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Minimum Government
Maximum Governance

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YOJANA

Seeking Solace

Do you often feel aggrieved because you have had an inflated electricity bill and when you go to the electricity office for a clarification you are unceremoniously shooed away. Or, you are getting an unfair amount of call drops and you don't know whom to complain to for a redressal. Or, you have to get your property changed to your name and you are running from pillar to post in the concerned office and it just doesn't seem to be getting done. Most of us, at some time or the other, have had to face such problems which need redressal from some government official or organization. And, every time one attempts to find a solution to the problem or even want a simple clarification, there is no one to give even a proper hearing.

No system is perfect. There are likely to be shortcomings always. However, if these shortcomings start impacting the basic interest of the public, they have legitimate claims for the redressal of their grievances. A complaining customer can be a good opportunity to show how good you are. That is why public grievance redressal is said to be the corner stone of any well governed democracy.

Our Constitution does confer various rights on its citizens. However, the lack of an effective mechanism to deal with everyday grievances of people is still one of the weaknesses of governance in India today. Various governments, in recent years, have attempted to introduce initiatives to address the grievances of the common man as a good governance attempt. One of the earliest attempts to address the situation was the Citizen's Charter which was first introduced in India in the 1990s. The Department of Public Grievances(DARPG) subsequently took on the task of formulating a Citizen's Charter. The components of the Citizen's Charter as outlined by DARPG include the vision and mission statement of the organization, details of grievance redress mechanisms and how to access them. Unfortunately, the Citizen's Charters of many organizations just remained a dormant document and the consumer was left more or less where he was earlier.

That was when the Right to Information Act was introduced in 2005. The RTI proved to be a landmark reform in public grievance redressal because it put the onus of redressal on the officials dealing with the particular issue and also introduced a penalty clause. This not only forced the concerned official/organization to address the grievance in a time bound manner but also reduced corruption since the complainant had access to all documents relating to the issue including file notings and enforced a situation of accountability.

With the growing concept of e-governance and "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance', there has, of late been, an increased focus on web and mobile based grievance redressal platforms. Some of the recently introduced systems include the CPGRAMS (Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System) – a web based public grievance redressal mechanism - initiated by the DARPG to streamline and unify the process of receiving grievances relating to various Ministries/Departments; PRAGATI(Pro-active government and Timely Implementation), an interactive platform to address common man's grievances and simultaneously monitor programmes and projects of Centre as well as State Governments, MyGov, a citizen engagement platform and E-Nivaran a paperless mode for redressal of tax related grievances etc. Various regulatory mechanisms have also been created to address grievances related to services like telecommunications (TRAI), banking (Banking Ombudsman), health services(MCI and IMA), etc.

Women are often the most vulnerable part of the population, prone to abuse at home and at the work place. Though there are various acts to protect women from domestic violence and abuse at home and at workplaces like the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013; Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; Domestic Violence Act 2005, etc, women still end up being at the receiving end. To address these issues, the government recently introduced SHe Box (Sexual Harrassment electronic box), to provide a single window access to every woman to complain against any kind of harassment.

The central theme of democracy is that the government is accountable to the citizens for all policies and activities. And only an effective and efficient public grievance redressal mechanism can build trust with the citizens and assure them that it is a government 'of the people and for the people'.

Effective Grievance Redressal : Heart of Good Governance

K V Eapen

SHARP, EFFECTIVE, FAST AND FLEXIBLE.

MINIMUM GOVERNMENT

MAXIMUM GOVERNANCE

The effort to usher in an era of Sushasan (सुशासन) has begun on a very promising note. However, it is also important to understand that governance is an area where the citizen too has a specific role to play at every given point

Good Governance is the key to a Nation's progress and an important step towards it is the simplification of procedures and processes in the Government so as to make the entire system transparent and faster. Further, the ever expanding provision of Citizen-Centric Online Services is one of the most important aspects of an efficient and effective public administration system as it leads to transparency and accountability in governance and also fosters equitable growth. Technology is, thus, both an empowering tool for citizens and a measure of accountability for the Government. Further, it is important to note that the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister is the emphasis on "Minimum Government and Maximum Governance".

At the same time, besides the change in procedures and processes and use of the empowering nature of technology, it is important to note that public grievances redressal is equally a very important component of a responsive administration. The grievance redressal mechanism of an organisation is its instrument to measure efficiency and effectiveness as it provides important feedback on the working of that organisation. The Government of India has established an internet based Centralised Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) to facilitate all citizens to lodge grievances for redressal. CPGRAMS is a platform based web technology which aims to enable submission of grievances by the citizens from anywhere, anytime to the Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations. Tracking grievances is also facilitated on this portal through a system generated unique registration number. Further, grievances received manually are also digitized and uploaded on the system. The system also enables Ministries/ Departments to take appropriate action and upload the Action Taken Report (ATR) on it. This can be viewed by the citizens online with the help of the unique registration number.

At the same time, while dealing with public grievances, it is important to note that issues which do not fall within the scope of grievance redressal are those relating to sub-judice cases or any matter concerning judgment given by any Court; personal and family disputes; RTI matters; anything that impacts upon the territorial integrity of the country or friendly relations with other countries and correspondence which is in the nature of advice/ suggestions.

Public Grievance Mechanism in India

The Public Grievance Mechanism of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the President's Secretariat, the Directorate of Public Grievances (Cabinet Secretariat), Department of

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Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) as well as the Pensioners' portal have been integrated through the CPGRAMS. This enables grievances lodged at any of these entities to be transferred to the Central Ministries/Departments and State Governments online through CPGRAMS.

The DARPG is the policy making, monitoring and coordinating department for public grievances. Its mandate arises from the Allocation of Business Rules 1961. These rules have allocated the work relating to (a) redress of public grievances in general; and (b)grievances pertaining to Central Government agencies to DARPG. Further, grievances are required to be redressed in a decentralized manner by the Ministries/ Departments concerned under the Rules.

Nodal Officers for Public Grievances have been identified in each Ministry/ Department. Redressal of grievances is handled by various officials as per the internal work allocation in a Ministry/ Department. In addition, all Ministries/ Departments have been advised to ensure that a well-reasoned speaking order is given while disposing off a grievance. Each Ministry/Department/ Organization should also have a Director of Public Grievances, whom an aggrieved citizen can approach for redressal. Every Wednesday of the week has been earmarked for the purpose. A Dashboard has also been created on CPGRAMS for all the Heads of the Ministries/ Departments for accessing the relevant information pertaining to pendency of grievances in their respective Ministries/Departments and the subordinate Organizations affiliated to them.

It is also important to note that the Prime Minister also monitors/reviews the pending grievances of one or more Ministry/Department every month under the Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) platform.

Disposal Rate

During the last three years, while the total number of grievances has increased, it is as important to note that the disposal rate has also improved. The disposal rate (including pendency from the previous year) for grievances relating to Central Government Organizations during the three calendar years (as on November, 2017) are as follows:
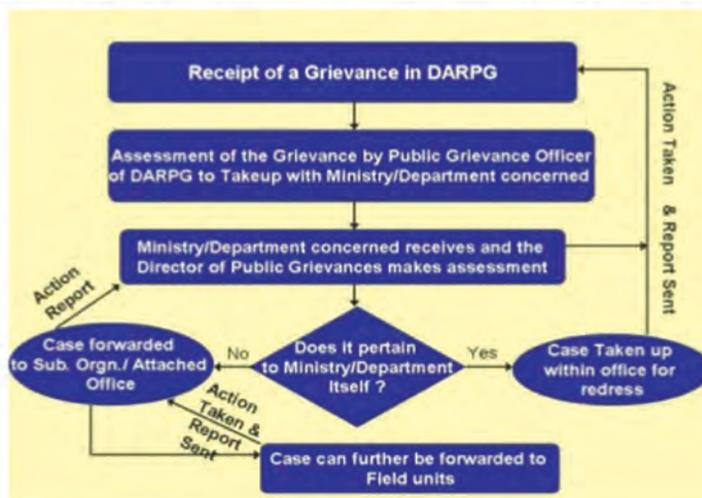
Year	Receipts	Disposal	% Disposal
2015	1049751	797453	76
2016	1479862	1229428	83
2017 (Nov'17)	1728194	1601544	93

(Source: CPGRAMS Data)

In order to have a single pan India Public Grievance Redressal System, and to ensure that the citizen's experience is satisfactorily uniform, it is necessary that the State Public Grievance Redressal Systems also need to be integrated with CPGRAMS. The State related grievances lodged on CPGRAMS can then be handled in an integrated and effective manner because, while many States are using CPGRAMS, some States have their individual grievance redressal mechanisms. The CPGRAMS is nationally linked to all the State Governments. It is important to note that State Government related grievances received in CPGRAMS are only forwarded to the concerned State Government for redressal, but are not monitored by the Centre. The CPGRAMS with local language interface, has so far been launched in 9 State Governments / Union Territories, namely, Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Punjab and Puducherry.

New Developments

A new, revised, more citizen friendly updated version of the CPGRAMS software with additional features like horizontal transfer of grievances among Ministries/ Departments, bulk disposal of similar grievances, one time registration to avoid duplication of complaints, escalation of unresolved complaints to higher authority, multiple forwarding, local language interface, etc. is in the offing.

Further, a person can lodge a grievance on the PG portal through the Common Service Centre located in his area by paying a nominal fee. A toll free facility for receiving reminders regarding pending grievances is also being introduced. A Mobile App which allows lodging and tracking of public grievances on android based mobiles was launched in October 2015 and it

EXTERNAL GRIEVANCE REDRESS MACHINERY–DARPG AS NODAL

can be downloaded from the PG portal. Besides, a new Mobile App with some added features has been developed which is more user-friendly. This has been integrated with Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG).

Grievance Analysis

For effective public grievance redressal, an important tool is regular analysis of public grievances received in order to help identification of the problem areas in which modification of policies and procedures could be undertaken. The aim, as always, is to make the delivery of services easier and more expeditious. There is need for review of existing policies/procedures to bring about systemic changes in order to reduce reasons for public grievances as far as possible.

Keeping the above in view, a Grievance Analysis Study was conducted through Quality Council of India for identifying grievance prone areas, undertake root cause analysis and to recommend systemic reforms in respect of top 20 grievance receiving Ministries/Departments/ Organizations listed on the CPGRAMS portal. The Study identified 81 Reforms to be done for more effective grievance redressal and the Reports were duly circulated to

Launch of Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

- Initial implementation - June 2007; established - 2008
- PG portal accessible at www.pgportal.gov.in
- Covers all Ministries/Departments of GOI
- Web based, therefore Ministries/Departments do not require separate server
- Also covers subordinate and attached offices within the Ministries and further field offices
- Reduction/elimination of correspondence time
- Allows integration of manual complaints with electronic complaints by scanning

the concerned Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations. A Project Management Unit (PMU) has been put in place for monitoring the reforms. Out of the 81 reforms recommended, 35 have been implemented by the concerned Ministries/Departments. Some of the notable reforms introduced are: automatic refunds on cancellation of Railway Tickets, Single Window Pension through disbursing Banks, intensive mechanized cleaning of coaches, e-verification of Income Tax Returns, expeditious Income Tax Returns upto Rs.50,000/-, etc.

A Grievance Analysis Study for next 20 Ministry/ Departments receiving bulk of the grievances was also undertaken and the reports recommending systemic reforms were released in August 2017. These Reports have suggested 100 systemic reforms for reducing grievances which would lead to better public service delivery.

Award Scheme

The DARPG has also launched an Award Scheme as an incentive for recognising outstanding performance in redressal of public grievances through issue of Certificate of Appreciation on a quarterly basis. The Scheme not only takes into consideration the number of grievances disposed by the Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations, but also the feedback of the petitioners whose grievances have been closed. Till now, 21 Certificates of Appreciation have been issued. During 2016-2017, certificates of appreciation were issued to 12 Ministries/Departments.

In addition, a Public Grievance Call Centre has been made operational with effect from February 2016 for reminding concerned officials of the top 40 Ministries/Departments/ Organizations receiving bulk of the grievances, for expeditious disposal of grievances pending for more than two

months. This Call Centre makes about 20,000 to 22,000 calls per month.

Frequent review meetings are being held in the DARPG for monitoring pendency / disposal of public grievances. During 2017, five review meetings were held and 66 Central Ministries/ Departments have participated in the same.

Citizen's Charter

The Citizen's/Client's Charter, is another tool for good governance. This is a written declaration by a Government department that highlights the standards of service delivery that it subscribes to, the availability of choice for consumers, avenues for grievance redressal and other related information. It is a set of commitments made regarding the standards of service which it delivers. Though it is not enforceable in a Court of Law, the Citizen's/Client's Charter is intended to empower citizens and clients so that they can demand committed standards of service and avail remedies in case of non-compliance by service provider organisations. The basic thrust of the Citizen's/Client's Charter is to render public services citizen centric by making them demand driven rather than supply driven.

There is a portal *http://goicharter.nic.in* on which the Citizens Charter of Ministries/ Departments/ Organisations of the Central Government and State Governments have been uploaded.

Ultimately, the aim of these initiatives is to build trust with the citizen through effective and speedy redressal of the grievances in order to pave the way for good governance. The effort to usher in an era of Sushasan (सुशासन) has begun on a very promising note. However, it is also important to understand that governance is an area where the citizen too has a specific role to play at every given point. ❑

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1st PIO-Parliamentarian Conference

The First PIO-Parliamentarian Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in New Delhi on January 9, 2018.

141 Members of Parliament and Mayors of Indian descent were invited to attend the conference. At a media briefing, the Secretary CPA & OIA, Ministry of External Affairs said that people of Indian Origin (PIO) have contributed considerably to the economy and social upliftment of the countries in which they lived. Languages like Hindi, Bhojpuri, folklore such as Ramayana, literature from India, traditional cuisine etc. have not only survived but are flourishing in these countries as Indian migrants in these countries were determined to preserve their traditions, norms and customs. By a rough calculation there are over 270 people of Indian descent sitting in various parliaments and occupying various positions starting from the Head of Government, Head of State, Ministers as well as the Speakers and then the Members of Parliament. The conference was organized in keeping with the Prime Minister's endeavours to persuade PIOs to connect with India and avail of any opportunities India offered them.

Highlights of the Prime Minister's speech at the inaugural session of the PIO-Parliamentarian Conference.

- While many people may have left India over the course of hundreds of years, India continues to have a place in their minds and hearts.

- It appears as if a Mini World Parliament of Indian origin is gathered in Delhi today. He noted that persons of Indian origin are today Prime Ministers of Mauritius, Portugal and Ireland. He added that persons of Indian origin have also been Heads of State and Heads of Government in many other countries.

- The global impression about India has changed over the last three to four years. He said the reason for this is that India is transforming itself.

- PIOs are like permanent ambassadors of India, wherever they reside,

- The Government believes that NRIs are partners for India's development. He said that NRIs have an important position in the Action Agenda till 2020, drafted by the NITI Aayog.

e-Governance:
Grievance Redress for a New India 2022

Yogesh Suri
Desh Gaurav Sekhri

...the strategic plan leading into a New India 2022 would be to use e-Governance processes for public redress of grievances through a number of cutting edge and innovative initiatives, and ensuring that they are utilized to the greatest extent possible. This, together with enhancing awareness, dissemination of information, and greater participation by the public would help India to emerge amongst the frontrunners in public rights redress systems through e-Governance modules amongst the comity of nations

Public redress of grievances as a cornerstone of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' is a key aspect of New India 2022. Closely related to this is the growth of e-Governance through unique and cutting edge initiatives in India especially in the last few years. With advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), it has become possible to provide many public services through online modes. In accordance with the estimates made by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY), there are more than 3500 different e-services being offered by various Central Ministries and State Governments. As per NIC estimates, more than 8000 different portals and websites of Central Ministries and State Governments are hosted by them.

Sevottam and CPGRAMS

The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) is the chief policy making, monitoring and coordinating department for public grievances arising from the work of Ministries/departments of the Government of India. The DARPG has developed a framework called 'Sevottam', which essentially means Excellence in Public Service. Under this scheme, every Government Department must have a Citizens' Charter outlining the main services with service standards and timelines, a Public Grievance Redress Mechanism, and a system with assessment and improvement of public service delivery standards. Emphasis is also on service delivery enablers comprising customer feedback, employee motivation and infrastructure.

DARPG has put in place a 'Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System' (CPGRAMS) since 2007. It is a flagship initiative by the Government of India to address and monitor the resolution to redress public grievances in a centralised, transparent, accountable and efficient manner. It is a standardized web based solution and an integrated application to register and to redress the grievances received online, by post and by hand. Currently 139 Ministries/Departments/States/UTs and other Apex organizations are linked in CPGRAMS. It is also available in Hindi. CPGRAMS with local language interface, has also been launched in Government Departments of 9 States/ Union Territories viz. Haryana, Odisha, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Puducherry, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Punjab.

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SEVOTTAM SUCCESS

Success of SEVOTTAM depends on...

High level commitment
- Political
- Administrative

Change Management
- Mindset
- Management systems

Implementation of framework
- Criteria
- Assessment process

Stakeholder involvement
- Citizens
- Government staff

The grievances received by the Department through CPGRAMS are forwarded to the Ministries/ Departments concerned. Redress of grievances is done by respective Ministries/Departments in a decentralized manner. The Department periodically reviews the status of redress of public grievances for effective management of grievances under the Central Government. Many State Governments are also using it for monitoring of grievances within their States. Experience shows that while CPGRAMS has made a good beginning, it needs to be substantially upscaled to emerge as a major avenue for posting and redress of public grievances. Likewise, data available in CPGRAMS needs to be more effectively used to identify the root causes and focus areas for reforms in top grievance receiving departments. The system needs better integration and a parallel mechanism in the respective Departments/ Ministries/ Organisations.

