

CHAPTER - IX

EFFICIENCY, ORDER AND METHODS

9.1 Introduction – Every organisation, more particularly a bureaucratic set up should continuously strive to improve efficiency in order to provide optimum performance at all times. In order to do so, it should undertake:

- constant review of procedures to make improvements;
- improving human resources through capacity building and skill upgradation; and
- harnessing of new and improved technologies to enhance productivity.

The following are the main O & M (Organisation & Methods) practices that all Sections should adopt (to the extent feasible): —

9.2 Standing Guard Files – Very often important instructions or orders issued over a period of time on a subject are required to be consulted and at other times, the sequence in which orders were issued, or the dates of their applicability may be needed to dispose of a matter. Guard Files, maintained subject-wise ensure that a copy of important orders/instructions is kept separately and can be consulted with ease.

A Standing Guard File consists of major decisions on a particular subject collected at one place. In order to prepare such files, wherever an important decision is taken, a copy should be endorsed to the Guard File on that subject. The Guard Files will be prepared in each Section and will be maintained subject-wise. The subjects which will be included for the purpose of preparation of Standing Guard Files will be determined by the Branch Officer or higher officers. Each Guard File on a given subject will consist of three Sections, namely:—

- Section I* : An Index containing sub-head-wise names of subject of the file and the date and number of decisions or orders.
- Section II* : Full copies of the decision or orders referred to be placed in chronological order.
- Section III* : Model forms to be used in the issue of orders, notifications, etc.

Whenever any new decision is taken on the subject, it will be suitably incorporated in the relevant Sections of the Guard File by the Section in-Charge or under his/her direction by a dealing Assistant. The Branch Officer or Section in-Charge will indicate the circulars and decisions to be placed in the Guard File by giving initials “GF” on it. Sections which regularly issue instructions of wide applicability and require reference thereto, may directly endorse a copy of such instructions to the Guard File.

Whenever an important decision is to be taken on a subject, it is advisable to consult the Guard File on the subject to ensure that the decision is in conformity with earlier decisions and departure, if contemplated, is a conscious one. As soon as new officer joins a Section, it will be the duty of the Section in-Charge to bring the Standing Guard File of the Section to the notice of the officer concerned, so that he/she is properly apprised of the history of decisions taken on the subject. This will ensure that decision-making is quick and logical.

9.3 Precedent Register – Not all decisions are taken by issue of orders or circulars. Often-internal decisions may be recorded on the notes portion for applicability within the Section concerned. Such decisions or precedents need to be properly identified and indexed for ready reference in future. For this purpose, a Precedent Register will be maintained in every Section where decisions of this nature are taken. A note of all important decisions and rulings made in the Section will be made in it. The Precedent Register is a guide to find out important decisions taken in the

past in the Section, especially where the decision is not issued as a formal communication and therefore does not find place in a Guard File. A decision which is not recorded in the Precedent Register should not be quoted as a precedent. The Branch Officer or the Section in-Charge will mark the words “**P.R.**” on the file or receipt if the decision taken in it is to be incorporated in the Precedent Register. The register will be maintained by the Section in-Charge or by an Assistant under his/her directions. The register is an absolute must in all advisory and regulatory Sections to ensure continuity and consistency of decision-making. The following should be kept in view for maintaining the Precedent Register:

- (i) the register should start with an index containing subject-wise details of decisions forming precedents;
- (ii) the decision should be classified by identifying one or more ‘*key-words*’ which describe the decision and its context;
- (iii) the key word is the most important word that is placed first in the title of the subject and on it primarily depends the possibility of finding a file on the subject. This must be a word or words which will normally occur to anyone who is in search of the decision. Sometimes it may be necessary to enter a decision under two or three key words to facilitate quick search;
- (iv) the subject should be filled up in alphabetical order of the key-words where more than one key-word is used;
- (v) the Section in-Charge will ensure that an entry in the Precedent Register is made correctly soon after an important decision is taken; and
- (vi) the register should not be relegated to the position of a file Register by entering each and every case, nor should it be made a compendium of decisions by entering the decisions made in the other Sections.

Precedents Registers are useful in almost all Sections. In Sections dealing with the House, *i.e.* Table Office, Notice Office, Bill Office, Lobby Office, Legislative Section and Question Branch, proper maintenance and updating of precedents is essential and would be the personal responsibility of the Executive Officer/Legislative Officer/Assistant Director.

9.4. Reports, Returns and their Analysis and Review – Correct and quick decision-making depends on the accuracy of the information on which the decision is based. Accordingly, it is important to identify the information that is often required, the sources and the frequency with which the information must be updated. For this purpose reports and returns are specified with proforma giving the specification of each item of data. Systematic decision-making is possible only if the reports and returns are properly specified, they are obtained or sent as required, and are compiled and interpreted efficiently.

To monitor this, each Section should maintain a printed calendar of all reports and returns due from, and to it. Copies should be hung up in the rooms of Branch Officers and of Section in-Charge and, a copy supplied to each dealing Assistant. Section in-Charge and concerned dealing Assistants should study their calendars and, before a report or return is due, submit for approval a reminder calling the attention of the officer concerned to the fact that the report is due on a particular date. If the report is not received by the date fixed, the matter should be brought to the notice of the Branch Officer by submitting a draft reminder for approval. The dealing Assistant should start compilation of the report/return immediately on receipt of information in case the same is to be received from several offices. Where possible, compilation of statistical reports/returns should be computerised for easy compilation and retrieval.

In every case where a report is received or return is prepared, a periodic analysis of the compiled data should be carried out on file, interpreting the data, drawing conclusion and taking remedial action or initiating policy changes, as the case may be. The periodicity of the analysis should be specified in respect of each report/return.

The existence of unnecessary reports and returns and other paperwork not only causes infructuous work at all levels but also diverts the time and energy of staff from more important items of work. Reports which have outlived their utility need to be discontinued and other returns rationalised and simplified, wherever needed or found feasible. In the process it may also be necessary to re-design the existing forms or introduce new ones so as to make the reports more purposeful and adequate as aids to policy-making and evaluation.

A periodical review of reports and returns should, therefore, be conducted at the time of inspection of the Section. An inventory of all daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and yearly reports and returns should be drawn up by each Section and thereafter the review should be carried out by the Inspecting Officer, and the results recorded in the Inspection Note.