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Visiting two different Indian cities and understanding how consumer grievance redressal systems operate formed an integral part of this study. We are extremely grateful for the valuable insights and cooperation received from the reviewers at every stage of the project.

List of Abbreviations

AC	Assistant Commissioner
ACLM	Automated Complaint Loading and Monitoring
AE	Assistant Engineer
AMC	Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation
ATE	Appellate Tribunal for Electricity
BBMP	Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
BWSSB	Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board
CCC	Consumer Care Center
CDRF	Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum
CGRF	Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum
CGRS	Consumer Grievance Redressal System
CMC	City Municipal Councils
CROs	Consumer Relationship Officers
DERC	Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission
DO	Divisional Officers
ECAC	Electricity Consumers Advocacy Committee
EE	Executive Engineer
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoI	Government of India
GoNCTD	Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi
HCB	High Consumer Base
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IVRS	Interactive Voice Response System
JE	Junior Engineer
JNNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
JUSCO	Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company Limited
MC	Municipal Commissioner
MCC	Mysore City Corporation
MCF	Municipal Corporation of Faridabad
MoUD	Ministry of Urban Development
NDPL	North Delhi Power Limited
NeGP	National e-governance Plan
PGR	Public Grievance Redressal
PRIA	Society for Participatory Research in Asia
RMC	Raipur Municipal Corporation
RWAs	Resident Welfare Associations
SDM	Sub Divisional Magistrate
SERC	State Electricity Regulatory Commission
SLB	Service Level Benchmarks
SLG	Service Level Guarantee
SMC	Surat Municipal Corporation

ULBs
UNCRD

Urban Local Bodies
United Nations Centre for Regional Development

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CHAPTER 1 Introduction

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has been awarded a study by the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) under the Ministry's Centre of Excellence (COE) initiative to **“Recommend an Effective Framework for Consumer Grievance Redressal for Municipal Services”**. This study envisages a critical assessment of the existing consumer grievance redressal systems in Municipal bodies and in electricity sector with the objective of strengthening the grievance redressal systems in two selected cities. The study also proposes a model framework for consumer grievance redressal across cities.

The report is structured into five chapters. Chapter 1 briefly summarises the need for consumer grievance redressal system for municipal services and the on-going e-governance initiatives, which encompass such a system. Chapter 2 is a documentation of the grievance redressal mechanisms of municipal corporations in several cities in India. Chapter 3 presents the grievance redressal framework in electricity sector in Delhi. Chapter 4 discusses TERI's observations on Consumer Grievance Redressal System (CGRS) based on its field visits to Ahmedabad, Raipur, Faridabad, Bengaluru and Mysore. It critically assesses the grievance redressal systems in the Municipal Corporations of these cities and proposes a set of recommendations for Ahmedabad and Raipur to improve their redressal systems. Finally, chapter 5 lays down a model IT-enabled framework for grievance redressal system for municipal corporations

Consumer Grievance Redressal System: An Overview

Urban governance and management in India is predominantly the constitutional domain of the state government which delegate these functions to Urban Local Bodies through specific legislations. Urban local bodies (ULBs) are local self governing institutions and constitute third tier of governance systems in India and attend to the day- to- day needs of a community such as roads, street lighting, water supply and sanitation, solid waste management, primary education, parks, public health, and so on. Urban population of India is vast and growing on account of economic and social development in India. The massive growth in urban population has created an urgent need for strengthening urban local bodies that can deliver adequate services and improve living conditions of citizens.

Government of India (GoI) has recognized the importance of urban infrastructure development for the overall progress of Indian economy. It has launched the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in December 2005 in order to provide central assistance to identified ULBs for urban infrastructure development linked to various state and municipal level reforms that are necessary to improve urban governance and the delivery and management of urban services. Improving governance and service delivery is therefore an important component of the reform agenda linked to the JNNURM.

Most of the citizens' interaction with the government happens at the municipal level in India and thus these ULBs are required to orient their activities towards the satisfaction of citizens in the city so as to build confidence among the citizens.

Consumer grievance redressal is an important function of an efficient, responsive and transparent municipal body. The basic purpose behind a grievance redressal mechanism is to provide a platform to the citizens to lodge their complaints related to various services they receive from the municipal body, voice their opinions and provide feedback on various services rendered by ULBs. It bridges the communication gap between the municipal bodies and the citizens and provides citizens a platform through which they can get their grievances redressed in a timely and transparent manner. It also serves as a means to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal bodies as it provides important feedback to the ULBs on the working of the administration.

Thus Consumer Grievance Redressal process assists the municipal bodies in improving their services in the following manner:

- **Citizens →Municipal Bodies:** - Consumers /Citizens voice their grievances and thus provide valuable feedback to municipal bodies regarding the quality of services delivered.
- **Municipal bodies → Citizens:** - Besides addressing the complaint, the feedback given by the consumer/citizens helps the municipal bodies to analyze the quality of their services and become aware of (and eventually rectify) any deficiency (structural or otherwise) inherent in their services. This helps in improving the efficiency, accountability, responsiveness and transparency of the municipal bodies. All this ultimately leads to improved service quality.

The figure below presents the key benefits of a grievance redressal system of a municipal body:

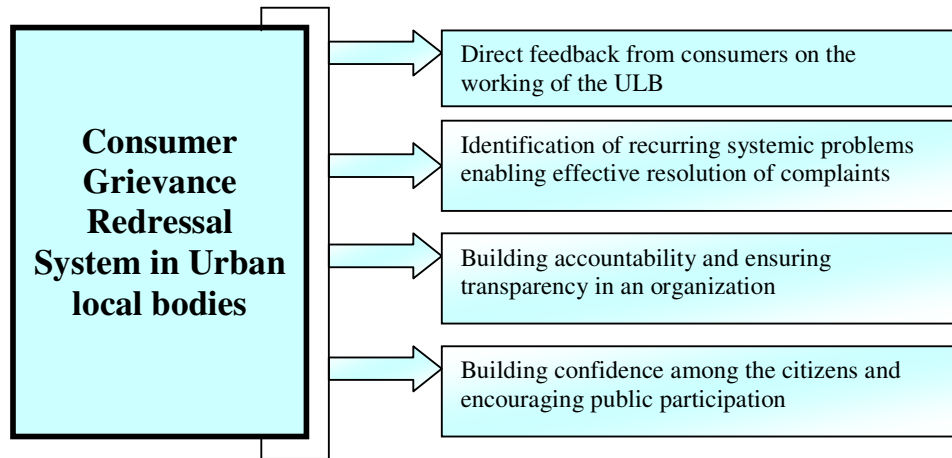


Figure 1.1 Benefits of a Consumer Grievance Redressal System

There are several avenues available to the citizens for grievance redressal (WSP, 2008). Some are initiated by the ULBS and implemented by them while there other channels also available to the consumers. The distinction lies in the fact that initiatives by ULBs are primarily formal while others such as those initiated by consumers and driven by other parties are informal channels. For instance, citizens sometimes resort to informal channels when they highlight their grievances with respect to municipal services in newspapers or resort to demonstrations led by NGOs etc.

During stakeholder discussion, a concern was raised regarding the provision for an appeal process where a citizen can appeal against the action/response of the corporation on his grievance in case he/she is not satisfied with the action. However, as per the municipal bodies, such kind of a forum is not required as corporations have elected representatives from citizens who can themselves proactively address such concerns.

In this report, we focus only on the formal grievance redressal mechanisms that are internal to the municipal bodies.

E-governance and CGRS

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is becoming increasingly popular in building the systems for interaction between citizens/ consumers and service providers across all the sectors in India. During the last few years in India, there have been major initiatives by the government towards ushering in information technology and its tools in the functioning of Government.

In 2006, the National e-governance Plan (NeGP) was initiated by the Government of India to:

- Make all the government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common services delivery outlets and
- Ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.

Since the local governments are the first interface between citizens and government, the importance of e-governance in ULBs has been recognized by GoI.

E-governance in municipalities is one of the various Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) identified under NeGP under the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) as part of JNNURM. The objective of this project is to leverage the ICT opportunities for sustained improvement in efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of municipal service to citizens. The project basically is expected to focus on clearly identified list of services that will be covered which includes complaints handling besides other functions and services of municipal bodies.

The use of ICT for Complaint handling and grievance redressal mechanism at ULBs is envisaged to stimulate good governance and improve transparency and accountability in the provision of municipal services.