The DARPG is also doing its part at being innovative by launching schemes such as the Public Grievances Call Centre, Twitter Seva and even a new version of CPGRAMS with additional features is slated for launch shortly. An incentive to gravitate towards IT based redress includes an Award Scheme for performance through Certificates of Appreciation. Also noteworthy is the upcoming launch of an online Dashboard for monitoring reforms.

Public Service Delivery Act

The Government of India had proposed the Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill, 2011 in the Lok Sabha in December 2011. The Bill provided for right to time bound delivery of goods and services to every citizen, mandatory publication of citizen's charter, grievance redressal mechanism for non-compliance of Citizen's Charter and penalty on defaulting officer and compensation upto the same amount to the applicant. However, the Bill lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha. It is understood that a new law is being contemplated. Meanwhile, it is expected to be launched in the form of a scheme and experiences from there would be helpful in framing the revised Act.

UMANG

As mobile phones are becoming increasingly important in e-governance, the government has recently launched a Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG). Developed by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and National e-Governance Division, UMANG provides a single platform for all Indian Citizens to access pan India e-Gov services ranging from Central to Local Government bodies and other citizen centric services. These services cut across Central and State Government Departments, local bodies and other utility services from private organizations. It provides a unified approach where citizens can install one application to avail multiple government services. It can be accessed through smartphones, tablets as well as desktops.

MyGov

MyGov.in is a unique and cutting edge participatory governance initiative involving the common citizen at large, initiated by the Prime Minister in 2014. The platform is now an integral component in dissemination of information and seeking public opinion. It provides citizens a voice in the governance process of the country and creates grounds for them to become stakeholders across the board, including in implementation through actionable tasks. MyGov is estimated to have in excess of 1.78 million users contributing and participating, while it gets more than 10,000 posts per week for further progression towards becoming actionable agenda.

Quality based Public Service Delivery and its Certification under IS 15700:2005 in India

सेवोत्तम

Towards a Citizen Friendly Government

UMANG
Unified Mobile Application
for New-age Governance

Other Citizen Centric Services

It is heartening to note that several State Governments have used online platforms for citizens to register complaints. A few such initiatives include the Lokvani project in Uttar Pradesh, which helps citizens make their grievances related to government services in an easy manner and also get their redress within 15 days of filling complaint through kiosk centers. Also initiated is the Jansunwai or e-Samvad Portal fully dedicated for grievance redress through e-Governance. Now all Lokvani complaints are available on this portal.

The Andhra Pradesh online portal 'aponline.com' is one of the most comprehensive State Government set ups for an e-interface between the Government and citizens with an integrated grievance redress channel as part of its real-time governance initiative. The channel is called People First or 'www.meekosam.ap.gov.in' and a People First mobile app was launched in September 2017. Also e-Pariharan has been launched in Kerala to facilitate online lodging of complaints. Complaints can also be received through SMS, WhatsApp, email, etc.

Public Grievances beyond G2C

It is important to note that public grievances may not be limited to only when they have an interaction with a Government Department. Citizens may have far more number of grievances when they purchase some goods or avail some service, which comes within the ambit of consumer protection. The Integrated Grievance Redressal Mechanism (INGRAM) is a portal launched by the Department of Consumer Affairs to create a platform to allow consumers to lodge complaints regarding consumer dissatisfaction. It has brought all stakeholders including consumers, government agencies, private companies, regulators and call centres onto a single platform.

Future Outlook

Looking at the future of public services and redress of grievances, there are a few fundamental principles which may need to be pursued. These include making services available to public in faceless, paperless and cashless mode; providing connectivity and digital identity to all; targeting benefits through Aadhaar enabled Direct Benefits Transfer; simplifying forms and processes and providing e-platforms.

The Group of Secretaries in its report on Good Governance had observed that there is a need for capacity building of service delivery officers, knowledge updation, streamlining processes, proper monitoring and attitudinal shift amongst Government staff towards more transparent and accountable governance. Awareness is also required among the public about their rights under the Right to Services Act. The system and processes for filing of a request and appeals under the Act also need to be simplified and innovative processes designed for providing alternative means of filing through e-Governance. Besides,

institutional mechanisms need to be set up to engage with civil society and media for seeking constructive cooperation in increasing awareness and providing support to the public in hassle-free filing through systems re-engineering. These issues need to be addressed on priority by the Central as well as the State Governments.

Table-1: Number of Transactions under E-Taal(in million)

Year	Total Transactions	Transactions per month
2013	2,418	6.5
2014	3,577	9.6
2015	7,608	20.7
2016	10,898	29.6
2017	30,191	82.5

Source: etaal.gov.in

Adoption of ICT has made significant strides at various levels in Government. Starting from biometric attendance of Government employees, digitizing database of beneficiaries across all schemes, seeding with Aadhaar numbers, using PoS machines for beneficiary authentication and finally transferring the funds to Aadhaar linked bank accounts have made marked improvements in the way the services are delivered to the public. Aadhaar-enabling benefits include removal of leakages, duplicates, fakes, and ghosts from the list of beneficiaries. Under the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme (dbtbharat.gov.in), subsidies have already been initiated for LPG and food, and a different beneficiary model has been rolled out for fertilizers in 2017. The Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana scheme is also more effective with Aadhaar linkage.

Under e-Taal which is a web portal disseminating electronic transactions of e-governance projects, over 30 billion transactions covering more than 3500 services have been undertaken in the calendar year 2017. The number of transactions reported on e-Taal has crossed 82 million per day compared to merely 6.5 million a day in 2013 (Table-1). This clearly indicates that e-services are increasingly becoming

the way of interface with the citizens. Looking at adoption of technologies such as mobile phones, smart phones and applications like WhatsApp, etc. even in the remotest parts of the country, there is no doubt that a few years down the line there will be hardly any service left requiring manual intervention.

CPGRAMS has emerged as a flagship initiative and has a potential to emerge as a major platform for redress of public grievances not just for Central Government but also all States and sub-State levels which need to be linked to the portal. It should be available in all major vernacular languages.

Looking at a 15 year horizon, India must move to a regime where service standards are at par with the best in the world. All G2C services must move online (front-end and back-end), eliminating the need for the public to visit any office or interact with a Government functionary for service requirements such as issuance of licenses, permissions, certificates, registration, social benefits, etc. The Public Services Delivery Act has already been enacted in 20 States and more States may need to follow suit.

As regards consumer complaints, there is a long way to go towards utilisation of IT tools in making the redress system more efficient and transparent. In order to realize the vision of widespread dissemination and public citizens' awareness of their rights and opportunities for redress, initiatives such as Jaago Grahak Jaago must become mainstays. Further, under the CONFONET scheme, all consumer fora should be computerized and net worked to enable online dissemination of information and ensuring quicker disposal of cases.

Therefore, the strategic plan leading into a New India 2022 would be to use e-Governance processes for public redress of grievances through a number of cutting edge and innovative initiatives, and ensuring that they are utilized to the greatest extent possible. This, together with enhancing awareness, dissemination of information, and greater participation by the public would help India to emerge amongst the frontrunners in public rights redress systems through e-Governance modules amongst the comity of nations.   ❑

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Public Grievance Redressal: Governance Challenge

Dolly Arora

While public grievances reflect the problem areas and challenges that confront the institutions involved in service delivery and administration, these also offer the opportunity to address these problems before they explode in the form of public discontent. The awareness of grievances is the first condition for effectively addressing them. Expression rather than repression of voice, therefore, should be encouraged if the objective is to win public trust or improve the state of governance

P ublic Grievances are a significant indicator of the state of governance in any system. In a democracy, the legitimacy of government depends primarily on public trust and support, which is often contingent upon its capacity to deliver quality governance. Efficient and effective public institutions provide the foundation on which the story of public trust can be developed, building on public satisfaction with administration and service delivery. History is witness that public discontent has often written the counter story of many regimes, marking a smooth and peaceful change in democracies and a violent and abrupt one in non-democratic regimes. Public discontent, however, simmers in the vortex of grievances. As grievances breed, discontent grows too. Public grievances, therefore, present the most domineering challenge before any government. But this challenge is complex and its resolution requires multi-dimensional focus and multi-layered interventions necessitating (a) timely capture of grievances by creating spaces for their expression; (b) effective redressal of existing grievances by creating robust redress mechanisms; and (c) accomplishing grievance-free governance by addressing the root cause and working on alternate policies or institutional reforms, where necessary. The question is how should we comprehend the evolution of

public grievances scenario in India and address the challenge of altering it.

The Grievance Complex

It is vital to acknowledge the need to gauge the complexity of public grievances before one attempts to assess the possibilities of redress and prevention. Grievances exist in as many areas as governance institutions and processes, spanning various ministries, departments and organisations at the central, state and local government levels. And as the responsibilities for service delivery shift away from the state towards service providers in the private sector and civil society institutions in many sectors, grievances related to these have grown too. The stakeholders caught in varied grievance situations include law makers, administrators, managers, employers, regulators, service providers, service users and citizens as bearers of rights granted to them by the Constitution and the legal system. Many grievances relate to appointment, work conditions, wages, allowances, service conditions, termination of service or other work related issues. Several of these pertain to schemes for development, their implementation, targeting issues, timely benefit transfer; or these may relate to non-delivery of services or entitlements related to health, education or other services like banks, communications, etc. In each sector, some grievance

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issues are of similar nature, but there are many grievances specific to the nature of particular responsibilities entrusted with administrators and entitlements of citizens in the sector. Grievances related to education, for instance, relate to fee refund, transfer certificates, degrees, exams, results, scholarships, research funds, teacher availability or other conditions of education and the role of regulatory institutions; and these involve many stakeholders- the students, admission seekers, teachers, administrators, regulators or institutions providing education, etc., sometimes having conflicting stakes too.

Public grievances emerge around varied situations- dispute over benefits or entitlements, interpretation of rules, complaints against misuse of power, wrong decisions, favouritism, discrimination, corruption or specific acts of omission and commission. These may be individual centred or may involve groups or a category of people, bundled together for reasons of identity or circumstances. Grievances around discrimination based on gender, caste or tribal identity or violation of specific rights or entitlements of involving women, SCs and STs have grown over the years. Grievances of groups formed by association based on shared circumstances are often quite diverse, such as, in case of displaced people, forest dwellers, disabled, job-seekers, students, teachers, government employees, handloom weavers, hawkers, manual scavengers, tax payers, etc. Group grievances are also visible around scheme beneficiaries or specific target groups, like poor, unemployed, widows, etc.; or service users or consumers like mobile users, insurance users, water users, power users, etc. Such groups also articulate individual grievances, which are sometimes location or time specific. However, these often offer the possibility of collective redressal or prevention by attempting correctives at policy or administration level.

Evolution of Mechanisms

The post-independence India began to feel the growing pressure of public grievances as political regimes confronted changes in political support. Unable to meet the rising expectations from state, the need to find mechanisms to contain discontent became compelling. Administrative reforms to reduce public grievances became a significant element of political discourse by the mid-sixties. However, the drive to set up public grievance redressal mechanisms gained momentum following the Chief Ministers' Conference in 1987 and the adoption of Action Plan for responsive and citizen-centric administration. What followed was a concerted effort to put in place three key mechanisms- citizen charters, information and facilitation counters and public grievance redressal machinery- in all ministries, departments and organisations of government of India and state governments. The programme witnessed much enthusiasm in the initial phase, with numerous directives flowing from DARPG to place these in order. Public grievance redressal mechanism was also central to the Sevottam model that was adopted later; and it was a significant variable in the Results Framewok documents which were to became an important performance measure. Two significant milestones in the evolution of grievance redressal mechanisms in India were the constitution of public grievance cells in the Ministries/ Departments/ organisation, with the formal responsibilities of grievance redressal being assigned to a designated officer, setting up of DPG to monitor the redressal of public grievances in select organisations with large public interface and higher level of grievances. The adoption of a web based Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)- was created to streamline and unify the process of receiving grievances of public with respect to almost 94 Ministries/Departments/Organizations in the Government of India. This was expected to enable people to seek redressal of their grievance from anywhere, anytime and to enable them to track it too. The system also enabled monitoring and analysis of grievances by the agency concerned and the nodal agencies, facilitating interventions and course correction as well as preventive action.

A review of the grievance redressal mechanisms in government of India Ministries, Departments and Organisations undertaken in 2008, however, found that these remained largely ineffective in the absence of adequate authority, human resource support or poor commitment of officers, some of whom were found ignorant of their own citizen's charter. Public grievance mechanism also faced the pressure of staff grievances more than public grievances. CPGRAMS was set up with very high expectations of making administration responsive. The mechanism, however, remained underutilised for lack of awareness, lack of access to technology and low level of public trust. Despite investments in technology and training for capacity building, there was not much progress evident till that time. Public grievance redressal remained a difficult challenge despite all efforts.[1]

The Emerging Scenario

Over the years, however, on account of rapid spread of information technology, growing internet access and increasing awareness about the mechanism, the utilisation of CPGRAMS has grown manifold.

There is also a renewed interest in strengthening the technology interface through other support mechanisms like PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) platform and social media too. Besides DARPG and DPG, PMO has also become an important nodal agency for receiving grievances. There has been a seven-fold increase in the number of grievances received since 2014.[2] While it can be disputed whether it indicates increase in grievances or increasing resort to redressal process because of growing trust in the mechanism, it is noteworthy that 40 per cent of the grievances received were related to two Ministries- 23 per cent to the Ministry of Finance and 17 per cent to the Ministry of Information Technology. The overall disposal rate has been quite high with 97 per cent grievances having been disposed though there is some variation in respect of overall disposal rate as well as the duration taken for disposal across various Departments[3]. An analysis of this variation and its reasons can throw light on many possibilities for reform. Issue based analysis can also be meaningful, provided the categorisation of grievance registered on the portal is done adequately, using specific rather than very broad category, which are generally used by the nodal agencies. Reclassification of issues should be done at the level of handling agency, where necessary, so that the real nature of grievances can be captured in the online analysis.

There has been eagerness evident at the PM level to ensure that pendency comes down and redress time is reduced to one month. During the PRAGATI interaction of March 23, 2016, the issue regarding analysis of handling of public grievances done by DARPG for top 20 Ministries / Departments receiving maximum number of grievances was taken up. Ministries /Departments were instructed to review and streamline their policies/procedure to redress grievances expeditiously. DARPG also observed that Ministries/Departments took considerable time to return back the grievances which did not pertain to them to the nodal Departments. Similarly attached/subordinate offices

took too long to return back grievances which did not pertain to them to their Ministries/Departments thus leading to long periods of pendency. Therefore, it was suggested that the Ministries/Departments should expeditiously examine the grievances received by them and return back the grievances which did not pertain to them within a period of maximum five working days. All the attached and subordinate organizations under the Ministries/Departments should also be instructed accordingly.[4] This is indeed appreciable. However, at ground level, the reality of redressal is not what it appears from the portal.

Redressal versus Disposal

In their eagerness to comply with these instructions, grievances are increasingly being disposed by some departments or organisations simply with the suggestion to approach another agency, sometimes a subordinate office. In some cases, the grievance is being re-sent to the agency against which the complaint is made and in some others, the online grievance is being disposed with the advice to take the grievance to the portal of the agency or some complaint committee. While these observations are based on a recent analysis of a limited sample of grievances received on the CPGRAMS portal, a wider study of the redressal process in all ministries, departments and organisations is needed to address the real issues involved in redressal.

Even where grievance was supposedly redressed, it remains to be ascertained whether redressal was to the satisfaction of the aggrieved or it was a mere reiteration of the official position. Only systematic analysis of process and feedback to redressal can throw light on this. DARPG too expressed concern that in many cases, grievances were being closed without the complainant knowing the reasons for that- it also issued instructions to give valid reasons for closure.[5] However, in many cases, this is still not being done.

The Federal Dynamics

Many grievances received on CPGRAMS are related to State governments- UP, Maharshtra and Delhi being the leading States. It is worth examining the nature of the grievances and the reasons for these. Whether grievances have grown or fallen with the adoption of Public Service Guarantee Acts adopted by some states or have some States shown a greater tendency to look towards Centre than others? Or, has the variation been on account of perceived relevance of Centre in the matter. It is also important to examine whether all State related grievances are forwarded to them or not; and in case the grievance is forwarded, whether the response is awaited or it is simultaneously disposed off. Our recent analysis of some grievances received on CPGRAMS revealed that in several of these cases, the petitioner was asked to approach

the State government and the grievance was disposed rather than forwarded. There was no redressal. It is important to ensure that CPGRAMS plays the facilitator role for the public without impinging on the nature of federalism. The performance of States on the portal can be left to them but the facilitation responsibility of the Centre cannot be shed when a public grievance is registered, and there is a jurisdictional conflict involved. The outcome should be visible to the public.

Private Provision of Public Service

Where service delivery has moved to the private providers on account of changing perspective on governance, accountability mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that rights of service users are not at stake and grievances can be addressed at appropriate level to offer effective redressal to the aggrieved. In some cases regulatory authorities have been created and the autonomy of these institutions is questioned. The influence of both state and private players on the regulators affects their ability to offer genuine and effective redressal to the service users. Autonomy, however, has its own challenges regarding the accountability of regulatory agencies. This necessitates public accountability of these institutions by making them transparent in exercising their responsibility. Making the process and the logic of decisions open to public comment can help reduce the grievances against them as well as help them effectively redress the grievances against the service providers.

