



Policy on Public Grievance Redressal 2020

Government of Punjab

Department of Governance Reforms and Public Grievances

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I. Introduction

The public grievance redressal mechanism may be understood as the process that enables citizens of any to voice their dissatisfaction with the delivery of public services, schemes, policies or programmes. It gives citizens a formal platform upon which their voices are heard by the government administration and accountability is brought into the system. At the same time, this mechanism helps the administration understand their citizens' problems better and gives them an opportunity to address these problems in a transparent and effective manner and make policy decisions. Therefore, the Government of Punjab is formulating this "Public Grievance Redressal Policy - 2020" (hereinafter referred to as "the Policy").

In this regard, the Department of Governance Reforms and Public Grievances (DGR&PG), Government of Punjab has built a Punjab Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) which will act as a single and standardized platform to address public grievances. With the aim of reaching a wider audience and to ease the public grievance redressal mechanism, the Government of Punjab had previously adopted the PBGrams portal in April 2013, developed by the National Informatics Centre. However, it was realised that substantial architecture, technological, and administrative changes were required to be made for more sophisticated use of PBGrams. Additionally, complaints were not being disposed of in a time bound, transparent, and accountable manner. It was therefore decided to build a new application and administrative structure to optimize grievance redressal in the state.

The DGR&PG is also working to establish an architecture where the legacy data of PGRS could be analysed with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help identify duplicate, dubious or bogus grievances such that the Government can spend time and effort towards genuine concerns of its citizens. The department is working towards tools for comprehensive data analysis of the collected and legacy data to prepare a data visual based on geography, nature of grievances and socio-economic indicators of the population. This aggregate data, represented through different variables, will better inform the state to make crucial policy decisions.

Hence, the state envisions that, with the help of this Policy, it will be able to create a multi-stakeholder ecosystem of efficient, accountable and transparent governance.

II. Objective of the Policy

The objective of this policy is to provide an accessible, transparent, robust, effective and time bound public grievance redressal system for individuals in Punjab. For this purpose, a comprehensive Grievance Redressal Policy with detailed roles and responsibilities of every actor, defined timeframes, and processes is being established.

This policy intends to use Information Technology (IT) as an important tool to make the public grievance redressal ecosystem equitable, de-centralised, transparent, accountable, inclusive, and accessible to all individuals.

III. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, unless the context otherwise requires:-

- a) **“Applicant”** means any individual who submits an application under this policy.
- b) **“Assistant Commissioner (Grievances)”** means the district Assistant Commissioner (Grievances) cum Member Secretary of the District Grievance Redressal Committee re-constituted in accordance with the DGR&PG Notification no. 1/1/17-3सि.नि./168 dated 24th April 2017
- c) **“Department District Nodal Officer”** means an officer appointed at the district level by the concerned department for redressal of grievances received by the department.
- d) **“Department Field Officer”** means an officer designated at the field level (e.g. sub-division, block) by the concerned department for redressal of grievances received by the department.
- e) **“Department State Nodal Officer”** means an officer appointed at the state level by the concerned department for redressal of grievances received by the department.
- f) **“District Grievance Redressal Committee”** means the Committee re-constituted in accordance with the DGR&PG Notification no. 1/1/17-3सि.नि./168 dated 24th April 2017
- g) **“Escalation”** includes voluntary as well as system-generated transfer of a grievance to a higher authority, as per the process defined in this policy, when an applicant is dissatisfied with a redressal.
- h) **“Grievance”** means any application made by an individual seeking any benefit or relief relating to any schemes, policies, programmes, delivery of goods or services offered by the state government, in respect of failure or delay in providing such benefit or relief, or in respect of violation of any law, scheme, order, policy, programme or service in force in the state by a public authority; but, does not include matters sub-judice in a court of law or in which any Court or Tribunal has jurisdiction, or personal and family disputes, or matters under the Right to Information Act 2005

- i) **“Interface”** means the medium through which a grievance is received from the applicant and includes mobile app, Sewa Kendras, web portal, and Call Centres notified by DGR&PG.
- j) **“Punjab Grievance Redressal System (PGRS)”** means the web portal and mobile application developed by DGR&PG as a system for registration, processing and management of grievances.
- k) **“Redressal”** means resolution of a grievance by the concerned authority accompanied with a reasoned response to the applicant.