Under the manual system of grievance handling process at the ULB level, citizens need to approach the municipal corporation office to register a complaint in a paper form or over the phone and keep waiting for the redressal in the absence of any complaint tracking mechanism. In this system even registering the complaint is a tedious and time-consuming process. However, growing use of ICT application for grievance handling process by municipal bodies has increased the accessibility to delivery of basic services.

ICT application in CGRS is envisaged to provide a 'one stop window' to register the complaints, provide a feedback for the municipal services, give suggestions and raise grievances with respect to any aspect of service delivery and provide a platform for public participation in the overall administration of ULBs.

Further, the MoUD has prescribed a set of benchmarks for e-governance in Municipalities, known as Service Level Benchmarks (SLBs). These benchmarks or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been prepared with the objective of implementing the national mission mode project on e-governance in municipalities. KPIs have been prepared for each

of the eight basic services identified for e-governance, including grievance handling.

For grievance handling, the KPIs have been developed for the resolution of complaints, adherence of response time for grievance resolution, accessibility and availability of facilities for registration of grievances, level of awareness among citizens etc. This would help the Municipal corporations and councils to evaluate their performance against the specified benchmarks and thereby identify areas of improvement.

The common structure of grievance redressal system that is typically followed by a service provider is discussed below:

- Citizens can register their complaints either through telephone or in paper form with the Helpline or they can register directly through the Municipal body's website.
- Once the complaint gets registered with the Helpline, the citizens are provided with a Unique Tracking Number. The Helpline officials may upload the complaint immediately on the web application or do so at the end of the day.
- Officials manning the helpline complaints direct these complaints to the appropriate department and transfer the complaints either directly to the field officers or to the concerned department head or engineer. The field officers or the department head may receive immediate intimation or they may receive them at specific time slots of the day.
- The field officer after redressing the complaint, reports back the status directly to the Helpline staff or to his senior.
- The status of the complaint is then updated on the website.

The operation and maintenance of the helpline is usually outsourced to a third party, in some cases to NGOs. Throughout the process, the status of the complaint can be monitored by the complainant. In some cases, once the complaint has been redressed, the municipal body also seeks feedback from the complainant (through feedback forms, etc.).

The above structure can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

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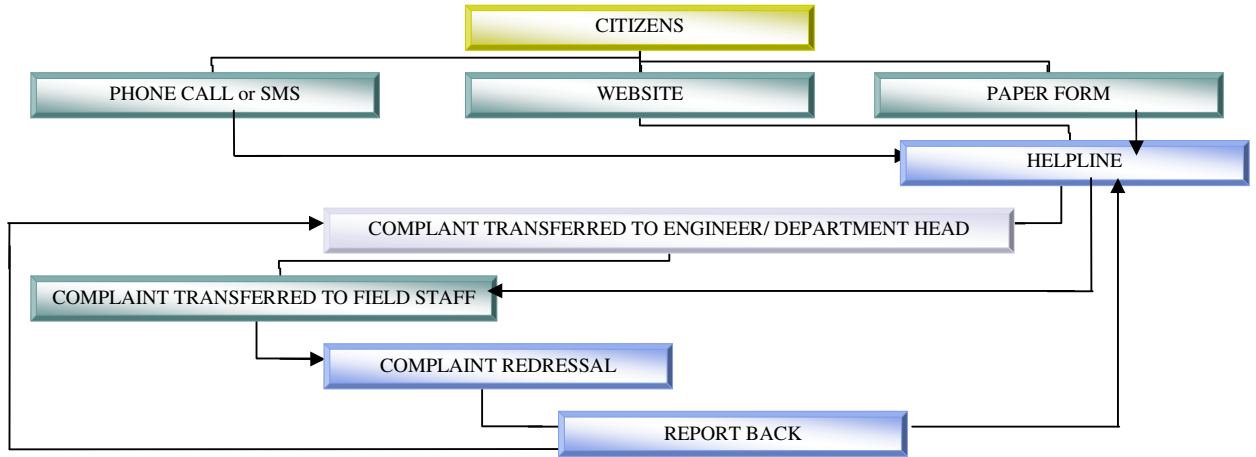


Figure 1.2 CGRS: General Structure Flow

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review of Consumer Grievance Redressal Facilities in cities

The ULBs and local government in India have recognized the importance of improved urban service delivery for the expanding urban population and are trying to examine the impediments in efficient service delivery and are working towards improvement.

In the provision of urban services, there has been a growing consensus that citizens' involvement and an active interaction between municipal bodies and the citizens can play an important role in bringing accountability, transparency and improving service delivery of ULBs. To this end, many municipal bodies across India have initiated reform processes to improve the consumer grievance redressal system, some of which are quite progressive and impressive. In order to increase the accessibility and the efficacy of the system, information technology is being used by several municipal bodies; however, the features and the extent of initiatives differ from city to city.

Some of the cities in India have introduced e-governance in the process of service delivery and especially in redressing and handling the consumer grievances. For instance, in Karnataka, the government has introduced the Online Public Grievance Redressal System (PGR) in July 2005, in 57 towns across the state to provide transparent and efficient public grievance redressal system. This system enables the consumers to voice their grievances and track the progress of its redressal in a structured and efficient manner. In order to keep a track on the recurring problems faced by the citizens, complaints are categorized to understand what kind of problems are faced by the citizens most so that appropriate actions can be taken to improve the situation. Similar initiatives have been taken in Andhra Pradesh as well.

The e-governance module of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in Gujarat has bagged the 'e-India 2009' award in the municipal IT sector in 2009. An IT enabled automated system has been launched for complaint registration, allotment of complaints to the concerned officials in zones/wards, automatic escalation in case of non-resolution of complaints and facility to track the status of complaint at any point of time before the complaint is closed.

Besides the online mechanism, AMC has recently initiated a SMS-based complaint registration system (as a pilot project) in

two districts in 2008 in order to provide timely resolution to the citizens and to increase accountability amongst the officials.

The efficacy of the automated system differs from city to city. For instance, at AMC, though an online system to register complaints is in place, it was found that most of the officials still use a manual and conventional process of complaint registration. It may be due to lack of adequate training to the officials which is imperative to familiarize them with the new system. Karnataka has acknowledged this need and has designated 2-3 software engineers to handle the system at each of PGR and to provide training to the officials to use it effectively for the practical purposes.

There are other innovative steps taken by several municipal bodies across India to institutionalize their grievance redressal process. For instance, systematic monitoring mechanism at Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company Limited (JUSCO) by making random calls to the complainants to identify whether they are satisfied with the action taken, priority-wise classification of complaints at Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC), automatic escalation to authorities at the higher level in case of non-resolution of complaints at Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Limited.

The initiatives taken by municipal bodies vary from city to city and their practical implementation depends on several factors including incentive structure, capacity building, accountability relationships, monitoring mechanism etc. The literature review has also brought out a fact that awareness among the consumers about the initiatives of municipal bodies is very important and is often found wanting.

The subsequent section explains in detail, the case studies of consumer grievance redressal systems in Municipal bodies in various cities in India.

Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company Limited

Jamshedpur is an industrial town located in Jharkhand. It has a total area of 64 sq. kms and is home to approximately 7 lakh people (as per 2001 census). Till 2004, Tata Steel's Town Services Division used to provide municipal services to the residents. In 2004 a separate company - Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company Limited (JUSCO) was created out of the Town Services Division. The services provided by JUSCO include water and waste water services, power distribution services, engineering and construction, and public health and horticulture (JUSCO 2007).

In order to address consumer grievances, JUSCO Sahyog Kendra was established. This Sahyog Kendra allows single window access to the complainant for complaint registration and subsequent follow-ups on a 24x7 basis. To streamline the working of the Sahyog Kendra, the township has been divided into seven zones – Sonari, Kadma, Central, Bistupur, Sakchi, Sidhgora and Burma Mines.

Under this Sahyog Kendra system, consumers can register their complaint by calling on the complaint number. For registration, consumers are required to identify themselves by their phone number, customer ID, and the location from where they are calling. In case of infrastructure problems, JUSCO maps down the location to any one of the seven zones through their Geographic Information System (GIS) software. After the identification, the consumer is asked to specify the particular complaint code (as listed in the JUSCO Sahyog Kendra Complaint Booklet¹) followed by the details of their complaint. On receiving the complaint, the JUSCO Sahyog Kendra registers the complaint in its central database, along with the customer ID and nature of the complaint as identified by the relevant job code.

The Sahyog Kendra then puts in the request for addressing the complaint by categorizing the complaint according to the relevant department and sending it to the relevant department for consideration. A job card is simultaneously printed at the concerned zone and is sent to the allocated employee/contractor for complaint redressal.