Accountability Issues

Many of the grievances also involve complex issues and overlapping jurisdictions, necessitating disentanglement and clarity over rules, regulations, processes, jurisdictions and appropriate mechanisms for redress. Furthermore, there is the issue of coordination across multiple authorities in case of many grievances. Rather than letting these issues and the aggrieved be kept revolving between multiple authorities, creation of appropriate mechanisms for such coordinated responses is desirable. Taking note of this complexity, it is important that mechanisms for grievance redressal are created at appropriate levels so that access and effectiveness issues are addressed appropriately. Ease of access may increase with decentralisation of the mechanism, but it may bring in issues of local prejudice and the accused deciding the complaint unless some autonomous structures are available and there is scope for appeal. The centralised online mechanism can address this challenge and reduce the plight of the citizen to run back and forth between different authorities, while facilitating transparency and enabling the monitoring. Its effectiveness, however, is still conditioned on (a) how the issues of access to technology and ability to read and write are addressed; (b) how accountability mechanisms can be built in to ensure that disposal of public grievance is not simply presumed to imply redressal. There is need, therefore, to simultaneously utilise other mechanisms like *lok adalats, jan sunwais*, social audit, mobile apps etc. to ensure inclusion of those who may not have access to CPGRAMS.

Public Grievances as Opportunity

While public grievances reflect the problem areas and challenges that confront the institutions involved in service delivery and administration, these also offer the opportunity to address these problems before they explode in the form of public discontent. The awareness of grievances is the first condition for effectively addressing them. Expression rather than repression of voice, therefore, should be encouraged if the objective is to win public trust or improve the state of governance. Timely capture and appropriate analysis of public grievances offers an opportunity to public institutions to address performance appropriately. It is important to realise that a patriarchal approach to grievance redressal may sometimes prove to be less effective than a participatory approach, where suggestions to improve the functioning of institutions or policy, or to prevent the grievances are invited from the public and considered with an open mind. Undertaking systematic analysis of grievances and suggestions, or even queries, received from the stakeholders can provide insights into the possible ways of improvement. Since all grievances are not registered through formal grievance redressal mechanisms, and since barriers to communication come from issues of access as well as power structures, it is important to also take note of grievances received through informal channels of communications which can also help arrive at a better state of governance.

Reading the Absence of Grievances

While grievances received by an organisation speak of its performance and the relative state of governance that characterises it, a word of caution is needed here. One should not read too much into the absence of grievances, as this may be on account of poverty of mechanisms for expression, fear of reprisals or simply lack of public faith in the ability to get redress. Grievances may turn underground for fear of reprisals or stay invisible for long simply in search of spaces for redress, the time and resources involved in filing them, or due to lack of faith in the system's ability to respond. Even as the ultimate challenge is to work towards a state of governance, which does not deliver grievances, it is important to ensure the institution of multiple mechanisms for the timely capture and effective redressal of the grievances that may emerge and the course correction that may result after careful analysis of their reasons and possible remedies or prevention strategies.

Endnotes

1. Dolly Arora, Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System in Government of India Ministries and Departments, IIPA, 2008. The study was done for DARPG, Government of India.
2. *Economic Times*, December 8,2017.
3. See, CPGRAMS Portal.
4. No. k-11017/3/2015-PG C 1, 15th July 2016.
5. No. k-11019/4/2015-PG, 9th November 2015.; No. k-11011/4/2015-PG, 15th November 2015. ❑

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BRINGING INFORMATION TO THE CITIZENS

Right to Information (RTI)

Right to Information is a part of fundamental rights under Article 19(1) of the Constitution. Article 19(1) says that every citizen has freedom of speech and expression. As early as in 1976, the Supreme Court said in the case of Raj Narain vs State of UP , that people cannot speak or express themselves unless they know. Therefore, right to information is embedded in article 19. In the same case, Supreme Court further said that India is a democracy and people are the masters. As masters they have every right to know how the government is functioning. Every citizen pays taxes at least in the form of goods and services tax if at all he or she is not covered in the purview of Income tax.

Right To Information Act
A Powerful Tool For Citizens

Right to Information Act 2005 mandates timely response to citizen requests for government information. The basic object of the Right to Information Act is to empower the citizens, promote transparency and accountability in the working of the Government, contain corruption, and make our democracy work for the people in real sense. It goes without saying that an informed citizen is better equipped to keep necessary vigil on the instruments of governance and make the government more accountable to the governed. The Act is a big step towards making the citizens informed about the activities of the Government.

The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions had provided a web portal for the facilitation of citizens and this RTI Portal works as a Gateway to them for quick search of information on the details of first Appellate Authorities, Principal Information Officer PIOs etc. amongst others, besides access to RTI related information / disclosures published on the web by various Public Authorities under the government of India as well as the State Governments.

Further, every public authority is obligated to maintain computerised versions of all records in such a way that it can be accessed over a network anywhere in the country and issued to the person who has requested for information.

Every public authority should provide essential information to the public through various channels of information (including internet) at frequent intervals so that the use of the RTI Act to obtain information can be kept to a bare minimum.

Any person who desires to obtain information shall submit a written or electronic request in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area to the Central Public Information Officer or his/her counterpart at the state level. No applicant will be required to give any reason for application for request or to provide any personal information except for contact details where it is necessary for the authorities to contact the applicant.

Under normal circumstances, the information requested for will be provided in the form sought for - if a citizen asks for some information in the form of an email attachment, it will be provided unless it causes damage to the original document itself.

The authority will be under no obligation to provide such information that might hurt the sovereignty and integrity of India, information that has been forbidden to be shared by any court of law, information received under confidence by a foreign Government and cabinet papers.

Here are F A Qs related to RTI Act (Courtesy – www. righttoinformation.org.in)

If RTI is a fundamental right, then why do we need an Act to give us this right?

This is because if you went to any Government Department and told the officer there, "RTI is my fundamental right, and that I am the master of this country. Therefore, please show me all your files", he would not do that. Therefore, we need a machinery or a process through which we can exercise this fundamental right. Right to Information Act 2005, provides that machinery. Right to Information Act does not give us any new right. It simply lays down the process on how to apply for information, where to apply, how much fees etc.

When did RTI Act come into force?

The Central Right to Information Act came into force on the October 12, 2005. However, before that 9 state Governments had passed state Acts. These were Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya

Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Goa.

What rights are available under RTI Act 2005?

Right to Information Act 2005 empowers every citizen to

1. Ask any questions from the Government or seek any information.
2. Take copies of any government documents.
3. Inspect any government documents.
4. Inspect any Government works.
5. Take samples of materials of any Government work.
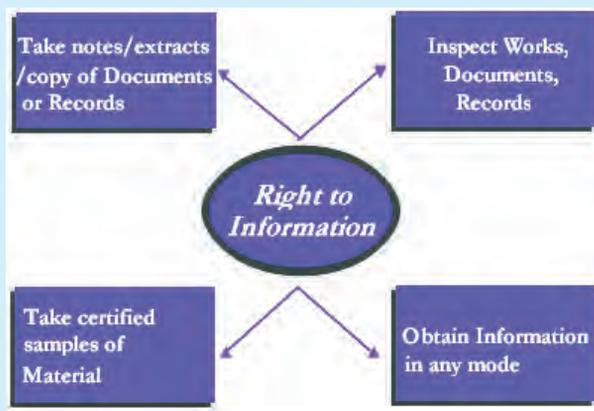
Who is covered under RTI?

The Central RTI Act extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. All bodies, which are constituted under the Constitution or under any law or under any Government notification or all bodies, including NGOs, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are covered.

Are Private bodies covered under the RTI Act?

All private bodies, which are owned, controlled or substantially financed by the Government are directly covered. Others are indirectly covered. That is, if a government department can access information from any private body under any other Act, the same can be accessed by the citizen under the RTI Act through that government department.

Isn't Official Secrets Act 1923 an obstacle to the implementation of RTI Act?

No. Sec 22 of the RTI Act 2005 clearly says that RTI Act would over ride all existing Acts including Officials Secrets Act.

Can the PIO refuse to give me information?

A PIO can refuse information on 11 subjects that are listed in section 8 of the RTI Act. These include information received in confidence from foreign governments, information prejudicial to security, strategic, scientific or economic interests of the country, breach of privilege of legislatures, etc.

There is a list of 18 agencies given in second schedule of the Act to which RTI Act does not apply.

However, they also have to give information if it relates to matters pertaining to allegations of corruption or human rights violations.

Does the Act provide for partial disclosure?

Yes. Under Section 10 of the RTI Act, access may be provided to that part of the record which does not contain information which is exempt from disclosure under this Act.

Can access be denied to file notings

No. File notings are an integral part of the government file and are subject to disclosure under the Act.

This has been clarified by the Central Information Commission in one of its orders on January 31, 2006.

How to use Right to Information
How do I locate the full Act?

The full Act in Hindi and English is available on the website of Department of Personnel and Training www.persmin.nic.in and on the RTI website http://righttoinformation.gov.in/rtiact.htm.

Who will give me information?

One or more existing officers in every Government Department have been designated as Public Information Officers (PIO). These PIOs act like nodal officers. You have to file your applications with them. They are responsible for collecting information sought by you from various wings of that Department and providing that information to you. In addition, several officers have

Online RTI Status Form

Note: Fields marked with * are Mandatory.

* Enter Registration Number

* Enter Email Id

* Enter Security code   dd26g9

refresh

Submit   Reset

been appointed as Assistant Public Information Officers (APIOs). Their job is only to accept applications from the public and forward it to the right PIO.

Where do I submit application?

You can do that with the PIO or with APIO. In the case of all Central Government Departments, 629 post offices have been designated as APIOs. This means that you can go to any of these post offices and submit your fee and application at the RTI counter in these post offices. They will issue you a receipt and acknowledgement and it is the responsibility of that post office to deliver it to the right PIO. The list of these post offices is given at http://www.indiapost.gov.in/rtimanual16a.html

What if I can not locate my PIO or APIO?

In case you have problems locating your PIO/APIO you can address your RTI application to the PIO C/o Head of Department and send it to the concerned public authority with the requisite application fee. The Head of Department will have to forward your application to the concerned PIO.

Track your RTI application

Application ID

123

Email

email@gmail.com

Submit Query

Do I have to personally go to deposit my application?

Depending on your state rules for mode of payment you can deposit your application for information from the concerned departments of your state government via post by attaching a DD, Money Order, Postal Order or affixing Court fee Stamp

For all Central government departments the Department of Posts has designated 629 postal offices at the national level. The designated officers in these post offices work as Assistant PIOs and collect the application to forward to the concerned PIO. A list is available on http://www.indiapost.gov.in/rticontents.html

Is there a time limit to receiving information?

Yes. If you file your application with the PIO, you must receive information within 30 days.

In case you have filed your application with Assistant PIO then information has to be made available within 35 days. In case the matter to which the information pertains affects the life and liberty of an individual, information has to be made available in 48 hours.

Latest initiatives

The Central Information Commission (CIC) announced that citizens who file appeal/cases filed under the RTI (Right to Information) Act will now receive real time updates about the status of their cases. The updates will be delivered via emails and SMSs.

A citizen's duty does not end with voting and the RTI Act is a great tool for citizens to come together and be more involved. The government is taking steps to make sure that citizens are not denied the right to information by making the application and follow up process easy.

Private Service Providers: Redressal Mechanism

Udai S Mehta, Sidharth Narayan

...the government, led by the vision of implementing 'ART for Governance', i.e. Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency, has not only digitised the existing public grievance mechanisms operational in the country, but has also launched several new platforms, such as the Railway Ministry's Nivaran, Minstry of Petroleum, Oil and Natural Gas's e-Seva, Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) a multi-purpose grievance redressal platform, etc. which allow citizens to lodge their grievances against government services, as well as private service providers in certain instances through online means

As the country celebrated its 69th Republic Day, the 1.3 billion Indians are once again reminded of the beauty of India being the world's largest democracy. Being governed by a government 'of the people, for the people and by the people', is truly worth cherishing, since it empowers the citizens to hold the government accountable. However, the Indian government is plagued with an inefficient bureaucracy, leaving an average Indian citizen with scarce redressal platforms for grievances against the government and/ or private businesses. Hence, there is an urgent need to fulfil the true spirit of democracy, by devising appropriate mechanisms for the redressal of citizen's grievances.

Though the current government has digitised many grievance redressal mechanisms and introduced newer ones as well for empowering citizens to raise complaints against the government ministries, departments etc., their effectiveness remains debatable. Also, there still exists a gap in an effective regulatory mechanism for grievances against private service providers, due to the absence of ombudsman in many sectors, such as telecom, etc. This highlights the need and role of the respective sectorial regulatory bodies such as Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) etc. in being empowered to become an individual public grievance redressal platform.

To date, the importance of efficient and effective grievance redress as a building block for consumer trust has unfortunately remained understated. Across sectors, focus remains predominantly on enabling access to goods and services, with limited thought on post-sale customer engagement and grievance redressal. An Indian consumer faces a threefold challenge to lodge a grievance for redressal. Firstly, complainants are unaware about the available platforms for resolving their grievances. Secondly, even if they do know the appropriate redressal platform, access to the same becomes a major impediment in filing their grievance. Thirdly, even if an aggrieved person is able to lodge a grievance with an appropriate government platform, they risk high chances of it remaining unresolved. Without prejudice to these, Indian consumers have generally lacked a complaint filling culture, which is another major obstacle requiring a solution from the government. This may be done by inculcating a grievance redressal culture, through incentivising, or atleast not de-incentivising filling consumer complaints.

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To overcome these challenges, and to empower all citizens with a convenient grievance redressal mechanism, the government, led by the vision of implementing 'ART for Governance', i.e. Accountability, Responsibility and Transparency, has not only digitised the existing public grievance mechanisms operational in the country, but has also launched several new platforms, such as the Railway Ministry's *Nivaran*, Minstry of Petroleum, Oil and Natural Gas's e-Seva, Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI) a multi-purpose grievance redressal platform, etc. which allow citizens to lodge their grievances against government services, as well as private service providers in certain instances through online means.

The repackaging of these initiatives, along with their extended reach through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), have managed to overcome the first two challenges to a certain extent. However, the third challenge, i.e. action on grievances still remains largely unaddressed. One of the pending legislations capable to address this, atleast from the point of view of public services, is to enact the 'The Right of Citizens for Time Bound Delivery of Goods and Services and Redressal of their Grievances Bill (popularly known as the Lokpal Bill), which has been pending since 2011. Though the government is mulling over introducing Delivery of Services and Grievances Redressal Scheme – 2015, the same may not yield to be an adequate redressal mechanism.

Further, though the various online redressal platforms are a welcome step, owing to the weak infrastructure and knowledge required to access these online platforms, a vast population remains excluded from availing such grievance redressal mechanisms. Therefore, there is a need for setting up ombudsman, to redress consumer grievances. Such a mechanism has already been introduced in the banking, electricity and insurance sectors, but is yet to be implemented in many other important economic sectors.

Another alternate for efficient consumer grievance redressal, would be to further empower the sectorial regulators to act as tools for public grievance redressal platforms against private service providers. A strong rationale for empowering regulators may be on account of regulators being closer to consumers, than the government itself, by forming a bridge between the two. Apart from empowering them to entertain individual consumer grievances, they also need to be made accountable to the people. The elected government proves its worth and merit, by winning the people's mandate every 5 years. However, regulators being unelected, need to be all the more answerable to the people.

However, many sectoral regulators such as TRAI in the telecom sector, lack such powers. Recognising its own under-capacity, the regulator had floated a consultation paper in 2016 requesting for comments on 'Complaints/Grievance Redressal in Telecom Sector', which also advocated for establishing a three-stage grievance redress mechanism for telecom sector— resolution by Telecom Service Providers, resolution by Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF) — and determination by Telecom Ombudsman. However, there has been no follow up progress on this need, due to which an aggrieved person

who is not relieved of his grievance by the telecom service provider, has to escalate the complaint either to Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT), and further to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Centralized Public Grievance Redress And Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), or else approach the court. Similar instances may also be seen in other sectors.

Also, considering the vast geographical spread of the country, forming an ombudsman may need to be complimented with various central and state initiatives, such as the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), Government of India's suspended initiative of establishing *Grahak Suvidha Kendras* (GSKs) or Consumer Care Centres, which worked as a one stop centre, by catering to a spectrum of services for consumer welfare. They functioned on a common Information and Technology (IT) platform of National and State Consumer Helplines. Expected to have trained personnel experienced in counselling, drafting complaints and providing information, GSKs could be approached by aggrieved consumers to register their complaints against any private goods and services provider.

The success and need of rethinking

about GSKs may be felt from the experience of the GSK which was being run by CUTS International in Jaipur. In the 18 months of its existence, the GSK received complaints relating to various sectors. However, 11 per cent of these pertained to the financial sector, which could be on account of the shift to digital payment platforms post demonetization. Such figures were encouraging for measuring the success of the GSK initiative, since consumers were able to file their complaints through various modes, and in various languages, which allowed them to approach the GSK, despite the existence of a banking ombudsman. Also, consumers were also able to avail of a host of other services, such as obtaining information on consumer rights, guidance and assistance on consumer complaints through counselling and conciliation, one-on-one advice and assistance in approaching formal grievance redress mechanisms.

