

5.2 Enhancing Grievance Redressal Performance in CCA Units: A Proposal for Responsive Governance

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Abstract

To facilitate a responsive and citizen centric grievance mechanism and as part of the Government of India's vision to improve ease of living, it is essential to have a robust grievance redressal system as it is a direct reflection of the Government's commitment to transparency, responsiveness, and citizen welfare. Taking insights from the practical experiences from the North East (NE) Circle, this paper proposes two key interventions for further strengthening the grievance redressal mechanism: elevated disposal level for postal grievance portal appeals and implementation of speaking order format. This paper also includes a suggested sample template for a speaking order. In conclusion, the paper highlights areas where deeper exploration is required.

Keywords

Grievance Redressal, Postal Grievance, Speaking Order, Elevated Disposal Level, Responsive Governance.

Introduction

Grievance redressal is not just an administrative responsibility — it is a direct reflection of the government's commitment to transparency, responsiveness, and citizen welfare. Drawing upon personal experiences from my tenure in the NE-2 Circle, Dimapur, and inspired by the larger vision of the Department of Telecommunications, this article proposes two key interventions to further strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms across the CCA units.

Effective grievance redressal stands as a critical pillar of good governance, serving as a catalyst for overall improvement in the service quality. Considering the increasing number of pensioner grievances being handled by the 28 CCA units in the country, it is imperative to adopt measures that reinforce our commitment to prompt, fair, and transparent grievance handling.

In the year 2022-23, CCA Units handled **860** Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) (hereinafter referred to as "PG Portal")

grievance. As more and more pensioners have been migrated to the SAMPANN platform, and the *direct* disbursement of pension is effected to them, bypassing the traditional middle-agencies of banks/post offices, the number of grievances to be handled by CCA units, especially related to disbursement, are bound to increase. It is because the grievances, which were previously directed towards banks/post offices, shall now be raised with CCAs. No surprise that the figure (number of PG Portal Grievances) increased to 1700 in 2023-24 and has further risen to 3950 during the year 2024- 25.

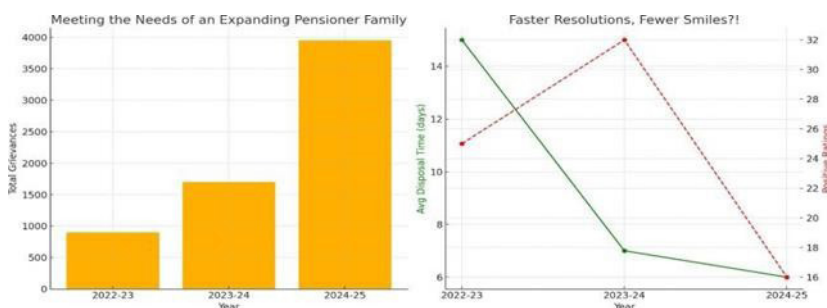


Fig-1 Trend since 2022-23

During the period, CCAs have successfully kept the average disposal time of grievances quite low. In fact, there has been a significant reduction in the average disposal time from 15 days to 6 days. While this is a matter of pride and holds a convincing testimony to our commitment towards the welfare of the pensioners, it is equally important to ensure that we maintain the quality of our grievance disposal, and also benefit from the feedback received from the aggrieved pensioners. It is said that feedback opens the door to a dialogue and is the foundation upon which trust and improvement are built. Data related to the number of disposals receiving positive ratings (good or above) from the aggrieved pensioners, suggest that ‘quality of disposal’ is where we may have some sincere work to do.

Proposed Administrative Interventions

With this objective, I propose two administrative interventions which align with the Government of India’s priority on enhancing ease of living and also foster a more robust grievance redressal process across the CCA units.

1. Elevated Disposal Level for PG Portal Appeals

To strengthen the objectivity and effectiveness of grievance resolution, we may work towards ensuring that appeals submitted via the Public Grievance (PG) Portal are reviewed and disposed of by an authority at least one level above the initial

grievance- handling authority.

This additional level of oversight will enhance accountability and instill greater confidence in the grievance redressal mechanism. Disposal of appeals at higher level would inspire more sincerity in the initial disposals as well.