In addition to the complaint reference number (through which customer can track the status of the complaint), the complainant is also informed about the Service Level Guarantee (SLG) i.e. the maximum time that the service department expect to take to redress a complaint.

Once the complaint is redressed, the consumer must fill in the job card indicating his/her satisfaction with the actions taken to resolve the complaint. The job card must also be signed by the concerned employee/contractor before being handing it back to the department/employee that was responsible for resolving the complaint. The employee/department updates the database for the daily review at the Kendra.

¹ JUSCO's Complaint booklet lists complaints according to eight different service categories: Town Electrical, Integrated Customer Service, Water Management, Planning Engineering and construction, Public Health, Fleet Management, Billing and customer care, and Horticulture. Each of these service categories are further categorized into respective areas of work, having their own job codes. For instance, Town Electrical is further subcategorized into 4 categories – House Maintenance, Street Light, Meter in House, and Service and Transmission – all of which have a particular job code.

There is also provision of registering repeat or recurring complaints with the JUSCO Sahyog Kendra. Such a complaint registration is followed by in depth analysis of when the complaint was last registered, what was the action taken earlier and why was the complaint not redressed on a permanent basis.

Sahyog Kendra monitors the effectiveness of the complaint redressal system by randomly picking up 100 job cards daily and making calls to the concerned customers to check if their complaints have been addressed and also whether they are satisfied with the action that was taken for addressing their complaints.

In order to bring their service level closer to consumer expectations, JUSCO continuously monitors certain indicators. These indicators are presented in Table 1. Constant monitoring of these indicators has led to efficiency improvements on part of the services provided by JUSCO. For instance, after monitoring the response time for redressing complaints related to overhead tank overflows, JUSCO was able to reduce its Actual Turnaround Time from 3 days in the first three quarters of 2005 to 1 day in the last quarter of 2005.

Table 2.1: JUSCO's Service Level Indicators

INDICATOR	DEFINITION
SLG: Service level guarantee	The maximum time that service departments expect to take to redress a complaint. Also called expected compliance time
SLP: Service Level Performance	The actual performance against SLG, called compliance within time. $SLP = \frac{\text{Number of complaints within SLG}}{\text{Total number of complaints with defined SLG}}$
SLE: Service Level Expectation	The average time a customer can tolerate to get his complaint redressed
ATAT: Actual Turnaround Time	Time taken by JUSCO service departments to resolve a particular customer complaint
CG: Capability Gap	Inability of JUSCO services to promise a service level that matches customer expectation. $\text{Capability Gap} = \text{SLG} - \text{SLE}$
SG: Service Gap	Gap between ATAT and SLG, also called compliance beyond time. $\text{Service Gap} = \text{ATAT} - \text{SLG}$
QG: Quality Gap	Sum total of capability gap and service gap. $\text{Quality Gap} = \text{ATAT} - \text{SLE}$

Source: Jusco Sahyog Kendra, January 2006.

Surat Municipal Corporation

Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) was established under the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act of 1949. As per 2001 census, the total area of SMC (with extended area) is 326.515 sq. kms and total population approximately 2.8 million

people (SMC, 2009). The area under SMC is divided into seven zones – North, South, East, West, Central, SouthWest and SouthEast Zones.

Surat Municipal Corporation introduced automated complaint lodging and monitoring system in October 2000 (NIUA, 2003). The system is supported in Gujarati, Hindi and English languages. Under this system, citizens can register the complaint through phone, email, post, fax, or they can submit a written complaint. On lodging of the complaint, the complainant is issued a unique tracking number called Ticket Number to help him track status of the complaint. Complaints are then streamlined into complaints relating to Engineering Works, and complaints relating to Public Health and Sanitation departments. All the complaints are fed into a central database called Automated Complaint Loading and Monitoring (ACLM) System which is based on Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) software.

The registered complaints are then classified on the basis of priority as Emergency complaints (that are to be attended immediately), High Priority complaints (that are to be attended within 24 hours), Medium Priority complaints (are meant to be attended to within 48 hours), Low Priority complaints (to be addressed within 72 hours) and General complaints (need to be attended to within 7 days) (SMC, 2009).

The complainant is also issued a White card or a Red card depending upon the nature of the complaint. White card is issued for complaints related to Public Health Department that needs to be addressed within 24 or 48 hours and Red card is issued for complaints related to Engineering Works Department and needs to be looked upon within 1, 3 or 7 days (UNCRD, 2001). The services that are included in the White and Red Cards are shown below in Table 2.

Once a complaint is registered, the ACLM System automatically directs it to the concerned department official. Once the complaint has been redressed, the officer calls the helpline number to update the status of the complaint. In case, the complainant is not satisfied with the solution, he can reopen the complaint by using the same ticket number.

Table 2.2: Categorization of Complaints by SMC

WHITE CARD (For Public Health related complaints)	
To be cleared within 24 hours	To be cleared within 48 hours
○ Disposal of carcasses	○ Sweeping
○ Leakage of 0.5" water lines	○ Cleaning public toilets
○ Disposal of garbage	○ Spraying of insecticides
○ Leakage of public standpost	○ Overflow of cesspools

○ Mixing of drainage with water line	○ Stale food control
○ Shortage of chlorinated water line	○ Rodent work
RED CARD (For Engineering Works related complaints)	
To be cleared within 1 day	To be cleared within 3 days
○ Change of drainage covers	○ Repair of street lights
○ Fallen light poles	To be cleared within 7 days
○ Fallen trees	○ New water/drainage connection
○ Repairing roads	○ Footpaths repair
○ Lifting of debris from building material	○ Encroachments
	○ Repair of hand pumps/standposts

Source: Second Thematic Training Course (1-30 November 2001), United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), Nagoya, Japan.

Monitoring of the grievance redressal system at SMC is carried out at 3 levels. Level 1 consists of Zonal Officer or Departmental Head, who monitors the system daily. Level 2 consists of the Zonal Chief or Divisional Head, and Level 3 consists of the Municipal Commissioner. Both the Zonal Chief and the Municipal Commissioner review the system once in a week. The ACLM generates and prints reports on a weekly basis. These reports help in analyzing the performance of the grievance redressal system, thereby making the system more effective.

Public Grievance Redressal System in Karnataka

In order to streamline the municipal systems, a new mechanism for public grievance redressal was introduced in 2005 in 57 towns across the state of Karnataka. This PGR (public grievance redressal) was web-enabled, which the citizens could access anywhere anytime. The PGR module works as a citizen-friendly complaint registration and tracking system that function over the Internet, phones, and in paper form. Citizens can register their grievances and can then track progress of its redressal in a structured manner. Upon registration, the computer system generates a 'complaint tracking number', using which the status and progress of the complaint can be checked by the citizen over Internet. The complaints are then auto-routed to the appropriate official based on the complaint type and categorization. The system is developed in such a manner that if complaints are not redressed within the allotted time they automatically get escalated to the higher officer. The Directorate of Municipal Administration office constantly monitors the status and generates weekly report of the PGR system across the 57 cities. The efficiency of the redressal of grievances is also measured and accordingly, cities are ranked. The PGR system has introduced transparency and accountability amongst the municipal staff. This system is not only useful to redress

individual citizen's complaints but also to understand the problems that occur in different parts of the city.

Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Limited

The grievance redressal mechanism adopted by Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Limited is made effective by a system wherein if a complaint is not addressed by officials, it automatically gets escalated to the next level of officials (APSHCL 2009). Further, in this escalation process, even the number of days granted to the officials for redressal goes on decreasing. For example, if the complaint is not redressed by the First level functionary in 5 days, it automatically gets escalated (through SMS & web application) to Second level functionary who has to redress the same in 3 days. Finally, if the complaint is not redressed by second level functionary also, it gets escalated to Third level functionary that needs to address the complaint within 2 days. The combined force of escalation and response time reduction ensures accountability and puts constant pressure on the officials to address the complaint.

CHAPTER 3 Consumer Grievance Redressal in Electricity Sector

Provision under the Electricity Act, 2003

The Electricity Act, 2003, recognizes the need to provide quality services to consumer. The Act provides for the establishment of a two-tier consumer grievance redressal system. Section 42(5) provides that a distribution company shall constitute a Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF) in the respective license area. Thereafter if any issue remains unaddressed or the complainant is not satisfied with the CGRF, it can file an appeal to the ombudsman under Section 42 (6) (DERC, 2003).

Another forum open to consumer under the Electricity Act 2003 is the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (ATE). Consumers can also approach the ATE under Section 111 if they are aggrieved by any order of the Commission.