Such modes of alternate dispute redressal should have been encouraged for enhanced uptake by Voluntary Consumer Organisations, which would have also helped in reducing the burden of the Dispute Redressal Agencies established under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 (COPRA), i.e. the National Commission, State Commissions and District Forums.

These consumer courts, though conceived over 30 years ago, to become dedicated and speedier alternatives to civil courts, have been accused of developing the same symptoms of civil courts. Although the numbers displayed on the National Consumer Disputes

Redressal Commission's website suggest that the consumer courts have successfully disposed of 86.26 per cent of cases in the National Commission, 85.67 per cent of cases in the State Commissions, and 92.43 per cent of cases in the District Forums since their inception, studies indicate that most of these were disposed way over the prescribed time limit of COPRA. Also, going by absolute numbers of pending cases, they cross over a staggering figure of 4 lakhs. Going by the popular coinage of 'justice delayed is justice denied', these consumer courts are also failing the grievance redressal aspirations of Indian consumers. The recent Consumer Protection Bill, 2018, which is set to replace the existing COPRA, provides for establishing a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), which will be tasked with providing faster grievance redressal for consumers, and will also entertain class-action cases.

The effect of CCPA on the pendency of existing cases will only be tested with time. However, it has been noted, that such delays are often on account of large number of vacancies, inadequate infrastructure, and squabbles between the central and the state governments, who keep trading charges on the grounds of accountability and funding of these consumer forums. Therefore, there also exists a need for better centre-state coordination in effectuating speedy redressal for consumer grievances, by enabling a well-oiled redressal mechanism.

It is not just the centre-state tussle which is a problem, another notable challenge is the multi-departmental or

multi-ministerial redressal mechanisms operating in a single sector. e-Commerce is one such industry which has seen a steep rise in the number of complaints being registered on the National Consumer Helpline. It was reported that as compared to 13,812 complaints in the year 2014-15, 2015-16 saw 23,955 complaints, and 50,767complaints in 2016-17, despite which, the government is not considering appointing a dedicated regulator for addressing consumer grievances against e-Commerce companies. Though the CCPA is expected to ease the woes of consumers, the absence of a single regulator has encouraged consumers to leverage the foremost asset of e-Commerce players, i.e. digital technology, against them, through complaints and negative reviews on Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms, which arguably offer a good chance for grievance redressal.

Considering the above developments, the Prime Minister expressed his concerns recently, on the increasing number of overall consumer complaints, while reviewing the consumer grievance redressal process. Subsequently, he called for substantial improvements in the administrative arrangements to ensure expedited resolution to consumer complaints. It may be suggested that, apart from enacting CCPA, having dedicated and empowered sectorial regulators, independent ombudsman, GSKs, as well as ensuring better inter-governmental and inter-ministerial / inter-departmental coordination will help resolve the rising consumer redressal issues. The ART model of governance will be put to test for overcoming the threefold challenges faced by consumers, in getting their grievances redressed.

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GPS enabled device in Trains

Ministry of Railways in collaboration with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is implementing Real-Time Train Information System (RTIS) which involves tracking of trains by placing GPS / GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation System) based devices on locomotives. In Phase-I, the RTIS project will cover about 2700 electric locomotives in which the GPS device will be installed. This phase is planned to be completed by December, 2018. Remaining locomotives will be covered in subsequent phases.

The trials for this system have been done on New Delhi – Guwahati and New Delhi – Mumbai Rajdhani trains on six electric locomotives. A reliable and high level (about 99.3 per cent) of real time reporting of arrival departure timing updates has been observed, which is considered adequate to meet the RTIS requirements.

Grievance Redressal Mechanisms for Women

V Amuthavalli

The Government has gone a long way in bringing out many initiatives to redress the grievances of women both at work and at home. In alignment with Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) National policy for Empowerment of Women, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a gender inclusive society, many schemes have been initiated by the Government resulting in a positive impact while addressing gender needs

The public grievance redressal mechanism serves as an indicator to gauge the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative processes. Public grievances in any administrative system are always expected. Both timely ventilation and redress of grievances are essential for any citizen friendly administration. The Government of India has taken several initiatives in this direction. At the apex level, there are primarily two designated nodal agencies in the Central Government for handling these grievances:

i) The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, and

ii) The Directorate of Public Grievances, Cabinet Secretariat. Standing Committee of Secretaries for Grievance Redressal, headed by the Cabinet Secretary, conducts review of grievance redressal mechanism of different Ministries/ Departments of Government of India.

On the basis of the grievances received, the Department identifies the problem areas regarding which recurring grievances are received. These problem areas are analyzed with a view to suggest procedural improvements.

Government departments have set up designated officers exclusively to handle the complaints. Departments have displayed the name, designation, room number, telephone number etc. of the offices at the reception and other convenient places.

The Government has gone a long way in bringing out many initiatives to redress the grievances of women both at work and at home. In alignment with Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) National Policy for Empowerment of Women, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a gender inclusive society, many schemes have been initiated by the Government resulting in a positive impact while addressing gender needs.

The Department of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment have contributed substantially in improving gender equality and child sex ratio and eradicating the evils of female infanticide. The Department also provides care and protection for children, women, senior citizens and third genders through various schemes like Working Women Hostels, One Stop Center, Short Stay Homes and Old Age Homes, Women, Child and Elders Helpline etc.

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Domestic Violence

The Department also implements Social Legislations like Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Child Marriage Prohibition Act, 2006, Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment at Work Place Act, 2013 and Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen's Act, 2007 to ensure the safety and rights of women, children and senior citizens as guaranteed under the Indian Constitution.

The Constitution of India embraces the substantive equality approach as provided under Articles 15 (1) and (3). While Article 14 lays down the overarching equality clause, it is through the language of non-discrimination under Article 15 that the Constitution empowers the State to undertake affirmative action for women so as to ensure that the guarantee of equality enshrined under Article 14 is in effect realized. Article 21 provides that every person has the right to life and personal liberty. Right to live with "dignity" is the most important indicator for fulfillment of the promise of the Article 21 guarantee.

Domestic Violence: Grievance Redressal

Domestic violence is a violation of this basic right to live with dignity. Significantly, Article 21 demands not merely procedural safeguards but due diligence or "substantive due process" in State action, in order to protect and fulfill the right to life with dignity. However, violence in the "private" sphere by "private actors" or "non-state" actors, like it is in cases of domestic violence, is more difficult to address. This therefore, poses a grave challenge to our very understanding of the idea of justice. Hence, the need to define violence in this "private" sphere in the law and provide for preventive remedies.

After the infamous rape and death incident in Delhi in 2012 the Government had created an exclusive fund, "Nirbhaya Fund", to oversee the implementation of special projects intended for ensuring women safety. Based on this safety and security measures mandated for women under the Constitution of India, innovative initiatives have been introduced by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and have been implemented by the state governments.

To provide safety and security of women and establish the rights of women the National Commission for Women has been set up at the Centre. Following this, various State Governments have set up State Commission of Women to take up issues related to violation of rights of women. Aggrieved women who have been subjected to Dowry Harassment, Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Kidnapping, Molestation and other family disputes can approach the State Women Commissions for speedy and effective redressal of their grievances. The State Commission of Women also conducts public hearings to take into account public views, complaints etc.,

Similarly, there are other forums like the independent Human Rights Commissions and the State Child Rights Commissions which provide effective grievance redressal for other categories like the general public and children in particular.

Women in Work Places: Grievance Redressal

Handbook on the Social Legislations have been developed and training is being imparted to all stakeholders working in various departments. Posters on Sexual Harassment of

SHe-Box Online Complaint Management System
IF YOU ARE FACING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

Register Your Complaint

View Status of Complaint

A safe workplace is every woman's right

SEXUAL HARASSMENT
of Women at Workplace Act, 2013

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is referred to (whether directly or by implication) as:
a) physical contact and sexual advances;
b) demand for sexual favors;
c) sexually colored remarks;
d) showing pornography;
e) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

Women at Workplace (Prohibition, Prevention and Redressal) Act-2013 has been designed, printed and sent to all Districts to be displayed in Strategic location. These posters have been displayed in Metro Rails and buses also.

The Government of India has developed an exclusive online complaint system called the SHe –Box through Ministry of Women and Child Development (www.mwcdshebox.nic.in)

This Sexual Harassment electronic Box (SHe-Box) is an effort of the government to provide a single window access to every woman, irrespective of her work status, whether working in organized or unorganized, private or public sector, to facilitate the registration of complaints related to sexual harassment. Any woman facing sexual harassment at the work place can register their complaint through this portal. Once a complaint is submitted to the 'SHe-Box', it will be directly sent to the concerned authority having jurisdiction to take action in the matter.

The Government of India has proposed a Special Scheme named **"SAKHI",** which is a One Stop Centre (OSC), intended to support women affected by violence, in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. The objective of the Scheme is to provide integrated support (Medical, Legal and Police help) and assist women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.

Action is being taken to orient the OSC functionaries on the functions and services of OSC to the aggrieved women. Awareness is given to District Social Welfare Officers, Protection Officers, Local police personnel, District Legal Service authority, Community based organisations, ICDS and Health Department officials on the necessity of linkage in providing services to the distressed women. Counsellors have been posted in the OSC and the One Stop Centre has started providing psycho-social support services to women in distress who have reached the centre on their own or also referred to the Centre.

The Scheme of Universalisation of Women Helpline initiated by Government of India is intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women affected by violence through referral (linking with appropriate authority such as police, One Stop Centre, hospital) and information about women related government schemes programs across the country through a single uniform number.

For enhancing information sharing and knowledge management within the Department a user friendly website has been developed with online MIS reporting system. The website is updated with all essential information on the department's schemes and legislations, events etc.

Other Means of Grievance Redressal

'**Right to Information Act"** requiring that the public be informed of activities and actions initiated for public welfare and governance, and be provided with information that it might require to assess the Government's responsibilities and ability to provide services;

"**Citizens' Charter"** explaining the Government's commitments and approaches to redress public grievances or complaints, the time required, the range of possible responses, submission procedures including any supporting information and documents, service standards, complainants' rights, and expectations from the complainants, applicants, and the staff in the delivery of services;

Grama Sabha are conducted at village levels to redress grievance of village community members and a strong panchayat raj system facilitates this process.

Through **Juvenile Justice Act** children's homes are being monitored, child tracking system is in place and all kinds of abuses against children and trafficking are controlled and monitored.

The **Hostels Act** provides relief for the working women whose safety and security in the working women hostels are ensured and basic amenities for their stay, food and safety are ensured.

Under the **Senior Citizen Act** Revenue Division level tribunals are formed to redress the grievances of parents and senior citizens to get maintenance from their children when they are left unattende**d.**

Conclusion

Any complaints mechanism needs to be backed up by information collection and analysis systems.

Committees are to be formed to review the number of complaints received, addressed, the number of issues settled, and the number referred to higher decision-making authority etc. At the same time, frequently asked questions and repetition of mistakes by Government departments should also be recorded and reviewed. Developing an organizational culture based commitment to public service is the foundation of an effective grievance and complaints management system.

Last but not the least, complaints are valuable for public institutions, as a means of strengthening their administration and improving their reputations, enhancing public trust and legitimacy. The complainant should be treated as a friend and complaints as an opportunity to improve. ❑

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Role of Behaviour Change Communication in Achieving A Swachh Bharat

Parameswaran Iyer

The Swachh Bharat Mission has caught the imagination of the people, and with everyone getting involved, is for the people and by the people. In less than three years, over 30 crore rural Indians have started accessing toilets. The Mission is moving rapidly towards a achieving a Swachh and ODF Bharat by October 2, 2019, a fitting tribute to the Mahatma on his 150th birth anniversary

For the past four decades, several rural sanitation programmes have been introduced in the country by different governments over the years. From one of India's first efforts to provide safe sanitation in rural areas with the Central Rural Sanitation Programme in 1981 to the reconstructed Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in 1999, to the Nirmal Bharat Abhyaan, we have seldom seen the kind of mass mobilization created by the Swachh Bharat Mission in the country. The largest sanitation programme in the world, the Swachh Bharat Mission has left its construction driven counterparts behind, and moved towards a community-based mass movement.

This article looks to reflect on the journey of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) in progressing towards its goal of complete sanitation coverage. It begins with an overview of the programme, its progress and achievements and moves to the field, which is the base of the community-led participation and the recipient of highest impact as a result of the program. Further, the paper discusses different campaigns and events orchestrated to create the buzz and keep the *janandolan* going. Plunging into the importance of Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) and of customising messages with respect to the audience, the article looks at the way forward towards a Swachh Bharat in 2019 and sustaining the same.

Making his landmark announcement on October 2, 2014 from the Red Fort, the Prime Minister called for a Swachh Bharat and successfully guided India towards an exceptional adventure. Since 2014, we have witnessed a near doubling of percentage of households with toilets, with a whopping 6 crore toilets having come up at the household level in just 3 years, going from 39 per cent in 2014 to over 76 per cent today. On the sanitation front, India has achieved in three years what we have not achieved in 67 years post independence! This has resulted in rural areas of seven States (Sikkim, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Gujarat, and Arunachal Pradesh) and two Union Territories (Chandigarh and Daman & Diu) having become Open Defecation Free (ODF).

The Swachh Bharat Mission has witnessed several notable achievements in reducing open defecation, thanks to the focus on behaviour change, need-based capacity building and constant measuring of outcomes. The programme's focus on behavior change stems from its focus on sustainability, and measuring outcomes of open defecation free communities and not just outputs of toilets constructed. The Prime Minister himself has been at the helm of affairs, being the communicator in chief of the SBM.

The author is Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India. He has vast experience in the area of sanitation. He was earlier programme leader and lead water and sanitation specialist in the World Bank and has also been part of the World Bank's Water Anchor programme.

This has been a gamechanger for the Mission, and is one of the primary differentiators between the Swachh Bharat Mission and previous sanitation programs. As the Mission moves forward, it is important for individuals and communities to take ownership of their own sanitation and hygiene as well as that of their surroundings. This is only possible through a change in attitudes and inculcated behaviour traits as results of age old customs.

Interpersonal Communication (IPC) is a crucial component of SBM in this regard. IPC involves various activities such as door-to-door awareness generation, early morning follow ups in common OD spots in villages, etc. Emphasis is laid on conducting awareness programs, and citizen engagement in the reform process. An army of Swachhagrahis have been trained through multiple capacity building programs in all villages of the country. These are the foot soldiers of Swachhta, the ones making it happen through intensive inter-personal communication (IPC). Currently, there are approximately 3.5 lakh Swachhagrahis registered with the Management Information System (MIS) and the numbers are rising by the day.

The Swachhagrahis adopt a direct approach to trigger public sentiments during village meetings. Surveys and meetings are conducted through master trainers in all districts, in the Community Approaches to Sanitation (CAS) Programme. This is where villagers are made to realise that the toilet is critical by evoking emotions and engaging different drivers of human behaviour, such as love for one's family, care for one's children, pride in one's social status, esteem in society, etc. From evoking emotions of disgust or maternal instincts to pressing upon dignity, safety and health, villagers are encouraged to build toilets themselves, and use them continually.

Most often the 'triggering' does not directly ask villagers to construct a toilet but it is through such explorative questioning that they are made to introspect and realise for themselves, that constructing and using a toilet in their homes is the best option for them and their families. An example of this is the Swachhagrahi asking a simple question like "how much does a person excrete at a time?" And the options are given – 200 gm to 400 gm; 400 gm to 600 gm; or more than 600 gm. As most people answer 500 gm per individual, then a family of five would excrete 2.5 kg of faecal matter at one time. Four families excreting that amount would come to 10 kg of faecal matter being left out in the open, which is carried and deposited onto everyone's food through flies. This way of participative quizzing has a hard-hitting impact on the villagers.

Swachhagrahis are of all ages, sexes and creeds. Children in particular are among the most enthusiastic sanitation champions. *Vaanarsena* (army of monkeys), a team of small kids who do whatever it takes to ensure that people do not resort to open defecation are seen in districts across the country. They engage in playful and childlike measures like blowing whistles, singing songs, taking out awareness drives to make people aware of the ill-effects of open defecation. They step out in common open defecation spots in the village early in the morning, and ask those out in the fields to build and use toilets. For the time being, they advise people to cover the faecal matter with soil, so that they do not contribute to the spread of diseases associated with open defecation. Besides, the children also visit homes of people to convey the SBM message. Since these are children from within the community itself, people don't mind their persistent messaging. This makes the *vaanarsena* one of the more powerful social mobilization mechanisms involving and led by community insiders.

Rapid Strides in India's Swachh Bharat Mission
January 12th, 2018
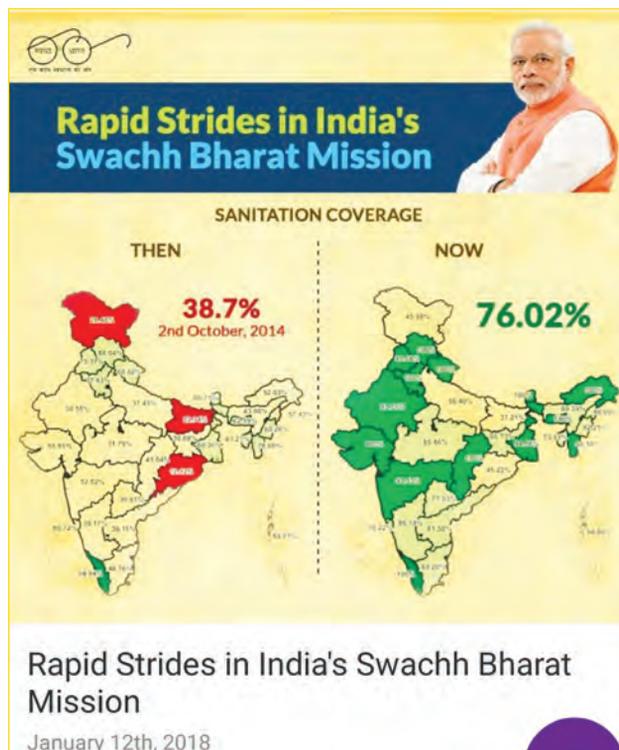
The case of *vaanarsena* and other examples like it has established that identifying Champions from within the communities is a better motivator and influencer than a top-down chain of command. In this method, the community gets a sense of unity and are mobilised together to achieve their goal of an ODF village.

