Chapter-20

VIGILANCE AND REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

VIGILANCE

20.1 The areas, which have potential for corruption and malpractice, have been identified.

20.2 Preventive and corrective measures are being taken to prevent recurrence of corrupt practices to instil confidence in the minds of people about the objectivity and impartiality in the functioning of the Ministry and to create conditions, which can spread the signal of probity, rectitude and orderliness in public dealings.

20.3 Instructions have been issued to all autonomous bodies and attached/ subordinate offices of the Ministry to the effect that for handling sensitive posts at all levels only such of the Officers should be posted whose integrity is beyond doubt. They have also been advised to introduce greater transparency and openness in the functioning of the offices in general and in the offices having extensive dealing with public in particular.

20.4 All the public dealing offices under the control of the Ministry have been advised to simplify the work procedures at the cutting edge level so as to avoid delays in decision-making, as it is the delay at this level that generally breeds corruption.

20.5 Vigilance awareness week was observed in the Ministry from 7.11.2005 to 11.11.2005. All Officers and staff in the Ministry also took a pledge on 07.11.2005 to maintain absolute integrity, transparency in all spheres of activities and to work unstintingly for eradication of corruption in all spheres of life.

20.6 Chief Vigilance Officer held meetings with the Inquiring Authorities to review the progress of enquiries pending with them. All Inquiring Authorities were asked to hold hearings at regular intervals and complete the enquiry within the given time frame. All Vigilance Units in the Attached/Subordinate Offices were also asked to review the enquiries pending with them and submit a report to the Ministry.

20.7 As part of the current drive against corruption, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) forwards complaints received from various quarters containing allegations of corruption against individuals and organizations. Such complaints received from the Prime Minister's Office were pursued with the requisite degree of promptitude and thoroughness at senior levels. Proper inquiry was conducted in each case in a time bound manner and feedback sent to the PMO.

20.8 The Employees Provident Fund Organization(EPFO) have adopted a multi pronged strategy to contain, control and curb corruption and ensure prompt, effective and hassle free service to the subscriber members. In an attempt to adopt a well-defined strategy, the corruption prone areas have been duly identified. The emerging situation, therefore, calls for evolving and maintaining an effective system to arrest corruption and malpractices. The system envisaged in the modernisation programme of EPFO would greatly address these issues.

20.9 With a view to ensuring that the possible corrupt practices or malpractices in the area relating to coverage of establishments under the ESI Scheme, recovery of ESI dues from the defaulting establishments, purchase of land and

readymade flats, construction of hospitals/dispensaries, investment of ESI funds, grant of medical benefits on forged medical certificates and purchase of inferior quality medicines and equipments for use in hospitals and dispensaries are checked, the following instructions have been issued:-

(i) Assessment of dues decided by the Officers may be reviewed at random basis.

(ii) The Officers found to be lacking in their efforts to make recovery of ESI dues should be transferred and necessary action be taken against them for not performing their duties efficiently.

(iii) A definite time schedule for disposal of various types of cases may be prepared and officers/officials not adhering to the time schedule should be severely dealt with.

(iv) The nexus between the employees of the ESIC and the suppliers of medicines, if found, should be broken at the earliest and necessary action taken against those found to be involved in such deals.

(v) A quick assessment regarding integrity of the persons holding sensitive positions may be made and such of the officers/officials whose integrity is suspect should be immediately transferred out and such positions should be manned only by officers whose integrity is beyond doubt.

REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

20.10 A system of ventilation and redressal of grievances from employers, trade unions and subscribers/ members is in place in Ministry of Labour & Employment, EPFO and in ESIC.

20.11 A Facilitation Centre has been set up in the Ministry to receive applications for redressal of grievances and to provide necessary information to the members of the public on various matters dealt in the Ministry. The e-mail ID of the Public Grievance Cell, Ministry of Labour and Employment is **pglabour.nic.in.**

REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES IN EPFO

20.12 EPFO Headquarter office and all the field offices across the country are equipped with full-fledged facilitation centres, public relation officers and supporting staff. The organization in tune with its objectives lays considerable importance to the redressal of grievance of the members of the fund. The Public Relation Officers at the Reception Counters are available on all working days of the week to handle the grievances of the visiting members. It is noticed that the number of grievances received during the year has reduced. The initiative has resulted in ensuring prompt service given by the field officers to the members, which in turn has reduced the number of grievances.

