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GOVERNMENT OF KERALA

Abstract

**PUBLIC SERVICE—ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS—FIRST REPORT OF THE KERALA
ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS COMMITTEE—APPROVED—ORDERS ISSUED**

PERSONNEL & ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS (D) DEPARTMENT

G. O. (Ms.) No. 30/99/P&ARD.

Dated, Thiruvananthapuram, 21st December, 1999.

Read:—G.O.(MS) No. 7/97/P & ARD dated 26-5-1997,

ORDER

In the Government Order read above, the Kerala Administrative Reforms Committee was constituted to recommend measures to simplify and streamline the present system of Administration of the State. The Committee has submitted its first report which contained recommendations on the following:—

- (i) Citizens Charter
- (ii) Transparency and Right to Information
- (iii) Public Grievance Redressal
- (iv) Decentralisation and Administrative Reforms and
- (v) Monitoring.

2. Government have examined the report in detail and are pleased to approve the recommendations contained in the First Report of the Kerala Administrative Reforms Committee with modification as annexed to this

3. The concerned Administrative Departments of the Secretariat and the Heads of Departments will implement the recommendations forthwith.

By order of the Governor,

RAM SINGH,
Secretary to Government.

To

The Principal Secretaries/Secretaries/Special Secretaries to Government
All Department of Secretariat including Law and Finance
All District Collectors and all Heads of Departments
The Director of Public Relations
The Accountant General, Thiruvananthapuram
The Member Secretary, Kerala Administrative Reforms Committee
(with C.L.)
The Private Secretary to Chief Minister and other Ministers
The Private Secretary to the Leader of Opposition and Chief Whip
The Additional Secretary to Chief Secretary.

ANNEXURE I

CITIZENS CHARTER

1. Citizen's Charter is essentially a statement on the part of Government Department/Agency, on the levels of services which the citizen is entitled to, and which it is willing to guarantee to him. All Government Departments/Agencies under Governments will prepare and publish their own Citizen's Charter.

2. The Administrative Reforms Committee has constituted Task Forces in 73 departments and 5 Public Sector Undertakings in order to prepare the Citizens Charter. General terms of reference helping to prepare Citizen's Charter may be seen in Appendix I. After the Citizen's Charter is prepared by Task Forces in each Departments/Agency, they should be examined by the Committees consisting of Secretary of the Administrative Departments, concerned Head of the Department and a representative from the Personnel and Administrative Reforms Department. The Citizens Charter, so scrutinised, will have to be approved by concerned Minister.

3. To start with, the following departments may be identified for proclaiming of Citizens' Charter:

- (i) Civil Supplies Department
- (ii) Revenue Department including Survey and Land Records
- (iii) Motor Vehicles Department

4. In addition the following a public utilities may also be selected for introducing Citizens' Charter

- (1) Kerala Water Authority
- (2) Kerala State Electricity Board

5. The list of departments and agencies suggested above could be expanded gradually. Within an year it has to be extended to all departments and agencies rendering services to the public.

6. Task Forces created for each of these departments and agencies by the Administrative Reforms Committee can be asked to work out detailed Citizens' Charter for the department/agency in consultation with the Administrative Reforms Committee. The Administrative Reforms Committee has already circulated a guideline for preparing the Citizens' Charter enclosed as Appendix I. The Charters would vary for each level of office as the functions performed would be different at the state, regional, district, sub-district and local levels.

7. Illustrated Citizens' Charters for 3 departments and public sector undertakings mentioned above have been prepared by the Administrative Reforms Committee based on the response received from the Task Forces:

8. Citizens' Charter may be introduced in all the local self-governments. Each unit has to lay down its own charter subject to general guidelines issued by the Local Administration Department.

9. Citizens' Charter may be included as an item in the existing training programmes. The Institute of Management in Government (IMG) could be the nodal institution for government departments and agencies and the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) could be the training institution in charge of the local self-governments, for both officers and elected representatives. These nodal institutions can interact with the Task Forces and the Administrative Reforms Committee while chalking out the training programme.

