntary agencies:—

1. D/o Agriculture & Cooperation
2. D/o Fertilizers
3. M/s Commerce
4. D/o Textiles
5. D/o Defence
6. D/o Revenue (Open house meeting with representatives of business and industry are held under the chairmanship of the concerned Minister)
7. M/o Information & Broadcastings
8. M/o Petroleum & Natural Gas
9. D/o Coal (There is a total Advisory Council under the Chairmanship of Minister with broad based Membership)
10. D/o Civil Aviation
11. M/s Labour

**The following Ministries/Departments have set up SCOVA:—**

1. Deptt. of Youth Affairs & Sports (Resolution dated 26-10-86)
2. Deptt. of Electronics (Resolution dated 18-2-87)
3. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (from 17-6-86)
4. Deptt. of Pension & Pensioner' Welfare (from 31-7-86)

**The following Ministries/Departments have set up bodies akin to SCOVA**

1. Deptt. of Civil Supplies
2. Deptt. of Women & Child Development
3. Deptt. of Environment & Forests
4. Deptt. of Rural Development
5. Ministry of Welfare

#### **E. Legal Safeguards for Citizens**

4.22 The Ministry in a written note informed the Committee that no legislation, as such, for redressal of public grievance has been enacted.

Asked whether Government plan to bring forward any statutory mechanism for the purpose the Ministry stated that the Lok Pal Bill 1989 was introduced in Lok Sabha on 29.12.1989. It was yet to be enacted.

4.23 Asked why legal right cannot be given to citizens against harassment by Government Department particularly the right to claim damages for harassment and delay, the Ministry in a post-evidence reply stated that Government's role as an organ of the State in the performance of the multifarious duties and responsibilities of the state towards the citizen, have the effect of causing some harassment to the latter. But it is far more difficult than is the case with a commercial or industrial undertaking, to identify the specific factors or functionaries that may be responsible for this. Much of the harassment to citizens is due to the fact that there is a large gap between the demand for services placed upon government agencies and the availability of wherewithals required for these services, rather than the defuse, even unidentifiable, loci of responsibility in the organisation of the Government.

4.24 In their written reply the Ministry further stated that in some recent court judgements and judicial pronouncements, the claim for

payment of compensation to the citizen in specific cases has been upheld. However, without denying the logical case for such a dispensation, it is felt its introduction on a large scale at the present level of our socio-economic development is beset with a variety of serious practical problems. In the first place, it is often not feasible or practicable to distinguish between the traditional role of the State and its more modern role as the provider of welfare to the citizen, and more specifically, the dispenser of services for a consideration. Some of the harassment and hardship caused to the citizen by the state in playing its former role may be unavoidable at the present stage of our social development. This role may sometimes be indistinguishable from the states role as provider of services for a consideration. In real life, the line of distinction may be difficult to identify, even though, theoretically speaking, its existence is undoubtedly.

4.25 The Ministry also added that the above point is being urged not to deny the need for eliminating unavoidable and unjustified harassment to the citizen in his daily dealings with the agencies of the State. However, each case has to be decided on merit. If the courts have come to feel that there has been a totally unjustified denial of satisfaction or causing of harassment to the citizen by the agencies of the State, they have from time to time ordered payment of compensation to the citizen concerned. But a general dispensation for payment of damage to the citizen for all kinds of acts of commission and omission on the part of the State is likely to be counterproductive and will only lead to innumerable litigations.

4.26 The Ministry also mentioned that in the recent years, a strong public opinion in this country is building up, somewhat along the lines of public opinion in the advanced industrialised countries of the West, demanding that consumers of goods and services provided by industrial, commercial and service agencies should have the right to seek redress of their grievances, if failure on the part of these agencies causes lack of satisfaction to the consumer or damage to his health or property. A small but significant step in response to this public opinion has been taken in the form of the Consumer Protection Act of 1986 (CPA). It provides for compensatory satisfaction or damage to the consumer for the loss of satisfaction that may be caused to him on account of supply of sub-standard, inadequate, spurious or harmful goods and services, or non-supply or only partial supply of goods and services paid for.

4.27 The question of extending the same principle that relates to the provision of goods and services to sphere of the government's work is far more complex. It is far more difficult to pin-down the responsibility for lack of satisfaction to the public resulting from acts of commission or omission on the part of agencies of Government other than those involved in the provision of goods and services for a consideration. Although, the consumer's Protection Act does not make any distinction

between Government and non-Government agencies, the scheme of the Act being what it is, it is much more difficult to demand satisfaction from an agency of Government like the Railways, the Posts and Tele-communication Department or the airline services and so on, than is the case with a producer of goods in the private or the public sector. Again, a major area of the Citizen's dissatisfaction pertains to the activities of Government where there is no direct *quid pro quo* involved between the giver and the taker.

#### F. Attitudinal Reorientation

4.28 The Ministry in a post-evidence note submitted to the Committee has stated that the analysis of grievances made from time to time points to the fact that much grievance is caused by the insensitivity of the personnel of the government agencies concerned, to the needs and feelings of the public or the client groups, as the case may be. However, it is by no means the case that these attitudinal factors alone explain the wide prevalence of public grievance against Government agencies. There are certain basic deficiencies in our situation which give rise to conditions for grievance.

4.29 Within the limitations of these basic deficiencies which can neither be wished away nor overcome in the short run, much can be done to ameliorate public grievance against the working of Government agencies by way of inculcating into the personnel of Government agencies a culture of responsiveness to the public.

4.30 At the lower and middle levels of these agencies, particularly those away from the headquarters and scattered all over the country, there is a lack of perception of the larger objectives underlying the apparently small tasks being performed by them. This often promotes a certain cynicism in outlook and mechanical approach to ones' duties. The functionaries neither understand the importance of what they do nor the gravity of their failings and negligences. Much harassment or dissatisfaction caused to the public is often not the result of wilful acts of commission or omission on the part of these functionaries they are not necessarily motivated by malevolence. It is often that they do not fully understand the significance of their tasks and responsibilities. Quite often a functionary's lack of articulation and capacity to communicate with members of the public and client groups causes the latter's dissatisfaction. A principal contributory factor to this state of affairs is the culture of secrecy prevailing all Government organisations. Right from the induction of person into the Government service, an impression is continuously conveyed to him by a host of direct and indirect suggestions that as little information as possible should be shared with the public. As a result even when a functionary is helpless about giving satisfaction to the public or has done his work properly

within the limitations of his situation, he fails to convey that impression and instead gives the impression of being deliberately obstructive or resistant to the request of a citizen. To cite these factors is not to underestimate the prevalence of widespread corruption and malpractice particularly at the lower levels of the machinery.

4.31 During oral evidence the Secretary, Ministry stated:—

“I may be reviewing the work of a Ministry which at the bureaucratic level is headed by an officer of my rank. We both by definition belong to the same herd, I am examining his work, if there is a particular complaint with reference to his office and he is unable to provide relief, nothing much could be done. The inherent deficiency of the system is not the rules. Bureaucrats tend to blame rules. Rules have never stood in our way. Within the rules we can work and deliver the goods. It is we who are really at fault.”

4.32 When asked whether the Government has determined any criteria/norms to test the sensitivity of government towards Public Givevances the Ministry stated that there is an institutional mechanism for judging the sensitivity of government departments/functionaries towards public grievances in the form of a column prescribed in the proforma for the Annual Confidential Report on officers. It assesses attributes like an officer's readiness to be accessible to the public and responsive to their needs. Accordingly, if officers are found lacking in this respect, corrective advice is given.

#### G. Training

4.33 Asked as to what could be done to bring about positive attitudinal change amongst officers and staff of Government department, in order to make them more sensitive to public grievances. The Ministry stated that large scale training can contribute to the improvement of attitudes and appreciation of perspectives. A functionary at the lower or the intermediate level should not only be thoroughly conversant with the skills required for performing his daily duties, but should also have a perspective of the larger objectives being sought to be served by him, the significance of the apparently small role expected of him in the fulfilment of these objectives. If he can relate himself to the larger goals or objectives, it will infuse in his mind a sense of pride in what he does and a sense of belonging to an organisation aiming high. The training programme should thus focus both on upgradation of skills and generation of an awareness of the social environment.

