

Standing Committee Report Summary Strengthening of Grievance Redressal Mechanisms

- The Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice (Chair: Mr. Sushil Kumar Modi) submitted its report on Strengthening of Grievance Redressal Mechanism of Government of India to Rajya Sabha on December 10, 2021. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee are as follows:
- **Grievance redressal:** Grievance redressal mechanism of an organisation is an important instrument to measure its effectiveness as it provides feedback on the working of the organisation. The Committee noted that grievances are being disposed of by certain departments with suggestions to approach another agency or a subordinate office. In certain cases, the grievance is sent back to the agency against which the complaint was made. Further, the Committee noted that Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) instructed Ministries to give valid reasons for closure of grievances. However, in many cases, the Ministries did not provide any reasons for closure of grievances. The Committee recommended all Ministries to comply with the instructions for grievance redressal issued by the DARPG. Further, it recommended all Ministries to undertake a regular review of grievances raised in print and electronic media and include it in their quarterly reports submitted to DARPG. The review should also be put on their respective websites.
- **Handling grievances:** The Committee noted that wide variations exist across Ministries and other organisations with respect to the framework, process, and capacity to handle grievances. Timely redressal of grievances is necessary for a citizen friendly administration. The Committee recommended an overall review/evaluation of the grievance handling process by all Ministries.
- **Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS):** CPGRAMS is an online portal available to the public to lodge their grievances against various authorities. The grievances are transferred to the concerned Ministry and state government. Functioning of the CPGRAMS is being continuously evaluated by DARPG and reforms are being undertaken. The Committee recommended including certain things while reforming the portal. These include: (i) opening channels for effective communication, (ii) making the portal user friendly, and (iii) involving stakeholders in the reform process.
- Several grievances received on CPGRAMS are related to state governments. The Committee noted that in several cases the complainant was asked to approach the state government and the grievance was disposed and not forwarded to the concerned state government. It recommended that CPGRAMS should play the role of a facilitator without impinging on the nature of federalism.
- **Grievances during COVID-19:** DARPG created a separate category for COVID-19 grievances in CPGRAMS. The stipulated time for redressal of COVID-19 related grievances was decreased from 60 days (for normal grievances) to three days. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation launched a National Dashboard for monitoring COVID-19 related grievances. The Committee recommended DARPG to create dashboard for CPGRAMS containing certain performance indicators. These indicators include: (i) average complaints per day, (ii) disposal rate, and (iii) average disposal time.

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