In line with the provisions of the Act, most state electricity regulatory commissions have issued regulations for establishment of CGRF. Further, State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) have also appointed ombudsman, which can be approached in case a consumer is not satisfied with the order of the CGRF. Besides the provisions made under law, all utilities also have an in-house complaint redressal mechanism.

Apart from specific provisions related to grievance redressal, the Act also prescribes certain provisions related to Standards of Performance, which are aimed towards protecting consumer interest. Section 57 of the Act stipulates that all licensees should specify standards of performance and abide by them. In case the licensees fail to comply with these standards, they are required to pay compensation to the user. Further under Section 59, the Act directs licensee to furnish information to the regulator on its compliance with the prescribed standards.

In the subsequent section, the consumer grievance redressal system of the electricity sector in Delhi is discussed.

Case study: Delhi

Consumer grievance redressal in the electricity sector is a structured process. At the first level is the in-house customer care centre/cell constituted by the utilities. The second level is Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF), which has been set up in accordance with the provisions of the Electricity Act 2003. The CGRFs comprise of 3 members. Applications for the

post of members are invited by the utilities through public advertisement in leading dailies. The appointment of the members is made in consultation with DERC. Consumers who are not satisfied with the decision of the CGRF can approach the Electricity Ombudsman by filing an appeal against it. In addition to the CGRF, the consumers can also directly approach the Public Grievances Cell (PGC), formed by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi or the Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum (CDRF), which takes up all kinds of complaints (except telecom related). The GoNCTD has also constituted the Electricity Consumers Advocacy Committee (ECAC), which empowers consumers and creates awareness among them about tariff, ARR, cross subsidy etc.

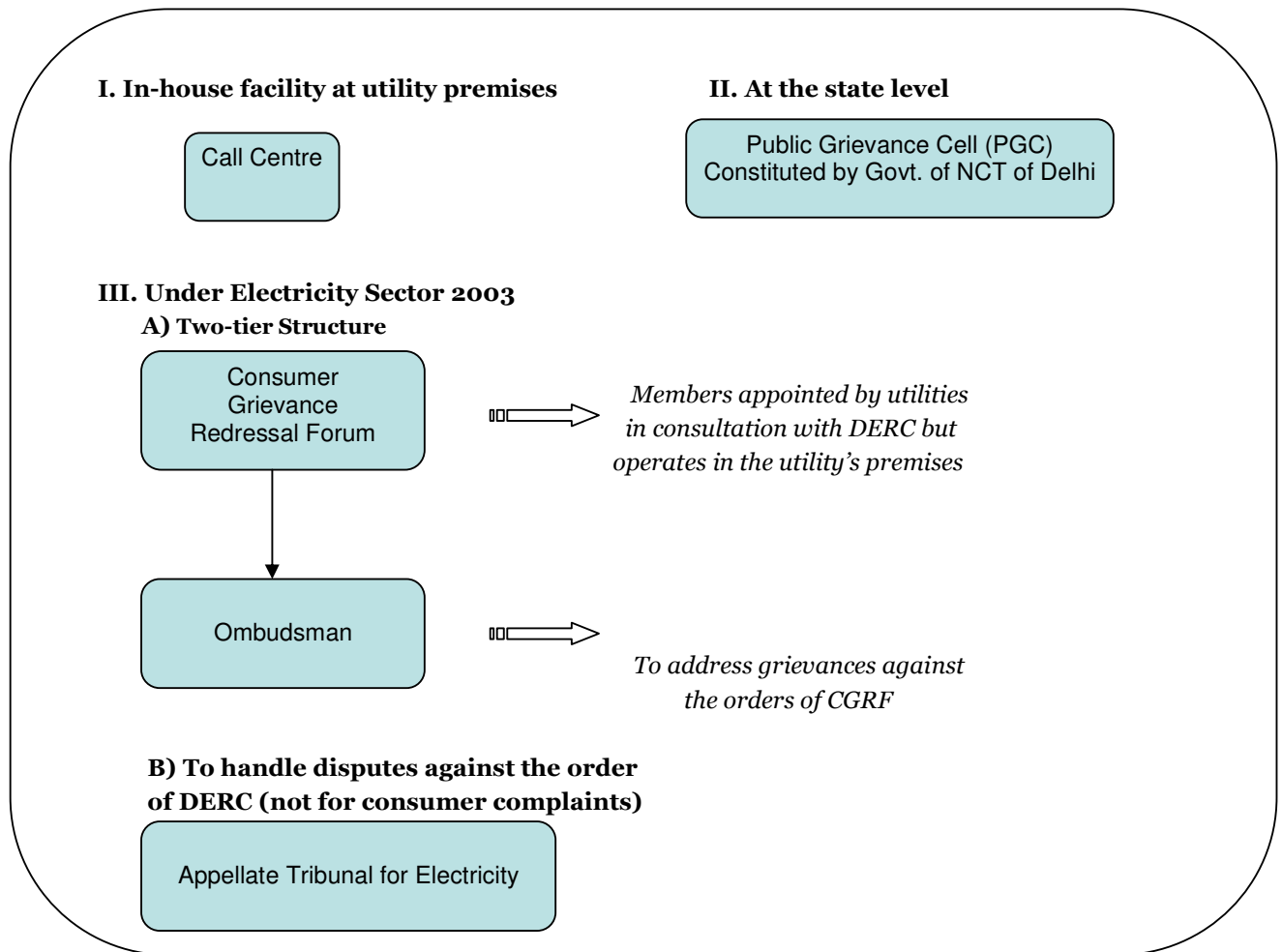


Figure 3.1 Structure of Grievance redressal process in Delhi's Electricity Sector

TERI team held discussions with the distribution licensee NDPL, on the complaint handling and grievance redressal

procedure put in place by the discom. The observations made by TERI are given below:

North Delhi Power Limited (NDPL) was founded on July 1, 2002 as a 51:49 joint venture between TATA Power and Govt. of Delhi. NDPL is responsible for distribution of power in the north and north-west Delhi. It serves a population of about 4.5 million people spread across 510 sq kms with a registered customer base of around 1 million.

For administrative purposes, NDPL's licensed area is split into 5 circles comprising of 2 to 3 districts each, which in turn comprises of 3-4 zones. In total there are 12 districts and 46 zones in the NDPL's licensed area.

Complaint handling and grievance redressal procedure in NDPL

Avenues for complaint registration

NDPL provides its consumers several facilities to register their complaints and seek clarifications to their queries. Various touch points provided by NDPL to its consumers are:

- Consumer Care Center (CCC)
- Call centre
- Web based services (email, online filing of complaints)
- Zonal complaint centre

Out of the all the above-mentioned facilities, most of the consumers use the first two viz. Consumer Care Centre and Call Centre.

Consumer Care Center (CCC)

There are 13 consumer care centres in the NDPL area including 12 district offices and one at the corporate office. At these centres, the consumer can register complaints and seek clarifications to his/her queries. The executives provide the complainants an approximate time period within which the issue would be resolved along with a unique complaint registration number for future reference. Once the complaint is registered, it is automatically allocated to the concerned officials who have to take action (at various stages of the redressal process) within the stipulated time.

Call Centre

There are two call centers to handle commercial and operational complaints with different helpline numbers. Both of these centres have been outsourced; however, the commercial call

centre is housed in NDPL's premises at its centralized back office. The operational call centre (generally known as No Supply Call Centre) handles complaints largely related to no supply and other such issues while commercial call centre registers complaints related to connection, billing, metering and related concerns.

The agents at the commercial call centre are given specialized training to handle various types of complaints related to connection, metering, billing, recovery etc. Whenever the customer calls at the centralized helpline number, he/she is automatically connected to the relevant agent depending on the nature of his complaint.

Besides the centralized call centres as explained above, there are service helpline numbers at each zone. If the consumer is not able to call at the centralized call centre, he can register his complaint at the zonal service centres. The internet users can register their complaints online through online complaint registration system or through an email to the NDPL's customer care.

The consumers can register their complaints related to Theft, Harassment, Ethics, NDPL's project related queries & Safety Issues on a special IVRS number. The consumer is not necessarily required to provide his personal details and he can raise his voice against theft and security issues across the NDPL's operational area.

At present these call centre numbers are not toll free; however NDPL is planning to introduce toll free call centre numbers in the future

Complaint redressal process after registration

The CCC and Commercial Call Centre are supported by software called 'Sambandh'. All the complaints registered through various sources are fed into the software by the executives. Once the complaint is registered, the system generates a unique complaint number and the executives can locate the status of the complaint at any stage of the redressal process and it can be accordingly communicated to the customer. In other words, till the complaint is closed and issue is resolved, concerned officials, at each stage of the process, have to update the software on the status of a particular complaint.