4.34 The Ministry stated the some efforts have been made to provide periodic training to the higher levels of the Central Government

administration viz. the All India Services as well as Group 'A' Central Services and to a lesser extent to members of some of the Group 'B' Services. But very little concrete steps have been taken so far for periodic training of the numerically much larger personnel of Groups 'C' and 'D' services. For their sheer size, it is very difficult to make any institutional arrangement for their periodic training aimed at upgradation of functional skill and imparting a proper perspective in them. Apart from the large financial expenditure involved, there does not simply exist sufficient human resources required for the purpose.

4.35 The Ministry further stated that apart from the culture of secrecy, a distorted system of accountability has also contributed to the promotion of the culture of unresponsiveness on the part of the functionaries of Government at the lower levels. A distorted system of accountability often acts as a disincentive to people taking the risk of departing from the prescribed course of action. In the process, formal adherence to prescription is often ensured, the action remaining short of essence.

#### H. Modernization

4.36 Asked to indicate whether Government had reviewed work practices and office layout to promote public satisfaction with the functioning of Government agencies the Ministry stated:

"As a part of administrative reforms review of work practices, procedures and office layouts is made periodically."

4.37 With a view to promoting modernization of offices including modern office lay-outs, a Plan Scheme was drawn up under the Seventh Five Year Plan which provides money to selected office units for modernisation of offices including alteration of lay-outs in order to make offices having interaction with the public more easily accessible to the latter. The idea is to set up one or two model units in every major organisation on the basis of which over a period of time, the entire organisation could adopt suitable lay-out, use modern office equipments promoting efficiency and facilitating easier interaction with the members of the public.

4.38 In this context the Secretary, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions stated during evidence:—

"We would try to modernise our own section in keeping with the guidelines and in fact, we are working on that ...Modernisation... is the lay out of the office, the manner in which the people sit facilitate easier interaction with the public, congenial atmosphere of working, proper storage of record etc. Then, there should be quicker transaction of business. These are some of the aspects and

we have prepared a small blue print, which we are trying to put through. We would introduce this scheme first in those departments which have larger public contacts like Post Office, railway booking offices etc. but even there it has not gone beyond some gadgetry."

4.39 Asked whether any schemes/projects/other activities had been undertaken for fulfilling the objectives of the Department, the Ministry stated that there is no scheme or project specifically for the Public Grievances Wing of the Department. However, since 1987-88, the Department has been implementing a small scheme under the Five Year Plan for the modernisation of Government offices. The idea is to provide some assistance to selected Ministries and Departments of Government so that they can take up a programme of modernisation of one or two units to begin with. The modernisation involves use of modern office equipments, contributing to speed and efficiency, creation of appropriate office lay-out to make easily accessible to the members of the public such units as have to have frequent interaction with them. The budgetary provision for the year 1988-89 was a sum of Rs. 100 lakhs. It is used as an incentive for Ministries and departments to induce them to take on much larger scale programmes of modernisation than can be financed by the money under the scheme.

4.40 Giving salient features of the Plan scheme for modernisation of offices the Ministry in a written note stated that the Plan Scheme aims at obtaining tangible results in the shortest possible time by focussing special attention on a limited area of a Ministry/Department are required to identify a section or a unit within the office which would be taken up for development into a model unit within the framework of the guidelines contained in the Scheme. The unit is intended to set an example for the other units/sections of the organisation to take up imaginative steps to improve their work environment.

4.41 The basic idea underlying the scheme is that improvement should come from within and as far as possible by using the available resource in an imaginative and innovative manner. Funds to supplement the Departmental effort are allocated to the Ministries/ Departments on the basis of the proposals formulated by them. A Screening committee examines and clears the proposals received from the ministries/departments. After the clearance of the proposals, the funds as sanctioned by the Screening committee are placed at the disposal of the user Ministries/Departments for the implementation of the works.

4.42 The scheme started some time towards the end of 1987. For a scheme like this, a period of trial and error becomes unavoidable. While certain well-known concepts of modernisation have been sought to be promoted under the scheme, there are a number of factors

which render it difficult to operationalise such concepts wholesale under any project, much less to replicate it in other institutions.

4.43 Within the limitations of the existing buildings, suitable changes in the functional lay-out keeping in view the specific function on an office unit, have been sought to be brought about by requisitioning the assistance of a specialised agency like the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad. As an experimental measure, one unit of the Department of Personnel & Training in the North Block has been sought to be restructured in order to make it more functional. While some model has been prepared for this purpose, it is still under examination in consultation with the CPWD. The main reason why it has been necessary to go slow on finalising the design is the fact that it will not be enough merely to ensure the rationality of the design but also to see that it is cost effective, that it can be replicated in other units and does not remain merely an island of excellence not susceptible to replication.

4.44 While the experimental stage of finding suitable functional lay-outs is not yet over, a number of other changes have been brought about under the scheme of modernisation, the total effect of which, not quantifiable easily, is perceptible in the day-to-day functioning of many departments of the government. Large scale introduction of time-saving equipments like high-duty photocopiers, risographs, electronic typewriters, FAX machines, laminators, shredders, etc. has contributed a great deal to speeding up work in these offices.

4.45 In addition, considerable amount of attention is being given to records management. Introduction of microfilms and more up-to-date devices for miniaturising records for saving space, better maintenance, easier retrievability, etc., have been started on a small scale.

4.46 When asked as to what are the shortcomings that have been observed in the scheme of modernisation of offices and to what extent modernisation can be initiated in the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances itself, the Ministry stated that the objective of this limited scheme is the adoption of an integrated approach to the designing of an office lay-out that promotes more openness, facilitates accessibility for the members of the public or the client groups where they have a legitimate interest in the working of the office, relationalise movement of files and personnel inside the office premises as to promote better time and motion management and contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of better efficiency, cleanliness, freshness and so on.

4.47 Right from the inception of the scheme in the middle of the financial year 1987-88, this Department has sought to prevail upon the ministries, departments and major agencies of the Government of India to come up with an integrated design that promotes better lay-out for the office, more rationalised seating arrangements for the staff, saving in

space and wasteful movement, contributing to efficiency and speed blended with greater openness and esthetically pleasing environment for work.

4.48 But in actual practice, it has been found that this is not an easy thing to do. In the first place, there is no standard prescription applicable to all offices of the Government of India regardless of the type of work they do and the degree and kind of interaction they have with the members of the public or the client groups. In the second place, even public sector undertakings and private sector organisations with whom some exchange of ideas has taken place, have not been able to come up with any standard set of prescriptions or a standard model that can be adopted in to or even with suitable modification. In the third place, most of the Government of India's offices are housed in buildings which were constructed years ago; and the design of each building imposes its own limitations upon any move for modernisation of office lay-out and so forth. In the fourth place, entrenched habits and traditions on the part of the office personnel have also undoubtedly stood in the way of a more rational use of office premises. For example, units of an office, which have traditionally been located in what is thought to be a more prestigious area or a more prestigious part of an office complex, are chary of moving out elsewhere, even if the norms of rationalisation so demand. On account of haphazard growth of office units, different units work as places far removed from each other, although functionally they are closely interlinked.

4.49 Some efforts have been made to involve specialised design agencies to suggest model office lay-out and so forth. Certain office units, chosen for the purpose of modernisation, have been inspected by some specialised agencies; they have made some exercises and come up with certain suggestions. Unfortunately, the benefit that is likely to accrue from this exercise is at best marginal and at worst only cosmetic in nature. But the extra investment involved in carrying out these suggestions of limited value is likely to be so high as to inhibit their adoption. Even if they bring any small benefit to the organisation concerned, it will not be realisable in other units of the same organisation, much less other offices of government. Since it has not yet been possible to evolve such design and models as are replicable to various organisations so that the total benefit resulting from this exercise is large enough and perceptible, this Department has been rather cautious in sanctioning expenditure for introducing such models. However, efforts for evolving suitable models are on and it is expected that over a period of time, some reasonable models that lend themselves to easy adoption in the already built office premises, will come to be evolved and adopted at reasonable cost.

4.50 No doubt, in the way the scheme has been implemented during the last 2-3 years, the basic objective of creating model office lay-out has not been achieved. But considerable efficiency in the performance of repetitive work has been achieved in different offices by the introduction of various

time and cost saving modern office equipments, like photocopiers (including high duty photocopiers) electronic typewriters, shredders, Fax system and so forth. It will perhaps be too drastic to dismiss the introduction of such gadgets as of no consequence in terms of achievement of higher efficiency and speed in the work of Government. No doubt, the benefit so gained is not easily quantifiable; nor is it practicable to apportion this benefit to various measures taken for achieving overall efficiency and speed during the last several years. But the fact that there has been considerable improvement in terms of efficiency and speed in these organisations, — at least in specific areas of their work is testified to by people who work in these organisations and those who have dealings with them. However, the Department is fully conscious of the larger objectives of the scheme not having been achieved as yet and efforts will be kept up to bring its implementation more closely in line with the objectives outlined.