On the national front, campaigns and events are rolled out as a means of reinforcing the work being done in the field. Apart from spreading the message of the work being done under the Mission, campaigns are also crucial in increasing recall and keeping the buzz of the *janandolan* going. In May 2017, for the promotion of toilet usage across the country's villages, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation came out with an aggressive new campaign called Darwaza Band. Darwaza Band symbolically stands for shutting the door on open defecation. Led by eminent actor, Amitabh Bachchan, the campaign envisages bringing out a behaviour change in men who have toilets but are not using them. Actor Anushka Sharma is also part of the campaign to encourage women to stand up for this issue and assume leadership roles in their villages.

These brand ambassadors bring an incredible recognition to the Mission on a national scale by promoting social mobilisation through mass media. Swachhata has even captured the imagination of the mainstream movie industry. The mass entertainer, 'Toilet – Ek Prem Katha', starring Akshay Kumar and Bhumi Pednekar, was a seminal case of mainstreaming the Swachhata message, while also spreading awareness about ground realities and the kind of work being done by the Mission in the field. The story of a wife leaving her husband because her in-laws did not have a toilet for her to use everyday might have begun as an exceptional case or two, but since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission, women fighting for their right to a toilet has become a recurring theme in rural India.

In the 'Swachhta Hi Seva' fortnight in September 2017, a total of over 9 crore individuals came together in their respective communities and undertook shramdaan for Swachhata, pledged Swachhata Shapaths, wrote essays and made paintings and films on cleanliness. Inspiring such a spike in citizen engagement serves as a platform for the way forward. The fortnight witnessed massive support with celebrities holding cleanliness drives, the hockey team undertaking a clean up drive in Bangalore, and political leaders inaugurating cleanliness drives across the country. The Indian Cricket Team also joined the movement by taking up spot clean ups and recording short videos on Swachhata, which were aired during the televising of their matches. This heightened momentum gave way to a new normal, thus, inculcating an upward curve in community participation and consequently, in the progress of SBM-G.

Sanitation in a diverse country like India encompasses a number of factors which are important determinants for the success of the mission. In order to address such factors, which makes achievement of safe sanitation a very complex exercise, the Swachh Bharat Mission gives substantial flexibility to States to devise their own action plans. These plans include but are not limited to running campaigns in regional languages, use of local folk artists as influencers or even customised toilet technology solutions for senior citizens and the differently abled.

As the number of ODF villages in the country has crossed the 300,000 mark, it is important to reflect on the manner in which these districts, many of whom faced several challenges along their ODF journey, achieved success. There is a lot that other districts can learn from these successes and MDWS is facilitating this learning through several learning initiatives for district and block administrators. The sanitation programme in Bikaner district for example, located in the heart of the arid Thar Desert in Rajasthan, was faced with several cultural and geographical challenges. But the BankoBikano campaign, when it was launched, surprised everyone. Unlike other target oriented government programmes, this one focused on being community led and community driven. Moreover, the basic premise of the programme was pride and self respect for the women, pride for the family, pride for the village and ultimately for the district. This thought and vision using local language and customs, caught on in the social fabric of rural Bikaner and the programme became almost self-propelling.

It is integrated and innovative approaches like these which are playing a pivotal role in putting sanitation and cleanliness on the top of everyone's mind in rural India. And behavior change communication does not stop with achievement of ODF, but continues even post ODF to ensure sustainability. Nigrani samatis in ODF villages performing regular morning follow-up is a common sight. The real success of the behavior change efforts is minimizing slip-backs in the long run.

As the Prime Minister has articulated time and again, achieving and sustaining ODF status is the collective responsibility of the entire nation; it is everyone's business. The Swachh Bharat Mission has caught the imagination of the people, and with everyone getting involved, is for the people and by the people. In less than three years, over 30 crore rural Indians have started accessing toilets. The Mission is moving rapidly towards a achieving a Swachh and ODF Bharat by October 2, 2019, a fitting tribute to the Mahatma on his 150th birth anniversary. ❑

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The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, being the nodal Ministry of the Government of India for communicating programmes and policies of the government, put out the message of swachhata through various communication methodologies at the 15-day Swachhata Pakhwada from January 16th, 2018. During the Pakhwada, a number of communication related activities were undertaken like audio-video programmes on Doordarshan and All India Radio, publication of books and articles and organisation of swachhata campaigns.

Swachhata–Different Milestones in 2017
Swachh Bharat Mission

To accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on access to safe sanitation, the Prime Minister launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on October 2, 2014, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. SBM aims at achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) nation and a Swachh Bharat by October 2, 2019 thereby paying a befitting tribute on his150[th] anniversary.

Behavior change is the primary focus and fundamental tool for achievement of ODF outcomes. The Ministry is doing it by its focused Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programme. It promotes gender sensitive information, behavior change guidelines and various mass education activities. The Ministry issued gender guidelines in 2017 and Menstrual Management Guidelines on 2015.

Sanitation Coverage at the launch of SBM(G) on October 2, 2014 was 38.70 per cent. This has increased to 74.15 per cent as on December 18, 2017.

Swachh Bharat Mission: Making Swachhata Everyone's Business

MDWS is mandated to convene and coordinate all activities and initiatives towards achievement of a Swachh Bharat, besides its allocated charge of SBM-Gramin. In fulfilling this responsibility, the Ministry constantly works with all other Ministries, the state governments, local institutions, NGOs, Faith organizations, media and the rest of stakeholders. This approach is based on the Prime Minister's call that Swachhata has to be everyone's business and not only that of sanitation departments. A host of special initiatives and projects have come out in quick time in this process. The response from all the stake-holders has been extremely encouraging.

Swachh Bharat Mission achieves New Milestones

January 12th, 2018

1.1K   99

Swachhata Pakhwada

Swachhata Pakhwada started in April 2016 with the objective of bringing a fortnight of intense focus on the issues and practices of Swachhata by engaging Central Ministries and Departments in their jurisdiction. An annual calendar is pre-circulated among the Ministries to help them plan for the Pakhwada activities.

Namami Gange

Namami Gange Programme is an initiative of Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR), comprising of making villages on the bank of River Ganga ODF and interventions dealing with solid and liquid waste management are being implemented by MDWS.

All 4470 villages located across 52 districts of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal have been declared ODF with active help of state governments. Now the Ministry has taken up 24 villages on the bank of River Ganga to transform them as Ganga Grams in coordination with NMCG.

Swachhata Action Plan (SAP)

SAP, a first of its kind inter-ministerial programme for Swachhata, is a concrete realization of Prime Minister's vision that Swachhata is everyone's business. All Union Ministries/Departments have started to work for its realization in a significant manner with appropriate budget provisions. A separate budget head has been created for this by the Ministry of Finance. During the financial year 2017-18, 77 Ministries/Departments have committed funds worth Rs 12468.62 crore for their SAPs. SAP implementation started on April 1, 2017.

Swachh Iconic Places (SIP)

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has taken up a multi-stakeholder initiative focusing on cleaning up 100 places across India that are "iconic" due to their heritage, religious and/or cultural significance. The goal of the Initiative is to improve the cleanliness conditions at these places to a distinctly higher level. This initiative is in partnership with Ministries of Urban Development, Tourism and Culture with MDWS being the nodal ministry. So far in first two phases, 20 iconic places have been taken up. All these 20 Iconic Sites have designated PSUs or corporates for financial and technical support.

Swachh Shakti, March 8, 2017

Swachh Shakti was organized on March 8, 2017, International Women's Day, at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar. The Prime Minister addressed the gathering on this occasion. Around 6,000 selected women sarpanches, grassroots workers from across the country attended the event, and Swachhta Champions were honoured for their outstanding contribution towards making Swachh Bharat a reality in rural India.

Swachh Sankalp se Swachh Siddhi Competition (August 17-September 8)

The Hon'ble Prime Minister has given the clarion call to achieve a New India by 2022 under Sankalp se Siddhi, a mass resolve to make all dirt and filth quit India. In pursuit of this vision, MoDWS organised countrywide Film, Essay and Painting Competition between August 17, and September 8, 2017 as another major step towards making Swachhta a people's movement.

Darwaza Bandh Media Campaigns

Aiming at Behavior Change, an aggressive mass media campaign titled 'Darwaza Band' featuring Amitabh Bachchan to promote continued toilet use especially by men has been launched. The campaign includes 5 TV and Radio spots in 9 languages including Hindi and has been successfully launched on the mass media across the country.

Swachhata Hi Seva (SHS), September 16-October 2, 2017

In his Mann Ki Baat address on August 27, 2017, the Prime Minister called upon the nation to invoke a spirit of cleanliness and perform activities or SHRAMDAN and urged all NGOs, schools, colleges, social, cultural and political leaders, corporates, government officials, collectors and sarpanches, to accelerate Swachhata activities during the September 15 – October 2, 2017 period. The Prime Minister led the campaign by performing shramdan for twin pit toilet construction in Shahanshahpur village, Varanasi. He commented that "Swachhata has to become 'Swabhav' – it is our collective responsibility to keep our nation clean".

YOJANA

Forthcoming Issue

Union Budget 2018-19

DO YOU KNOW?

NARI (NATIONAL REPOSITORY OF INFORMATION FOR WOMEN) PORTAL

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India recently launched a portal called NARI. NARI stands for "National Repository of Information for Women". It will serve as the national repository comprising of all kinds of information which will benefit women across the country.

This portal consists of around 350 different schemes for welfare of women and will get updated timely. Subsequently, it will provide information regarding all the women related central government schemes along with states governments/Union territories' schemes. One can log on to http://www.nari.nic.in for easy access of information on schemes.

Nari Portal has given various schemes which have been divided into eight broad categories. One can also find scheme related to them according to their age group as portal has conveniently distributed these schemes in to four age groups. These age groups are-

0-6 years

7-17 years

18-60 years

And above the age of 60 years.

The eight different categories are-

1. Health
2. Education
3. Employment
4. Housing and Shelter
5. Addressing violence
6. Decision making
7. Social support and
8. Legal support

In short, the portal will enable women to get information on all those issues which are affecting their lives. As mentioned above, a number of schemes and legislations for women have been implemented by the Central and State governments to provide them equal rights, economic opportunities, social support, legal aid, housing etc. However, there is often a lack of awareness of these provisions and difficulties in accessing their benefits. For example, many are unaware that One Stop Centres are available in 168 districts for women in difficult circumstances; PM Awas Yojana gives priority to registration of homes in the name of women and many State Governments offer financial support for the education of girl children. The citizens can access information regarding various government programmes like Mahila Shakti Kendra, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Janani Suraksha Yojana and many other schemes.

Apart from details and links of various ministries, departments and autonomous bodies, the portal also enables easy access to online applications and grievance redressal besides offering tips on proper nutrition, suggestions for health check-ups and Nutrition, information on major diseases, tips for job search and interview, and investment and savings advice. The user can also access information, tips and advises on topics covering Safety, Adoption and Direct Benefit.

The 'Knowledge Corner' on the portal lets the user know about the procedure for the following-

● to get a voter ID ● to get an Aadhaar Card ● to open a bank account ● to apply for a Passport ● about savings and investments information about basic women rights like maternity leaves etc.

On the portal, the user can also get involved in the government's efforts for a better India like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Foster Care etc. in the ' GET INVOLVED' section. One can also find latest information on crimes against women and reporting procedures, contacts of legal aid cells and simplified adoption procedures.

Citizen's Charter in India

Meena Nair

A well-defined Citizen's Charter backed by a committed department will not need any other crutch, such as new service delivery or grievance redress Bills and Acts, if a final and sincere effort can be made to ensure their formulation and implementation in the next two years

Navigating through the corridors of the government to apply and receive a benefit has often been a frustrating and bewildering experience for the average citizen in India. The main reason for this is the information asymmetry that exists between the government department and the applicant or the consumer. While the former has all the information but may not have put it in the public domain, the latter may not have either the awareness or the information to follow laid down procedures. Add to this the lack of a grievance redress mechanism and the consumer may have no other option but to turn to a middleman to get the work done, invariably at a higher cost.

Citizen's Charters were introduced in India in the 1990s as an attempt to address this very lacuna in the system. However, concerns have been expressed time and again regarding the effectiveness of this reform measure both as an information-sharing mechanism as well as a grievance redress solution. Though the last two decades have seen the introduction of the Right to Information Act and the Right to Public Services Act that make information sharing a legal requisite, the importance of Citizen's Charters cannot be undermined. It is high time that this programme is revived and reintroduced to government departments so that they can become accountable not only to their customers but to themselves as well.

Citizen's Charter Initiative

The United Kingdom pioneered the Citizen's Charter initiative when Prime Minister John Major of the Conservative Government announced it in 1991 as a measure to refocus public services towards the needs and expectations of their users. This included adopting certain operating principles by those public service providers who planned to implement a Citizen's Charter; they included -

- Set standards of service.
- Be open and transparent.
- Consult and involve end-users.
- Encourage access and the promotion of choice.
- Treat all fairly.
- Put things right when they go wrong.
- Use resources effectively.
- Innovate and improve.
- Work with other providers.

This Initiative by the UK created a pathway for many other countries to emulate, albeit with different names – 'Public Service Users' Charter' in Belgium, 'Service Charter' in France, and 'The Quality Observatory' in Spain all in 1992; 'Client Charter' in Malaysia, and 'The Quality Charter in Public Services' in Portugal, both in

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1993; 'Citizens' Charter' in Jamaica in 1994; 'Service Standards Initiative' in Canada in 1995; and 'Service Charter' in Australia in 1997. In the UK, the same programme was modified and re-introduced again as 'Services First' by the Labour Government in 1998. However, the most critical features, namely, improving quality of services, standards conformity, and the grievance redress process, remained consistent across all the Charters.

In India, the concept of Citizen's Charters was first introduced in 1994 when consumer rights activists drafted a charter for health service providers at a meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council in Delhi. It saw fruition as an initiative, when, in a state level conference of Chief Ministers held in May 1997, the "Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government at the Centre and the State Levels" was adopted, paving the way for the formulation of charters among ministries, departments and agencies that have significant public interaction. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) of the Government of India took on the task of coordinating, formulating and operationalising Citizen's Charters.

The DAPRG defines the Citizen's Charter in the following manner – 'Citizen's Charter is a document which represents a systematic effort to focus on the commitment of the Organisation towards its Citizens in respects of Standard of Services, Information, Choice and Consultation, Non-discrimination and Accessibility, Grievance Redress, Courtesy and Value for Money. This also includes expectations of the Organisation from the Citizen for fulfilling the commitment of the Organisation'[1]. It is interesting to note that the DARPG emphasized the need for consumer organizations, citizen groups, and other stakeholders to be closely involved when Citizen's Charters were being drafted in order to focus the documents towards the needs and requirements of end-users. Based on the UK model, the DARPG outlined the following six

components for inclusion in charters drafted by public agencies:

- Vision and mission statements.
- Details of business transacted by the organization.
- Details of clients.
- Details of services provided to each client group.
- Details of grievance redress mechanisms and how to access them.
- Expectations from clients.

The DAPRG website currently indicates that 144 Citizen's Charters have been formulated by departments at the Centre as of December 23, 2013[2]; however, this number will come down considering the fact that last year witnessed the amalgamation of all the State Banks under the State Bank of India, and many of the Citizen's Charters were that of the previous avataars - State Banks of Hyderabad, Travancore, Bikaner and Jaipur, Mysore, Patiala, and the State Bank of India. Among the states, 729 Citizen's Charters have been formulated by 24 State governments and Union Territories as of January 24, 2011[3]. The dates that these webpages have been updated on also reflects a disappointing fact – Citizen's Charters no longer seem to be an exercise worth investing in.

Which brings one to the question – are Citizen's Charters that difficult to create and implement? If so, what can be done to invigorate the remaining departments at the Centre and the States/UTs to carry out this exercise?

Modalities of a Citizen's Charter

The Citizen's Charter Handbook created around the time of the launch of the Citizen's Charter Initiative, is one the most comprehensive documents to be created by DPARG. The Handbook gives detailed outlines of the process to be followed to create an effective and implementable Citizen's Charter. These include – (i) Formation of a Task Force; (ii) Identification of all Stakeholders and major services to be provided by the Organisation; (iii) Consultation with Clients/Stakeholders/

Staff (primarily at cutting-edge level) and their representative associations; (iv) Preparation of Draft Charter (Circulation for comments/suggestions; Modification of Charter to include suggestions); (v) Consideration of the Charter by Core Group; (vi) Modification of Charter by the Ministry/Department on the basis of suggestions/observations by the Core Group; (vii) Approval by the Minister-in-charge; (viii) Submission of a copy of the charter to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances; (ix) Formal issue/release of Charter and putting up on website; (x) Sending copies to People's Representatives and all stakeholders; and (xi) Appointment of a Nodal Officer to ensure effective implementation[4]. The process clearly indicates a bottom-up approach involving all the staff of the department especially those who deal with citizen interfaces. The handbook additionally provides model guidelines, general structure guidelines, do's and don'ts and a model format that could be followed. To motivate other departments, the handbook provides examples of best practices from different states and suggested readings. An updated version of this handbook can now be found in the form of another document brought out by the DPARG called the 'Compilation of Guidelines for Redress of Public Grievances including Employee Grievances, Citizen's Charters and Information Facilitation Counters in Government of India' brought out in 2010. It lays major emphasis on 'systemic reforms component of grievance redress mechanism'[5] and introduces the CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System) and the 'Sevottam Framework' that incorporates not only Citizen's Charters but public grievance redress

and public service delivery capability as well.