At any stage of the redressal process, if the action is not taken within the stipulated time frame or the status is not updated, the complaint gets automatically escalated to the senior official for an appropriate action.

For the operational issues, the consumers call at the No Supply call centre. Once the call is received by the executives, a SMS is sent to the concerned lineman or the crew on field to attend the complaint. Once the issue is resolved, the line man and the crew sends back an SMS to the call centre. The call centre informs the consumer and his feedback is taken before the complaint is closed.

Performance Benchmarks

NDPL set its own performance benchmarks in 2006 prior to the formal notification of Performance standards by DERC in April 2007. NDPL claims that its targets are stricter as compared to the benchmarks specified by DERC.

Performance linked incentives to employees

In order to boost up the performance of employees towards the improvement in the consumer services, salaries and bonuses have been linked to the overall performance during annual appraisal of all the employees. There are several rewards and recognition that are given to employees at every level for their outstanding performance. For eg. NDPL has an internal process known as 'Shine project' for rewarding employees who come up with new project ideas that can significantly improve the operational performance of the utility and help serve its consumers better. These ideas are critically evaluated by the top management and promising ideas are implemented. In addition to this there is also a provision of penalty that can be imposed on the employees in case of non-compliance of key performance targets.

Consumer Feedback Mechanism

NDPL has various customer feedback mechanisms aiming at improving its services based on the comments and suggestions provided by the consumers.

- **Happy Calling:** During the off-peak hours at the call centres, the agents make some random calls to the consumer after their complaints have been resolved and feedback. This feedback is used to assess the existing performance of the system and to identify the scope of improvement in consumer services.
- **Voice of Consumer:** This is a system to establish a process for capturing experience of consumers at various touch points and develop an information flow for ensuring that the information is collated and analyzed centrally and the appropriate actions are taken to improve the services and increase the customer

satisfaction. Under this system the feedback is taken in through three sources:

- Apka Anubhav forms: These are the suggestion forms available at the customer care centres. The customers can provide their feedback by rating various customer services such as call centre, customer care centre, billing services, complaint redressal etc.
- “Awaz”: Responses/feedback received by any employee from consumers (even during non-working hours)
- Periodic questionnaire survey by the third party

All the comments and suggestions received from the above sources are first streamlined and collated for an extensive analysis. The findings and results of such analysis are presented to the top-level management and an appropriate action plan for the implementation is prepared. Several initiatives have been undertaken on the basis of feedback received from consumers.

Consumer Participation

In order to involve consumers in improving its services, NDPL has created various forums to interact with consumers. In order to build up relationship with its customers, NDPL has undertaken a segment wise relationship approach wherein it has classified its customers into categories on the basis of their approved load as follows:

- Account managers for Express and KCG group consumers (100-500 KW and more than 500 KW respectively)
- Client managers for High Revenue Base consumers
- Consumer Relationship Officers (CROs) for High Consumer Base (HCB) consumers.

NDPL also conducts meetings with the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) on monthly basis at all the districts to understand customers' perspective about the services of NDPL. Meetings are held on first Saturday of every month with RWAs and on last Saturday of each month with industrial welfare associations.

TERI team also interacted with the officials of DERC to understand the efficacy of the complaint handling and grievance redressal procedure in the electricity sector. The following key points emerged from the discussions:

- The multiplicity of grievance redressal forum enables consumers to engage in ‘forum shopping’, which creates problems in terms of coordination.

- Any complaint placed with the Ombudsman has to be cleared within 60 days from the date of filing of the petition. Bi-annual monitoring is being carried out to see if this process is being followed through.
- It was stressed that CGRFs were not viewed as entirely independent by the public at large as these forums are housed within the premises of the utilities and also the salaries of the staff are met by utilities.
- It was mentioned that the regulator does not have a direct role in grievance redressal as per the provisions of the Electricity Act 2003. However in order to protect and safeguard the interests of the consumers, the regulatory commission can take measures from time to time. For instance, recently a temporary cell has been set up by DERC which looks into complaints of critical nature such as inflated electricity bills etc.
- It was also pointed out that Sec 142 of the Electricity Act authorizes the Commission to impose penalty on any person (including utility) in case of any serious violation of the provisions of the Act.
- For improving consumer services DERC has brought out SoP regulations which lays down the standards of performance to be adhered to by the licensees. The licensees/utilities periodically submit data on compliance with SoP to DERC. However DERC officials were of the view that the credibility of data was questionable, as these standards were not being monitored independently by a third party.
- SoP regulations also lay down the compensation payable to consumers in case the standards are not adhered to. DERC officials stated that in a few cases compensation has been paid to consumers. DERC is now trying to develop a system of linking the electricity bills with the non-compliance of the SOP such that any compensation to be paid to consumers can be directly deducted from the bill.

CHAPTER 4 Review of Existing Redressal System in Cities

To study the CGR systems and evaluate their functioning, TERI team visited the municipal corporations of Ahmedabad, Raipur, Faridabad, Bengaluru and Mysore during the course of the project. The two cities - Ahmedabad and Raipur have been selected by MoUD as case studies. Other cities have been visited to gain insights on the working of the CGRS with diverse characteristics and also to draw lessons from the best practices.

This chapter critically assesses the grievance redressal systems at AMC and RMC and highlights some of the good initiatives as well as existing issues that adversely affect their functioning. Based on the actual observations, TERI proposes recommendations to further improve the CGR systems in these cities. In addition to Ahmedabad and Raipur, the chapter also describes TERI observations during its visit to other cities.

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) is responsible for the governance of nearly 5.5 million people of the city of Ahmedabad in the state of Gujarat. For administrative purposes, AMC has divided the entire city into 43 wards (12 new wards) spread across 6 zones. Unlike other cities, AMC provides larger range of services. In total, it supplies around 17 services in the city ranging from water and sewage to medical services and public transport.

Online Complaint Registration System

A consumer can register his/her complaint online on the AMC website. There are various modules for 13 categories of complaints such as drainage, water etc. The consumers can choose from the 13 categories and specify the respective zone and ward in the online complaint registration form. He/ she is also required to provide name, address and brief description of the complaint in the form.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Complaint Registration". The form contains the following fields and controls:

- Category***: A dropdown menu with "Select" as the current selection.
- Zone**: A dropdown menu with "Choose" as the current selection.
- Ward***: Two dropdown menus, both with "-Choose-" as the current selection.
- Applicant***: A text input field.
- Address***: A text input field.
- Email Id**: A text input field.
- Phone**: A text input field.
- Tenement No.**: A text input field with a "Help" link to its right.
- Subject***: A text input field.
- At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Submit" and "Clear".

Figure 4.1 The Online complaint registration form of AMC

Those consumers who can not access the online redressal system can visit or call up the zonal/ward offices and get their complaints registered. Similar online form is used at the zonal/ward offices and the official at the zonal/ward office will register the complaint for the consumer in the above-mentioned online complaint registration system.

After submitting the complaint (either by the consumer or the official), the system generates a receipt mentioning the complaint registration number, date of registration, consumer's name and address, the subject of the complaint and the designation of the concerned officer who is supposed to address the issue in the respective ward such as assistant engineer, public health officer etc. If the consumer approaches the ward/zone office for registering his complaint, a print out of the receipt is given to the consumer. The consumer can use his complaint registration number for any future reference or to check the status of the complaint.

A sample of such acknowledgement slip given to the consumer is depicted below:

Illustration of an acknowledgement of complaint registered by a consumer

Acknowledgement for the Civic Complaint

Complaint Reg. No. 0910-87-9900033

Reg. Date 27-OCT-09

Received From XYZ

Address XYZ

Ward 28 (BAPUNAGAR)

Category DRAINAGE

Received By ASSISTANT CITY ENGINEER
(BAPUNAGAR)

Subject DRAINAGE PROBLEM NEAR MY HOUSE

City civic centres

AMC has also established 26 city civic centres around the city of Ahmedabad. These civic centres are largely to facilitate citizens in property tax registration, birth and death certificates, vehicle tax submission etc. Besides the revenue collection for AMC services, these civic centres also provide another platform to the citizens for registering their complaints. The citizen from any ward/zone can get his complaint registered at all of the 26 civic centres; however, as of now, these centres are not extensively used by the citizens for the purpose of complaint registration.