4.51 This specific scheme for modernisation of offices does not encompass the question of introducing attitudinal changes required for speedier and more effective disposal of public grievances. The question of attitudinal changes in the personnel of Government, a highly pertinent one, in nevertheless too large and complex to be the subject matter of a limited scheme like this.

4.52 Explaining performance of the scheme, the Ministry stated that it is difficult to quantify the benefit which has accrued to these Ministries and Departments as a result of the introduction of these measures. But the general impression of all these Ministries, Departments has been that the use of these equipments has considerably speeded up work in many sectors.

### I. Monitoring Public Awareness

4.53 Instructions have been issued by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances from time to time to all Ministries/ Departments and agencies of Government which provide facilities, services or goods to members of the public to publish booklets, pamphlets, hand-outs and so on outlining the objective of the activity concerned, the procedure to be followed, the offices/officers to be contacted and so on.

4.54 The Department of Pension & Pensioner's welfare have issued booklets like "Your Retirement Benefits" about the pension and other entitlements for the benefits of retiring/retired government servants. Many departments and agencies of Government have issued booklets, pamphlets etc., in respect of specified areas of work where they frequently interact with the members of the public. While it is difficult to quantify the public satisfaction derived from these measures, it can generally be said that the issue of such booklets, pamphlets has considerably facilitated interaction with the public in the related areas.

**4.55 Some examples of booklets/pamphlets published are given below:—**

***Department of Revenue (Central Board of Direct Taxes)***

1. How to compute your taxable income.
2. New law and procedure for assessment-guidelines.
3. Settlement of cases under direct taxes acts.
4. Tax clearance.
5. How to compute your wealth and gift-tax.
6. How to compute your capital gains tax.

***Ministry of Railways (Railway Board)***

1. Passenger's hand book.
2. Rail Travel Concession Guide.

***Ministry of Industry (Directorate General of Technical Development)***

1. Delicensing of industry.
2. Broad banding of industry.
3. Introduction to DGTD.

***Department of Pensions and Pensioners Welfare***

1. Your retirement benefits
2. Care, concerns and compassion for pensioners—ours senior citizens.

4.56 Booklets, pamphlets and handouts are issued by not only the Ministries and Departments but also by other agencies subordinate to them. In the second place, different areas have different issues for being projected to the members of the public. No single agency of Government functions as a repository of all such pamphlets, booklets and so on.

4.57 During evidence the Secretary of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions stated "We have asked major department to bring out pamphlets and booklets explaining what the Government is supposed to do in that area. We have also instructed the grievance machinery in each department to look for grievances published in the columns of newspapers and attend to those grievances which are aired in the press quickly because these are one of the things which everybody sees and the image of the department is also involved in that."

4.58 Asked whether the public at large were aware about the existence of the Directorate of Public Grievances in the Cabinet Secretariat the Ministry stated that once the Directorate has been provided with the requisite staff and other infrastructure, wide publicity through the Press notes, Radio/T.V. etc. may be launched.

**Conclusion**

4.59 The Committee note that public grievances in regard to Government Department, are not only very large in number but also relate to a complex variety of spheres of Governmental activity. They are also conscious of the fact that public satisfaction has to be at the point at which the citizen comes in contact with Government officials and that redressal of any grievances

which may arise on such contact ought to be available at the next one or two levels of the hierarchy. The Committee are, however, dismayed to find the situation otherwise. Although they accept the rationale of setting up a distinct Department of Public Grievances at the apex level, that, nevertheless, can not detract them from the realisation that the problem, however gigantic, has to be approached in a decentralised manner. The Committee are convinced that the procedures and methods of redressal of public grievances have to be so devised that grievances are not pushed upwards.

4.60 In this context, the Committee have been apprised by Government that they do not find any further necessity of delegating administrative and financial powers at different levels of the administrative hierarchy. They are, however, not convinced by the implicit suggestion that existing delegation of powers does not, in any way, lead to public grievances.

4.61 The Committee find that the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances is neither meant for nor capable of looking into specific grievances as such. They are also apprised that in furtherance of its role as the policy formulating agency the Department has been paying a great deal of attention to effecting improvement in organisational and procedural aspects of the work done in Government Departments. The Department also looks into the reasons for delays and inefficiency and suggests necessary reform in the methods of work. It also acts as a management consultant to various Departments for this purpose. This is being done through systemic studies of various Departments or even of individual segments of such Departments. The Committee, however, find it disappointing that no comprehensive review of various statutes has been conducted so far, to identify and delete such provisions of the law which cause undue harassment to the public. The Committee are of the firm view that the roots of harassment to public and consequential corruption in Government Departments essentially are due to excessive and various legislation.

4.62 The Committee are happy to note that the Department has adopted a five point Action Plan for making machinery for redressal of public grievances effective. They also note that under this plan the Department aims at reducing the decision making levels, quantification of tasks, setting of time limits for its performance, identifying the loci of responsibility besides drawing up of annual action plans for major areas of work. The Committee also learn that about 1700 procedures being followed in various Government Departments have been simplified as a result of efforts made by the Department. They, however, can not escape the feeling that the large number of procedures still remain unsimplified.

4.63 The Committee also note that in carrying out systemic studies and in simplification of procedures, the Department has only an advisory role. Obviously this puts a limitation on the utility of the work done by the

Department in this regard. The Committee would, therefore, like the Department to ensure greater involvement of the individual Ministries/ Departments in carrying out studies of their concern so as to enhance the final acceptability of the consequential recommendations made by the Department. In this regard, they would expect the Department to work out an appropriate scheme of inter-action with various Ministries/ Departments.

4.64 The Committee are convinced that voluntary agencies can play a very significant role in providing necessary feedback to the Government Departments about the functioning of their field level agencies and the degree of sensitivity they exhibit in regard to public grievances. In this context, they welcome the initiative taken by the Department in asking individual Ministries/Departments to involve voluntary agencies in the task of redressing public grievances and in setting up standing Committee of voluntary agencies for this purpose. The Committee, however, are not satisfied with the response this suggestion has received from other Ministries/Government Departments. Even though 12 Ministries/ Departments had initially stated that they would benefit from institutional inter-action with voluntary agencies, none of these have actually set up the standing Committees even though a period of five years has lapsed. On the other hand, 9 other Ministries/Departments have set up such Committees or identical bodies.

4.65 The Committee find that there exist no specific legislation for redressal of public grievances. They were further informed by the Ministry that citizen cannot be given a legal right against harassment by the Government Departments and a right to claim damages for such harassment, as introduction of such a dispensation on a large scale at the present level of country's socio-economic development is beset with a variety of serious problems which include large gap between demand and supply for services rendered by the Government agencies and unidentifiable loci of responsibility within the Government structure, besides indistinguishability of the two roles played by the Government in modern times viz. the traditional role of the state and modern role as provider of welfare and dispenser of services for consideration. While the Committee are inclined to appreciate the complexities involved in enacting a law against harassment by a Government Department, they nevertheless have a feeling of deep disquiet over the predicament of ordinary citizen.

4.66 The Committee perceive the attitudinal aspect in redressing a public grievance to be the core of the whole problem. They are convinced that the reform of procedure can result in fewer grievances or speedy redressal of grievances unless Government officials display a positive attitude towards the ordinary citizen. The Committee are also convinced that training is the most essential input for bringing about the necessary attitudinal change amongst the Government staff. They are, however, dismayed to find that sufficient attention has not been given hitherto for to

the training of Group 'C' & 'D' personnel who though numerically large, are precisely the people with whom the citizen comes most in contact.

4.67 The Committee also feel that attitudinal problem is not so much of a governance or a management problem as it is inspirational in nature. The Committee firmly believe that the right attitudes should flow from top down words and that Government officers at higher level ought to develop the necessary qualities of leadership as would help them in inspiring and motivating their staff to develop a positive attitude towards their work.