How effective have these efforts been in improving public service delivery? Time and again there have been evaluations carried out by DPARG itself and other institutions to assess the same.

Evaluations of Citizen's Charters and Way Forward

DARPG, with the Consumer Coordination Council, New Delhi, undertook an evaluation of the Citizen's Charters programme in 1998. Subsequently, a professional agency was engaged from 2002 to 2003 to develop a standardized model for internal and external evaluations of charters. The Public Affairs Centre (PAC) undertook a preliminary assessment of Citizen's Charters drafted by eight major departments in the Government of Karnataka with substantial public dealings. The review critically evaluated the contents of charters and assessed the quality of their contents by analysing the various components of Citizen's Charters: basic information about the department; standards of services; grievance redress system; and, citizen-friendly criteria. Transparency International (TI), India conducted a study of 10 Citizen's Charters of the Government of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi and two departments of the Central Government. The National Productivity Council (NPC) conducted a far-reaching review of Citizen's Charters in Gujarat to benchmark the implementation of such charters, assess the charters themselves, and suggest possible improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the charter programme by analysing the views of beneficiaries and employees. Another critical and influential study was the one carried out by PAC again in 2007 that included a comprehensive review of Citizen's Charters on 10 parameters: 1. Vision/Mission/Objectives of the Department/Agency, 2. Details of Business Transacted or General Services Provided, 3. Name, Address, and Phone Numbers of Key Officials, 4. Procedures to Avail Services, 5. Information on the Costs of Services Provided, 6. Standards of Services

(Time limits, etc), 7. Grievance Redress Mechanism, 8. Names, Addresses, Phone Numbers of Officials in Charge of the Grievance Redress Mechanism, 9. Duties of Citizens, and 10. Simple and User-friendly Language and a primary data collection that included interviews with officials of various departments across India and users of various services[6].

The findings from these varied studies threw up some consistent facets, the most important being that many of the Citizen's Charters were incomplete – details regarding services provided, procedures to be followed for applying for a service, process of grievance redress, names of key officials and their contact details-some aspect or the other was either not or only partially provided. The studies that involved interviews with department staff clearly revealed that most members were not involved in the process of drafting their department's Citizen's Charter.

The way forward on the basis of these findings is clear – there needs to be a two-pronged approach to ensure that every department of the government has a Citizen's Charter – firstly, a revision of existing Citizen's Charters to ensure that they meet with all the 10 critical parameters, and secondly, a systematic consensus-based formulation of every Citizen's Charter that is practical and whose commitments are achievable as endorsed by those staff members who are at the cutting edge of citizen interface.

This cannot be a half-hearted attempt. Any renewed effort will require the following pre-conditions –

an impetus from within, that includes a strong movement within the department to motivate staff to be part of a 'Mission' to set standards for themselves; rethink factors for success, that will help set realistic standards and commitments based on current constraints and capabilities; take external assistance by including experts (either individuals or Civil Society Organisations) who have proven track record of consultation-based document formulation; put accountability mechanisms in place, especially with regard to grievance redress to ensure that officials handling cases are able to carry out their duties responsibly; and commit to a regular feedback loop, that will help the departments to continuously improve themselves. A well-defined Citizen's Charter backed by a committed department will not need any other crutch, such as new service delivery or grievance redress Bills and Acts, if a final and sincere effort can be made to ensure their formulation and implementation in the next two years. Otherwise, this Programme should be laid to rest forever.

Footnote

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3. http://goicharters.nic.in/charter-state.htm, accessed on 9th January 2018.
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Addressing Grievances in Health Care

Sanjeev Kumar

...there is an urgent need to devise and implement a clear and practical swift grievance and compliant redressal mechanism that is patient and public friendly and improves access, availability and quality. ...The setting up a regulatory authority as promised in the National Health Policy 2017 will go a long way in this direction

Although the Supreme Court of India (SC) has recognised the right to health as an integral facet of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, enforcement machineries for this right are virtually non-existent. In fact, the question of enforcement might even seem premature, given that the contours of the right to health and the corresponding duties that it imposes have not yet found legislative expression. Redressal of complaints and grievances is an important part of health service delivery and quality of service standards. Health and medical sector, both public and private, have been faced with many challenges in this regard and have evolved over the years, and more so in recent years, to more effectively address the complaints and grievances of the public and patients. Unfortunately, there is not one singular agency, policy or organisation that is comprehensively available to the public or the patient to take their grievance and complaints to and find fast solutions. In addition, the process and procedure for filing and following up the complaints and grievances is also not very simple or is taken up with necessary speed and support.

National Health Policy 2017[1] does clearly mention in section 14.2 about the regulation of clinical establishments. It observes that a few states have adopted the Clinical Establishments Act 2010. Advocacy with the other States would be made for adoption of the Act. Grading of clinical establishments and active promotion and adoption of standard treatment guidelines would be one starting point. Protection of patient rights in clinical establishments (such as right to information, access to medical records and reports, informed consent, second opinion, confidentiality and privacy) as key process standards would be an important step. The policy recommends the setting up of a separate, empowered medical tribunal for speedy resolution to address disputes /complaints regarding standards of care, prices of services, negligence and unfair practices. Standard Regulatory Framework for laboratories and imaging centres, specialized emerging services such as assisted reproductive techniques, surrogacy, stem cell banking, organ and tissue transplantation and Nano Medicine will be created as required. The status is that the proposed set up or mechanism is still not in place.

The Clinical Establishment Act (CEA) 2010, is a Central law for registration and regulation of all clinical establishments in the country (public or private). It prescribes the minimum standards of facilities and services provided by them, and the

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fees that may be charged from the patients. Non-compliance with the standards can lead to cancellation of the registration license granted under the Act and imposition of penalties provided in the Act. The CEA has not taken effect in all the states of the country, and this remains its biggest weakness i.e. that there are no minimum uniform standards for all clinical establishments across the country. However, even if the CEA were in force in all states, the minimum standards prescribed under it as well as the related rules 25 for various categories of clinical establishments do not contain provisions on grievance redressal. There is no requirement for a clinical establishment to have a grievance cell in place as a pre-requisite for obtaining either provisional or permanent registration under the Act. Neither does the application for registration require an undertaking or disclosure to this effect. The closest that the CEA comes is by requiring certain categories of hospitals to have a patient citizen charter in place; however, even this charter does not require the creation of a grievance redressal mechanism. This demonstrates that the only central regulatory framework on clinical establishments in the country makes no provision for the enforcement of individual patient rights.

The consumer can also lodge a complaint under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) 1986 as amended recently. But the applicability of CPA to Public Health Establishments (PHEs) has been debatable due to differences in the interpretation of the term "consumer" and "service" by various courts in India. As the terms appear in the CPA, a consumer is someone who buys goods or avails services for a consideration, and services means a variety of services including health care services, but which do not include rendering services free of charge. Therefore, it would appear to exclude the applicability of CPA to PHEs, where generally services are provided free of charge. However, this assumption has been challenged and interpreted

by some judgements by the Supreme Court as well as National Consumer Disputes Redressals Commission.

The MoHFW has in place a "hospital manual" which lays down provisions for the smooth functioning of public hospitals in the areas of management, administration, various departments and wards, and includes a citizen's charter. The manual envisages a grievance redressal mechanism for every public hospital, and the appendix lays down the citizen's charter for central government hospitals. The mechanism requires a person to be designated as a grievance redressal officer in each hospital, compliant boxes to be installed and the complaints therein to be registered and regularly responded to, follow up action to be taken, a committee headed by chief of the hospital to monitor the complaints and the follow up action taken, and a nodal officer be appointed to monitor the implementation of the citizen's charter.

One initiative, though, is worth looking at in this regard. The National Health Mission through its National Health Portal launched the *Mera Aaspatal*[2] app in 2017. मेरा अस्पताल

(My Hospital) is Ministry of Health, Government of India's initiative to capture patient feedback for the services received at the hospital through user-friendly multiple channels such as Short Message Service (SMS), Outbound Dialling (OBD) mobile application and web portal. The patient can submit the feedback in seven different languages on mobile app and web portal for the hospitals visited in the last seven days.

The patient can also check the already submitted feedback. The collected feedback is compiled, analysed and visualized in the form of a dashboard accessible to the different stakeholders at facility, district, state and national level.

My Hospital helps the government to take appropriate decisions for enhancing the quality of healthcare delivery across public facilities which will improve the patient's experience. The patient is also able to receive an effective and appropriate care. My Hospital will ultimately help establish a patient driven, responsive and accountable healthcare system. The app presents its dashboard with

total number of feedback, hospitals, satisfied and dis-satisfied number of respondents which is quite substantial (approximately 25 per cent). What is not clear is how are these "feedback" addressed and how is that measured and shown?

The National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and health care providers (NABH)[3] is another mechanism under Quality Council of India that addresses grievances and appeals. National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) is a constituent board of Quality Council of India, set up to establish and operate accreditation programmes for healthcare organisations. The board is structured to cater to the much desired needs of the consumers and to set benchmarks for progress of the health industry. The board, while being supported by all stakeholders including industry, consumers, and the government, has full functional autonomy in its operation. The Board has a prescribed format for handling of complaints and grievances but is largely within the ambit of the hospitals and health care providers registered or accredited with them.

Under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, the Medical Council of India (MCI)[4] has issued the Code of Ethics Regulations, 2002 (CoER) which lays down standards for the professional conduct, etiquette and ethics for registered medical practitioners. Complaints may be registered before the appropriate Medical Council—state or the MCI. If the medical practitioner is found to be guilty of committing professional misconduct, the relevant council may award such punishment as deemed necessary or may direct the removal of the name of the medical practitioner altogether from the register or for a specified period. Such removal is publicised widely to serve as a deterrent. The violations under the code may, inter alia, include neglecting the patient, not giving priority to the interests of the patient, doing sex determination tests, soliciting of patients etc.

Indian Medical Association (IMA)[5] is the only representative, national voluntary organisation of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well-being of the community at large. IMA also has an IMA mediation and grievance cell which receives complaints and meets once a month and takes up the complaints lodged and addresses them through their state Head Quarter and other chapters. The IMA HQ Mediation, Conciliation and Grievance redressal cell[6] received 162 complaints, out of which 88 complaints were referred to state/local branches and total number of complaints resolved at HQ was 55 and total number of complaints pending was 19. National Consumer helpline[7] can also be approached and a complaint can be lodged for medical negligence. It observes that Medicine is a noble profession and the practitioner must bring to his task a reasonable degree of skill and knowledge and must exercise reasonable degree of care. Neither the very highest nor a very low degree of care and competence, judged in the light of the particular circumstances of each case, is what the law requires.

With the recent high profile cases of some private hospitals in Delhi and Gurgaon as well as public health care hospitals in various parts of the country it is clear that there is an urgent need to devise and implement a clear and practical swift grievance and compliant redressal mechanism that is patient and public friendly and improves access, availability and quality. The absence of an effective enforcement mechanism across all public and private health establishments is rather unfortunate. The setting up of a regulatory authority as promised in the National Health Policy 2017 will go a long way in this direction.

Endnotes

1   National Health Policy, 2017, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, 2017

2   Mera Aspatal, http://meraaspataal. nhp.gov.in/about_us accessed on 9th January 2018

3   http://www.nabh.co/a accessed on 9th January 2018

4   https://www.mciindia.org/ ActivitiWebClient/footer/ guidelineForComplaint accessed on 9th January 2018

5   http://ima-india.org/ima/free-way-page.php?pid=2

6   https://imahq.blogspot.in/2017/12/straight-from-heart-ima-grievances-cell.html

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DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

Smart Freight Operation Optimisation & Real Time Information (SFOORTI) Application

In a major digital initiative to help plan the traffic flows and optimize freight operations, Ministry of Railways have launched Smart Freight Operation Optimisation & Real Time Information (SFOORTI) App for Freight Managers which provides features for monitoring and managing freight business using Geographic Information System (GIS) Views and Dashboard. Salient features of SFOORTI Application are as below:

• With this application, movement of freight trains on Geographic Information System (GIS) view can be tracked. • Both passenger and freight trains can be tracked over Zones/Divisions/ Sections in single GIS View. • Freight business can be monitored. • Comparative Analysis of Zonal/Divisional Traffic. • Analysis of new traffic captured and traffic lost. • This app provides a Bird's eye view of all Freight Assets in a single window. • Provides end to end Rake movement on Geospatial view • Expected Traffic at Interchange points to evaluate daily performance can be viewed. • Performance of each zone and divisions with respect to loading and utilization of freight assets can be viewed. • Sectional performance monitoring for sections, divisions and zones shall help in traffic routing. • Freight terminal and sidings can be better monitored to ensure better turnaround of rakes.

MPLAD Scheme Approved Beyond 12th Plan

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister has given its approval to continuation of Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) till the term of the 14th Finance Commission i.e. 31.03.2020. The Scheme would entail an annual allocation of Rs. 3,950 crore and a total outlay of Rs. 11,850 crores over the next three years with an additional annual allocation of Rs. 5 crore per year for monitoring through independent agency(ies) and for capacity building/training to State/District officials to be imparted by the Ministry.

The MPLADS funds are released to the nodal District Authorities on receipt of requisite documents and as per provisions of Guidelines on MPLADS. The entire population across the country stands to benefit through creation of durable assets of locally felt needs, namely drinking water, education, public health, sanitation and roads etc., under MPLAD Scheme. The MPLAD Scheme is an ongoing Central Sector Scheme which was launched in 1993-94. Since the inception of the Scheme till August, 2017, a total number of 18,82,180 works for Rs. 44,929.17 crore have been sanctioned from MPLADS fund.

FDI Policy Further Liberalized in Key Sectors

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, has given its approval to a number of amendments in the FDI Policy. These are intended to liberalise and simplify the FDI policy so as to provide ease of doing business in the country. In turn, it will lead to larger FDI inflows contributing to growth of investment, income and employment. Key features of the amendments are as follows:

• 100 per cent FDI under automatic route for Single Brand Retail Trading • 100 per cent FDI under automatic route in Construction Development • Foreign airlines allowed to invest up to 49 per cent under approval route in Air India • FIIs/FPIs allowed to invest in Power Exchanges through primary market • Definition of 'medical devices' amended in the FDI Policy

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a major driver of economic growth and a source of non-debt finance for the economic development of the country.Government has put in place an investor friendly policy on FDI, under which FDI up to 100 per cent, is permitted on the automatic route in most sectors/ activities. In the recent past, the Government has brought FDI policy reforms in a number of sectors viz. Defence, Construction Development, Insurance, Pension, Other Financial Services, Asset reconstruction Companies, Broadcasting, Civil Aviation, Pharmaceuticals, Trading etc.

Measures undertaken by the Government have resulted in increased FDI inflows in to the country. During the year 2014-15, total FDI inflows received were US $ 45.15 billion as against US $ 36.05 billion in 2013-14. During 2015-16, country received total FDI of US $ 55.46 billion. In the financial year 2016-17, total FDI of US $ 60.08 billion has been received, which is an all-time high.

Innovative Financing for Health System

Kavita Singh

According to a 2015 IMF report, government spent 6.5 percent of the world's GDP to subsidise energy and energy subsidies exceeded public spending on health and education.
Re-allocating fuel subsidies towards clean fuels and eliminating subsidies on those items which have direct harmful effect on health is necessary to improve health and save scarce resources

Improving health care and increasing the number of people who are healthy is the development goal of any country. In case of fast developing economies like India, external aid is drastically getting reduced and there is a little capacity to increase per capita spending on health as these economies have limited capacity to raise tax revenue.

In India, additional funds for health would be reprioritisation which may mean curtailment of funds in other social sectors which are already constrainted for resources. Innovative ways of health care financing to create more money for health and enhancing capacity and efficiency to get more health for money are the options to support developing economies to deal with unfinished agenda of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and to create a roadmap for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Progress towards the MDGs, on the whole has been remarkable especially on the front of poverty reduction, education improvements and increased access to safe drinking water. The progress on health goals and targets has also been considerable. Globally, the HIV, TB and malaria epidemics were addressed to an extent. Child mortality and maternal mortality decreased 53

per cet and 44 per cet respectively since 1990. In case of India, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) reduced from 88 per 1000 live births in 1990 to 35 per 1000 live births in 2015 and Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) reduced from 556 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 167 per 100,000 live births in 2015 but failed to achieve the target of reducing IMR by $2/3^{rd}$ and MMR by $3/4^{th}$ in 1990.

The paper deals with achievements of health care system made during the MDG era and innovative means of generating resources to address the unfinished agenda of MDGs carried forwarded to be achieved during the era of SDGs. India is undergoing a demographic, epidemiological and nutritional transition.

