

Grievance Redressal System revolutionized through CPGRAMS



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For the last several decades several changes have been brought about to improve transparency in the functioning of the government and bring accountability. Cumulatively, these have helped the common man find his groove in a maze of laws and indifference of the lower bureaucracy and the response time for the solution of his or her grievance has improved significantly.

However, nothing has revolutionized accountability, transparency and the response time of the government departments than the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), brought in by the Narendra Modi government.

Web based CPGRAMS has been designed and implemented in all the Ministries and Departments of Government of India. Moreover, a customized software with local language interface has also been designed for the state governments too called CPGRAMS - States. This provides online access to all citizens, including those in Armed Forces personnel, to report their grievances. The new system allows the Ministry to monitor the grievances and ensure their time-bound redressal.

A Public Grievances Call Centre has also been set up for reminding the Ministries and Departments concerned receiving bulk of the grievances in the Central Government, for expediting action on grievances pending on CPGRAMS for more than two months. Guidelines have been issued to all the Ministries and Departments of Central Government to ensure that their Citizens' Charter, incorporating list of services, service standards and timelines, are duly uploaded and updated on the respective websites.

As the Modi government has completed three years, I would limit myself to CPGRAMS which shows how penetration of Information Technology has overhauled grievance redressal mechanism in the country. While some say this is "revolutionary", my personal experience with the system reinforced my belief that indeed the government departments have started working very fast in the last over three years.

I have two experiences to share and both relate to the postal department. In the first instance, my father, who left for his heavenly abode, left a very old Post Office savings bank account in his files. Several visits to the post office did not help as the staff found some excuse or the other to deny payment to the nominee, my mother. Several months passed and correspondence with the postal department did not yield anything. The Post Master of the small post office in Bettiah, Bihar, would not clear the papers. Enquiries were tiresome and time consuming and the staff would demand one paper or the other consistently.

It was then that I came across the PG Portal—pgportal.gov.in—and how it is meant exactly for

cases like this. I opened it one fine morning and gave the account details in the complaint section and wrote a brief description about the problem and the harassment I went through. It took me all of five-seven minutes to lodge a complaint with my e-mail ID and Mobile number given.

I logged into the portal again using the number sent to my mobile phone and e-mail after two hours. It had the details and said that the complaint is lying with the Public Grievance Officer of the postal department, with an office at Parliament Street, New Delhi. Next day, in the morning, when I again opened the portal to see the status of the complaint, it had been sent to the Public Grievance Officer at Patna GPO. In the next three hours, the complaint had reached the Superintendent of the West Champaran postal Circle in whose jurisdiction the account existed. It was actually so fast.

In the evening, I got a call from the Superintendent of Posts that the matter has been processed and my mother is welcome to visit the post office next day for collecting the cheque which now totaled Rs 39, 480 after adding interest. I was elated as the system had worked so efficiently. The cheque was collected by my mother the next day. For the first time, I saw how this system cut through all sorts of hierarchies, paper work and obstacles and delivered to the common man.

The second matter also pertained to the postal department. This time, it was the NSC of my father which had matured at the end of March 2016 and I was the nominee. The agent, through whom my father used to invest in small savings scheme of the post office, got the paperwork done and deposited in the Lal Bazar post office from where the NSC was purchased.

But the post master would have none of it. He simply sat on the papers and did nothing. Lodging a complaint with the PG Portal was a click away. This time, in three days flat, cheque was given to my representative.

CPGRAMS is the new hope for redressal of any grievance - related either to the central or the state government. While the grievances related to departments of central government are handled quite efficiently, those pertaining to the states are passed on to the respective state governments. An officer of the Indian Revenue Service said, "The monitoring of the system is done at the highest level and no laxity on the part of the officials tolerated". As monitoring is done at various levels, there is an unusual hurry on the part of the officials to dispose the complaints as everyone would now know at which end the problem exists.

That to me is indeed a revelation and my personal experience with the CPGRAMS has been extremely pleasant.

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Views expressed in the article are author's personal.

(This article has been contributed by PIB Chandigarh)

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