10. Typically the Citizens' Charter should cover the following points:

- (i) The departments, agencies, and local self-governments would state their mission, objectives and their general policy to attain these objectives in clear simple terms and publish them and exhibiting them in all offices in the local language also. This would help each staff member of these organisations to have an idea of what his organisation stands for besides enabling the public to frame its expectations.
- (ii) The standards of service in various areas covered by these organisations need to be fixed. For this, the services to the citizen are to be listed out covering statutory, procedural and conventional matters. The rendering of each of these services should be quantified indicating time limits, quality levels, etc. It is necessary to make this quantification within the existing frame work and utilising existing resources, human, financial material and technological. It is necessary to peg the levels at challenging heights. These standards have to be published and made available to potential users.
- (iii) There is need for providing information about these services and being open in their performance. It is necessary to collect the rules and instructions governing the areas of public interface and make them available freely as far as practicable in the local language. The public should be informed about accessing these services, through simple handouts, which should also

indicate what remedial measures are available when certain problems arise. Enquiry counters should be revitalised and restored in the Secretariat and the offices of the heads of departments and district level offices of the concerned departments/agencies. In the case of small offices, separate enquiry counters may not be necessary but a notice board indicating who should be approached for what has to be set up. Who does what in each office should be prominently exhibited in the offices implementing the charter. In the case of any one being absent, the head of office has to make substitute arrangements.

- (iv) All the offices should have a clear "queue" system for dealing with requests and applications, and should strictly follow priority in disposing of applications for various services. This should also be seen to be done and transparent methods of implementation should be resorted to so that the first come first served principle is not violated. Where emergencies and extraordinary situations exist for immediate response, a fast track mechanism needs to be designed and published, defining discretion to the maximum possible. Each case of use of discretion needs to be backed up by cogent reasoning put down in writing.
- (v) It is necessary to exhibit the targets and achievements and the cost incurred by the department.
- (vi) The departments/agencies implementing Citizens' Charter need to identify their consumer groups and hold periodical consultations with them both with organized groups as well as with the general public. Question and answer sessions through the media may also be regularly done.
- (vii) Courteous behaviour and courteous gestures may be enforced in all offices.
- (viii) Facilities for the visiting public like drinking water, toilet, seats for waiting persons, etc. should be provided in offices wherever the number of visitor is more than 50 per day. In Offices frequented by senior citizens or disabled people separate queues and reserved facilities are necessary.
- (ix) There needs to be a grievance redressal procedure. This is being dealt with separately. Also transparency and right to information are larger issues which will be dealt with at length separately.

- (x) The adherence to the Citizens' Charter needs to be monitored at various levels particularly through formal surveys. The achievements also need to be monitored in house and published at regular intervals.
- (xi) There has to be a publicity campaign to spread awareness about the Citizens' Charter. Spots in radio and TV, advertisements in newspapers and other publications display at public places and written information to consumer groups and people's groups would be quite useful.
- (xii) There has to be an evaluation of performance by an evaluation team after one year and recognition for good performance has to be given.
- (xiii) Improvements/changes have to be brought about through review, from time to time.

11. The Administrative Reforms Committee recommends the following time limits for various activities by departments/agencies, once the decision to implement recommendations is taken.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Constitution of task forces | 15 days |
| (2) Preparation of draft charter | 1 month |
| (3) Discussion and finalisation | 1 month |
| (4) Training of trainers | 1 month |
| (5) Training of others | 2 months |
| (6) Operationalisation | 6 months after acceptance of the recommendations |
| (7) Evaluation | 6 months after Operationalisation |

12. For local bodies, a three-month time limit is suggested for operationalisation as they can do it quickly through mutual discussion once the basic training is given.

ANNEXURE II

TRANSPARENCY AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

1. Now there is a lot of information, which is theoretically available freely, especially relating to Statutes, Government Orders, Circulars, Public Reports, etc., but they are hardly available for reference to the ordinary man. It is necessary to collect such relevant documents, index them and make them available for ready reference at the State Central Library as well as with the Director of Public Relations. The abstracts of these documents could be made in plain language and distributed on realisation of actual cost. A directory on where to find information could also be prepared and made available in all district and block/municipal centres.

2. These documents can be published directly by the Government. Formerly, the practice of publishing manuals was followed in several departments, but now this practice has fallen into disuse. It is necessary to revive this practice of publishing manuals. It is suggested that manuals be updated for the departments with public interface, in particular, the following:

- (1) Revenue
- (2) Civil Supplies
- (3) Panchayats
- (4) Municipalities
- (5) Motor Vehicles
- (6) Public Works

3. A time limit of one year is recommended for this updating.

4. A subject-wise compendium of Government Orders has to be prepared straight away and made available in the District Information Offices and District Libraries in the first instance. This may be extended to cover local governments in a phased manner. It should be ensured that this is not a one-time activity. A system needs to be created for sending Government Orders regularly to the places mentioned above.