Health care spending in India including public and the private sector was 4.7 per cet of the country's GDP in 2014 which translates to about 75 USD per capita and three fourths of this is from the private sector. The National Health Account for 2013-14 reports that Government health expenditure in India is 3.8 per cet of the Total Government Expenditure (TGE) including State and Central government. Considering India's federal structure, share of State governments in government health expenditure is about 66 per cet. National Health Policy 2017, has committed increasing health expenditure to 2.5 per cet of the GDP by 2024-25.

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Health in MDG: Achievements and Limitations

In September 2000, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Millennium Declaration which established a global partnership of countries and development partners committed to achieve eight voluntary development goals to be achieved by 2015. The MDGs called for action to (a) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (b) achieve universal primary education, (c) promote gender equality and empower women, (d) reduce child mortality, (e) improve maternal health, (f) combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, (g) ensure environmental sustainability and (h) develop a global partnership for development.

Three of these eight MDGs focused on health whereas health also remained a component of other MDGs. In India, health is not solely in the hands of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and parallel systems in States and local Governments but also on counter sectors like water and sanitation; women and child development; social welfare; tribal affairs; urban development; agriculture; industry; environment; rural development and transport etc. Therefore, health outcomes are much beyond the allocation towards health sector.

Other sectors also have cross building effect on health. In India, to generate more resources for health, there is need to consider review of taxes and subsidies which play a preventive role in controlling communicable and non-communicable diseases. For example, commodities that harm health needs to be declared sin and heavily taxed and taxes to be earmarked for preventive and promotive health care whereas those beneficial need to be subsidised. In India, as per 2017-18 budget document, 10 per cet of government spending is earmarked for subsidies for food, fertilizers and petroleum etc. which have direct and indirect health effects. The subsidies during 12th Five Year Plan (FY 2012-13 to 2016-17) accounted for Rs. 2,43,152 lakhs crore annually which is 1.74 times more than the central, State and local budget on health; hence subsidies need to be reviewed periodically.

Raising taxes on harmful commodities may not only improve health but can generate more fiscal space for health. In case of India, taxes on alcohol, tobacco, salt and sugar will not only generate additional resources but would be preventing communicable and non-communicable diseases and contribute to easing burden on health systems. At present, communicable and non-communicable diseases cause more than 65 per cet deaths, the fiscal deficit created due to raised taxes would be impacting socio-economic and cultural factors in a low and middle class society. The revenue generated through tobacco taxes may be earmarked for health sector to deal with cancer and cardiovascular diseases and for agriculture sector to shift farmers from tobacco cultivation to other crops which yield high returns and are sustainable ecologically.

Similarly, taxes generated from alcohol, may also be used for health. No doubt taxes generated from tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy food play an important role in economy but epidemiology transition has brought the society at a juncture where 62 per cent deaths in India are due to Non-Communicable Diseases and the risk factors attributed are tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, high blood pressure due to high salt intake, obesity, unhealthy diets like sugar sweetened beverages and physical inactivity.

Subsidies on commodities such as sugar, diesel, kerosene and coal needs to be reviewed and savings to be diverted to nutritious food and clean renewable energy sources. Government needs to subsidise LPG heavily instead of diesel, kerosene and coal for cooking and fruits, dairy products and protein sources to be promoted for healthy life style.

Government has levied taxes on tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diets and sugar contained beverages to generate revenues but this could be enhanced to the level to make them beyond the reach of people. Turning point in the era of taxation would be when these taxes, labelled sin tax, are levied to move towards assuring healthy behaviour which act as preventive health providers, save society from

Health Sector Reforms-Innovative Healthcare Financing

Sl. No.	Product	Risk factor	Outcome	Burden on health system	Preventive measures or Solution
1	Tobacco	Smoking Chewing	Cancer, heart diseases	Curative, Palliative, rehabilitative	Imposition of heavy taxes
2	Harmful use of Alcohol	Drunk driving, unsafe sex, substance abuse	Traffic accidents, cancer, liver diseases, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)	Curative	Imposition of heavy taxes
3	Salt	High BP	Stroke	Curative	Imposition of heavy taxes
4	Sugar sweetened beverages	Obesity	Cancer, Heart diseases, Diabetes	Curative, Palliative, rehabilitative	Imposition of heavy taxes
5	Food grains	Obesity	Diabetes	Curative, Palliative	Imposition of heavy taxes
6	Trans fats	Obesity	Diabetes, Heart Diseases	Curative, Palliative	Imposition of heavy taxes
7	Fuel Diesel	Air Pollution	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (COPD)	Curative	Imposition of heavy taxes
8	Condoms	Unprotected/ unsafe sex, Unwanted pregnancy	Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary care	Subsidy
9	Vaccines	Measles other preventable disease Pneumococcal diseases	Infectious diseases	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary care	Subsidy
10	Essential drugs to treat infectious diseases	Lack of treatment	HIV/TB/ Malaria/ bacterial infections	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary care	Subsidy
11	Early diagnostics of TB	Lack of diagnostic	Undiagnosed hidden TB	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary care	Subsidy
12	LPG as a substitute for Kerosene and fossil fuel	Air Pollution	TB/COPD	Primary, Secondary, Tertiary care	Subsidy

Non-Communicable Diseases, protect human resources from disability at a juncture when India is at an advantage of demographic surplus which in a way would get converted into demographic dividend. Ethically, it is inhuman to generate revenue from tobacco and alcohol for investment in developmental activities and construct cancer hospitals and palliative and rehabilitative centres in parallel.

At the policy level, marginal increase in taxes may not yield desired results/outcomes. Therefore, increase in taxes need to be substantial to achieve the desired changes in consumption and move towards phasing it out from life. In a country like India, inflation suppresses small increases; hence inflation needs to be adjusted to avoid tax ineffectiveness. Planning of such taxation would yield outcomes if a mechanism of strict adherence of regulation at centre and State is in place to avoid non-compliance on grounds of loopholes specially against smuggling and bootlegging as large tax collection allures pilferages. Formulation of a policy on raised taxes may not achieve defined results unless its implementation and enforcement is monitored effectively and coordinated till it yields desired outcomes to reduce transport and trade illegally. Raised taxes on tobacco, alcohol, salt and sugar and unhealthy products are justified not only to address the bad effects on society from the abuse of these substances but also to enhance collection of government revenue. Revenue raising on these products should be as high as the component that mitigate the bad effects of consumption/ abuse. The design of taxes must take into account all products leading to obesity and further diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Adolescents and adults respond most to price increases on unhealthy foods and beverages, tobacco and alcohol.

For the productive utilization of tax resources, part of tax collection could be earmarked to preventive and promotive health care, improvement for air and water quality, nutrition and treatment of diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, Cancer and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

In a similar way, another front of resources mobilisation is review of subsidies which is a burden on growing economies and may provide some fiscal space. Food substances that contribute to obesity including refined grains such as white flour and white rice are highly subsidised and these subsidies need to be reviewed and reoriented towards improving the nutritional content of subsidised food.

Production and consumption of pulses have stagnated in India while the output of food grains and sugar has increased. In India, under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, the government is projected to spend $25 billion a year to subsidize food grains, whereas this food subsidy can be used towards subsidies on pulses, fruits, vegetables and milk which will have a far more beneficial impact on nutrition.

It is not only what consumers eat, drink or smoke that can harm health and whose effects can be modified by taxes or subsidies. India subsidises coal, gasoline and their fossil fuels which are the leading products of particulate matter which causes lower respiratory tract infections, COPDs, cancers, heart diseases and exacerbates the risk of tuberculosis.

According to a 2015 IMF report, government spent 6.5 percent of the world's GDP to subsidise energy and energy subsidies exceeded public spending on health and education. Re-allocating fuel subsidies towards clean fuels and eliminating subsidies on those items which have direct harmful effect on health is necessary to improve health and save scarce resources.

Review of subsidies and later removal or reduction and imposition of heavy taxes may not favour political agenda but the health and economic burden of tobacco and alcohol use falls heaviest on the poor. Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of catastrophic expenditure in India and the main reasons of families falling below the poverty line trap into poverty.

A second concern is that, removal of agricultural subsidies would adversely affect farmers and small scale manufacturers including those who make bidis and other tobacco products. Farmers of tobacco and sugarcane do well as these crops are cash crops in India but they should be assisted to switch over to such crops that are not harmful to human health and just a substitute of their livelihood by allocating part of earmarked revenue collected through taxes for the orientation of these farmers for smooth transition from these cash crops to other crops without putting them into financial hardship. Policy makers need to document explicitly pros and cons of these reforms of reorienting tax revenue and subsidies and explain provisions on how the losers from these changes would be compensated to ensure that their livelihoods are not compromised. ❑

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J&K WINDOW

ALL WEATHER CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN SRINAGAR, KARGIL AND LEH

Zojila tunnel in the difficult terrain of Jammu and Kashmir is now set to be a reality, with the Cabinet Committee on Economics Affairs (CCEA) clearing the Rs. 6,809 crore project. This project is to be built under the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) Mode. Zojila Tunnel project aims at providing all weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh. This excludes approaches on Srinagar-Leh section connecting NH-1A at Km 95.00 and at Km 118.00 in Jammu and Kashmir. The game changing infrastructure project will comprise a 14.15 km long two lane bi-directional single tube tunnel with a parallel 14.200 km long egress tunnel excluding approaches between Baltal and Minamarg in Jammu and Kashmir.

The project holds strategic and socio-economic significance, especially given the fact that the region of Leh has limited connectivity for as many as 6 months of the year due to threat of avalanches. The long awaited project will be executed by Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRT&H) through National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and will take minimum seven years to complete. The total estimated capital cost of the project with Rs 6808.69 crore will also include the cost towards land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation and other pre-construction activities as well as maintenance and operation cost of tunnel for four years. The construction of approaches for the Zojila tunnel will be undertaken separately. It is hoped that the implementation of the Zojila tunnel will generate massive job opportunities among local residents and due to better road connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh, the tourism industry will also witness commendable traffic throughout the year, which will successfully boost the state economy.

Zojila tunnel project, along with the ongoing Z-Morh tunnel project at Gagangir, which is 6.5 km long, will provide connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh.

MODERN TECHNOLOGIES OF VEGETABLE PRODUCTION FOR RURAL WOMEN

Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology-Kashmir (SKAUST) recently organized one-day training programme for rural women on 'Modern Technologies of Vegetable Production' under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). The workshop was organised to empower rural women by educating them about the modern technologies being employed in vegetable production to help them strengthen production and boost returns.

The aim of the workshop was to enhance economic empowerment of rural women through training on modern technologies of vegetable production. Elaborated discussions were held on on "Vermicomposting" technology, liquid manure, bio fertilizers, crop rotation, green manure.

A farm kit prepared under this project was also distributed amongst the participants as an incentive for the women farmers.

Under RKVY three districts in Kashmir division have been identified to train women farmers for adopting modern technology in vegetable cultivation. For this, 40 rural women beneficiaries will be identified by the concerned KVKs i.e, KVK, Ganderbal, KVK, Malangpora and KVK, Srinagar.

JAMMU NURSING COLLEGE TO START CLASSES FROM CURRENT ACADEMIC SESSION

The Government has decided to start first batch in the newly established Nursing College Jammu from the current academic session.

The Nursing College will function from Government Women College Gandhi Nagar Campus with affiliation to Jammu University. The first batch will comprise of 60 students as per the intake capacity and the candidates would be shortlisted strictly as per merit.

Impact of GST on Textile Sector

C Chinnappa

...although there was dip in the textile sector during GST implementation period, it is expected that GST will accelerate textile sector growth in the long run particularly in terms of higher production, export and employment generation

Textile sector contributes 13.5 per cent to manufacturing and 2.1 per cent to GDP in India. Textile exports accounted for 14 per cent of total exports in 2016-17. It is the largest employer after agriculture (105 million estimated employment with 45 million direct employment) (2011 Census). Significantly, women constitute 70 per cent of the workforce in the garment manufacturing sector. However, the Indian textile sector is facing many challenges including tough competition in the global market due to many reasons, which include higher input costs compared to costs of competing countries, uncompetitive tax structure, etc. The Textile industry was perpetually demanding for uniform, lower tax structure. Meanwhile, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced w.e.f. 1st of July, 2017 pursuant to 122nd amendment of the Constitution. It is a single tax system on the supply of goods and services, right from the manufacturer to the consumer. All the indirect taxes of Central and State Governments have been subsumed under the GST. Credits of input taxes (ITC) paid at each stage will be available in the subsequent stage of value addition – tax only on value addition at each stage. GST Council headed by Union Finance Minister comprising of State Finance Ministers of States/UTs as Members, finalise/recommend rates of tax on supply of goods and services.

GST rate for Textiles

GST has been imposed on all textile items except silk and jute. The GST rate initially was fixed on (i) Cotton and other natural fibres (5 per cent); (ii) Natural Yarn (5 per cent); (iii) 18 per cent on man-made yarn; 5 per cent on all fabric including knitted or crocheted and woven; 5 per cent on apparel and made-ups below value of Rs.1,000 and 12 per cent on its value above Rs.1,000. 5 per cent GST for job works (reduced from 18 per cent); and 12 per cent for carpets and other textile floor coverings, etc. Textile Trade/ Industry Associations raised concern over the rate and demanded exemption for different items of textiles, stock transfers, exports, refund of blocked taxes, to make 5 per cent rate for job applicable across the value chain up to garment stage including Man-Made Fibre (MMF), those pertaining to HS code classification, etc. All those issues/demands were placed before the GST Council.

Impact of GST on Textiles

Whether there was any impact of GST on textile sector may be assessed, based on data of prices, production, export-import of textiles, employment, etc. The Textile Industry Associations claimed that GST on the textile sector particularly the inverted tax i.e.18 per cent GST on MMF yarn and 5 per cent GST on fabric, 5 per cent/18 per cent GST on job works, reduction of

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import duty (from 29 per cent to 15 per cent) led to escalation/uncompetitive prices, low production, export, closure of industries, unemployment, etc. Although the three months period may not be sufficient to capture the impact of GST on prices, production, exports of textiles, an attempt has been made to assess the impact based on the data compiled by the Office of the Textile Commissioner, Mumbai (TxC), Director General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), Central Silk Board (CSB), Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India Ltd. (CCICI),

Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), The Jute Corporation of India Ltd (JCI) and National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC).

Impact of GST on Prices of Textile Items

Price of major textile items like cotton hosiery, viscose, polyester, etc has increased by 15 per cent from June to July, 2017 and it has declined during September, 2017 i.e. 8 per cent below the prices of June, 2017. Whereas, price of MMF items have increased between 5 to 15 per cent during the said period as shown in Table -1.

Impact of GST on Textiles Production

The month-wise production of textile items during pre-GST and post-GST period is not available. However, data of textiles production during April- July, 2016 and April- July, 2017 has been used for assessing the impact of GST on textile production. Table-2 indicates that production of Man-Made fibre has declined by 0.8 per cent and filament yarn by 6.4 per cent during April-July, 2017 corresponding to the same period of the previous year. Production of cotton yarn decreased by 2.7 per cent and blended and 100

Table: 1

S. No.	Textile product/items	Average Price (Rs)		Increase/ Decrease (Col (4) over Col.3)	Average Price (Rs) Sept., 2017	Increase/ Decrease (Col.6) to Col.3)
		June, 2017	July, 2017			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1	Cotton Yarn (20s)	200	195	(-)5 (-2.5 per cent)	190	(-)10 (-5 per cent)
2	Cotton Hosiery yarn (30s comb)	229	229	0	212	(-)17 (-7.4 per cent)
3	Poly./Viscose	199	214.76	(+)15.8 (+7.9 per cent)	215	(+)16 (+8 per cent)
4	Poly./Cotton (70:30 per cent)	161.28	173.23	(+) 11.9 (+7 per cent)	143.4	(-)17.9 (-11 per cent)
5	MMF (30s Viscose Yarn)	210	217	(+) 7 (+3.3 per cent)	220	(+)10 (+5 per cent)
6	MMF(300 D Polyster)	147	173	(+)26 (+18 per cent)	173	(+)26 (+18 per cent)
7	Lint Cotton 1 Candy:355.62 kgs)	42,642	42,422	(-)220 (-0.5 per cent)	40,930	(-) 1,712 (-4 per cent)

Source: Office of the Textile Commissioner (Txc), Mumbai & CCI.

Table:2

S. No.	Textile item(s)	Production	(Fig. in million)		
		2016-17 (P)	2016 (P) Apr.-July.)	2017 (P) Apr.-July.)	per cent Variation between col.(4) and Col. (5)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	Man-made fibre	1364	459	455	-0.9
2	Man-made filament yarn	1159	377	401	+6.4
3	Cotton yarn	4056	1388	1351	-2.7
4	Blended & 100 per cent non-cotton yarn	1606	543	533	-1.8
5	Total Spun Yarn	5662	1931	1884	-2.4
6	Cloth				
(i)	Mill Sector	2264	785	731	-6.9
(ii)	Decentralized Sector	61630	20896	20930	+0.2
	Sub-total of 6	63591	21681	21661	-0.1

Source; Office of the Textile Commissioner (Txc), Mumbai & CCI.

per cent non-cotton yarn decreased by 1.8 per cent during April-July, 2017 corresponding to the same period last year. Like-wise cloth production also decreased by 0.1 per cent during April-July, 2017 as compared to the same period last year except cloth production by decentralized sector, which has increased by 0.2 per cent during the said period.