IV. The process for grievance redressal

a) Interfaces for intake of public grievances into PGRS

- i. Online web portal
- ii. In person at Sewa Kendra (Sewa Kendra operator to upload details to PGRS)
- iii. Mobile app
- iv. Call Centre

For **grievances received via interfaces other than the above**, such as post, email, texts, etc., they should be scanned and uploaded to the portal for redressal in the following manner, as per the type/category of the recipient:

- i. Recipient: CM Office/ CS Office

A copy of the received grievance should be sent to the DGR&PG at grievances.pb@punjab.gov.in within 2 working days from the date of its receipt. DGR&PG shall then upload the grievance to PGRS for further action and redressal as per this policy. At this time, a SMS/email notification shall also be sent to the applicant with the tracking number of the grievance and its current status. A SMS/email notification shall also be shared with the applicant to put in all future grievances to PGRS via any of the four mentioned interfaces under IV (a)

- ii. Recipient: DC Office

The received grievance should be forwarded to the Assistant Commissioner (Grievances) for uploading to PGRS within 2 working days from the date of its receipt for further action and redressal as per this policy. At this time, a SMS/email notification shall also be sent to the applicant with the tracking number of the grievance and its current status. A SMS/email notification shall also be shared with the applicant to put in all future grievances to PGRS via any of the four mentioned interfaces under IV (a)

iii. Recipient: Department Office

The received grievance should be uploaded to PGRS by the Department within 2 working days from the date of its receipt for further action and redressal as per this policy. Upon successful upload, a notification shall be sent to the applicant via SMS/ email with the tracking number of the grievance and its current status. A SMS/email notification shall also be shared with the applicant to put in all future grievances to PGRS via any of the four mentioned interfaces under IV (a)

b)PGRS shall provide for classification of the applicant into 2 categories at the time of registration

- i. Individual citizens
- ii. Companies registered under the Indian Companies Act 2013/ Partnerships registered under the Indian Partnership Act 1932/ Trusts registered under the Indian Trusts Act 1882/ Societies registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860/ Any other establishment/ body corporate registered under any other law for the time being in force in India.

Both the categories shall follow the same workflow as has been defined under this policy. This categorisation shall help PGRS map the grievance to the appropriate department for redressal.

c)PGRS shall provide for classification grievances into 2 categories at the time of registration of the grievance

- i. Category 1 - grievances that require State Level redressal
- ii. Category 2 - grievances that require District Level redressal

d) Category 1 - Regarding grievances that require State Level redressal :

- i. Upon receipt of the grievance for State Level redressal, PGRS marks it to the concerned Department State Nodal Officer (DSNO).
- ii. The DSNO is required to take action on the grievance within 7 working days from the date of its receipt. She/he may
 1. Redress the grievance and mark it as closed
 2. Transfer the grievance to her/ his counterpart in another department if the grievance received pertains to another department.
 3. The DSNO, as per her/ his judgement, may transfer the grievance to the relevant Department District Nodal Officer (DDNO) for further action and resolution. DDNO to proceed as per the process laid down here under at IV(d)
- iii. If the grievance is redressed,
 1. The applicant shall be informed of the redressal via the same interface that had been taken for registration of the grievance
 2. The applicant shall receive a call from an automated system (as explained under IV(k)) within 2 working days from the date of redressal.
This call shall ask the applicant if she/he is satisfied with the redressal provided.
If the applicant is not satisfied and wishes to reopen the grievance, the system marks the grievance as reopened by the applicant.

e)Category 2 - Regarding grievances that require District Level redressal :

- ii. Upon receipt of the grievance for District Level redressal, PGRS marks it to the concerned DDNO.
- iii. The DDNO is required to take appropriate action upon the grievance within 7 working days from the date of its receipt. She/ he may