5. Computerised facilitation centres may be set up in the three cities of Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode to start with. It is understood that the National Informatics Centre is in the process of setting up such centres. All relevant information could be fed in such centres for easy access. The private sector could be encouraged to set up such information centres if they are willing.

6. There has to be a regular system of suo moto publication of information. The manner and matter of such publication has to be decided department wise and monitored annually, preferably in the form of reports to legislature.

7. To enable the citizen to utilise the services of a department/agency he has to be aware of the Statutes governing the functioning, the procedures followed in the discharge of functions and in the remedial measures available in the event of failure to perform a function satisfactorily. This implies that the department/agency has to publicise the Acts and Rules governing its functioning.

8. For the purpose of Social Audit the following information has to be published:

- (i) Progress of processing of applications, achievements of physical and financial targets.
- (ii) Establishment costs incurred item-wise
- (iii) Abstracts of expenditure of developmental works item-wise
- (iv) Eligibility criteria and prioritisation criteria within the eligible groups for developmental programmes.
- (v) Lists of beneficiaries assisted under various schemes.

9. Different kinds of information may have to be published at the State, district and local levels. At the local levels information has to be in sufficient detail in the case of developmental matters.

10. There has to be a procedure for declassifying information. As a general rule, all information can be declassified after 30 years. Along with this, an archival policy needs to be formulated so that valuable documents of historical relevance are not lost to posterity.

11. There has to be a clear procedure for provision of information. This procedure could be laid down on the following lines:

- (i) The kinds of information, which are available, should be listed out and published. Also, the kinds of information, which cannot be given, should likewise be published.
- (ii) All organisations should have an information officer. A fairly senior officer can be given additional charge of this duty where there is no set up for providing an independent officer.

- (iii) There has to be a procedure for requesting for information. For scrutiny of records, it can be allowed on fixed days at fixed times; but if copied are to be supplied, actual cost may be realised and a time limit of seven days fixed for supplying the information. In local governments the information could be provided on the same day. A fixed day may be set apart for this, so that people can come on that day, place their request and get the information the same day. If self addressed and stamped envelopes are provided, mailing could also be done.
- (iv) If an application seeking certain information is received and it cannot be provided, it has to be rejected by an officer senior to the information officer.
- (v) For ensuring right to information, legislation may be necessary. But to start with; through executive instructions it can be ensured in areas relating to developmental programmes and individual entitlements.

ANNEXURE III

PUBLIC GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

1. The existing instructions on grievance redressal are collected, collated and published with the required modifications as a single set for each department/agency.
2. Enquiry counters should be opened in all the offices having dealings with public. Depending on the volume of work, the counter could be manned by different levels of officers. As far as possible the officers so selected should be volunteers and given counter duty for not more than three months at a stretch. During the period a person is manning the counter, he need not be asked to do any other work. At the same time no separate post should be created for this purpose. A working arrangement system for each office could be evolved, so as to identify the persons required every three months.
3. The enquiry counter would have a two-fold purpose. It should be a place where all information on the activities of the department/agency is made available to the public, preferably in a written form. Secondly, the enquiry counter should be able to give information on the current stage of the various grievance petitions. There should be a monitoring of the petitions from the counter and a facility for giving interim replies orally if approached by the petitioner. A detailed scheme is prepared to serve as a guideline for setting up of enquiry counters and given as Appendix II.

4. For the Secretariat and Collectorate, a single enquiry counter is suggested. In the Secretariat to begin with one enquiry counter/window manned by one Under Secretary and one Section Officer will be posted. There shall be three windows with permanently assigned serial numbers in future. In the Collectorate a Junior Superintendent would be enough. These counter should be computerised.

5. The enquiry counters would give proper acknowledgement and reference number on receipt of each petition, inform the petitioner of the initial action taken and indicate the probable time limit for final redressal wherever possible. For different types of grievances, different levels of officers should be made responsible for giving this assurance on the time limit. All petitions that cannot be finally disposed of by the initially fixed date should be assigned a new deadline and the petitioner informed accordingly.

6. Grievance petitions could either be sent by post or directly handed over to the officers. For petitions sent by post, there should be provision for attaching a self-addressed stamped envelope, in which case, the petition would be acknowledged with a reference number and with the indication of the expected time required for processing the case. A similar procedure can be followed for petitions, which are received directly by officers.