4.68 The Committee have been informed that with a view to promoting modernisation of offices including modern office lay out a plan-scheme has been taken up since late 1987. Under the scheme money is provided to select office units for their modernisation including alteration of lay outs in order to promote efficiency and to make inter-action with the public more easy. The strategy is to set up one or two modern units in every major organisation on the basis of which, over a period of time, the entire organisation can adopt suitable lay out and use modern office equipment. A sum of Rs. 100 lakhs was provided under the scheme during the year 1988-89 and used as an incentive for Ministries/Departments to induce them to take up programmes of modernisation on a much larger scale. The Committee note that the basic idea underlying the scheme is to bring about improvement from within an organisation and, as far as possible, using available resources in an imaginative and innovative manner. They, however, find that the scheme has not made any visible impact, so far, as it has not progressed beyond the experimental stage. They also note that a number of difficulties are being faced in operationalising and replicating the experiment. The Government have also been going slow in the matter. One of the major problems being faced relates to adoption of a standard office lay-out and that in this endeavour the assistance of National Institute of Designing, Ahmedabad has also been sought. A beginning in this regard has also been made with the re-structuring of one of the Department of Personnel and Training while the Committee appreciate the objectives of the scheme they would, nevertheless, like to point out that modernisation ought not to connote merely its physical aspect, that is, office lay out and introduction of time saving office equipment like photocopiers, FAX machines, shredders and electronic typewriters etc. The Committee are of the opinion that modernisation goes beyond this and encompasses the software aspect i.e. attitudes towards work, procedures, management of record, work practices and the overall culture which pervades the Government offices. While they welcome better office lay out and introduction of equipment to increase the efficiency of the staff, they would like the Department to adopt a holistic approach to modernisation. This would call for an integrative strategy which emphasises both physical and non-physical aspects.

4.69 The Committee cannot but emphasise the need for promoting public awareness in regard to existing remedies available to the citizen for

redressal of public grievances. They are of the view that sufficient publicity has not been given, so far, to the existence of Directorate of public grievances. Likewise people in general do not appear to have a correct appreciation of the role of each of the three tiers of public grievance redressal machinery.

#### Recommendation

The Committee make the following recommendations:—

4.70 The existing delegation of powers at different levels of administrative hierarchy may be reviewed. Also a mechanism may be evolved whereby such a review can be carried out at regular intervals in order to readjust the structure of delegated powers in accordance with changing situation.

4.71 The Government should consciously move away from a situation of excessive and cumbersome laws. Towards this end it should undertake a thorough review of all the statutes that affect the common citizen in his day to day life so as make it simple and easy to comply. The drafting of bills should also reflect the same concern for the common citizen.

4.72 The Government should step up efforts towards simplification of rules and procedures in different fields of public administration to ensure visible relief to the public.

4.73 The Department of Public Grievances should ensure the involvement of individual Ministries/Departments in carrying out studies of their concern so as to enhance the final acceptability of consequential recommendations made by the Department. An appropriate scheme of interaction with various Ministries/Department may be drawn.

4.74 The Department should review the position in regard to involvement of voluntary agencies for monitoring the grievance redressal performance of field offices / agencies of various Ministries / Departments and explain to the Committee why 12 departments which had initially responded positively in the matter, have later failed to set up Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies for this purpose. The Committee will also like to know how successfully such standing committees have been functioning in other Departments. They also desire that while constituting SCOVA suitable guidelines should be issued to involve only genuine and reputed voluntary agencies.

4.75 In the present situation where Government has critical role in every sphere of life and whereby its inefficiencies as dispenser of services and provider of welfare get shielded behind the omnipotency of the State and the public feeling about the insensitivity of the Government Department to their grievances is widespread, the committee would like the Government to at least move in a direction in which it can progressively shed responsibilities which do not fall strictly within the traditional role of the State. Simultaneously they would like the Government to encourage legal action under Consumers Protection Act by citizens or their bodies against such of

its Departments as are clearly engaged in distinctly service oriented and commercial activities.

4.76 The Government should draw up a comprehensive plan of imparting training to middle level supervisory and non-supervisory Government staff so that apart from acquiring the necessary office skills they also understand the importance of their work and the perspective from which such importance is derived. The committee would like the training programmes to be so devised as will emphasize the attitudinal aspects as a part of the technical aspects of the work.

4.77 The training of Group 'A' level officers, apart from focussing on technical skills of management ought to lay an equal stress on leadership.

4.78 As a step towards modernisation of Government offices the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances should first operationalise the concepts of modernisation in their own offices so as to serve as a model for other Ministries/Departments. In this regard while the Committee are assured by the efforts which are already underway and they desire that the Department should show results. The government should also inform the concerned agencies.

4.79 The Government should take immediate steps to make effective use of the electronic medias and other in educating general public about the public redressal machinery available in various Ministries/Departments and to particularly enhance awareness about the role of Director of Public grievances.

**Illustrative list of recommendations of the D.P.G. which have been accepted by the Ministries/Departments**

**1. *Value-dating of Remittances***

A citizen complained that the money transferred by him through mail transfer to his account in another branch at another station of the same bank was unduly delayed and he was not compensated by the nationalised bank. It was recommended that in the case of an individual customer; particularly, where the amount is deposited to liquidate loan should be deemed as accounted for after 7 days from the date of deposit. Accepting this recommendation, the Reserve Bank of India had issued instructions on 1st December, 1988 providing—

- (i) Credit of mail transfers should be afforded within a maximum period of 7 days (10 days in case of Northern Region and Sikkim State); and
- (ii) A system of value-dating should be introduced in commercial banks in respect of mail transfers and suitable interest may also be paid to the customers if there is delay beyond this period.

The complainant was accordingly paid interest for the delayed transfer.

**2. *Charging of overdue interest by commercial banks***

A customer of a nationalised bank complained that the bills discounted by him were not despatched by the bank promptly and as a result he had to pay overdue interest which commences 7 days after the discounting of the bills. It was recommended that a time-limit may be fixed for despatch of instruments and if there is a delay by the bank, the period of 7 days beyond which overdue interest becomes due may be extended to the extent of delay. This recommendation was accepted and the amount due was refunded to the customer.

**3. *Delay in crediting matured value of FDR to the account of the Customer***

Fixed Deposit of a customer matured on 12th November, 1988 and his instructions to credit the amount to his account were executed on 4.1.89. He complained against this delay and demanded interest. The recommendations of the Directorate to pay interest and to convey regrets to the customer for delay were accepted and implemented.

**4. *Rationalisation of service charges for bankers cheques and Demand Drafts***

The service charges for bank drafts and bankers cheques were not uniform and as a result, bankers cheques of small value were issued by the bank by charging higher rate of service charges than the rate applicable to

the demand drafts, although the bankers cheques are drawn only for local banks while the Demand Drafts are for outstation banks. This matter was taken up with the RBI and the RBI accordingly issued instructions to bring the charges at par with those for Demand Drafts.

#### *5. Refusal to pay medi-claim*

An insured complaint that a subsidiary of the GIC and refused to pay medi-claim of his wife on the plea that he had not disclosed material information in the proposal form. Investigation of the case revealed that two important columns were left blank and the Insurance Co. issued policy without verifying the proposal form properly. It was recommended that the medi-claim may be paid because after having accepted the proposal, the liability of Insurance Co. is established. The Insurance Co. accepted the recommendation and paid the claim.

#### *6. Interest on delayed payment of pension under the Jeevan Akshay Policy*

A senior citizen who had invested in Jeevan Akshay policy complained that while the LIC accepted the payment but it did not release the pension when it became due one month after the acceptance of the payment. The LIC argued that since the proof of age was not submitted with the proposal form, the policy could not be made effective from the date of receipt of payment. It was suggested that proof of age is not very material in case of Jeevan Akshay policy and, therefore, pension should be paid one month after the date of payment and if at all any verification is required, that should have been completed before the payment was accepted. The LIC accepted the recommendation and released the payment of pension.

#### *7. Payment of arrears of pay and allowances to the widow of a railway employee*

A railway employee who was retired on his attaining the age of 55 years, represented on March, 9 1983 that he was wrongfully retired and should have been continued in service upto the age of 60 in accordance with the judgement of the Supreme Court. The Railway Administration took the view that the claim of the complainant was not admissible because only those retiring after 1968 would get the benefit and his claim was not an established claim under the Industrial Disputes Act. When his request was being processed, the complainant expired and the case was pursued by his wife. Investigation of the complaint revealed that the Labour Court in similar cases had decided in payment of arrears for five years and the plea of Administration that the complainant should get his claim established by a court was not fair. The Law Ministry also agreed with this view. It was recommended that arrears of pay and allowances for five years may be paid to the wife of the complainant, which the Railways paid.