1. Redress the grievance and mark it as closed.
 2. Transfer the grievance to her/ his counterpart in another department if the grievance received pertains to another department.
 3. If required, as per her/his judgement, the DDNO can transfer it to the relevant Department Field Officer (DFO) for further action and redressal.
 4. The DDNO, as per her/ his judgement, may transfer the grievance to the relevant DSNO for further action and resolution.
DSNO to proceed as per the process laid down here under at IV(d)
- iv. The DFO has 15 working days to take action and redress the grievance.
- v. If the grievance is redressed,
1. The applicant shall be informed of the redressal via the same interface that had been taken for registration of the grievance
 2. The applicant shall receive a call from an automated system (as explained under IV(k)) within 2 working days from the date of redressal.
This call shall ask the applicant if she/he is satisfied with the redressal provided.
 3. If the applicant is not satisfied and wishes to reopen the grievance, the system marks the grievance as reopened by the applicant.

f)First escalation of grievances at State Level:

- i. When the applicant is not satisfied with the redressal provided by the DSNO under IV(d) (Category 1) and reopens the grievance on the automated call received by her/ him, the system sends it to the Head of the Department (HOD).

- ii. The HOD is required to take appropriate action upon the grievance within 15 working days from the date of receipt of the reopened grievance. She/ he may
 - 1. Redress the grievance and mark it as closed.
 - 2. The HOD, as per her/his judgment, may voluntarily escalate the grievance to the Department Administrative Secretary if she/ he feels that the grievance cannot be redressed at her/ his level.
- iii. The Administrative Secretary is required to redress the grievance within 15 working days from the date of its receipt from the HOD.
- iv. When the grievance is redressed,
 - 1. The applicant shall be informed of the redressal via the same interface that had been taken for registration of the grievance.
 - 2. The applicant shall receive a call from an automated system (as explained under IV(K)) within 2 working days from the date of redressal.
This call shall ask the applicant if she/he is satisfied with the redressal provided.
 - 3. If the applicant is not satisfied and wishes to reopen the grievance, the system marks the grievance as reopened by the applicant.

g) First escalation of grievances at District Level:

- i. When the applicant is not satisfied with the redressal provided by the DDNO or DFO under IV(e) (Category 2) and reopens the grievance on the automated call received by her/ him, the system sends it to the Assistant Commissioner (Grievances) (AC (Gr.)).
- ii. The AC(Gr.) is required to take appropriate action upon the grievance within 7 working days from the date of receipt of the reopened grievance. She/ he may
 - 1. Redress the grievance and mark it as closed.

2. The AC(Gr.), as per her/his judgment, may voluntarily escalate the grievance to the DSNO if she/ he feels that the grievance cannot be redressed at her/ his level.
- iii. The DSNO is required to redress the grievance within 15 working days from the date of its receipt from the AC(Gr.).
- iv. When the grievance is redressed,
 1. The applicant shall be informed of the redressal via the same interface that had been taken for registration of the grievance
 2. The applicant shall receive a call from an automated system (as explained under IV(k)) within 2 working days from the date of redressal.
This call shall ask the applicant if she/he is satisfied with the redressal provided.
 3. If the applicant is not satisfied and wishes to reopen the grievance, the system marks the grievance as reopened by the applicant.

h) Second escalation of grievances at State Level:

- i. When the applicant is not satisfied with the redressal provided after the first escalation under IV(f) (Category 1) and reopens the grievance on the automated call received by her/ him, the system
 1. Sends it to the Department Administrative Secretary, if it was redressed by the HOD in the previous escalation.
 2. Sends it to the Cabinet Minister, if it was redressed by the Administrative Secretary in the previous escalation.
- ii. If the grievance has been sent to the Department Administrative Secretary, she/he is required to take appropriate action upon the grievance within 15 working days from the date of receipt of the reopened grievance. She/ he may
 1. Redress the grievance and mark it as closed. This decision shall be final.

