

S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN

MINISTER OF STATE
PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, PENSIONS AND PARLIAMENTARY
AFFAIRS
GOVT. OF INIDA

D.O. No. 30011/3/97-0&M

Dated 31st March, 1997.

SUBJECT: *Prompt attention to communication from Members of Parliament.*

Dear

I wish to bring to your notice a matter that is *greatly* agitating all Members of Parliament. We have been receiving complaints from Members of Parliament that letters written by them to the Ministers/ Ministries are neither being acknowledged nor the final replies sent even after a long period, often stretching to 2 years, despite reminders. As you would be aware, very clear guidelines have been laid down in the Manual of Office Procedure regarding the level at which a reply should be sent, the time frame in which the acknowledgements and interim reply should be sent, as well as the need for fortnightly monitoring of disposal of such references by the senior officers, and my Ministry has been reiterating these guidelines from time to time. Attention is invited in this regard to the letter from my predecessor, Smt. Margaret Alva dated 1.7.95, to all the Ministers. Secretary (Personnel) had separately addressed all the Secretaries on August 23, 1996.

This letter dated August 23, 1996 conveying the concern of the members of the Department-related Standing Committee of the Parliament about the lack of promptitude of some Ministries and the Union Territory Administrations in attending to grievances and letters of Members of Parliament. We had also requested all the Ministries/Departments separately to initiate disciplinary action for deliberate default in giving replies, in terms of the conduct rules applicable to various employees.

During the course of discussion arising from a starred Question answered by my Ministry in the Rajya Sabha on March 20, 1997, the Members of Parliament have brought to the notice of the Prime Minister and myself that the guidelines provided in the MOP and conduct rules are not at all being observed by various ministries and *long* delays continue to occur in final replies to letters of MPs and the grievances posed by them. They also complained about the attitude of officials and Ministers' staff towards the MPs, including delay in handling telephone calls of MPs. They consider this lack of responsiveness as a breach of rights of MPs to get information.

I would, therefore, be grateful if your Ministry/Department could take the following steps to improve the situation and address the deficiencies referred to by MPs before the Prime Minister:—

- (a) Strict observance of the instructions contained in the Manual of Office Procedure-
- (b) Time limits should be fixed for sending the final replies to the MPs for as many types of cases as possible, and this should be ensured by regular monitoring of reports to be received from field agencies and State Governments.
- (c) Not only maintenance of necessary registers for monitoring disposal of the references from MPs should be ensured as provided in para 122 of MOP, but this monitoring should be computerized as soon as possible with the help of NIC.
- (d) Disposal of references from the MPs should be personally monitored by all Joint Secretaries every 15 days and the Secretaries every month, and the position should be brought to the notice of Ministers concerned periodically, All officials should be directed to follow the conduct rules strictly.
- (e) The officers should be directed to be courteous on telephone, and in person to MPs, and senior officials should personally attend to the telephones from the MPs. Appointments desired by MPs should be promptly given by senior officers and your staff.
- (f) Disciplinary action should be initiated against the officials found guilty of non-compliance of the MOP guidelines and the conduct rules and quick punishment imposed.

Suitable instructions may please be issued to all the attached/ subordinate offices and the public sector undertakings attached to your ministry on the above lines. A copy of the instructions issued and other actions initiated may be sent to my Ministry for keeping the Standing Committee of Parliament duly informed.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(S.R. Balasubramanian)

To

All Cabinet Ministers & Ministers of State.