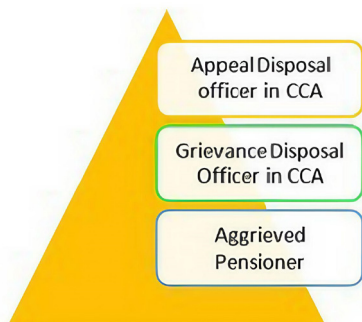


Fig-2 Appeal Disposal at Higher Level

2. Implementation of a Speaking Order Format

We may prescribe a “Speaking Order” format for the initial grievance disposal as well as for appeal disposals. A comprehensive detailed response format will ensure that each grievance is addressed comprehensively, providing the complainant with a clear and resolution that outlines the basis for the decision. This approach will contribute significantly to transparency and the perception of fairness in grievance handling.



Fig-3 Ingredients of a Speaking Order

I have attempted to draft a sample Speaking Order¹-

Sir/Madam,

This letter is in reference to your grievance registered on [Date] via the PG Portal with reference number [Grievance Reference Number], regarding [Brief Summary of the Grievance]. We value your concerns and have reviewed your grievance promptly and thoroughly, and we have conducted a detailed review of your case.

- 1. Grievance Summary-** [Provide a concise but complete description of the

grievance as raised by the aggrieved party.]

2. **Applicable Rules and Regulations-** [Introduce specific rules, policies, or circulars that are relevant to the grievance and will guide the decision-making process.]
3. **Reasoning and Analysis-** [Explain the thought process and rationale for addressing this grievance. Outline the steps taken to review the grievance and how the applicable rules have been interpreted in this case.]
4. **Root Cause Identification-** [Identify any underlying causes that contributed to the issue, if identifiable. This may include process gaps, documentation issues, etc.]
5. **Final Decision-** [Clearly state the decision or action taken. If any corrective actions are being implemented, specify them here.]
6. **Information on Appellate Rights-** If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you have the right to appeal through the PG Portal. Please submit your appeal along with the necessary details, referencing this decision. This appeal will be reviewed by an authority at a higher level to ensure fair reassessment.
7. **Feedback Invitation-** We value your feedback on this grievance disposal process. You are invited to provide your feedback through the feedback utility available on the PG Portal. Your input is essential for improving our services, and grievance handling mechanisms.

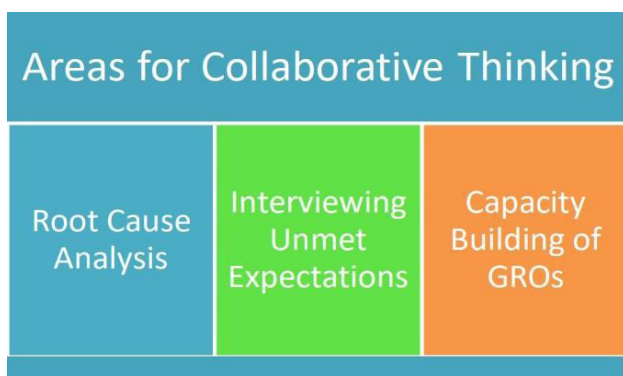
Thank you for your patience and for giving us the opportunity to address your concerns.

Sincerely,
[Name of Grievance Officer]
[Designation]
[Office Contact Information]

^[1]The headings and the content in the Sample are for suggestion purpose. The idea is to highlight the critical ingredients of a Speaking Order and to propose what exactly a particular ingredient would expect from the Redressal Officer

Conclusion

Both interventions resonate with the core objective of facilitating a responsive and citizen-centric grievance mechanism, directly contributing to the Government's vision for ease of living. They may bring measurable improvements in our grievance redressal performance. In conclusion, I invite thoughts and feedback on three areas that merit deeper exploration: first, the gap between quick grievance disposal and modest feedback ratings—what does this signal about actual satisfaction levels? Second, the need for systematic root cause analysis to address recurring grievance types proactively. And third, the readiness of our grievance officers to take on enhanced responsibilities—what capacity building or support structures would best enable them? Insights on these aspects would enhance efforts to build a responsive, citizen focused grievance system.



Author's Profile

Shri Harshvardhan Singh Khangarot is a Director in the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India, currently serving in the SEA & Training Finance division. An officer of the Indian Post & Telecommunications Accounts and Finance Service (2012 batch), he holds a Master's degree in Development Studies and a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Political Science. He has over 12 years of experience in public finance and administration, including telecom field assignments in North East-II Circle (Nagaland) and Madhya Pradesh Circle (Bhopal). He actively pursues continuous learning through the iGOT platform.