### *8. Suit bar of railway claims*

A number of complaints were received against rejection of compensation claim of railways on the plea of suit bar under the Limitation Act. Investigation revealed that provisions of the Limitation Act were invoked even in those cases where the claims had been filed within three years and delay in disposal was on the part of Railway administration. This matter was examined and after obtaining the advice of the Law Ministry, it was recommended that the suit bar clause may not be invoked in such cases and the claim settled on merit. The Railway Board have accepted this and issued requisite instructions to the zonal administration.

### *9. Refund against lost railway tickets*

A senior citizen had booked four tickets for journey in Southern Railway. A week before the date of the journey, the tickets were lost by him and he reported the matter to the Station Supdt. as well as to the Commercial Supdt. of the Southern Railway. His claim for refund was rejected as the rules do not provide for refund against lost tickets. The matter was examined and it was recommended that considering the facts and circumstances of the case and the status of the complainant, refund may be granted as a special case. This was accepted and the Southern Railway granted refund.

### *10. Non-settlement of claim by Railways for non-delivery of goods*

A complaint was received pleading that a claim against non-delivery of goods booked from Madras to Jalpaiguri has been arbitrarily repudiated by the Railways. Investigation of this case showed that Section 77 of the Indian Railways Act was wrongly invoked. Accordingly, payment of the claim was recommended which the Railways accepted and made the payment.

### *11. Refund of rental on account of excessive charges on teleprinter circuits*

A teleprinter user represented that the Department provided teleprinter circuit to them at old rates prevalent upto 1986 for use on 8-hours basis. Later, however, the Department hiked the charges and made it mandatory for the users to avail of the services for 24 hours. The subscriber wanted to surrender the system but the condition of 3 months guarantee period was invoked and the new tariff was charged. On investigation of this grievance, it was recommended that the complainant may be charged at old rates (i.e. part-time basis) for the total guarantee period and refund granted to it. The Department accepted this recommendation and granted the refund.

### *12. Inflated telephone bills and delay in shifting of telephone*

A subscriber complained against disconnection of his telephone, delay in shifting, charging of bills during the period the telephone remained out of order, etc. Investigation revealed that the subscriber had frequently complained against faulty working of his telephone resulting in excessive

billing; his request for shifting the telephone was not executed in time and the telephone bills were sent during the period the telephone remained dead. It was recommended that a rabate of 5300 calls may be given to the subscriber and the telephone re-connected at the new place without levying re-connection charges. The Department accepted the recommendations.

*13. Payment of interest for the delayed payment of maturity value of PLI*

The complainant stated that while his Postal Life Insurance Policy matured on 2nd January, 72, it was credited to his account on 14.2.76; i.e. after a lapse of four years. He asked for payment of interest on account of delayed payment. During the course of investigation of this grievance, it was found that there had been delay on the part of various authorities in re-conciling the payment of premium and that the rules exempt the Department of any responsibility for delay which may occur in the settlement of the claims. Considering that the insured was not at fault and had asked for payment sufficiently in advance of the date of the maturity of the policy, it was recommended that the interest may be paid to him in relaxation of the rules. This has been accepted by the Department of Posts and Ministry of Finance.

*14. Issue of duplicate bonds in lieu of lost bonds*

The complainant was issued five Bihar Zamindari Abolition Bonds which he kept safe custody with a nationalised bank. The bank sent the bonds under registered post to the Treasury Officer for redemption. The registered letter was lost in transit. For issue of duplicate bonds, there is an elaborate procedure of advertisement in newspapers, State Govt. Gazette and waiting for one year after the advertisements. The complainant could get a lost certificate from the Post Office after 1-1/2 years of the occurrence of the loss and he pleaded that the completion of prescribed procedure would take him another two years. The matter was taken up with the RBI and a Notification has been issued relaxing the procedure in respect of small value bonds.

**Reforms brought about as a result of studies on topics of direct concern to the citizen are given below:—**

- Service line charges and security deposits for domestic connections are recovered at standardised lumpsum rates along with applications for connections by DESU.
- Computerisation of work relating to billing introduced in DESU.
- Steps have been taken by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. to reduce the time taken in rectification of telephone faults.
- All paid up policies taken up six months in advance of the date of maturity by LIC to ensure that all formalities are completed and intimation sent three months in advance.
- Level of services provided by agents reviewed periodically by LIC.
- Extension counters of public sector banks are allowed to transmit cheques/instruments direct to the clearing branches without having to go through the controlling branch.
- Facility of immediate credit of outstation cheques upto Rs. 2500/- extended as a matter of course by all nationalised banks.
- To reduce rush at banking counters at Indira Gandhi International Airport departure hall, Indian passengers going abroad are now allowed to purchase 20 dollars worth of foreign exchange from any authorised dealer in the city.
- The practice of getting requisition slips filled in by the customers for purchase or sale of foreign exchange at the banking counters at the Indira Gandhi International Airport has been discontinued.
- Medicines prescribed by specialists are not to be altered by medical office-in-charge in CGHS dispensaries without consulting a specialist.
- The Central Medical Stores Depot of CGHS issues weekly circulars showing fresh arrivals and stock-out position.
- Frequent inspection of CGHS dispensaries carried out by higher officials for maintaining cleanliness, discipline, etc.
- Concerted efforts by Food and Supplies Department, Delhi Administration to weed out bogus ration cards and to take action against officials responsible for issuing these.

A report on 'Procedure relating to fixation of rateable value of property, collection of property tax and some other levies' was sent to the Commissioner, MCD in December, 1985. Major recommendations made in the report, the fate of which is still uncertain, are given below:—

- (i) Introduction of a system of self-assessment for payment of property tax after the rateable value is fixed initially, so as to avoid individual bills numbering about 2.5 lakhs to be sent each year.
- (ii) Reducing the periodicity of issuing public notice from one year to three which will cut down paperwork substantially.
- (iii) Setting up of Appellate Tribunals for disposal of disputed cases for fixation of rateable value.
- (iv) Inspection of the site by Assistant/Deputy Assessor and Collector before the proposed rateable value is assessed so as to reduce the number of objections against the rateable value, cut down delay and minimise inspector-property owner contact.
- (v) Publication of a brochure containing information on the procedures for sanctioning of building plans, fixation of rateable value of properties, method of calculation of property tax and the machinery available for dealing with public grievances.

A report on 'Simplification of procedure for settlement of third party compensation claims of motor accident victims' was issued in August, 1988. Spurred primarily by this report and in the light of suggestions received from other sources for simplification of procedures in this regard, the Ministry of Surface Transport constituted a Working Group in May, 1989 to prepare a detailed scheme covering aspects of procedure and payment of compensation to the victims of road accidents. The Working Group is still continuing its deliberations.

Major recommendations made in the report of this Department are as under:—

- (i) Wide publicity regarding legal entitlements of compensation for road-accident victims and the procedure for claiming compensation should be given.
- (ii) Pamphlets describing the procedure should be available to the victims in Emergency Units of all hospitals in the country.
- (iii) Urgent measures to set up accident aid posts in accident prone areas on all highways and in cities and major towns.
- (iv) Preventive and educative steps to be taken by State Governments and UTs on a continuous basis.
- (v) All the insurance companies should *suo moto* initiate steps to verify the details of accidents and particulars provided to them.
- (vi) A time limit of four months for the grant of an interim award and

a maximum period of two years for the final award from the date of filing of the application before the MACT should be prescribed in the Act or in the Rules.

- (vii) Appropriate definition of the term 'legal representative' to be made in the Act.
- (viii) In case of death of a house-wife, the legal representative should get a minimum of Rs. 1 lakh as compensation.

In pursuance of the guidelines issued by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances from time to time regarding administrative reforms, the ministries/departments of the Central Government have taken a number of steps for making the administration more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. Some illustrations in this regard are given below:—

#### *Department of Posts*

To avoid delay in case of premature closure of Cumulative Time Deposit (CTD), Recurring Deposit (RD) and time Deposit (TD) accounts, the following changes in the procedure have been made:—

- a) Depositors of 5 year recurring deposit accounts can prematurely close their accounts after one year of opening the account without having to furnish any reason. No interest will, however, be paid on such premature closure.
- b) Premature withdrawal from post office time deposit account is permitted after six months of the opening of the account without the depositor having to assign any reason.
- (c) For premature closure of cumulative time deposit account with balance upto Rs. 10,000/- the procedure of field enquiries by post office officials has been dispensed with, though the grounds for premature closure will continue to be given.