2. The Department Administrative Secretary, as per her/his judgment, may voluntarily escalate it to the Cabinet Minister if she/ he feels that the grievance cannot be redressed at her/ his level
- iii. If the grievance has been sent to the Cabinet Minister, she/he is required to redress the grievance within 60 days from the date of its receipt.
The decision of the Cabinet Minister shall be final.
- iv. When the grievance is redressed,
 1. The applicant shall be informed of the redressal via the same interface that had been taken for registration of the grievance
 2. The applicant shall receive a call from an automated system (as explained under IV(k)) within 2 working days from the date of redressal.
This call shall ask the applicant if she/he is satisfied with the redressal provided.

i) Second escalation of grievances at District Level:

- i. When the applicant is not satisfied with the redressal provided after the first escalation under IV(g) (Category 2) and reopens the grievance on the automated call received by her/ him, the system sends it to the Deputy Commissioner (DC).
- ii. The DC is required to take appropriate action upon the grievance within 7 working days of its date of receipt. She/he may
 1. Redress the grievance and mark it as closed
 2. The DC, as per her/his judgment, may voluntarily escalate it to the District Grievance Redressal Committee (DGRC) if she/ he feels that the grievance cannot be redressed at her/ his level
The AC(Gr.) shall inform the applicant of the date and time of the DGRC's meeting for this purpose.

- iii. The DGRC is required to redress the grievance within 60 days from the date of its receipt from the DC. The decision of the DGRC shall be final.
- iv. When the grievance is redressed,
 - 1. The applicant shall be informed of the redressal via the same interface that had been taken for registration of the grievance
 - 2. The applicant shall receive a call from an automated system (as explained under IV(k)) within 2 working days from the date of redressal.
This call shall ask the applicant if she/he is satisfied with the redressal provided.

j)Regarding grievances that require longer term resolution/ inquiry:

For all such grievances, as per the judgement of the concerned authority, the authority shall mark the grievance as requiring a longer term resolution than as prescribed under this policy and initiate a response to the applicant. This response should contain information on the status of the grievance and reason(s) for longer term resolution.

k) Process for feedback collection from the applicant:

i. Automated call system:

The DGR&PG shall put into place an automated call system as a part of PGRS.

Every time a grievance is marked as redressed or requiring a longer term resolution (as under IV(j)) on PGRS, this automated system shall place a call to the applicant within 48 hours of the redressal.

This call shall aim to record the applicant's feedback including, but not limited to, the quality of redressal, and suggestions for improvement with respect to redressed grievances.

If the applicant records her/his response as unsatisfied with the redressal, she/he shall be given an option to escalate the grievance. If the applicant agrees, PGRS shall mark the grievance as escalated and send it forward as per the workflow described above.

ii. Call Centre:

The DGR&PG shall cause a call centre to be established for citizens to submit grievances.

For feedback, the operators from this call centre shall place calls to a sample of past and current applicants to understand the applicants' satisfaction from the redressal and its process under PGRS.

V. General Guidelines for Grievance Redressal

- a) If a grievance is sent via any channel other than the four interfaces defined for PGRS under IV (a) and the grievance is not accompanied by the applicant's name, address and phone number, the applicant shall be informed via the same channel to submit the grievance on PGRS with relevant details.
- b) Whenever a grievance is marked as redressed, the response to the applicant should contain a reasoned explanation of the taken decision.
- c) If any authority in the workflow does not act on the grievance within the specified period, the grievance shall be auto-escalated to the next authority in the hierarchy as specified under this policy.
- d) The applicant shall receive SMS notification at each step of the process on the current status of the grievance.
- e) Real-time monitoring through dashboard available to DC Office, Concerned Department, DGR&PG, CS office and CMO.
- f) Any authority in the workflow may flag a grievance as urgent if she/he feels it requires immediate intervention.
- g) The dashboard data shall be used by DGR&PG for analysis of the received grievances by department/ district/ subject such that it can be used for evidence-based policy making and decisions with a view to improving processes and efficiency within the government.
- h) Grievances that are currently sent to the Government of Punjab from the web portals of the central government shall be received by the PGRS portal.
- i) The timelines assigned to each level of authority in the workflow may be modified upon written request from the department with approval from the Chief Minister, Punjab.
- j) If a grievance is marked to the District-level for redressal by the State-Level:

- i. It shall follow the escalation workflow as defined for the District level grievances in case the applicant chooses to reopen and escalate the grievance upon redressal,
- k) If a grievance is marked to the State-level for redressal by the District-Level, it shall follow the escalation workflow as defined for the State level grievances in case the applicant chooses to reopen and escalate the grievance upon redressal.
- l) The system shall allow the actors in the workflow to link grievances received from multiple applicants pertaining to the same concern together. In such cases action on one grievance would automatically apply to other grievances linked together. The applicant shall be notified if her/his grievance is linked to others.
- m) The system shall allow the actors in the workflow to mark grievances as frivolous or inapplicable upon which the grievance shall be closed, and the applicant shall be notified. The applicant may then escalate the grievance as per the currently defined workflow.
- n) For Departments that have multiple Directorates/Branches, the Department may submit a written request to have multiple State Level Nodal Officers, as may be required.
- o) If a Department wishes to introduce an additional level of authority in the currently defined workflow, the same may be introduced for the Department upon receipt of written request with the approval from the Chief Minister, Punjab. However, the accountability and responsibility to resolve and escalate grievances shall adhere to the currently defined workflow.
- p) If a Department wishes to disallow an actor in the workflow from closing grievances, the Department may submit a request for the same with approval from the Chief Minister, Punjab.
- q) The Commissions established in the Government of Punjab shall not fall under the purview of this policy
- r) The State Universities and Boards under the Departments of the Government of Punjab shall be included as categories of grievances under the concerned department.

VI. Process Audit

With the aim to identify systemic deficiencies and areas of improvement within the new grievance redressal system under this policy and to aid the DGR&PG address these deficiencies and concerns:

- a. The DGR&PG may engage the services of a third-party for an independent audit and assessment of PGRS. Such a study may undertake independent surveys to evaluate citizen satisfaction, analyse and assess the processes, grievance flows, and tools under PGRS as well as engage with stakeholders of the system to assess its impact, effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility and transparency, in order to then recommend improvements to the system for better public service delivery.

VII. Dashboard and Analysis of Data collected for Further Action

The PGRS dashboard shall be created for effective real-time monitoring of grievances by all the actors in the workflow as well as by the respective DC office, concerned department, DGR&PG, CS office and CMO.

Alongside, the PGRS dashboard shall provide for a meaningful and comprehensive analysis of the information on incoming grievances and their redressal. This analysis may help the government departments in formulating more robust and impactful policy decisions and program designs. Such analysis may be used in the future to make changes to the PGRS itself, (for example, to add more levels of grievance redressal in addition to the District and State Levels currently defined.).

The data would be used in a manner that is cognizant of the security and privacy of citizens. Grievances would be deidentified for analysis and for any open data initiatives for public access. A report on the performance of the system, performance at each level of redressal and by geography shall be shared with the public on the DGR&PG website every month.

- a. The dashboard shall provide for access to view data by
 - i. Department
 - ii. Geographical data (e.g. District, Block, Municipality)
 - iii. Demographical data (e.g. Age profile of complainant)
 - iv. Subject of the grievance
 - v. Gender of the applicant
 - vi. Socio Economic background of the applicant (as applicable)
 - vii. Actors of the workflow
 - viii. Pendency of grievances
 - ix. Satisfaction amongst citizens
 - x. Others as may be required

The exact rules to govern this access shall be defined by the DGR&PG at the time of building the web portal/ mobile application and amended from time to time as necessary.

b. The dashboard shall allow all for viewing this data for correlation in the form of visual representations such as maps/ pie charts/ other visual formats.

c. The AC(Gr.) shall incorporate a review report on PGRS data in the agenda for the D.C.'s monthly review meeting.

d. The DC will furnish the district-level monthly review reports on PGRS data to the DGRC at each meeting for review and action.

e. The DGR&PG will meet with the Administrative Secretaries of all departments onboarded on PGRS to review performance on grievance resolution.

