

5. COMPLAINT/ GRIEVANCE REDRESS:

i. POLICY FOR GRIEVANCE REDRESS IN OUR BANK

I. Introduction: In the present scenario of competitive banking, excellence in customer service is the most important tool for a sustained business. Customer complaints are part of the business life of any corporate entity. This is more so for banks because banks are service organisations. As a service organisation, customer service and customer satisfaction should be the prime concern of any bank. Providing prompt and efficient service is essential not only to attract new customers, but also to retain existing ones. This policy document aims at minimising instances of customer complaints and grievances through proper service delivery and review mechanism and to ensure prompt redressal of customer complaints and grievances. The review mechanism should help in identifying the shortcomings in product features and service delivery, as the customer dissatisfaction would tarnish bank's name and image.

The bank's policy on grievance redressal follows the under noted principles:

- Customers be treated fairly at all times
- Complaints raised by customers are dealt with courtesy and on time
- Customers are fully informed of avenues to escalate their complaints/ grievances within the organisation and their rights to alternative remedy, if they are not fully satisfied with the response of the Bank to their complaints.
- Bank will treat all complaints efficiently and fairly as they can damage the bank's reputation and business if handled otherwise.
- Bank employees must work in good faith and without prejudice to the interests of the customer.

In order to make bank's redressal mechanism more meaningful and effective, a structured system needs to be built up towards such end. Such system would ensure that the grievance of the customer is handled promptly and Bank would tell the customer how to escalate the complaint further if the Bank has not redressed the grievance to his/her satisfaction. The policy document would be made available at all branches. The concerned employees should be aware of such a Complaint handling process.

The customer complaint arises due to:

1. The attitudinal aspects of staff members in dealing with customers
2. Inadequacy of the functions/arrangements made available to the customers or gaps in standards of services expected and actual services rendered.

The customer is having a full right to register his complaint if he/she is not satisfied with the services provided by the bank. He/She could lodge his/her complaint in writing, orally or over telephone. If a customer's complaint is not resolved within the given time or if he/she is not satisfied with the solution provided by the bank, he/she can approach Banking Ombudsman with his/her complaint or other legal avenues available for grievance redressal.

II. Internal Machinery to handle Customer complaints/ grievances:

In order to make bank's redressal mechanism more meaningful and effective, the following structured system has been placed in our Bank:

a. Customer Service Committee of the Board:

- This sub-committee of the Board is responsible for formulation of a Comprehensive Deposit Policy incorporating the issues such as the treatment of death of a depositor for operation of his account, the product approval process and the annual survey of depositor satisfaction and the tri-ennial audit of such services. The Committee would also examine loan policies and any other service issues having a bearing on the quality of customer service rendered. This committee would also review the functioning of Standing Committee on Customer Service.
- The Customer Service Committee of the Board would also periodically review customer grievance mechanism in place, the efficacy of the grievance redress, the steps taken by the Bank to preclude possibilities of receiving complaints in certain specific areas of functioning such as loan disbursements and educational loans in particular, services rendered to senior citizens/pensioners etc.
- The committee would periodically review the compliance of the Bank's Code of Commitment to customers.
- The committee would also review the overall status relating to the customer complaints to Banking Ombudsman/ Consumer Forum.

b. Standing Committee on Customer Service:

The Standing Committee on Customer Service consisting of Chairman/ Executive Director, senior executives besides four eminent non-executives drawn from public, meets once in a quarter to review the following areas:

- quality of customer service rendered and feed back received from various quarters
- Implementation of Codes under BCSBI
- Adherence of regulatory instructions regarding customer service.
- Position of unresolved complaints/ grievances

And to Submit a report on its performance to the Customer Service Committee of the Board at quarterly intervals.

c. Nodal Officer and other designated officials to handle complaints and grievances:

General Manager in-charge of Customer Service is the Nodal Officer who is responsible for implementation of Customer Service and complaint handling for entire Bank. All the Circle Heads would be Customer Relation Officers for their respective Circles to handle complaint grievances in respect of branches of their Circles.

Any complaints related to non-compliance of the Code of commitment to customers should be referred to General Manager incharge of Customer Service who is also the Principal Code Compliance officer of the Bank.

III. Mandatory display requirements

It is mandatory for the bank to provide:

- Appropriate arrangement for receiving complaints and suggestions
- The name, address and contact number of Nodal Officer(s)
- Contact details of Banking Ombudsman of the area
- Code of Bank's Commitment to Customers/ Fair Practice Code.

IV. Resolution of Grievances:

Branch Manager is responsible for the resolution of complaints/grievances of customers in respect of services rendered by the branch. Branch Manager would also be responsible to ensure closure of all complaints received at the branches. It is Branch Manager's foremost duty to see that the complaint is resolved completely to the customer's satisfaction and if the customer is not satisfied, then the complainant should be provided with alternate avenues to escalate the issue. If the Branch Manager feels that it is not possible at his/her level to solve the problem he/she can refer the case to Circle Office for guidance. Similarly, if Circle Offices find that they are not able to solve the problems, such cases may be referred to the Nodal Officer.

a. Time frame for Complaint/Grievance Redress Mechanism :

Any Complaint has to be seen in the right perspective because they indirectly reveal a weak spot in the working of the Bank. Complaint received should be analysed from all possible angles.

Communication of bank's stand on any issue to the customer is a vital requirement. Complaints received which would require some time for examination of issues involved should invariably be acknowledged promptly. Branches and Circle Offices must send action taken reports on complaints received to the Head Office at the end of every month.

Specific time schedule has been set up for handling complaints and disposing them at all levels including Branches, Circle Office and Head Office. Branch Manager should try to resolve the complaint within specified time frame, decided by the bank.

1. Customer has to lodge his/her complaint to the Branch Manager who is the first point of redressal of complaint.
2. If the complaint is not redressed /attended to his/her satisfaction within a week by Branch Manager, the complainant can forward his/her complaint to the concerned Circle Head.
3. If the complaint is not redressed/ attended to by the Circle Head to his/her satisfaction within a week, the complainant can forward the complaint to Nodal Officer of our Bank at Head Office.

If the complaint is not redressed by the Bank to the complainant's satisfaction within a period of **30 days** from the date of submission of the complaint to the branch, he/she could approach the Office of Banking Ombudsman of the jurisdiction at the address displayed in the Branch for redressal.

b. As a measure towards complaint free service, as an incentive, our Circle Offices/ Branches are advised not to include such complaints/grievances which are redressed within the next working day in their statement of complaints.

V. Interaction with customers:

The bank recognizes that customers' expectation/requirement/grievances could be better appreciated through personal interaction with customers by bank's staff. Structured customer meets - say once in a month, would pass a message to the customers that the bank always cares for them and values their feed back / suggestions for improvement in customer service. Many of the complaints arise on account of lack of awareness among customers about bank services and such interactions will help the customers appreciate banking services better. As for the bank, the feed back from customers would be valuable input for revising its product, strategies and services to meet customer requirements.

VI. Sensitizing operating staff on handling complaints:

Staff should be properly trained for handling complaints. We are dealing with people and hence differences of opinion and areas of friction could arise. With an open mind and a smile on the face we should be able to win the customer's confidence. It would be the responsibility of the Nodal Officer to ensure that internal machinery for handling complaints/ grievances operates smoothly and efficiently at all levels. Nodal Officer to give feed back on training needs of staff at various levels to the HRM Department.