#### *Ministry of Railways*

- (i) The following steps have been taken to improve the Passenger Enquiry System:
  - shifting of telephonic enquiry to control offices, where the running of trains is constantly monitored round the clock;
  - provision of additional P&T phones in Telephone Enquiry Offices;
  - provision of hot-lines between adjacent control offices and face-to-face enquiry offices;
  - provision of electronic display system at important stations.
- (ii) Passenger reservation has been computerised at all metropolitan cities, viz., New Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Terminals of Main Computer Frame at New Delhi have also been provided at Calcutta, Amritsar and Jammu Tawi.

*Ministry of External Affairs*

- (i) All the authorities issuing passports have been directed to scrutinise the applications at the counter level for their completeness with a view to avoiding delay in processing on account of incomplete information.
- (ii) Procedural requirements for issue of passports are prominently displayed in English, Hindi and the local language for information of the public.

*Ministry of Labour*

Emigration procedures have been simplified by exempting a large number of categories from the emigration-check requirement.

*Department of Economic Affairs*

Reserve Bank of India has advised the banks that collection of out-station cheques should be effected within 14 days when the cheque is on the branch of one and the same bank and 21 days where another bank is involved. Banks have been asked to pay interest to the depositors at SB Account rate, wherever the collection is delayed beyond this period.

*Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions*

With effect from 1.4.1987 the Heads of Department/Office have been made accountable for ensuring issue of pension payment order and gratuity order (provisional or final) latest by the date of retirement.

*Department of Civil Supplies*

- (i) To promote consumer movement and to provide simple, speedy and inexpensive redressal to consumer grievances, a law on Consumer Protection has been enacted.
- (ii) Essential Commodities Act, Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976 and Standards of Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1985 have been amended to confer specific rights to aggrieved consumers and associations of consumers to file complaints in courts.

**Instructions and guidelines issued by Government for Redressal of Public Grievances**

Special attention is drawn to the following instruction:

O.M. No. 30/1/64-PG dated 26-6-64 was sent to all ministries/departments requesting them that in big organisations having substantial contact with the public they should set up cells for public grievances.

O.M. No 38/13/67-PG dated 26.10.67 requesting ministries/departments to issue brochures/pamphlets and press notes in respect of their policies for the benefits of the common man.

O.M. No. 27/9/72-PG dated 13.9.72 was sent to all ministries/departments requesting them to maintain complaint books to enable the members of the public to register/enter their complaints.

D.O. No.K-11022/54/86-p dated 27.11.86 from Secretary, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions to all Secretaries requesting them to send a statement of redressal of public grievances under the 20-Point Programme.

O.M. No.K-11022/44/86-P dated 26.5.87 was sent to all ministries/departments prescribing a proforma for quarterly report on public grievances.

On 1st March, 1988, instructions were issued vide O.M. No.1/PLCY/PG-88(7) dated 1.3.1988 to various ministries/departments of the Government of India to the effect that the internal grievance redressal machinery in every Ministry/Department/Office should be strengthened in order to make the administration more responsive to the needs of the people. All Ministries/Departments were advised that every Wednesday should be observed as meetingless day in the Central Secretariat offices when all the officers above a specified level should be available in their desks from 1000 hrs. to 1300 hrs. to receive and hear public grievances. Field level offices having contact with the public were also advised to designate some day as the meetingless day. Ministries/Departments were also advised to declare an officer of an appropriate level as Director of grievances/grievance officer in every Ministry/Department/office as well as in autonomous bodies and public sector undertakings under them. They were further told that all officers in each Ministry/Department should deal with every matter in a fair, objective and just manner.

The Ministries/Departments were also advised that a careful

appreciation and analysis of public grievances would often lead to identification of the problem areas in which modifications of policies could be undertaken with a view to making the delivery of services easier and more expeditious.

In November, 1988, O.M. No. 39473/9/PLCY-PG/88(7) Vol. III dated 29.11.88 was sent to all Ministries/Departments emphasising the need to tone up the administration so as to ensure that difficulties which the common man faces in dealing with Government offices are obviated.

Instructions were issued in June, 1988 advising all Ministries/Departments to issue booklets/pamphlets about the facilities available for the public from a particular office/organisation and indicating the procedure and manner in which these can be obtained by the public. It was emphasised to the Ministries/Departments/offices that through such publications it may be ensured that the members of the public could approach the right authority and follow the prescribed procedure so as to obtain the facilities expeditiously.

In June 1989, a set of questionnaire was also sent to all Ministries/Departments which could help them in evaluating the public grievances redressal machinery as existing in their offices with a view to improving and strengthening the same.

In July 1989, all Ministries/Departments were requested that the grievance columns in newspapers should be regularly examined by the Ministries/Departments/agencies of the government. With a view to picking up cases which relate to them and taking remedial action on them in a time bound manner.

## **ANNEXURE IV**

### **Simplification of Rules in some of the Ministries/Department**

#### **I. The Department of Telecommunications have introduced**

- (i) a scheme for grant of rebate in rental for interruptions in (telephone, telecom, telex and leased) lines of a subscriber. This period of interruption for which rebate is permitted has been reduced from one month to 15 days and then to 7 days progressively;
- (ii) the 'Tatkal' scheme for providing telephone connections for those who require telephone connections on immediate basis;
- (iii) simplification of procedure for self-custody of telephone connections;
- (iv) introduction of third party transfer of telephones.

#### **II. The Department of Revenue (Central Board of Excise & Customs) have simplified the baggage rules as follows to avoid harassment to the public and to reduce the element of discretion in the implementation thereof.**

- (i) The uniform rate of customs duty (@250) advalorem has been prescribed on accompanied baggage for goods in excess of the duty free limit and on unaccompanied baggage.
- (ii) The general free allowance under rule 3 of the baggage rules has been increased from Rs. 1,250 to Rs. 2000 per passenger.
- (iii) A uniform rate of 25 per cent has been prescribed on specified articles within the overall value of Rs. 20,000 for passengers returning after a period of one year and upto Rs. 1 lakh for passengers availing the facility under transfer of residents rules.

#### **III. The Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have revised procedures for payment of compensation claims; refunds and increased compensation of claims arising due to railway accidents. The Ministry of Railways have further established Railway Claim Tribunal for expeditious settlement of claims. The Indian Railways Act 1890 has been replaced by the Indian Railways Act 1989 with effect from 1 July, 1990. The new Act contains some stringent measures for offences under the Indian Railways Act so that the public may have a smooth rail travel. For example unauthorised entry into a reserved compartment, forced entry into a compartment reserved for ladies, drunkenness and causing nuisance have been made**

offences in respect of which a railway servant may arrest a person without warrant. Besides this increased fines & penaltis have been provided for the following offences:

Misuse of alarm chain: Upto Rs. 1000 in fines or imprisonment upto 1 year or both.

Disconnection of Hosepipe: Upto Rs. 2000 in fines or imprisonment upto 2 years or both.

Fraudulent ticketless travel with improper pass or document: Upto Rs. 1000 in fines or upto 6 month in prison or both.

Transfer of tickets (applicable to both seller and buyer): Upto Rs. 500 in fines or a maximum of 3 months in prison or both.

Unauthorised business activity of procurement and sale of tickets: Upto Rs. 10,000 in fines or upto 3 years in prison or both.

Unlawful carriage of dangerous goods in a train: Upto Rs. 1000 in fines or a maximum 3 years imprisonment or both.

Unauthorised opening/shutting of a level crossing gate (includes breaking open of gates): Imprisonment upto 3 years.

IV. The Ministry of Industry liberalised industrial licensing system in 1988 with the effect that a non-MRTP/Non-FERA Company, having projects involving an investment in fixed assets of more than Rs. 50 crores if it is located in a declared backward area or more than 15 crores if it is located in non-backward areas, is not required to obtain industrial licence under the Industries (Development and Regulation Act).

The Directorate General of Technical Development has also introduced simplified procedures like self-certification on location of units and imparting information to the applicants regarding status of their application filed with DGTD.

V. The Department of Posts have introduced the following simplified procedures in the recent years to avoid harassment to public.

(i) Surrender of pass book to the post office in case of transfer of accounts has been dispensed with to avoid inconvenience due to possible loss/misplacement etc. in transit from one office to another office.

(ii) Simplified common purchase application form for National Savings Certificates/Kisan Vikas Patras in a single sheet has been introduced in place of the cumbersome one previously used.

(iii) The limit, for a single/joint holder of SB Account has been doubled to Rs. 50000/- and Rs. 1,00,000/- respectively to avoid inconvenience and loss of interest on deposits in excess of Rs. 25,000/- Rs. 50,000/-.

