

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:453

ANSWERED ON:23.11.2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MPS LETTERS

Rathwa Shri Ramsinhbhai Patalbhai; Sayeed Muhammed Hamdulla A. B.

Will the Minister of PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any guidelines issued to the various Ministries/ Departments of the Government to first acknowledge the letters received from MPs and later send a final reply particularly concerning the matters of their constituencies;

(b) if so, the number of such letters received and replied during the last one year; and

(c) if not, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government regarding expediting action on such letters pending in the Ministries/ Departments and U.T. administration?

Answer

Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office.
(SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY)

(a): Yes, Madam. The paragraphs No. 63, 66 and 127 of the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure (CSMOP) deal with the subject of giving acknowledgement and prompt response to letters received from Members of Parliament. A copy of the relevant extracts is enclosed at Annexure.

(b): The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions does not centrally maintain any data/information with regard to the letters received by all Ministries/Departments from Members of Parliament.

(c): The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances, from time to time writes, to Ministries/Departments to sensitize them on the need for following the procedure contained in the CSMOP, especially with regard to acknowledging and giving prompt replies to the letters received from Members of Parliament.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.453 BY SHRI HAMIDULLAH SAYEED AND SHRI RAMSINH RATHWA REGARDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LETTERS TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.11.2011

63. Correspondence with Members of Parliament -

(1) Communications received from Members of Parliament should be attended to promptly.

(2) Where a communication is addressed to a Minister, it should, as far as practicable, be replied to by the Minister himself. In other cases, a reply should normally be issued over the signature of an officer of the rank of Secretary.

(3) Where, however, a communication is addressed to the head of an attached or subordinate office, Public Sector Undertakings, Financial Institutions (including nationalized banks) Division/Branch In-charge in a Ministry/Department/Organization, it should be replied to by the addressee himself. In routine matters, he may send an appropriate reply on his own. In policy matters, however, the officer should have prior approval of higher authorities before sending a reply. It should, however, be ensured that the minimum level at which such replies are sent to Members of Parliament is that of Under Secretary and that also in a polite letter form only.

(4) Normally information sought by a Member should be supplied unless it is of such a nature that it would have been denied to him even if asked for on the floor of the Houses of Parliament.

(5) As far as possible, in corresponding with Members of Parliament, pre-printed or cyclostyled replies should be avoided.

(6) In case a reference from an ex-Member of Parliament is addressed to a Minister or Secretary, reply to such reference may be sent by the concerned Divisional Head after obtaining approval of the Secretary of the Ministry/Department. In case the reference is addressed to a lower level officer, reply to such reference could be sent by the officer on his own in non-policy cases and after obtaining approval of the higher authorities in policy cases. However, the lowest level at which reply could be sent should be that of an Under Secretary and that too in a polite letter form only.

66. Prompt response to letters received -

(1) Each communication received from a Member of Parliament, member of the public, recognized association or a public body will be acknowledged within 15 days, followed by a reply within the next 15 days of acknowledgement sent.

(2) Where (i) delay is anticipated in sending a final reply, or (ii) information has to be obtained from another Ministry or another office, an interim reply will be sent within a month (from the date of receipt) indicating the possible date by which a final reply can be given.

(3) If any such communication is wrongly addressed to a department, it will be transferred promptly (within a week) to the appropriate department under intimation to the party concerned.

(4) Where the request of a member of the public cannot be acceded to for any reason, reasons for not acceding to such a request should be given courteously.

(5) As far as possible, requests from members of public, should be looked at from the user's point of view and not solely from the point of view of what may be administratively convenient.

127. Watch on disposal of communications received from Members of Parliament -

(1) The personal section of each Joint Secretary/Director (if the Director submits cases direct to Secretary/Additional Secretary) will maintain a separate register of communications received from Members of Parliament in the form given in Appendix 45. The serial number at which a letter is entered in this register will be prominently marked on that letter together with its date of registration e.g.,

`125/JS/(P)MP` 20.3.2009

(2) To keep a special watch on speedy disposal of communications received from Members of Parliament, each section will;

(a) maintain a register as in form at Appendix 46; and

(b) mark out prominently those communications finally disposed of by circling the serial numbers in the register in red ink.

(3) If for any reason an M.P.'s letter is received by a section without being registered in the personal section of the Joint Secretary/Director, it should be got registered there immediately.

(4) On the first working day of each month, each section will submit the register along with the report in the form at Appendix 47 to the Under Secretary/Deputy Secretary. The report, with the remarks of Under Secretary/ Deputy Secretary, will be submitted to the Director/Joint Secretary and register will be returned to the section.

(5) The personal section of the Joint Secretary/Director will check whether all the communications entered in its register figure in the reports sent by the sections. If any discrepancy is found, it should be reconciled. Thereafter, the report will be submitted to the Joint Secretary/Director for scrutiny and for such other action as he may consider appropriate.

(6) Ministries/Departments may, through departmental instructions, include additional columns in the forms at Appendices 45, 46 & 47 to suit local needs.