7. As a general rule, applications which are not public grievance, but which require a decision which needs at least 15 days time, by post or given direct. In all such cases also, acknowledgement, and reference number should be intimated.

8. All the greivance petitions for a particular department/office need to be classified subject-wise. For doing this, each department/office has to determine what constitutes a public grievance petition as far as its domain is concerned. The subject-wise classified list should be available with each dealing hand with a time limit for its final redressal. The head of office should be personally responsible for monitoring the redressal of grievances and taking special action on delayed cases. There should be a system of specially marking public grievance cases in the personal register. The inspecting officer should specially watch the progress of disposal of such cases and make specific entries in the running note. While submitting the personal register the dealing hand should also give a list of public grievance petitions pending for more than a fixed period of time.

9. For Monitoring complaints in offices, there should be a Nodal Officer. The officer dealing with information could double up as the Nodal Officer for redressal of complaints. He should monitor the pace of redressal of public grievances and take remedial action wherever required. He should be responsible for sending periodical reports on the progress of redressal of public grievances to the higher officers. In the case of Secretariat, Secretary, Personnel & Administrative Reforms Department could be the Nodal Officer, and in the case of Collectorate, the ADM could be the Nodal Officer.

10. Each department should prepare an annual report on the type of public grievances it received, the action taken and the problems encountered, with suggestions for changes required at higher levels in policy, procedures, etc. This department/agency-wise report should be submitted to the Secretary, Personnel & Administrative Reforms Department.

11. There should be fixed days for meeting people in every office by the head of the office. In the case of local bodies, the elected head and the secretary should be there on such fixed days. It is suggested that for the entire state, Wednesdays could be designated as public contact days, where any member of the public can walk in and meet the head of office during office time. Consequently, Wednesdays would become no-meeting, no-tours days. If for some reason the head of office cannot be present, he should make the next senior-most officer sit in his office and receive visitors.

12. At levels below the district, mass contact programmes may be revived after widespread publicity through the press and local panchayats. The notice should be given at least 30 days in advance and grievance petitions collected in the Grama Panchayats/Municipal offices and forwarded to the concerned departmental officers at the district level. On the day of the mass contact programme, the petitioner should be invited and the final decision made known to him. He should be given full intimation of what has happened to his petition and if it cannot be redressed, the clear reasons for non-redressal. If more time is required it would be stated and follow-up assured. Department-specific 'adalats' or public hearings should be held in all the districts at least twice a year. Elected representatives, clients of the department etc. could be invited and detailed interaction sessions held at least for half a day. The follow up action taken on such adalats should be reported in the next half-yearly adalat.

13. Several organisations organise 'Neethi Melas' utilising the services of retired judges and eminent public men. Normally the organisation collects applications in advance and sends them to the concerned officers. The affected parties are invited to be present on a fixed day. The government should recognise such organisations if they are bonafide and instruct the departments to co-operate with such organisations to settle the public grievances in the Neethi Melas.

14. For sorting out public grievances, which have a law and order implication, regular special mass contact programme attended jointly by the District Collector and Superintendent of Police should be held Taluk-wise once in a month. The procedure followed in the mass contact programme can be followed here also, with the proviso that petitions are to be given to the Police Station or to the Village Office or to both. The kind of grievance dealt with in such mass contact programmes should be made clear in advance. It is felt that, boundary disputes, disputes relating to pathways, harassment

of weaker sections, etc. could be sorted out in such joint programmes, in which all officers of the respective departments would be personally present and the reports discussed in various joint counters manned by Collector/Superintendent of Police/RDO/Deputy SP/Tahasildar/Circle Inspector. The Excise Department could also be involved in this programme. In tune with the guidelines given as Appendix III, a circular will have to be issued by the Government for operationalising the programme.

ANNEXURE IV

DECENTRALISATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

1. Kerala Government has embarked on the path of decentralisation with a clear vision of what it means and what it intends to achieve. Decentralisation is the process of setting up local self-governments with a well-defined area of autonomous functioning. Also it implies transferring power to the people through the local elected representatives who would act as trustees for the people. Thus it implies the empowerment of the ordinary man.