- (iv) Multipurpose counters are being provided in Metropolitan cities.
- (v) Maximum limit of single money order has been raised from Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 2000/-

**VI.** The Ministry of External Affairs has recently authorised some officers of the Central Government as well as State Governments to issue verification certificates in favour of individuals who are applicants for passports, which will facilitate the issue of passport to an applicant.

They have also decided that police verification report should be invariably sent to them within four weeks and in case no adverse report is received in the prescribed time, it will be presumed that there is nothing against the applicant and a passport will be issued without waiting for police verification.

In case of Government servants who have been issued no objection certificate by the employer, no further police verification will be necessary.

**VII.** The Ministry of Surface Transport has replaced the Motor Vehicle Act 1939, with a view to introducing modern Techniques of Scientific Management of Road Transportation, urgent need for road Safty and control of pollution, by the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. The provisions of the Act have been brought into force with effect from 1.7.1989. The salient features of the Act are briefly as follows:

- (i) The validity period of driving licence for non-transport vehicles has been made 20 years or till the applicant attains the age of 40 years and there after it would be renewable at the interval of 5 years. Driving licence for a non-transport vehicle is valid for a period of three years at a time subject to subsequent renewals at the interval of every three years.
- (ii) It has been made compulsery to have a certificate of fitness in respect of transport vehicles and the periodicity of fitness certificate for newly registered vehicle would be two years initially and one year thereafter.
- (iii) The procedure for grant of permits for operating transport vehicles has been simplified. The restrictions on the maximum number of permits to be issued by a State/UT in respect of national permits for trucks and all India permits vehicles has been removed. The validity of permits of all kinds has been fixed as five years.
- (iv) State Governments have been empowered to authorise enforcement agencies to tow away the abandoned vehicles so that the disabled vehicle does not obstruct the flow of traffic.
- (v) The amount of compensation payable on the principle of no-fault liability in case of death has been raised to Rs. 25,000 from Rs.

15,000 and in case of permanent disablement to Rs. 12,000 from Rs. 7,500.

(vi) Motor Accident Claims Tribunals are required to arrange to deliver copies of judgements within 15 days from the date of judgement and the awarded amount is required to be deposited in the Tribunals within 30 days.

**ANNEXURE V**  
**LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE ESTIMATES**  
**COMMITTEE (1990-91)**

**CHAIRMAN**

**Shri Jaswant Singh**

**MEMBERS**

2. **Shri J. P. Agarwal**
3. **Shri Anbarasee Era**
4. **Shri Kamal Chaudhry**
5. **Shri Anantrao Deshmukh**
6. **Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal**
7. **Shri Balvant Manvar**
8. **Shri Hannan Mollah**
9. **Shri Arvind Netam**
10. **Dr. Debi Prasad Pal**
11. **Shri Rupchand Pal**
12. **Shri Harin Pathak**
13. **Shri Bhausaheb Pundlik Phundkar**
14. **Bh. Vijaya Kumara Raju**
15. **Shri Mullappally Ramachandran**
16. **Shri Y. Ramakrishna**
17. **Shri Rameshwar Prasad**
18. **Shri J. Chokka Rao**
19. **Shri Chiranjit Lal Sharma**
20. **Shri Yamuna Prasad Shastri**
21. **Shri Dhanraj Singh**
22. **Shri Subedar Prasad Singh**
23. **Shri Sukhendra Singh**
24. **Shri Tej Narain Singh**
25. **Shri Taslimuddin**
26. **Dr. Thambi Durai**
27. **Shri Nandu Thapa**

- 28. Shri P. K. Thungon**
- \*29. Shri K. C. Tyagi**
- 30. Shri Kailash Nath singh Yadav.**

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\*. Shri K. C. Tyagi has resigned from the membership of the Committee on Estimates with effect from 30th August, 1990.

## APPENDIX

### *Statement of Recommendations/Observations*

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S. No.	Para No.	Recommendations/Observations
1	2	3
The Committee make the following recommendations:-		
1.	1.31	The Government should maintain statistics in regard to public grievances on a comprehensive scale. Distinction between long pending complaints and recent complaints should be maintained. Further the Department of public grievances should pick up a larger sample of grievances/complaints for detailed examination and followup action so as to draw more realistic conclusions about the nature and prevalence of public dissatisfaction with the Government Departments.
2.	1.32	The data about public grievances may be maintained, Department-wise, Subject-wise, Region-wise and State-wise so as to facilitate a systematic and critical analysis of public dissatisfaction as well as adoption of suitable corrective measures.
3.	1.33	The Government should lay special emphasis on redressal of grievances of those Ministries/ Departments which have relatively larger public dealing and are, therefore, grievance prone. Immediate consultations should be initiated particularly with the Ministries of Finance, Department of Revenue and the Banking Division, Defence, Railways and Communications to evolve appropriate strategies for minimising public grievances in these Ministries/Departments.

1	2	3
4.	1.34	Instructions may be issued to all Secretaries to Government of India advising them to devote at least one or two days in a month exclusively for redressal of public grievances. Also appropriate powers may be delegated to Directors of public grievances in Ministries/Departments for granting immediate relief to the complainant. The official position and status of Directors grievance may be suitably upgraded wherever it is likely to make him more effective. The Committee recommend that the complaint should be acknowledged and a receipt of the same be given to the complainant.
5.	1.35	A system should be evolved in each area of the public administration where by complaints are duly acknowledged and progress made in their settlement reported periodically to the complainant.
6.	1.36	Each Ministry/Department may set up a small committee headed by a Member of Parliament and the concerned Secretary as its member-secretary, to study the volume of public grievances and to suggest a simplified system of disposing public grievances. Appropriate guidelines should be issued by the DARPG for constitution of such Committees.
7.	1.37	Vigorous efforts may be made to ensure that complainants feel encouraged to approach heads of Governments organisations for settlement of their problems before routing their complaints to public grievance machinery.

The Committee make the following recommendations:—

8. 2.39 The staffing pattern of the Department of public grievances may be reviewed to make it more officer oriented and to facilitate periodical induction of professional experts from the open market.

1	2	3
9.	2.40	The Government should issue strict instructions to all Ministries/Departments to ensure that officers not below the rank of Joint Secretary take part in the Meetings convened by Department of public grievances. In fact each Ministry/Department should designate specific officers of appropriate level for this purpose.
10.	2.41	Government at the highest level should deliberate upon the existing lack of synergy between the efforts of DARPG and those of various other Ministries/ Departments towards redressal of public grievances and evolve a mechanism under which study reports made by DARPG are examined and acted upon by other Ministries/Departments with full seriousness. It should also be ensured that such examination is carried out in a time-bound manner and a final view about the acceptance of these study reports taken expeditiously.
11.	2.42	The recommendations made in the DARPG study reports should be implemented within an appropriate but fixed time limit. In cases where these are not acceptable the reasons there for should be reported within a reasonable time.
		The Committee make the following recommendations:
12.	3.37	All secretaries to Government of India should be made personally responsible for prompt action in matters relating to public grievances particularly in regard to availability of relevant record to Directorate of Public grievances, and the action upon the recommendations made by the Directorate.
13.	3.38	There should be an institutionalized mechanism for resolution of difference of opinion between the Directorate of public grievances and other Ministries/ Departments so as to make sure that the effectiveness of Directorate is not lost in inter-ministerial wrangles.

1	2	3
14.	3.39	The existing time lag in granting relief to the complainant need to be reduced and for this purpose the Directorate of public grievances should be sanctioned the ministerial staff necessary to support an otherwise officer oriented organization.
15.	3.40	The practice of giving personal hearing of the complainant by the Directorate of public grievances as also by the Ministry/Department concerned may be given due encouragement so as to make the entire process of grievance redressal quick and purpose oriented.
16.	3.41	A record of the nature, source and magnitude of grievances which tend to get repeated should be maintained to gauge the on the ground effectiveness of grievance redressal machinery or measures.
17.	3.42	The Government should re-examine the desirability of keeping matters relating to policy, service conditions, commercial contracts or cases which have been decided at the Ministers level or cases which are sub-judice, outside the purview of Directorate of public grievances. The Committee should be informed about the result of such re-examination.
18.	3.43	Keeping in view the actual intensity of public Grievances in different Ministries/Departments more Ministries/Departments should be brought under the purview of the Directorate of public grievances.
19.	3.44	The Government should examine, <i>de-novo</i> , the question of converting Directorate of public grievances into a statutory authority on the pattern of ombudsman.
		The Committee make the following recommendations:—
20	4.70	The existing delegation of powers at different levels of administrative hierarchy may be reviewed. Also a mechanism may be evolved whereby such a review can be carried out at regular intervals in order to readjust the structure of delegated powers in accordance with changing situation.