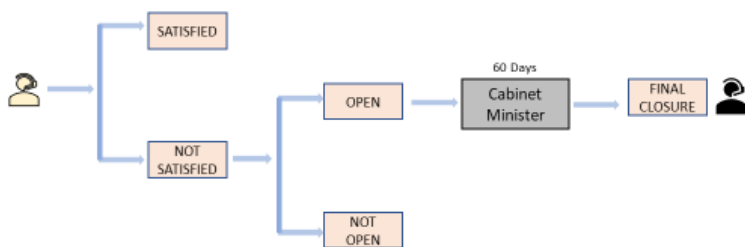
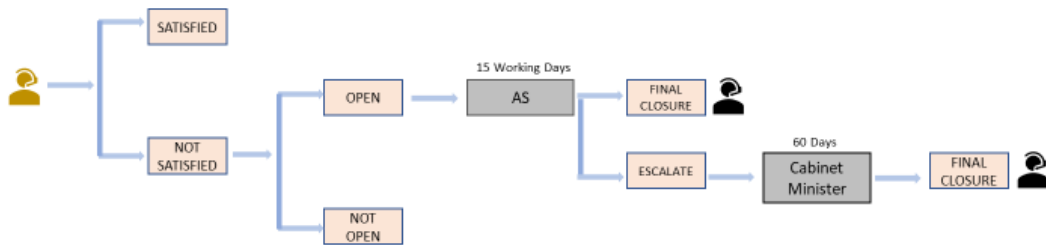
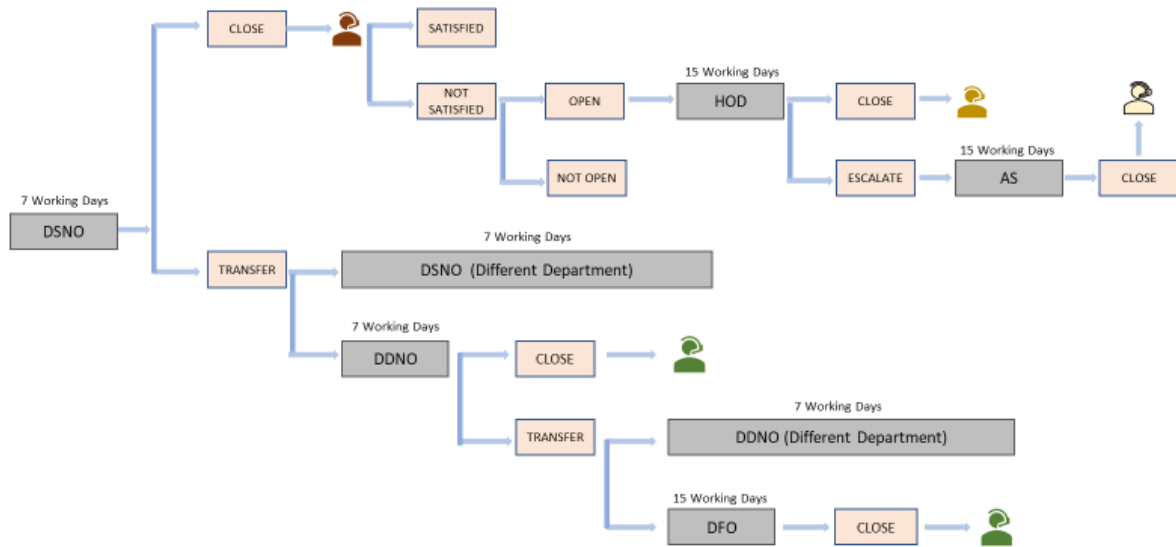
This meeting shall be scheduled once every quarter.

f. The DGR&PG will meet with the Chief Secretary to apprise her/him of departments' and districts' performance on PGRS. This meeting shall be scheduled once every six months.