2. In the Kerala context, the local governments do not constitute a hierarchy. Each type of local body has its own functional domain. Thus there are 1214 local governments in existence in the State. They will be now dealing with almost every developmental matter and every welfare activity having direct interface with the citizens. Grama Panchayat and municipal bodies also exercise a substantial portion of regulatory power. Thus direct contact with the people will be more at the local body level. Since they exercise functions and responsibilities hitherto discharged by the Government, there is need for a relationship of trust and understanding between local governments and people.

3. The recommendations made so far in this report all relate to bettering the services of the State to its people and making it more responsive in its day to day activities. Since a large number of such activities are carried out by the local governments, these recommendations would mutatis mutandis apply to them also.

4. The Committee on Decentralisation of Powers has already recommended incorporating of Citizens' Charter and Right to Information in the statutes relating to local bodies. These legal provisions need to be translated into practice at the earliest for which the recommendations in Annexure I and II of this order would be relevant.

5. In the new context there could be a large number of public grievances related to the functioning of local bodies that may be brought before

the Government. This would lead to a sensitive situation where the Government has to discharge its inherent obligation to the citizen even while protecting the freedom of local governments. The recommendation of the Committee on Decentralisation of Powers to set up an Ombudsman type of system for redressal of citizen's grievances assumes special relevance in this context. It is desirable to have an independent mechanism, which can take care of public grievances concerning local governments. Till such time this recommendation is put into practice, it is necessary to evolve a public grievance redressal system for the government in relation to local bodies.

6. The local bodies require a public grievance redressal system in cases where the grievances are directly given to them. Here the recommendations given in Annexure 4 would *mutatis mutandis* apply.

APPENDIX I

Terms of Reference for the Task Forces set up by the ARC in Departments/Agencies

1. Basic objectives and functional responsibilities of the department and the performance of the department vis-a-vis the objectives and functions.
2. Organisational structure of the department including its hierarchy and line of control and the possibilities of rationalisation to improve performance.
3. The delegation of powers both administrative and financial.
4. Financial management in the organisation with particular reference to resource raising, flow of funds, monitoring of expenditure, etc.
5. Office system with reference to procedures, rules and manuals and the possibilities of simplification.
6. The level of decentralisation within the organisation and possibilities of furthering it.
7. Linkages with the local governments and scope for enhancing it.
8. Interface with public particularly with reference to services rendered, common grievances and the procedures for redressal of grievances.
9. Problems of lethargy, corruption, indiscipline, flouting of instructions, breakdown of systems, etc.

10. Staff matters—
 - recruitment
 - placement and promotion
 - transfers and postings
 - disciplinary matters
 - rewards and punishments
 - standards of performance and measuring of performance
 - human relations
 - training.
11. Maintenance of assets of the organisation.
12. Conduct of litigation.
13. Initiatives taken for reforms and innovations introduced.
14. Office modernisation, achievement so far and possibilities.
15. Introduction of modern management practice, achievement so far and possibilities.
16. Information management
 - management information system (MIS)
 - access of information to various levels of staff
 - access of information to public
 - records management
17. Performance indicators and standards of service for the organisation and individual staff members.
18. Dealing with other organisations, both formal and informal.
19. Legislative changes required.
20. Good practices prevalent in other states or even other countries which can be adapted.
21. Specific areas which the ARC should concentrate on.

The list is illustrative and not exhaustive. While analysing each of these points the historical background has to be presented and then the current situation analysed with suggestions for reform. It is not necessary to give reports on all the points at the same time. The most important problem areas may be identified first and interim reports presented on each such area. While preparing the reports, special emphasis must be given to simplification and rationalisation of procedures and systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Also there should be suggestions to make the system and procedures user-friendly and making the entire functioning people-friendly. While making recommendations a series of options can be given outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each.

APPENDIX II

Enquiry Counter

1. Enquiry counters shall be set up in the Secretariat, Offices of the Heads of Departments, Collectrates, Offices of the Corporations and major Municipalities. In the Secretariat, the counter shall be under the control of the Secretary in charge of Personnel & Administrative Reforms. He shall function under the guidance of the Chief Secretary or an officer not below the rank of Additional Chief Secretary nominated by the Chief Secretary for the purpose.
2. In the offices of the Heads of Departments it shall be under the control of the Head of Department.
3. In City Corporations and major Municipalities, it shall be under the control of the Secretary of the Corporation/Municipality.
4. In all these offices, it shall be located in a conspicuous place near the entrance of the office. In the Secretariat, it shall be outside the security limits and accessible to the public throughout office hours.
5. The Enquiry Counter is to function mainly as an interface with the visiting public to give information on and to answer queries regarding petitions given by them.
6. The staff required to man the Enquiry Counters shall be drafted from the respective offices. Those who are willing to do the work and are found suitable will be preferred for posting.
7. In the Secretariat there shall be three windows with permanently assigned serial numbers. Each of them shall be manned by an Under Secretary. One Section Officer for all the counters taken together will also

be posted. The Section Officer shall man the counters by rotation so that the Under Secretary in charge of each of the windows gets some time to visit the Sections/Officers of the various Departments so that information can be collected in person.