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21. 4.71 The Government should consciously move away from a situation of excessive and cumbersome laws. Towards this end it should undertake a thorough review of all the statutes that affect the common citizen in his day to day life so as make it simple and easy to comply. The drafting of bills should also reflect the same concern for the common citizen.

22. 4.72 The Government should step up efforts towards simplification of rules and procedures in different fields of public administration to ensure visible relief to the public.

23. 4.73 The Department of Public Grievances should ensure the involvement of individual Ministries / Departments in carrying out studies of their concern so as to enhance the final acceptability of consequential recommendations made by the Department. An appropriate scheme of interaction with various Ministries/Departments may be drawn.

24. 4.74 The Department should review the position in regard to involvement of voluntary agencies for monitoring the grievance redressal performance of field officers agencies of various Ministries/ Departments and explain to the Committee why 12 departments which had initially responded positively in the matter have later failed to set up Standing Committee or Voluntary Agencies for this purpose. The Committee will also like to know how successfully such standing committees have been functioning in other Departments. They also desire that while constituting SCOVA suitable guidelines should be issued to involve only genuine and reputed voluntary agencies.

1	2	3
25.	4.75	<p>In the present situation where Government has critical role in every sphere of life and whereby its inefficiencies as dispenser of services and provider of welfare get shielded behind the omnipotency of the State and the public feeling about the insensitivity of the Government Department to their grievances is widespread, the committee would like the Government to at least move in a direction in which it can progressively shed responsibilities which do not fall strictly which do not fall strictly within the traditional role of the State. Simultaneously they would like the Government to encourage legal action under Consumers Protection Act by citizens or their bodies against such of its Departments as are clearly engaged in distinctly service oriented and commercial activities.</p>
26.	4.76	<p>The Government should draw up a comprehensive plan of imparting training to middle level supervisory and non-supervisory Government staff so that apart from acquiring the necessary office skills they also understand the importance of their work and the perspective from which such importance is derived. The Committee would like the training programmes to be so devised as will emphasize the attitudinal aspects as a part of the technical aspects of the work.</p>
27.	4.77	<p>The training of Group 'A' level officers, apart from focussing on technical skills of management ought to lay an equal stress on leadership.</p>
28.	4.78	<p>As a step towards modernisation of Government offices the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances should first operationalise the concepts of modernisation in their own offices so as to serve as a model for other Ministries/ Departments. In this regard while the Committee are assured by the efforts which are already underway and they desire that the Department should show results. The Government should also inform the concerned agencies.</p>

**Corrigenda to the First Report of  
Estimates Committee (1991-92)**

<u>S. No.</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Para</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Read</u>
1.	{v)	3	2	personnel	Personnel
2.	{vi)	8	5	dealaing	dealing
3.	1	1. 4	5	grievences	grievances
4.	2	1. 5	2	personnel	Personnel
5.	2	1. 7	3	abit	a bit
6.	2	1. 8	12	complaings	complaints
7.	7	1. 23	2	whcih	which
8.	7	1. 26	5 from bottom	public grievances	Public Grievances
9.	10	2. 2	2	samll	small
10.	10	2. 2	4	samll	small
11.	12	2. 14	5	Ministeries	Ministries
12.	14	2. 26	5 from bottom	dicision	decision
13.	16	2. 32	2 from bottom	functinal	functional
14.	17	2. 36	5	pro	-
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16.	20	3. 3	4 from bottom	scandinavion	scandinavian
17.	22	3. 14	3	Annexure	Annexure I
18.	23	3. 18	1	mititate	mitigate
19.	27	3. 36	1	public	Public
20.	28	3. 41	3	grievances	Grievances
21.	29	3. 44	2	grievences	grievances
22.	30	4. 2	5 from bottom	public	Public
23.	30	4. 2	5	grievances	Grievances
24.	33	4. 16		cambersame	cumbersome
25.	33	4. 17	1	over thse	cover these
26.	34	4. 21	2	quer	query
27.	34	4. 39	7 from bottom	voluntary	voluntary
28.	40	4. 16	5	contibuting	contributing
29.	40	4. 40		indentify	identify
30.	43	4. 50	10 from bottom	quantisable	quantifiable
31.	47	4. 66	last line	when	whom
32.	47	4. 67	4	words	wards
33.	48	4. 69	5 from bottom	publicty	publicity
32.	48	4. 71	3	thorugh	thorough
33.	66	-	1&2, After	The Committee	-
			para	make the	
			1. 37,	following	
			2. 42 &	recommendations	
			3. 44		
			respectively.		

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1	2	3
29.	4.79	<p>The Government should take immediate steps to make effective use of the electronic medias and other in educating general public about the public redressal machinery available in various Ministries/Departments and to particularly enhance awareness about the role of Director of public grievances.</p> <hr/>

**LIST OF AUTHORISED AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF LOK SABHA  
SECRETARIAT PUBLICATION**

Sl. No.	Name of Agent	Sl. No.	Name of Agent
<b>ANDHRA PRADESH</b>			
1.	M/s. Vijay Book Agency, 11-1-477, Mvlargadda. Secunderabad-500 306.	12.	Law Publishers, Sardar Patel Marg., P.B. No. 77, Allahabad, U.P.
<b>BIHAR</b>			
2.	M/s. Crown Book Depot. Uppar Bazar, Ranchi (Bihar).	13.	M/s. Madimala, Buys & Sells, 123, Bow Bazar Street, Calcutta-1.
<b>GUJARAT</b>			
3.	The New Order Book Company, Ellis Bridge, Ahmedabad-380 006. (T.No. 79065)	14.	M/s. Jain Book Agency, C-9, Connaught Place, New Delhi, (T.No. 351663 & 350806).
<b>MADHYA PRADESH</b>			
4.	Modern Book House, Shiv Vilas Place, Indore City. (T.No. 35289)	15.	M/s. J.M. Jaina & Brothers, P. Box 1020, Mori Gate, Delhi-110006. (T. No. 2915064 & 230936).
<b>MAHARASHTRA</b>			
5.	M/s. Sunderdas Gian Chand, 6C1, Girgaum Road, Near Princes Street, Bombay-400 002.	16.	M/s. Oxford Book & Stationery Co., Scindia House, Connaught Place. New Delhi-110001. (T.No. 3315308 & 45896).
6.	The International Book Service, Deccan Gymkhana, Poona-4.	17.	M/s. Bookwell, 2/72, Sant Nirankari Colony, Kingsway Camp, Delhi-110 009. (T.No. 7112309).
7.	The Current Book House, Maruti Lane, Raghunath Dadaji Street, Bombay-400 001.	18.	M/s. Rajendra Book Agency, IV-DR59, Lajpat Nagar, Old Double Storey, New Delhi-110 024. (T.No. 6412362 & 6412131).
8.	M/s. Usha Book Depot, 'Law Book Seller and Publishers' Agents Govt. Publications, 585, Chira Bazar, Khan House, Bombay-400 002.	19.	M/s. Ashok Book Agency, BH-82, Poorvi Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110 033.
9.	M & J Services, Publishers, Rep- resentative Accounts & Law Book Sellers, Mohan Kunj, Ground Floor, 68, Jyotiba Fuile Road Nalgaum, Dadar, Bombay-400 014	20.	M/s. Venus Enterprises, B-2/85, Phase-II, Ashok Vihar, Delhi.
10.	Subscribers Subscription Service India, 21, Raghunath Dadaji Street, 2nd Floor, Bombay-400 001.	21.	M/s. Central News Agency Pvt. Ltd., 23/90, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110 001. (T. No. 344448, 322705, 344478 & 344508).
<b>TAMIL NADU</b>			
11.	M/s. M.M. Subscription Agencies, 14th Murali Street, (1st Floor), Mahalingapuram, Nungambakkam, Madras-600 034. (T.No. 476558)	22.	M/s. Amrit Book Co., N-21, Connaught Circus, New Delhi.
		23.	M/s. Books India Corporation Publishers, Importers & Exporters, L-27, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110 052. (T.No. 269631 & 714465).
		24.	M/s. Sangam Book Depot, 4378/4B, Murari Lal Street, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110 002.