

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:367
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2012
AMBIT OF CSMO PROCEDURE
Rajaram Shri Wakchaure Bhausahab

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

- (a) whether the provision regarding directives relating to the reply of letters of Members of Parliament by the State Governments is not included in Para 122 of the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Union Government proposes to bring the State Governments and the Public Sector Undertakings within the ambit of the said directive so that they reply to the letters of Members of Parliament; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY)

(a) & (b): No Madam. Paragraph No.122 of Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure (CSMOP) deals with the subject of 'handling of public/staff grievances'. 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. The procedures contained in the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure (CSMOP) are applicable only to the Central Secretariat and not the State Governments who have their own Office Procedure. The relevant extracts are enclosed at Annexure-I.

(c) & (d): Para 63 of the CSMOP dealing with correspondence with Members of Parliament also covers Central Public Sector Undertakings. It is not possible to bring the State Government's within the ambit of CSMOP. However, the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions (Department of Personnel & Training) vide an Office Memorandum dated 1.12.2011 addressed to all Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and endorsed to all the Chief Secretaries of States/Union Territories has requested the Chief Secretaries of States /Union Territories to circulate these instructions to all State Government officials at the State/Division and District levels and to periodically review implementation. A copy of the Office Memorandum is at Annexure-II.

Annexure-I

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 367 TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.03.2012

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.

ANNEXURE-II

REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (c) & (d) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.367 SHRI WAKCHAURET BHAUSAHEB RAJARAM REGARDING AMBIT OF CSMO PROCEDURE TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.03.2012

No. 11013/4/2011-Estt (A)
Government of India
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
(Department of Personnel and Training)

North Block, New Delhi.
01st December, 2011

Subject: Official dealings between the Administration and Members of Parliament and State Legislatures - Observance of proper procedure.

The Members of Parliament and State Legislatures as the accredited representatives of the people occupy a very important place in our democratic set-up. In connection with their duties, they often find it necessary to seek information from the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India or the State Governments, or make suggestions for their consideration or ask for interviews with the officers. Certain well-recognized principles and conventions to govern the relations between the Members of Parliament/ State Legislatures and Government servants have already been established.

2 Reference is invited to the guidelines concerning the official dealings between Administration and Members of Parliament and State Legislatures which were issued by the Cabinet Secretariat (Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, in the O.M. No 25/19/64 -Estt (A) dated 08.11.1974). The importance of adherence to these guidelines was reiterated in the Department of Personnel and Training's O.M. No. 11013/6/2005-Estt (A) dated 17 08,2007. The provisions of the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure regarding prompt disposal of communications from MPs have also been reiterated by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances. The Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions has also written to all Ministers in this regard vide D.O letter dated 5th May 2011, requesting that a mechanism may be set up to periodically monitor progress in disposal of references received from Members of Parliament

3 Some instances of non-adherence to the existing guidelines have been brought to Government's attention by Members of Parliament and a need has been felt for again sensitizing all administrative authorities concerned.

4 The Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure provides following instructions for prompt disposal of letters from Members of Parliament- Correspondence with Members of Parliament-

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

(2) Where a communication is addressed to a Minister or a Secretary to the Government, it should, as far as practicable, be replied to by the Minister or the Secretary himself as the case may be. Where it is not practicable for the Minister to reply, a reply should normally be issued under the signature of an officer of the rank of Secretary to the Government.

(3) Where 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 such cases, care may be taken to ensure that wherever policy issues are involved, approval of the competent authority is obtained before a reply is sent. It should, however, be ensured that the minimum level at which such replies are sent to Member of Parliament is that of Under Secretary and that also in a polite letter form only.

(4) Information sought by a Member of Parliament should be supplied unless it is of such a nature that it would have been denied to him, if similar information had been sought in Parliament

(5) While corresponding with Members of Parliament, it should be ensured that the letter is legible. Pre-printed or cyclostyled replies should be scrupulously 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 J::L Secretary of 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. Here also, it may be ensured that the minimum level at which a reply is sent is that of an Under Secretary and that too in a polite letter form only.

Prompt response to letters received -

(1) Each communication received from the Member of Parliament, a member of the public, a 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 a delay is anticipated in sending a final reply, or where the information has to be obtained from another Ministry or another office, an interim reply may be sent within a month (from the date of receipt of the communication) indicating the possible date by which a final reply can be given.

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

5. The aforesaid guidelines also cover Official dealings between Administration and Members of Parliament/State Legislatures. In this context, attention is also invited to Rule 3(2A) of All India Service (Conduct) Rule, 1968 and Rule 3-A of Central Civil Service (Conduct) Rules, 1964 which provide as follows:-

Every member of the service shall in the discharge of his duties act in a courteous manner and shall not adopt dilatory tactics in his dealings with the public or otherwise.