SMS-based complaint redressal system

AMC has launched a new automatic complaint redressal system in 2008. It is a web based complaint registration mechanism which is supported by software named 'Smart Serve'. The officials of AMC worked closely with its technology partner Microtech Systems to develop an automated system which was compatible with the functioning of the existing manual system of the complaint registration. This initiative is a pilot project implemented in new west zone and south zone of the AMC area for registering monsoon complaints such as water logging, drainage etc.

Presently, the software so developed is being used at the newly established centralized Call Centre located at one of the AMC's civic centres. Under this initiative, the consumer can call on a toll free number to lodge his complaint. The call centre operator fills in the customer information such as name, address and mobile number (mobile number is a mandatory field). Once the operator fills in the information such as the consumer's ward and the concerned department for which complaint is made (such as water, drainage etc.), the system automatically provides the name of the official who is supposed to address the issue. As soon as the operator submits the application, system software sends a SMS to the concerned official and another SMS to the complainant mentioning the complaint registration number. After the complaint is registered and SMS is sent, the concerned official calls the complainant and gets the details of the problem. The officer in charge of the complaint directs the assistants and field workers to resolve the issue. The concerned official can also update the status of the complaint as pending, resolved or any such remarks using his login ID and password in the system for the monitoring and management of the information.

It was reported by the officials that once the issue is addressed, the officer gets an acknowledgment signed from the consumer for his approval to close the complaint. The officer updates the status as 'resolved' and the system again sends a SMS to the complainant confirming the closure of the complaint.

In-built monitoring mechanism

All the ward officers can use their unique login ID and password and access the list of all the complaints that are directed towards them (and not complaints directed towards other ward officers) through the system software. He can know the status of all the complaints and can follow up with the field officers for resolving the issue at the earliest depending on the nature of the complaint. Unlike ward officers, the deputy municipal commissioners have access to complaints to be addressed by all

the officials in a day. This helps a senior official to monitor the work being done and keeps the pressure on subordinates to effectively redress consumers' grievances. Regular meetings are held with all the ward and zonal officers to evaluate the performance of the complaint redressal system. Reasons for pending complaints are sought and steps to be taken for improvement are discussed.

Periodic reviews (monthly/weekly) are conducted to monitor the performance of the consumer grievance redressal mechanism. Monthly meetings are held wherein all the ward and zonal officers interact to review the redressal mechanism for consumer complaints.

TERI's observations during visit to AMC

- Even though the automated and IT enabled system is in place, few officials actually use these systems for handling and resolving consumer complaints. This may be due to lack of training of the officials or lack of technological infrastructure support.
- AMC is planning to extend the automated SMS system in other zones for all categories of complaints. 12 operators are supposed to handle the call centre. However, during the visit to this call centre, only 3 operators were found to be handling the calls.
- At present, there is no mechanism to seek customer feedback on the complaint redressal system of AMC after the complaint is closed. There is no system to elicit the opinions and views of citizens on the various aspects of CGRS such as the manner in which the officials at AMC interacted with the consumers, any problems faced by citizens in registering their complaint, their satisfaction in terms of the time taken to redress their complaint or any suggestions in general for improving the mechanism.
- Some senior officials at AMC were of the view that there is a scope for improvement in the consumer grievance handling mechanism.

Recommendations

- Once the complaint is resolved and acknowledgement has been signed by the complainant, the field officer should also get a consumer feedback form filled up by the complainant and submit it to the concerned official. It should also be updated in the system for reporting and monitoring. This shall be useful to analyze the consumer feedback and identify the areas of improvement.

- It is imperative to educate the officials about the various e-governance initiatives undertaken by AMC to effectively utilize the resources and maximize the potential benefits of such initiatives. It is essential to justify the costs and resources involved in introducing such systems and processes. The training should be customized to suit the requirements of the individuals. Since e-governance is at its nascent stage, periodic assessment should be made to identify the key issues being faced by the officials in making use of the new systems and procedures so that accordingly changes can be made to ensure user friendly systems.
- There should be provisions for performance incentives to the officials at various levels to maximise their accountability in terms of providing timely resolution to citizens' complaints. Penalties should be imposed in case of unsatisfactory feedback received from the complainants.
- There should be a formalised system to generate periodic reports for all the registered complaints for better monitoring. There should be a specific format in which the details for each of the registered complaints should be generated from the date of registration till the complaint is resolved.
- The periodic meetings within the municipal corporation to assess the CGRS should be made mandatory. The key findings from the system generated reports should be presented such as nature of frequent complaints, ward wise performance, general feedback from the complainants, percentage of complaints resolved within and beyond the stipulated time etc. All these findings should be analyzed and opinions and suggestions should be solicited from the officials to improvise the system and also to highlight their concerns about the working of the system.
- An ex post evaluation of the SMS based CGRS should be made before it is extended to the entire AMC area. The analysis will help AMC to understand the problems associated in the new SMS based system and then it can modify the system appropriately before it is incorporated across the AMC's licensed area.

Raipur Municipal Corporation

Raipur Municipal Corporation (RMC) is a civic body providing basic services to the citizens of Raipur city. The functional domain of RMC consists of water supply, sewerage, streetlights, general public health, fire brigade services, parks and gardens,

poverty alleviation etc. RMC provides services to 8 zones and 70 wards and serves a population of around 15 lakhs.²

Consumer Grievance Redressal System (CGRS) at RMC

At present the grievance redressal system in RMC is still manual. There is no automated/ online system. The grievance redressal system is known as Single Window system or “**Ekal Khidki Pranali**”. It is known as single window system as the citizens can submit all kinds of complaints at a single counter as opposed to different counters for different complaints. The single window system was launched in July 2009. Prior to this, the complainant had to personally meet the concerned departmental head in a particular zone and submit a complaint. There was no structured complaint registration mechanism.

Key features of CGRS

- There are eight single window counters present in all the eight zonal offices. Citizens can lodge their complaints by submitting a written application in the prescribed complaint form, which is available at these counters for a nominal fee (Rs 2/-). The single window counters are open everyday from 10:30 AM- 2:00 PM (except weekends and holidays). They can also directly contact the department officials on their personal mobile phones or personally meet them.
- After the complaint is noted into the complaint register, the complainant is given a receipt with the receipt no. and the time limit within which his or her complaint would be resolved. These time lines are the same as mentioned in the citizen’s charter. However, the name of the concerned officer is not mentioned on the receipt.
- Complaints where the complainant has directly approached the RMC official through phone are not recorded in the complaint register.
- These single window counters are being manned by clerical staff of the RMC. One person sits at each counter. The clerk is responsible for taking the complaints, entering the complaints into a single register, which is segregated into different sections according to the service. He enters the following details into the register:
 - Complaint number

² Two new zones are proposed to be added soon. Each zone has 8-10 wards.

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- Complainant name and address, details of complaint (Summary)
 - Concerned department, time limit (within which complaint would be resolved)
 - Status of the complaint
 - Remarks (to be filled as per the information given by the concerned department official)
-
- The complaint is forwarded to the concerned department the same day on which it has been registered.
 - Most of the times, the time limit as given to the citizen is adhered to except in some circumstances where in the work involves approvals from higher officials or requires funds. In such cases the citizen has to wait for an indefinite time period, as he is not given any kind of interim reply stating the time period within which his complaint would be resolved. The concerned department is then given more time to resolve such complaint.
 - Once the complaint is resolved, there is no proper closure and feedback mechanism. Sometimes the field staff takes the signature of complainant on an acknowledgement form, which indicates that the complaint has been resolved. Feedback from complainants is not sought after the resolution of complaint.

RMC has also published a citizen's charter, which gives the time lines for various services provided by the RMC. Broadly there are 8 services- Public works, revenue department, health officer, Town planning, Water supply, food license, streetlights and miscellaneous complaints. There are various subcategories under these eight categories.

Monitoring mechanism

Complaints are monitored on a monthly basis at the RMC head office. All the zonal offices submit the details on the number of complaints received, which are reviewed by the Municipal Commissioner. The TERI team was told that this monitoring is not on regular basis. While the zonal commissioners are also supposed to monitor complaints on a regular basis, this process is not being followed as the officials are severely tied up due to other work commitments. Further there is no monitoring mechanism in the RMC to check if the concerned officials have actually redressed the complaints satisfactorily.

