



FOUNDATION *for* RESTORATION of NATIONAL VALUES

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।
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NEWSLETTER

November 2017

Grievance Redressal

Queries, Requests & Concerns
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Transparency and Public Grievance Redressal

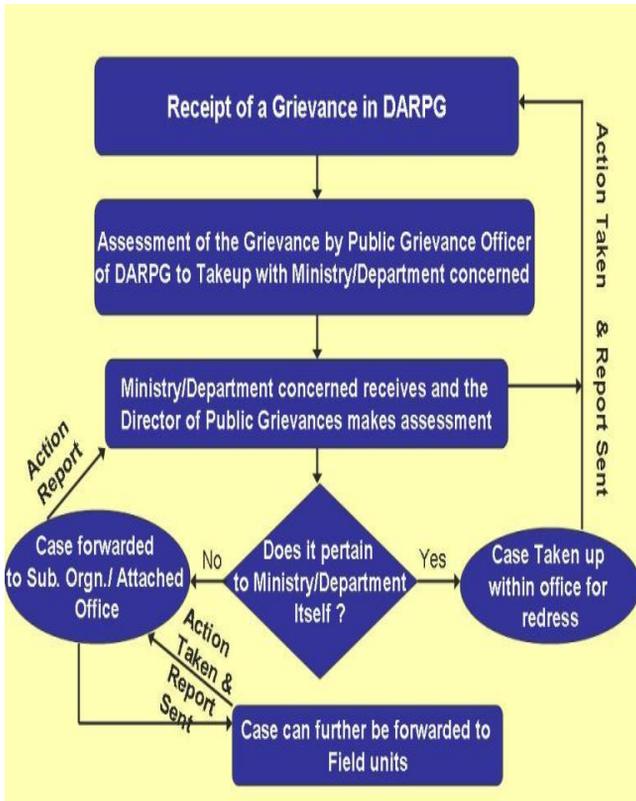
– By V Shankar Srinivasan, Friend, FRNV

In too many countries, people are deprived of their most basic needs and go to bed hungry every night because of corruption, while the powerful and corrupt enjoy lavish lifestyles with impunity.” – José Ugaz, Chair of Transparency International

It is commonly recognized that corruption which has become a universal phenomenon, unless kept in check, can undermine the finest of systems. It eats into the very vitals of the civil society and directly vitiates the relationship between the citizen and the state, which in modern times must conform to the status of a welfare state. However, the common man feels that there is lack of political accountability – its criminalization and ‘compulsions’ of coalition politics, and systemic weaknesses in corruption/grievance redressal machinery are the most important reasons for continuing corruption in the country. Further, it is also perceived monstrous greed as a result of monstrous greed of by corrupt politicians and a weak, apathetic and unaccountable government machinery – All these elements reinforce each other and contribute to corruption in the country. The existing anti-corruption institutions are also not very effective as they are under the control of the politicians lacking real teeth and powers and not having the strength of officers with impeccable integrity. Besides these institutions face problems with regard to paucity of staff and non-filling up of the vacancies etc. – Transparency international India.

In medieval India, Kings used to visit the cities at night incognito to ascertain how people fared, what they thought of the King and Government and whether they had any grievances. A good King always respected the wishes of the populace and made changes to existing laws or brought in new laws. In present day democracy, the people’s will is to be exercised through its elected representatives in various public forums viz. municipal corporations, state assemblies and the parliament. Many elected representatives do not care for the aspirations of their constituencies since they have to return for re election only after a period of five years. There is no system of mid-term appraisal of the elected representative and no provision for recall, in case he does not represent the views of the constituency. In these circumstances, there arise public grievances, which, if not attended to promptly or satisfactorily, result in strikes, hartals, non-cooperation and unhappy citizens. Their only recourse is to defeat the offending representative at the polls, when they are held. Here also, muscle and money power prevent the legitimate use of the ballot. How to overcome this? May be funding of election expenditure by the State could reduce the power of money? May be provision for recall of the elected representative after a mid term review of his performance would deliver responsive administration?