8. In the offices of the Heads of Departments there shall be one counter manned by a Deputy Director/Administrative Assistant/Senior Superintendent and assisted by a Peon.

9. In the Collectorate there shall be one counter manned by an Officer of the rank of Junior Superintendent assisted by a Peon.

10. In the Corporation/Municipality the level of the officer to man the counter shall be decided by them. It shall be ensured that the person has a thorough knowledge of the functions of the office and is capable of gathering information and to provide it to the visitor.

11. The Enquiry Counter shall be provided with computers to record the enquiries, other relevant details and to facilitate periodic monitoring of the stages of action on the petitions received and processed. The most important function of the counter is to respond to enquiries. If the enquiring person physically visits the Counter, the details shall be obtained in the format annexed as Appendix IV.

12. The enquiry shall be serially numbered in the computer and a slip containing the number and subject will be supplied to the visitor in the format annexed as Appendix II. On his subsequent visits to enquire regarding the same matter the visitor shall bring this slip for reference.

13. Once an enquiry is numbered in the computer it shall be closed only when the issue is finally decided and closed by the concerned Section of the Administrative Department.

14. Wherever a matter is not to be processed in that office, the visitor shall be politely told so and the appropriate officer to be contacted has to be intimated to him.

15. Enquiry Counter is not a paper processing area of the Office. So only the information available in the files of the respective office or the stage of action on that file alone need be made available to the visitor.

16. The Officer in charge of the counter shall gather information from the respective sections either over the phone or by visiting the section and perusing the concerned file. The entire office shall be liable to show their files to the designated officer except where it relates to a vigilance case, purchases or any other guarded information.

17. Enquiries shall be entertained only in respect of petitions, Representations or issues that are pending on the office or more than THREE MONTHS or after the indicated due date or specified period of time, on the date of enquiry. The enquiry counter need not render itself a file processing section parallel to the one that is having the subject as their allotted work. What really is intended is to inform the visitor regarding the stage of action on a long pending issue and to follow it up till disposal.

18. When a person makes an enquiry by post or through telephone, the officer in charge of the Enquiry Counter shall record the details in the proforma laid down at Appendix V. The enquiry number to be quoted while further enquiries are made will be intimated over phone or through post, as the case may be.

19. When a serial number is allotted to an enquiry, the officer in charge of the Counter shall try to gather the information from the respective section at the earliest and pass it on to the visitor.

20. In case the matter enquired into has to be located and verified, the enquiries received till a cut off time on every working day shall be replied to across the counter in the after noon. In any case, every visitor should be told as to when he could come back to the counter to get the required information or contact over phone.

21. All the departments/sections are bound to supply information to the officer in charge of the counter.

22. When the issue enquired about is kept pending for want of additional information from the petitioner, the fact may be intimated to the visitor. Materials or documents if any made available have to be entrusted to the Office Section/Tappal Section for its numbering and distribution to the concerned section.

23. The Enquiry Counter shall not add any paper or document to the file, which is given to them for perusal. They shall not hand over the file to any other officer or Minister and only return it to the given. They will not handle any file. They will collect information and give it to the petitioner.

24. When files are under circulation to the Chief Secretary, Ministers, and Chief Minister or pending before the council of Ministers, the Counter staff cannot obtain the file for reference. Moreover, the normal movement of a file should not be adversely affected by the intervention of the enquiry.

25. The enquiry shall be limited to issues affecting the person, group of people etc. General matters like the financial position of the State, Law and Order, Taxation etc. shall not be entertained as enquiries.

26. When the enquiry is made by MLA/MP, the instructions relating to the interaction with them have to be kept in mind and observed.

27. Non-supply of relevant information by any section or officer shall be brought to the immediate notice of the Chief Secretary or the Additional Chief Secretary by the Secretary in charge of the Department of Personnel and Administration. Such lapses that affect the credibility of the machinery of Government would be viewed seriously.