There is a weekly TL (Time Limit) meeting held under the municipal commissioner's direction every Wednesday. This meeting is attended by the Deputy Commissioners and the respective zonal commissioners and is chaired by the Municipal Commissioner (MC). In this meeting the MC identifies all the important issues, which may also include certain specific grievances of citizens to be addressed on a priority basis, and assigns a time limit to it. He reviews the status of these grievances every week thereon till the time it is resolved.

TERI's observations on CGRS at RMC

- Apart from the above-mentioned avenues, the citizens can also highlight their grievances directly to the Chief Minister who meets the citizens every Thursday (either from 9-11 AM or 8:30- 10:30 AM) for a one-to-one interaction. This day is known as "Jan Darshan". The citizens can submit written complaints to the CM who either resolves the complaint on the spot or directs it to the RMC to take up these complaints.
- Many citizens are also approaching the *Parshads* of the wards to get their complaints redressed. Interaction with PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia), a well known NGO in Raipur, highlighted the fact that citizens generally prefer this alternative, instead of directly reaching the zonal office. *Parshad* then directs the complaints to RMC.
- RMC officials informed TERI team that they are planning to set up an online system for CGRS, which would ensure proper accountability and timely redressal of complaints. RMC has initiated talks with some of the technology vendors for this. The team was further told that this process was initiated before e-governance in municipalities was included as one of the mission mode projects in JNNURM. 32 modules of municipal services have been identified across the state for implementation, where in CGRS has also been included.
- MoUD service level benchmarks are not being followed at present.
- The CGRS is still an unstructured mechanism without any proper accountability or feedback mechanisms built in.

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- Apart from written complaints the citizens do not have other avenues such as online CGRS, toll free helpline number etc to lodge complaints.
- The complaint received by RMC officials through phone is not a formal process of complaint registration. Citizens, who know the officials personally, are directly contacting them for speedy redressal of complaints.
- In terms of priority wise classification of complaints, RMC officials stated the following: (starting from most preferred to least preferred)
 - Sanitation
 - Water supply
 - Street lights
 - All other complaints
- The citizens charter published by RMC is not a comprehensive document. It only lists down the 8 main services (mentioned above), which have been further sub-categorized into 33 services. These services indicate the corresponding time lines/ service level time. It does not contain any details on the complaint handling mechanism, contact details of responsible officials, the details of concerned department etc.
- The officials of RMC were of the opinion that there is a scope for improvement in the consumer grievance handling mechanism.

Recommendations

Based on the city visit, TERI proposes the following recommendations:

- The CGRS in RMC should be made more structured responsive and accessible. Presently, the citizens directly get in touch with RMC officials to lodge their complaints. To do away with this practice, accessibility of the existing channels of grievance registration should be broadened. In addition to the Single window system, a dedicated helpline number should be introduced so that citizens can also get their grievances registered over the phone. Online CGR system should also be launched to facilitate ease of grievance registration. Both these measures should be implemented at the earliest.
- All complaints should be recorded and a database of complaints should be maintained, regardless of the type of channel used for grievance registration. Presently

complaints received by officials directly are not recorded. As reiterated above, the introduction of a helpline number would make the process more structured and simplified. The officials can direct the complainant to the RMC helpline number, in case the complainants get in touch with them directly. This would ensure that all complaints are duly recorded

- The timings of grievance registration should be extended from the present timings (10:00 AM-2:00 PM). The Single Window system should be open during office hours of RMC. This will add to the convenience of citizens.
- The awareness amongst the public regarding the grievance redressal mechanism in RMC is very low. Even though the grievance redressal mechanism exists in RMC, few citizens are using it. Therefore, creating awareness about the grievance redressal mechanism should be a top priority for RMC. Pamphlets should be distributed to households explaining the process of grievance registration. Prominent signages at important locations should also be put up.
- In those cases, where RMC envisages a time lag in complaint redressal, an interim reply should be sent to the citizen regarding the delay.
- Once a complaint reaches a concerned department, it needs to be tracked and monitored regularly to build greater accountability into the system, which is lacking at present. This can be done by strictly enforcing monitoring on daily basis by the department head and further regular weekly monitoring by the zonal commissioner. Monitoring should be done on a monthly basis wherein all the RMC officials including deputy Municipal Commissioner and Municipal Commissioner should check the progress of complaint redressal.
- To build accountability into the system and to ensure the efficacy of CGRS, it would be beneficial to have a performance appraisal system in place which considers the performance of employees with respect to complaint handling. The performance appraisal would act as an incentive for the staff to perform. Some of the parameters on which employees can be evaluated could be:

- No. of complaints satisfactorily redressed in the present month
 - Performance in the current period vis-à-vis the previous period
 - Actual complaint resolution time
-
- The complaints should be closed only after taking the signature of the complainant on a slip. Further, feedback must also be taken from the citizens after the complaint is closed primarily to gauge their level of satisfaction with RMC's complaint handling mechanism. The feedback should be duly accounted for while monitoring the performance of employees and also for improving the present system.
-
- Citizen charter should be revised and made more comprehensive. It should provide information about the services delivered by RMC and its departments, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, who they should approach in case of complaints and what is mechanism to lodge their grievances, when to complain and for what to complain, formats for registering complaints etc.
-
- Apart from the structured CGRS, grievance redressal forums could also be organized by RMC on a monthly basis. These forums would provide an additional platform to the citizens to voice their concerns. These forums could focus on grievances within a particular area. Regular updates on the progress made could be given in successive meetings. Concerned department heads, zonal commissioners, deputy municipal commissioner, citizens, Parshads and other citizen representative groups should attend these meetings.
-
- Training should be given to RMC officials to educate them on how to effectively handle citizen complaints. A message needs to be imparted to officials that they should adopt a "your problem is our problem" approach instead of reacting in a passive manner.

The recommendations for Ahmedabad and Raipur are based on a preliminary visit to these two cities. TERI team is in the process of firming up the recommendations based on a second comprehensive visit to these cities scheduled during month of April 2010.

Besides the two cities identified by MoUD, the team visited Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF) to understand the CGRS of the municipal bodies in small towns and the challenges faced by them in formally institutionalizing the complaint handling mechanism for improved urban governance

Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF)

Faridabad is the biggest urban agglomeration of Haryana consisting of old municipal Towns of Faridabad, Ballabhgarh, and New Industrial Town along with 38 revenue villages. It is the twelfth district of Haryana and comes under the Gurgaon Division of Haryana.³ The district has an area of 2151.00 Kms. It accommodates a population of approximately 13 lakhs (MCF, 2009). The district has 5 Community Development Blocks located in 4 tehsils. It has 388 revenue villages of which 25 are uninhabited and 40 villages have been urbanised.⁴ The **Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF)** is a civic body providing all the basic civil amenities to the citizens across 35 wards. It is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of roads, sewers, water supply lines, streetlights, public parks etc. TERI team held extensive interactions with the officials of MCF to understand the grievance redressal mechanism and critically assess its efficacy.

Grievance registration at MCF

The citizens of Faridabad can register their complaints and grievances with MCF using one of the following three options:

Personally visiting the MCF office and registering their complaints:

In each of the 35 ward offices, complaint registers are maintained separately for water supply, sewerage and general complaints. For electrical services (largely street lighting complaints), complaints are being registered at three centres across the licensed area of MCF. At present, peons and lower level staff are handling the registers and there is no separate staff to exclusively handle and maintain the complaint registers. At some of the offices, the JE himself registers the consumer complaints and directs the fieldworkers/linemen to collect the necessary equipments (required for resolution of consumer's problem) from the store and ask them to resolve the issue. Consumers can register their grievances anytime during the office hours i.e. from 9AM- 5 PM.

³ Haryana is divided into four Divisions. Each Division is headed by Divisional commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner is the administrative head of District. Faridabad is divided into four Sub Divisions and each Sub Division is headed by Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM).

⁴ Source: http://faridabad.nic.in/dist_profile.htm.

Online complaint registration:

The online complaint lodging facility was launched by MCF in 2008. The consumer can register his complaint regarding any of the services provided by MCF. After registration, a unique ticket number along with the details of the concerned officials who would handle the grievance is given to the consumer which can be used by the consumer to track the status of his grievance at any stage of the grievance resolution process. Once a complaint is registered, it is automatically forwarded to the Junior Engineer (JE), Assistant Engineer (AE) and the Executive Engineer (EE) of the team (water, sewerage etc) in the complainant’s ward.

Telephonic registration:

While at present there is no helpline number to handle consumer complaints, however consumers can directly contact the JE, AE or EE to lodge their complaints. The contact details of all the officials are given on the website and are also available on request from RWAs, media reports etc.