The existing instructions are hereby appropriately strengthened to emphasize the basic principles to be borne in mind by the Government servants while interacting with the Members of Parliament and State Legislatures. These are as follows :-

(i) Government servants should show courtesy and consideration to Members of Parliament and State Legislatures;

(ii) while the Government servants should consider carefully or listen patiently to what the Members of Parliament and of the State Legislatures may have to say, the Government servant should always act according to his own best judgment and as per the rules;

(iii) Any deviation from an appointment made with a Member of Parliament/State Legislature must be promptly explained to him to avoid any possible inconvenience. Fresh appointment should be fixed in consultation with him;

(iv) An officer should be meticulously correct and courteous and rise to receive and see off a Member of Parliament/ State Legislature visiting him. Arrangements may be made to receive the Members of Parliament when, after taking prior appointment, they visit the officer of the Government of India, State Government or local Government. Arrangements may also be made to permit entry of vehicles of the Members to these Offices subject to security requirements/restrictions;

(v) Members of Parliament of the area should invariably be invited to public functions organized by a Government office. Proper and comfortable seating arrangements at public functions and proper order of seating on the dais should be made for Members keeping in view the fact that they appear above officers of the rank of Secretaries to Government of India in the Warrant of Precedence; The invitation cards and media events, if organized for the function held in the constituency, may include the names of the Members of that constituency who have confirmed participation in these functions.

It is clarified that If a constituency of any Member of Parliament is spread over more than one District, the M.P should invariably be invited to all the functions held in any of the Districts which are part of his/her constituency;

(vi) Where any meeting convened by the Government is to be attended by Members of Parliament, special care should be taken to see that notice is given to them in good time regarding the date, time, venue etc. of the meeting. It should also be ensured that there is no slip in any matter of detail, however minor it may be. It should especially be ensured that:-

(a) intimations regarding public meetings/functions are sent through speedier communication devices to the M.Ps, so that they reach them well in time, and

(b) that receipt of intimation by the M.P is confirmed by the officer/official concerned;

(vii) Letters from Members of Parliament and Members of State Legislatures must be promptly acknowledged, and a reply sent at an appropriate level expeditiously as per the relevant provisions of the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure;

(viii) Information or statistics relating to matters of local importance must be furnished to the MPs and MLAs when asked for. The information so supplied should be specific and answer the points raised. A soft copy of the information should also be sent to the Member via e-mail;

(ix) If the information sought by a Member of Parliament cannot be given and is to be refused, instructions from a higher authority should be taken and the reasons for not furnishing the information should be given in the reply;

(x) Wherever any letter from a Member of Parliament is in English and the reply is required to be given in Hindi in terms of the Official Languages Act, 1963 and the rules framed there under, an English translation should also be sent along with the reply for the convenience of such Members of Parliament from non Hindi speaking areas;

(xi) References from the Committees of Parliament must be attended to promptly;

(xii) The officers should not ignore telephonic messages left for them by the Members of Parliament/State Legislatures in their absence and should try to contact at the earliest the Member of Parliament/State Legislature concerned. These instructions also include SMS and e-mails received on official mobile telephones which also should be replied to promptly and on priority;

(xiii) All Ministries/Departments may ensure that the powers of Members of Parliament/State Legislatures as Chairpersons/ Members of committees under various Centrally Sponsored/Central Sector government schemes are clearly and adequately defined; and

(xiv) A Government servant should not approach MPs/MLAs for sponsoring his individual case as bringing or attempting to bring political or non-official or jother outside influence is prohibited under the conduct Rules e.g. Rule 18 of the All India Service (Conduct) Rules, 1968 and Rule 20 of the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules.

6. All Ministries/Departments are requested to ensure that the above basic principles and instructions are followed by all officials concerned, both in letter and spirit. Violation of the guidelines laid down on this subject will be viewed seriously.

7. Any violation of relevant Conduct Rules in this regard, which violation is established after due enquiry will render the Government servant concerned liable for appropriate punishment as per Rule.

(C.A. Subramanian)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India

To

All the Ministries/Departments of Government of India

Copy to:-

1. Presidents Secretariat/ Vice Presidents Secretariat.
2. PMO/Cabinet Secretariat.
3. Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
4. UPSC/SSC/LBSNAA/ISTM/CVC/CIC.
5. Lok Sabha Secretariat/ Rajya Sabha Secretariat.
6. All Officers/Sections in Ministry of Personnel, PG & Pension.
7. NIC, DOPT-please upload this OM on this Department's website.

Copy also to:

Chief Secretaries of all States / UTs with a request to circulate these instructions to all State Government officials at the State/Division and District levels and to periodically review implementation.

(C.A. Subramanian)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India