Impact of GST on Export of Textiles

The data of DGCI&S given in Table-3 shows that the overall exports of textile and clothing in June,2017 was of the order of US$ 3008.7 million which came down to US$ 2686.80 million (i.e. 10.7 per cent less) in July,2017 and then, it has increased to US$ 2840.30 million (i.e. +5.71 per cent) in August, 2017.

Even if export of textiles in August, 2017 is compared with that of June, 2017, it shows that export of textiles declined by 5.6 per cent in August, 2017 as against decline of 10.7 per cent during the period between July and August, 2017 which indicates that textile exports has been picking up.

Impact of GST on Import of Textiles

The figures given in Table 4 indicate that import of textiles and clothing have declined by 24.59 per cent during July, 2017 and then it has surged to 38.61 per cent during August, 2017 and this may be due to lower import duty and other market forces. The comparison of imports in August, 2017 to that of June,2017 also shows surge in import of textile items.

Sector Specific Impact of GST

Silk: Production of raw silk as well as employment generation in silk sector have increased more than 70 per cent during the period between June to August, 2017 (Table 5).

The price of cocoon has been decreasing during June – September, 2017 except the price of filature raw silk, which has increased during August-September, 2017, as shown in the Table 6.

Cotton and Jute: The price of raw cotton declined by 4 per cent between June, 2017 and September, 2017 due to fluctuations in the domestic and international markets and there was no impact of GST on the prices of raw cotton. GST has no impact on the prices of raw jute. There was a dip in the supply of cotton and silk yarn during the month of July, 2017 due to

Table: 3

S.No.	Textile Item(s)	Textiles Exports 2017 (Fig. US$ million)					
		June	July	per cent change of Col. (4) to Col.3	August	per cent change of Col. (6) to Col.4	per cent change of Col (6) to Col.(3)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Readymade Garment	1515.9	1243.8	-17.9	1311.4	+5.43	(-)13.5
2	Cotton Textiles	814.6	766.6	-5.9	789.7	+3.01	(-)3.1
3	Man-Made Textiles	425.1	430.9	+1.4	462.5	+7.33	(-)8.8
4	Wool & Woolen Textiles	0.0	30.8	-	31.4	+1.95	-
5	Silk Products	18.8	16.6	-11.7	14.5	-12.65	(-)22.9
6	Handloom Products	33.4	32.3	-3.2	32.8	+1.55	(-)1.8
7	Carpets	113.0	105.7	-6.5	131.8	+24.69	(+) 16.6
8	Jute Products	27.9	30.7	+10.0	36.1	+17.59	(+)29.4
9	Coir & Coir Manufacturers	26.9	29.3	+8.9	29.9	+2.04	(+)11.2
	Total Textile & Clothing	3008.7	2686.8	-10.7	2840.3	+5.71	(-)5.6

Source: Director General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata.

S.No.	Textile Item(s)	Textiles Imports 2017 (Fig.US$ million)					
		June	July	per cent change to Col.3	August	per cent change to Col.4	per centchange to Col.(3)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	Readymade Garment	49.13	50.77	(+)3.34	76.95	(+)51.56	(+)56.6
2	Cotton Textiles	283.95	157.44	(-)44.55	268.20	(+)70.35	(+)5.5
3	Man-Made Textiles	188.94	158.39	(-)16.17	181.77	(+)14.76	(-)3.8
4	Wool & Woolen Textiles	29.72	30.11	(+)1.31	39.61	(+) 31.58	(-)33.3
5	Silk Products	19.11	18.60	(-)2.70	20.92	(+)12.51	(+)9.5
6	Handloom Products	0.9	0.3	(-)62.47	0.8	(+)125.41	(-)11.1
7	Carpets	6.52	4.73	(-)27.38	7.11	(+)50.24	(-)9.0
8	Jute Products	7.23	20.97	(+)189.97	16.66	(-)20.56	(+)130.4
9	Coir & Coir Manufacturers	0.5	0.6	(+)12.51	0.6	(+)0.47	(+)20
	Total Textile & Clothing	586.05	441.96	(-)24.59	612.62	(+)38.61	(+)4.45

Source: Director General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics (DGCI&S), Kolkata.

the fact that many user agencies (of handloom) did not register themselves under GST. All of them are reported to have registered under GST and in August/September, 2017. Supply has also picked up since then. The price of handloom products is reported to have increased by 5 per cent to 12 per cent on account of levy of GST on those products.

Concern over GST on Textiles.

It was reported that the Textile Trade Associations, power loom weavers, ready made garment units etc. which are located in cities and textile clusters across India, resorted to protests during 1st of July to 20th of July 2017 and demanded for abolition of GST on Yarn to Fabric and Job work units, reducing GST rate on Man-Made Fibre/Yarn, job work, etc. Due to the protest/unrest of the textile traders/industry, there was temporary slowdown of production as there was no pick up for the products in the market.

Revision of GST Rates: Implications

Textile Associations/Traders represented to Government concerning various issues relating to GST which inter-alia include (i) reduction of GST rate on MMF from 18 per cent to 5 per cent or at least 12 per cent; (ii) for zero GST to all textiles job works;(iii) to increase import duty on textiles; (iv) to exempt handicrafts and handmade handloom products from the GST, etc.

The Government, in consideration of their request, reduced the GST rate on some textile segment/items and on all job works of textiles from 18 per cent to 5 per cent, and that of MMF yarn from 18 per cent to 12 per cent and the GST on real Zari from 12 per cent to 5 per cent by covering it under HS Code Heading 5605. Further, exemption has been given to those service providers whose annual aggregate turnover is less than Rs. 20 lakh (Rs. 10 lakh in special category States except Jammu and Kashmir) from registering under GST, even if they are making inter-state taxable supplies of services. Those whose annual turnover is upto Rs.1.50 crore, can now file returns on quarterly basis and avail input credit tax (ITC) on a monthly basis. The taxpayers having annual aggregate turnover upto Rs.1.50 crore are not required to pay GST at the time of receipt of advances on supply of goods. The GST on such supplies shall be payable only when the supply of

Table: 5

Item	Pre-GST price	Post-GST price			
	(June, 2017)	July, 2017	Increase/ Decrease to Col.(2)	August,2017	Increase/ Decrease to Col.2
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Raw Silk production (MT)	5474	7447	(+)1973 (+36 per cent)	9713	(+) 4239 (+77 per cent)
Estimated Employment Generation (Persons in lakh)	15.05	20.02	(+)4.97 (+33 per cent)	26.25	(+)11.2 (+74 per cent)

Source: CSB, Bangaluru:

Note: Silkworm rearing starts from August and silk production increases from July onwards.

Item	Pre-GST price	Post-GST price					
	(June,2017) (Avg. Price) (Rs./kg)	July, 2017	Increase/ Decrease to Col.(2)	August, 2017	Increase/ Decrease to Col.2	Sept. 2017	Increase/ Decrease to Col.2
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Cross breed Cocoon	387	344	(-) 43 (-11 per cent)	376	(-)11 (-3 per cent)	363	(-) 24 (-6 per cent)
Bivoltine	489	408	(-)81	459	(-)30 (-6 per cent)	462	(-)27 (-6 per cent)
Filature Raw Silk	3296	3248	(-)48	3255	(-)41 (-)15	3488	(+) 192 (+6 per cent)

Source: Central Silk Board (CSB), Bangaluru.

good and services is made, which will reduce the compliance cost of small service providers. All these measures are expected to promote the fabric sector in alignment with global production and demand pattern.

The Traders/Industry Associations viewed that reduction of GST from 18 per cent to 12 per cent on MMF yarn and fabrics at 5 per cent GST has reduced accumulation of non-refundable ITC with the weavers and eased the working capital flow. The refunding of notional amount for the time being and later adjusting the amount in the e-Wallet w.e.f 1st April, 2018 will provide a permanent solution to the liquidity problem for the exporters. The exemption on inputs required for production of export textiles through Advance Authorization, EPCG and EOU schemes and putting a duty of 0.1 per cent on any supply from manufacturing to merchant will resolve the problems being faced by merchant exporters. Reduction of GST rate on real Zari from 12 per cent to 5 per cent by covering it under HS Code Heading 5605, will encourage production and generate employment for more women. Allowing SMEs with an annual turnover upto Rs.1.5 crore to file quarterly basis IT returns and pay tax and exempting exporters from furnishing Bond and Bank Guarantee when they clear goods for exports, will ease doing business. Still, some issues exist, which will impact
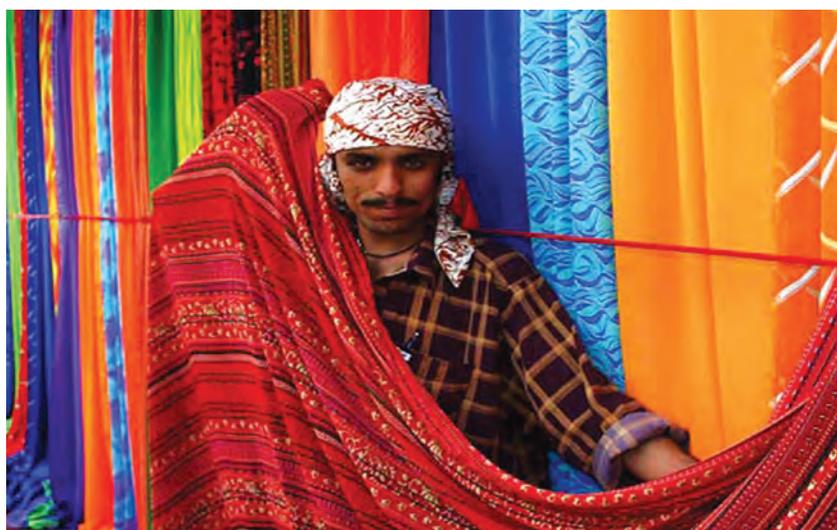
MMF textile industry severely. These include (i) 18 per cent GST on MMF yarn; (ii) import of textiles; (iii) not allowing refund of accumulated ITC, (iv) 18 per cent GST on Freight, (v) non-exempting handmade handloom and handicraft products from the purview of GST etc.

Conclusion

As far as impact of GST on textile production is concerned, price of textile items like Viscose, polyester, etc increased slightly during the month of July, 2017 and then, declined during August, 2017; however, the price of MMF textiles increased during the said period; textile production also declined marginally during the said period; textile exports declined by 10.7 per cent in June-July, 2017 and then increased by 6 per cent in August, 2017. Import of textiles and clothing surged to 38.61 by August, 2017 which may be due to lower import duty besides market forces. This signifies that import duty needs to be enhanced in such a manner that cost of imported textile items is equivalent to cost of those textile items being produced in India. Sector specific data shows increase of silk production and employment during the period under report. This reveals that although there was dip in the textile sector during GST implementation period, it is expected that GST will accelerate textile sector growth in the long run particularly in terms of higher production, export and employment generation. ❑

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NORTH EAST DIARY

NHAD AND OTHER PROJECTS

The budget line of Viable Gap Funding for Air Services in the North Eastern Region has been transferred from Ministry of DoNER to Ministry of Civil Aviation. In principle, approval for an amount of Rs.90 crore has been granted by Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance to the proposed 'Hill Area Development Programme' (HADP).

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has been assigned the function of coordinating the efforts of the Government for development of the North Eastern Region. The measures taken by the Ministry supplement the efforts of concerned Ministries and State Governments and, inter alia, includes coordinating with Central Ministries/Departments for ensuring enhanced and efficient utilization of their respective annual earmarked allocation for the Region, providing gap funding for infrastructure projects, skill development and capacity building and livelihood programmes. As the regional planning body for the region, North Eastern Council (NEC) has been taking up several infrastructure and social sector projects deemed to be of critical importance for socio-economic development of the region. Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) scheme, supported by 10 per cent Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) of non-exempted Ministries/Departments, is also in place to ensure speedy development of social and economic infrastructure in the NER.

TRADITIONAL SKILLS

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has supported the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Limited (NEHHDC) in organizing skilling programmes at selected Handicrafts and Handloom clusters under the guidance of master crafts persons/trainers for a duration of 15 days. The NEHHDC undertakes awareness and training programmes amongst the artisans and weavers of the North Eastern Region in preservation of traditional skills in the wood carving, bell metal works, loin and loom weaving, fly shuttle and throw shuttle looms and in vegetables dying of natural fibres. It also undertakes design development workshops for artisans and weavers at cluster level by engaging qualified designers. Skill Development is one of the components of the World Bank aided project, North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP). Under this project, various types of skilling traditional skills for weavers, craftsmen and artisans is imparted to youths and members of Self Help Groups in the area of project implementation.

2017- A SIGNIFICANT YEAR FOR NORTHEAST

The 2017 has been a significant year for the North-Eastern Region (NER), for it witnessed some landmark developmental initiatives.

During 2017, the 90-year-old "Indian Forest Act of 1927", which was a legacy of the British Raj, was amended through a decision of the Union Cabinet as a result of which "Bamboo", which was defined as a "Tree" under the Indian Forest Act of 1927, was changed, thereby doing away with the requirement of obtaining a permit for felling of bamboo for economic use. This has opened new avenues of job generation and entrepreneurship by allowing bamboo cultivation and bamboo use by non-farmers on non-forest land. Another historic decision, which is the first of its kind in independent India, relates to 100 per cent funding by Central Government for projects in the NER, which were earlier being undertaken on the basis of Centre-State sharing in the ratio of 90:10.

It was again in 2017, during his visit, the Prime Minister dedicated to the nation a 60 Mega-watt Hydro-Power Project, thus making Mizoram a power-surplus State of India.

The North-Eastern Region set an example for the rest of India by being the first to introduce "Venture Capital Fund" from the Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER) for young Start-ups and entrepreneurs who choose to invest in the region. The first lot of the cheques for young Start-ups with Venture Fund from Ministry of DoNER was handed over by the Prime Minister himself. Among the other "firsts" introduced in the North-East during the year 2017, was a helicopter-based "Air Dispensary" to carry out OPD health services in remote and inaccessible parts of the region. Similarly, the work on new rail link to Bangladesh also began with the rail track being laid from Agartala and being funded up to Akhaura by the Ministry of DoNER.

For the convenience of Northeast students studying in other parts of the country, construction of an exclusive hostel in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus at New Delhi began on July 24, 2017, while a piece of land measuring 5341.75 sq. meters (1.32 acre) was obtained from Delhi Development Authority at the prime location of Dwarka, New Delhi for the purpose of constructing a Northeast International Cultural and Information Centre.

About Our Books

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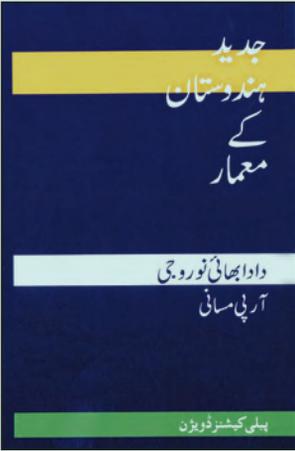
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Dadabhai Naoroji was involved in manifold public activities extending over seven decades. His untiring efforts culminated in the epoch- making change in the policy of Indian leaders and marked an era of national government during 1937-38, seeking a peaceful and orderly progress towards attainment of swaraj. This book seeks to present the personality and achievements of this 'Grand Old Man' of Indian polity to today's generation.

This English book was translated into Urdu by Sh.Farhat Usmani.
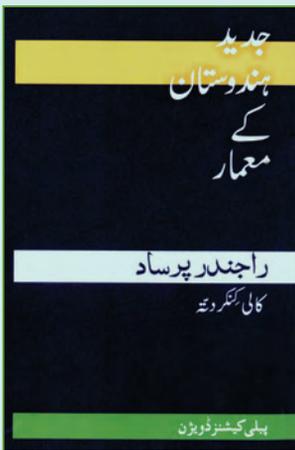
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Author : Kali Kinkar Dutta

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Dr. Rajendra Prasad was a great freedom fighter and nation builder. His contribution to India's freedom struggle as well as nation building is immense. This book seeks to portray the greatness of the first President of free India to today's generation.

This book was translated in Urdu by Sh. Rizwan Abbas.

Publications Division at the World Book Fair - 2018

Publications Division (DPD) participated in the World Book Fair, organized at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi from January 6-14, 2018. DPD put in a rich display of its books on subjects ranging from Gandhian literature, arts and culture, national freedom movement, biographies of national leaders, children's books and other areas of Indian panorama. In sync with its traditions, Publications Division also launched a bouquet of 15 books in English, Hindi and Urdu which included biographies, children's books and other publications. DPD book stall was inaugurated by Shri N.K. Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the opening day of the fair on January 6, 2018.

On the same day, Shri Sinha released 4 books of DPD, in the presence of Shri Umesh Sinha, Sr. Deputy Election Commissioner and Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA). The books include **Matdaan me Vishwaas** which gives a broad perspective of the electoral system in India, **Bhartiya Samvidhan aur Aam Aadmi** by Shri Subhash Kashyap, which explains the Indian constitution with reference to the common man; **Indian Dance : Through a Critic's eye**, a selection of 36 articles written by renowned dance critic Smt Leela Venkataraman and **Humare Sanskar aur Sanskriti**, which talks about the importance of value-based upbringing.

On January 8, 2018, another bouquet of 11 more books was released by Dr. Umakant Mishra, former Principal Director General, PIB and Dr. Rita Rani Paliwal, Secretary, *Sasta Sahitya Mandal*. This bouquet comprised biographies of national leaders, children's literature and books under co-publication arrangement with *Sasta Sahitya Mandal*, a premier publishing house.

The fair provided Publications Division an opportunity to outreach to a wide segment of book loving public and to get valuable feedback from them.