20.13 There is two-tier organizational structure for handling and redressal of public grievances. One, at Head Office level called Customer Service Division, is headed by Additional Central Provident Fund Commissioner and assisted by Regional Provident Fund Commissioner, Assistant Provident Fund Commissioner and Public Relations Officer. Another at Field Office level headed by Regional Provident Fund Commissioners and Assistant Provident Fund Commissioners are assisted by Public Relation Officers.

20.14 The details of grievances received and redressed during the last five years are given in **Table-20.1**.

20.15 The Regional Provident Fund Commissioner of the regions and Officer-in-charge of Sub Regional Offices/Sub Accounts Offices are available in person even without any prior appointment to the members of the fund for redressal of their grievance on all working days from 11 A.M. to 4.30 P.M. Besides the Regional P.F. Commissioners, In-charge of the Customer Service Division in the Head Office attends to the grievances of the members of the Fund in person on all working days during office hours. The members, who are not satisfied, can see the Additional Central Provident Fund Commissioner (Customer Service Division) or the Central Provident Fund Commissioner.

20.16 All grievances received by the Head Office in the Customer Service Division are monitored fortnightly with system support and acknowledgement is sent to the member. The Public Relation Officer in the Head Office also attends to the grievances of the members every day and initiates action to redress the grievances.

20.17 The Facilitation Centres have been set up in all the offices of the organization. All the prescribed forms for the members of the Fund are available free of cost during working hours. The salient features of a Facilitation Centre are as below:

- To provide information regarding schemes and procedures through brochures, booklets, reports, etc.
- To provide information regarding status of claims/complaints.
- To receive complaints, issue acknowledgements letters.
- Officer of the level of Assistant P.F. Commissioner /Assistant Accounts In-charge of the Facilitation Centre with appropriate orientation capable of attending visitors and redress the grievances are head of the Centres.
- Time limits for settlements of claims/petitions, meeting hours of the senior officer are notified through display boards.
- Physical facilities have been provided for sitting, drinking water, etc. for the members.

20.18 The organization is not lagging behind in reaping benefits of Information Technology regime. Apart from conventional ways of redressal of grievances, namely sending communications by post/over Fax, on phone or calling on the office in person, any subscriber can now avail the facility of internet/e-mail by logging on to any one of the following newly launched websites: -

- **www.epfindia.com**
- **www.epfindia.gov.in**
- **www.epfindia.org**

20.19 As a step to popularise fast track facility of internet/e-mail, the grievances received in the above websites are immediately acknowledged at Headquarters through email and forwarded to the concerned officer-in–charge of the field office on the same day. Regular monitoring ensures speedy disposal of such grievance.

20.20 To reduce the public grievances the organization has taken various measures for creating the awareness about the provisions of The Employees Provident Funds (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1952 among the members and employers. Brochures and pamphlets on schemes under the Act are provided. Seminars are arranged to educate employers, employees and various representatives. Functions are organized by field offices to provide a copy of Pension Payment Order (PPO) and related papers to retiring employee members on the day of retirement. Death cases are settled on priority and widows

are requested to attend the function and get the pension papers.

20.21 The organization plans to bring radical changes in existing "Business Procedure and Process" through Re-inventing EPF India. This will retool the accounting procedure from single to double entry to meet international accounting system and enable the process with Information and Communication Technology to set up a high availability country wide information system layer

20.22 The analysis of grievances has revealed that the delay in settlement of claims is mainly due to the following deficiencies: -

- Attestation of forms by un-authorized officials.
- Absence of addresses of the attesting authority other than the employer.
- In-correct Provident Fund Account Number.
- Difference in name of member and his/her parentage in official records.
- In-complete postal address.
- In-complete information regarding Saving Bank Account and address of Bank.
- Non-affixing of Revenue Stamp on the advance receipt.
- Contribution details not submitted through 3A and 6A form by the establishment.
- Non-furnishing of relevant documents prescribed for advance.
- Non-submission of relevant documents with application for Pension.
- Non-signing across the revenue stamp on the Advance Receipt.
- The Establishment is in liquidation.