28. The enquiry Counter is only to facilitate the providing of information in response to enquiries to the visitor. The Sections and officers charged with the processing of papers should ensure that instructions relating to processing of papers are observed properly and any assurance given through the counter are also accomplished.

APPENDIX III

Grievance Redressal Programme

1. It is observed that at the local level there are numerous individual complaints that are registered with the police and revenue authorities including matters related to possession, common access, trespass, public nuisance and boundary disputes. Obviously mere file processing cannot ensure mitigation of such disputes. Eventhough dispute settlement is attempted at the station house officer's level, often the issues get prolonged due to many reasons. Such issues could lead to law and order problems or end up at the civil court where they simmer leading to personal animosity and resentment. An inbuilt preventive system where conciliation of such types of disputes can be attempted is proposed below on the basis of its effectiveness tested out in the field.

2. On a bi-monthly basis the District Collector and the District Superintendent of Police may hold a joint conciliation programme, preferably in Taluk headquarters, by rotation.

3. The programme is to be conducted in a public space in a business like manner without any ceremony.

4. The programme may be conducted on a specified day, say, first Saturday of the month. The Circle Inspector of Police and the Tahsildar will be the joint convenors of the programme.

5. All the pending disputes in the Taluk Offices, RDO's offices, village offices and the police stations which are amenable to settlement through conciliation may be identified and copies of the original complaints may be forwarded to the police stations as well as the Taluk Office concerned.

6. Fresh application may be invited to be given sixty days in advance, through press releases, notice in public places and intimation to elected representatives.

7. The local bodies may obtain two copies. They may be processed as indicated above and given to both the Taluk Office and Police Station.

8. If complaints on departmental matters are received, they may be returned with a covering letter.

9. The joint convenors shall ensure that the complaints are compiled and distributed among the police stations and the Village Offices one-month before the date of the programme.

10. The Station house officers as well as the Revenue Officers (revenue inspectors or the village officers) shall conduct an enquiry and prepare a report indicating specific suggestions for the mitigation of disputes.

11. The complainant as well as the other parties that are required for attempting conciliation should be requested to be physically present on the day of the programme.

12. The two reports received from the police and the revenue shall be made available to the officers during the programme.

13. In the programme all officers of the level of SHO and above in the police department and village officers and above of the revenue department shall be present.

14. Three separate counters shall be set up. The Tahsildar and the Circle Inspector shall man the first counter, RDO and the Deputy Superintendent of Police shall man the second counter and the Collector and SP shall form the final decision making counter.

15. Attempt will be made to effect conciliation at the first two counters. The parties will be briefed about the need to reach a settlement, implications and delay likely in case a settlement, is not reached and the enforceability of the conciliation.

16. Once conciliation is reached, the Village Officer/Sub Inspector shall have a conciliation agreement drafted, which will be signed by all concerned in the presence of the Collector and the SP.

17. If conciliation cannot be reached in the first two counters the Collector and the SP shall attempt a settlement by talking to the parties separately.

18. A copy of the conciliation agreement shall be maintained in the concerned police station and any future disputes arising shall be sorted out by the Joint Convenors.

19. A progress report on the number of cases registered and actually settled shall be sent to the DGP and Secretary (Revenue). A copy of the same shall also be sent to the Offices of the Chief Minister, and Ministers in charge of Home and Revenue.

20. In the progress report, the Collector and the SP may specifically indicate the effectiveness of the role played by the joint convenors.

21. While reviewing the ACRs of the Collector and SP, the progress made in the effective conduct of the programme may be made one parameter, without getting the format of ACRs changed.

22. Similarly while preparing the ACRs of the Tahsildar and Circle Inspector, their contribution in the effective conduct of the programme may be made one parameter.

23. In case the district has similar long pending issues related to Excise Department, the Assistant Excise Commissioner may also be involved. The procedure mentioned above would apply in their case as well.

APPENDIX IV

1. Name of the Visitor/Petitioner
2. Address and Tel. No.
3. Matter in brief
4. Ref. No., if any
 - (i) Outside No.
 - (ii) Same office No.
 - (iii)

For office use

Enquiry No.

Date:

Time:

Remarks:

APPENDIX V

1. Enquiry Number:

Window No:

2. Date:

Subject in brief:

Enquiry Officer.

NB:—Kindly bring this card or quote this number while making future enquiries.