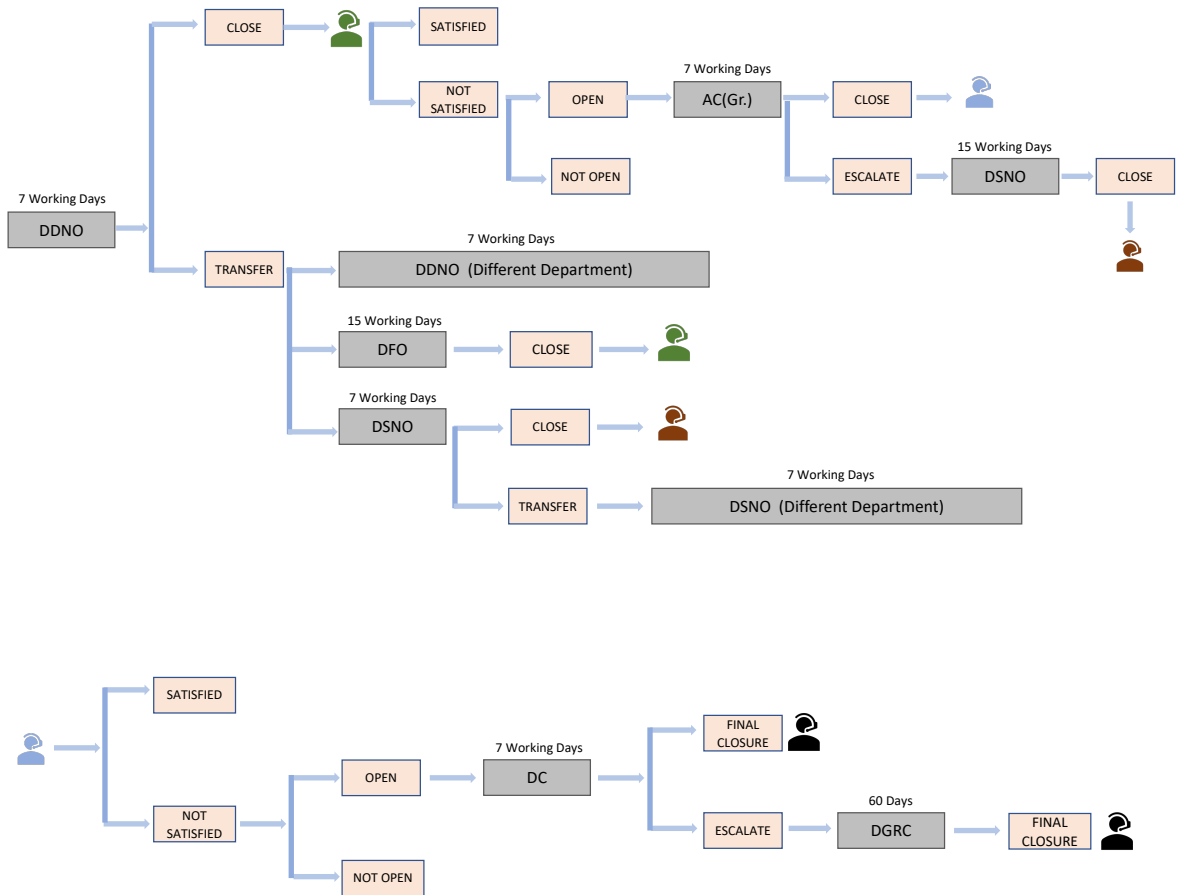
g. The DGR&PG shall apprise the Chief Minister on the departments' and districts' performance on grievance redressal once every year.

VIII. ANNEXURE







CATEGORY 1: STATE-LEVEL REDRESSAL



CATEGORY 2: DISTRICT-LEVEL REDRESSAL



AC(Gr.)	Assistant Commissioner (Grievances)	HOD	Head of the Department
AS	Administrative Secretary	DFO	Department Field Officer
DC	Deputy Commissioner	DGRC	District Grievance Redressal Committee
DDNO	Department District Nodal Officer	DSNO	Department State Nodal Officer

	State-level Redressal: May lead to escalation 1
 	State-level Redressal: May lead to escalation 2
	District-level Redressal: May lead to escalation 1
	District-level Redressal: May lead to escalation 2
	Final Closure of Grievance

Vini Mahajan
Additional Chief Secretary
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