20.23 The grievances received from the members of the Fund through various sources relating to the settlement of the claims, issue of account slips, matter arising out of non compliance etc., are required to be redressed by the field offices. Feedback of all such grievances obtained from field offices is promptly communicated to the members with the status/disposal of the petitions. The Regional Provident Fund Commissioner In-charge of the public grievance functions as the Nodal Officer responsible for the functioning of the Public Grievance Handling System.

20.24 The Public Relation Officers in the Regional / Sub-Regional / Sub-Accounts Offices attend to the grievances of the members who visit the offices for redressal. The Public Relation Officer provides information about the status of the claim as well as the status of the complaints filed by the members. The Public Grievance Wing in Regional / Sub-Regional / Sub-Accounts Offices functions under the direct supervision of the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner/In-charge of the Regional / Sub-Regional/ Sub-Accounts Offices.

20.25 Generally, the nature of grievances received for redressal by the Organization pertains to the:

- Settlement of the claims of Provident Fund.
- Employees' Pension Scheme.
- Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme.
- Transfer of Provident Fund Account.
- Advances.
- Issue of Annual Statement of Accounts.
- Non-coverage of employee for EPF benefits.
- Non-compliance by employers.
- Non-receipt of Annexure-K by transfer office.

- P.F. settled is incorrect.
- Pension released is lesser than entitlement.
- Pension arrear not remitted.
- Pension not released from due date.

20.26 The following guidelines are prescribed for handling grievances:

- Every complaint/grievance is to be entered and acknowledged.
- Public Relation Officer to acknowledge and/or intimate the latest position of the settlement in writing.
- Complete monitoring of the grievance until redressal.
- Officer-in-charge of the field office to be present at the time of hearing of complaint / grievance.
- The Facilitation Centres are set up in all the offices of the organization. All the prescribed forms for the members of the Fund are available free of cost during working hours.
- All Field Offices conduct Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats for redressal of complex nature of grievances of members of the Fund. The Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats are held on 10th of every month and if 10th happens to be a holiday, Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats are conducted on the next working day. The numbers of complaints filed before the Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats and the cases decided are given in **Table-20.2**.
- The grievances, which are appearing in various newspapers, are also being registered and the concerned field office is advised to redress the grievance.

REDRESSAL OF PUBLIC GRIEVANCES IN ESIC

20.27 In the Employees' State Insurance Corporation, Facilitation Centre/ Centres have been set up in all offices/ units, which receive complaints/ grievances from different sources, namely insured persons, employers, VIPs, items appearing in the newspapers etc. All the complaints received from any other source are registered and allotted a registration number. Acknowledgement is issued to the concerned complainant. In order to ensure transparency when any complaint / grievance is rejected, reasons thereof are communicated to the concerned person. In other cases, after taking necessary action the result is communicated to the complainant.

20.28 In the Regional/ Sub-Regional Offices of ESI Corporation, a notice board with the name of the complaint officer is displayed at a prominent place advising the beneficiaries to approach him for any grievance or complaint.

20.29 Out of 6068 grievance cases received during 2004-2005 (up to September,2005) in the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), 5542 cases were settled. Details are as under:-

Balance of unsettled grievances as on 01.11.2004	**1026**
Grievances received from 01.11.2004 to 30.09.2005	**5582**
Total	**6608**
Grievance settled during the period from 01.11.2004 to 30.09.2005.	**5542**
Unsettled grievances as on 30.09.2005	**1066**

Table-20.1

Details of grievances received and redressed by EPFO during the last five years

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Grievances pending at the beginning of the year	8697	4672	3839	4692	2389
Received during the year	184319	173692	87784	61449	48412
Total	**192996**	**178364**	**91623**	**66141**	**50801**
Disposed off during the year	188324	174525	86931	63752	45630
Balanced at the end of the year	4672	3839	4692	2389	5171
Percentage of disposal	**97.57**	**97.84**	**94.87**	**96.39**	**90**

Table-20.2

The number of complaints filed before the Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats & cases decided

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Number of Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats organized	914	1136	1186	1209	1244
Number of grievances registered before Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats	5069	4394	3586	2844	1976
Number of grievances disposed off by Bhavishya Nidhi Adalats	4949	4241	3483	2820	1968
Performance/disposal percentage	97.63	96.51	97.12	99.15	99.59

****