All readers would be aware of some form of corruption / harassment that they have witnessed or been a target of. Wouldn’t it be a great feeling of joy if the common man can hit back at such people ostensibly in positions of authority for making a common man’s day to day life a nightmare? Keeping in mind this very idealistic idea, the posts of the CVC and CAG have been created and more recently a LokPal is also being created to combat higher level corruption at the level of very senior functionaries including ministers in government. How far have CVC and CAG been successful in combating corruption is a moot question. The LokPal has yet to come into existence thanks to differences of opinion on his mode of



Grievance Redress Flow Chart

appointment. The challenge is to ensure that these institutions remain independent of government control yet with restraints that ensure that they do not exceed their powers.

The system of vigilance in government cannot be such that the bureaucracy is scared to take decisions because some vigilance officer blessed with the power of hindsight can then destroy his career by imputing intention to mistakes. After 10 years when the impact of any decision can be ascertained and quantified, blessed with such hindsight one shudders to think what will happen to the official who was instrumental in taking the decision. In case it was a political person he will get his just desserts at the hustings. Good impact – more votes, bad impact – thrown out of power. But if the fear of vigilance were to pervade bureaucracy, it would stifle initiative and result in delayed action, thereby bringing a bad name to the government. One way would be to associate vigilance departments at the time of taking decisions, but there may be practical difficulties in adopting this procedure.

The criminal justice system has also to be reformed if there is to be speedy and effective grievance redressal. Courts must be able to enforce their decisions. This sounds like a paradox but it has been found that in the Prakash Singh and Ors. v. Union of

India and Ors. AIR 2006 SCC 1 case, the Supreme court ordered the setting up of state and district level Police complaint authorities, But till date less than 12 states have passed legislation and none of them fixed any accountability. These are no better than the various ombudsmen for banking, insurance etc where a complainant can expect, at the most, is a slap on the wrist of the offending company.

The method adopted by the present Prime Minister for cutting red tape and ensuring transparency is very laudable (self attestation, etc) But as long as accountability is not fixed, where, for delay or harassment by the government officer of a citizen, the officer stands to lose his job – no real reform will happen.

Some other measures that could ensure transparency, eliminate corruption etc. are as follows:

1. *Dematerialization of land records.*
2. *Compulsory trading of properties through an exchange to be set up for this purpose.*
3. *Model "landlord – tenant" agreements – to eliminate legal disputes – also to be recorded in this exchange.*
4. *Asset mortgages to be noted through this exchange.*
5. *Property taxes etc to be paid through the exchange.*
6. *Registration fees on sale etc to be settled through this exchange.*
7. *Company mortgages for credit facilities to be done through the exchange etc.*

The problem of Income tax treating guideline value as sale value and “assuming” black money where the said guidelines are above market realities will vanish as this exchange is a normal anonymous order driven one which precludes collusion.

Regulators like RBI, IRDA etc should get more proactive. They should act for the public whose interests should be protected first. Like the Income Tax Department, communications should be through email only. Attitudinal changes in officials consequent on changes in work procedure are necessary.

Lastly, in a country where millions are without a job, a law should be made that all strikes for wage increase are to be treated as a letter of resignation-the logic being that if the worker thinks he is worth more for the work done by him, then he is free to go and join a company that will pay him more.

NEWS AND EVENTS

□ Teachers' workshop on 27/10/17 at DUSC Secondary School was organized. Prof. Daya Pant, Retd. Professor, NCERT took the sessions on Values-based Education with school teachers of DUSC Secondary School, Maurice Nagar. She discussed about various subjects and helped teachers to identify values from curriculum. She asked the teachers to design a classroom-based activity to promote the identified value among the students.



□ On October 30 and 31, 2017, Dr. Seema Pawar conducted the Teachers' Workshops at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Malviya Nagar and Raja Ram Mohan Roy Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Hauz Rani respectively. In both the workshops, Dr. Pawar helped the teachers to identify values from their teaching curriculum and develop a two-minute classroom based activity to promote these values.



□ Dr. Seema Pawar also took the two separate sessions with students of class IX on Peace. The main objective of this activity was to help the students to develop the skills (and attitudes) necessary to be proactive and effective peacemakers. These skills can be summarized under three heads: thinking skills, communication skills, and personal skills. In these two sessions, Dr. Pawar discussed about the communication skills like presentation skills, listening skills, negotiation skills and non-verbal communication, i.e., body language.



Dear Readers,

FRNV invites stories from its readers on deep-rooted values that have helped us in our everyday lives. Some of these stories will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter. So put your thinking caps on, recall the values integral to your life which you cherish and write to us at shilpi@valuefoundation.in.