Apart from these channels, a complaint center has also been housed at the Municipal Commissioner’s office, where in citizens can get their complaints lodged. The citizens who do not have access to internet facility or do not know how to lodge their complaints can come to MCF and get their complaints registered in the online complaint registration system at Municipal Commissioner’s office.

Grievance Resolution at MCF

After the complaint is registered, officials first cross check whether there is actually a problem in the consumer’s area/ residence. Having done that, officials at the concerned ward need to take an appropriate action to resolve the issue.

From the discussion with officials, the TERI team understood that all emergency complaints (such as drainage and water clogging etc.) are attended to on the same day while for other complaints; the minimum resolution time is 3 days. The concerned official has to report the status within 3 days failing which the complaint is automatically escalated to the next level official based on the hierarchy (Figure 4.2). This facility is only available in the online system.

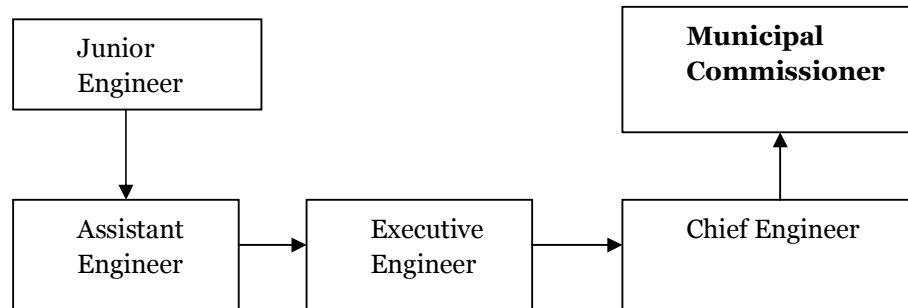


Figure 4.2: Automatic escalation of complaints based on hierarchy at MCF

Source: Based on discussions with MCF

In the online system, all the team members (JE, AE, EE) can categorize the complaints allocated to their team into following three categories:

1. Pending grievances
2. Complaint resolved and complainant is satisfied
3. Complaint resolved and the complainant is not satisfied

Cases where the complaint cannot be immediately resolved due to financial requirements and which need approvals from higher authorities, the consumer is given an interim reply and it is reflected in the system as a 'Complaint resolved and the complainant not satisfied' (iii above). In such cases, the consumer can approach higher-level officials to get it redressed. At every stage of the resolution process, the officials upload their comments and remarks (whether resolved or not) in the system that can be viewed by the consumer.

Grievance resolution is not a structured process when the consumers register their complaints telephonically. In this case, the consumer directly calls the JE/AE/ EE (on their personal contact number) for raising their concerns and the officials have to direct the field workers accordingly. According to the corporation officials, it is difficult for them to attend to the calls throughout the day simultaneously with following up with the field staff to ensure timely resolution of the issue. It was also noted that MCF staff do not always call back the consumers to know if the consumers are satisfied with the resolution process. This is primarily due to the fact that officials are severely tied up with consumer calls throughout the day which leaves them with no time to seek their feedback. After receiving the information from the field staff, the officials formally close the complaint. It was highlighted by the officials at MCF that after online complaint registration has been put in place; there has been a reduction in the number of complaint received telephonically.

The MCF officials highlighted that the most frequent complaints are related to sewerage problems. Following is the list of complaints in the order of recurrence:

1. Sewerage
2. Street light
3. Water supply
4. Sanitation
5. Roads
6. Parks

TERI's observations on CGRS at MCF

- There is no helpline number or call center dedicated to customer complaints.
- There is a lack of trained personnel to handle consumer complaints. Even within the MCF offices there is no separate personnel manning the complaint desk, instead peons and lower level staff are handling the complaint register.
- No analysis is being done for identifying the trends in complaints, most affected areas etc.
- The minimum resolution time for all complaints excluding emergency complaints is 3 days. This standard has been adopted by MCF without any specific rationale.
- MCF has not adopted a citizen's charter so far, giving basic information to consumers such as the standards for each service, contact details of officers etc.
- After the complaint is resolved the concerned staff does not always take consumer feedback
- There is a lack of willingness to adopt the IT enabled system on part of the employees
- Service level benchmarks prescribed by MoUD are not being followed at present.
- Formal meetings or interactions with consumers are not held on a periodic basis. Occasionally the Municipal Commissioner and other officials interact with RWAs and consumers but this is not on a regular basis.
- For any complaint resolution which requires approval from higher authorities, the concerned team puts them under the head of 'Complaint resolved and the complainant not satisfied'. However, such complaints should be reflected under the pending grievance head so as to enable effective monitoring of the grievances and also to build up accountability on the part of concerned officials.

TERI team also visited Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and Mysore City Corporation (MCC) to understand the working of CGR systems in larger cities and draw lessons from the best practices. The working of CGR system in the aforementioned corporations has been described below.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is in charge of the civic administration of Bengaluru. It was formed in 2007 by merging 100 wards of the erstwhile Bangalore Mahanagara

Palike with the neighbouring 7 City Municipal Councils (CMC), one town Municipal Council and 110 villages around Bangalore.

Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike presently comprises of 8 Zones and 198 wards within its jurisdiction.

Consumer Grievance Redressal System (CGRS) at BBMP

Citizens have the following avenues to get their grievances registered at BBMP.

- Online Complaint Registration
- 24x7 Helpline number
- Post
- SMS

Online grievance redressal system

The online complaint registration system “*Spandana*” has been recently launched by BBMP in September 2009. All kinds of complaints can be lodged from tree fall to health, revenue and civic infrastructure related problems. The citizen can register his complaints on Spandana link on BBMP’s website (www.spandana.kar.nic.in). A complaint form is opened where consumer has to give his details such as name, address, zone, the concerned department for which complaint is made and the description of the complaint. The consumer is also asked his mobile number to update him about status of the complaint through SMS.

24x7 Helpline

BBMP introduced a 24x7 helpline number (Centralized call centre) in July 2009. Once a citizen calls up at the BBMP office, the call gets routed to the centralized call center. It is an IVR based system which connects the citizen to the call center representative after which details are taken from the citizen and are passed on the concerned official through wireless sets. After the official reports back the status to the call center, the call center representative informs the citizen regarding the status of the complaint. The centralized call center is located in the West zone.

It is being manned by eight customer service working in three shifts viz.;

First shift: 8 AM- 3 PM,

Second shift: 3-10 PM,

Third shift: 10 PM- 8 AM.

BBMP claims that it receives 100-200 complaints everyday through the system.

Apart from the centralized call center, citizens can also call up their respective zone offices to lodge their complaints/grievances. Each zone has a control room, where staff logs the complaints into the system. All of this feeds into the central database maintained by the centralized call center. Citizens can also text their complaints to BBMP which are immediately responded through an SMS stating that their grievance has been registered. The text message is forwarded to the field officer and again a message is sent giving the name and contact details of the officer.

Complaint redressal process

Call centre executives are supported by 3 full-time BBMP employees who act as supervisors. 4 representatives handle the inbound calls and the rest handle outbound calls. Inbound representatives get all the relevant details from the citizen whenever he/she calls and log the same into the system. After the complaint is fed into a relevant complaint category, the system automatically generates the name of the concerned official who would handle the complaint⁵. They are also responsible for forwarding the call to the relevant official through wireless sets (walkie-talkie). The call received from the complainant is first recorded in the centralized call centre and is then forwarded to the field official. About 650 officers have been provided with wireless sets. After a complaint is allocated to an official, he resolves it and reports the status back to the call centre executive who then verifies it by calling the consumer and getting the feedback. The outbound representatives handle these calls.

All the calls made from the control room to the field official (and received from him) are recorded. This helps in tracking and monitoring of complaints.

Once a complaint gets lodged with BBMP through any of the above mentioned channels, an acknowledgement is sent to the citizen containing the following information- Name of the grievance officer, contact details of the officer, time limit within which the complaint will get redressed, grievance number/ docket number.

The time limits for redressing a complaint are linked to the citizen charter. If an officer does not redress a complaint it automatically gets escalated to the next higher level. The number of intermediaries involved in the escalation process

⁵ The directory of BBMP officials with their contact details, classified according to specific zones, wards and geographical location has been fed into the system

differs according to the department. For instance, in case of health related complaints, there are a total of 9 levels involved starting from the Junior health inspector to the Additional Commissioner. The call center representatives informed TERI team that generally complaints get resolved at the Executive engineer level and does not get to the Additional Commissioner level.

The auto escalation of health related complaints in BBMP is shown in Figure 4.3 below:

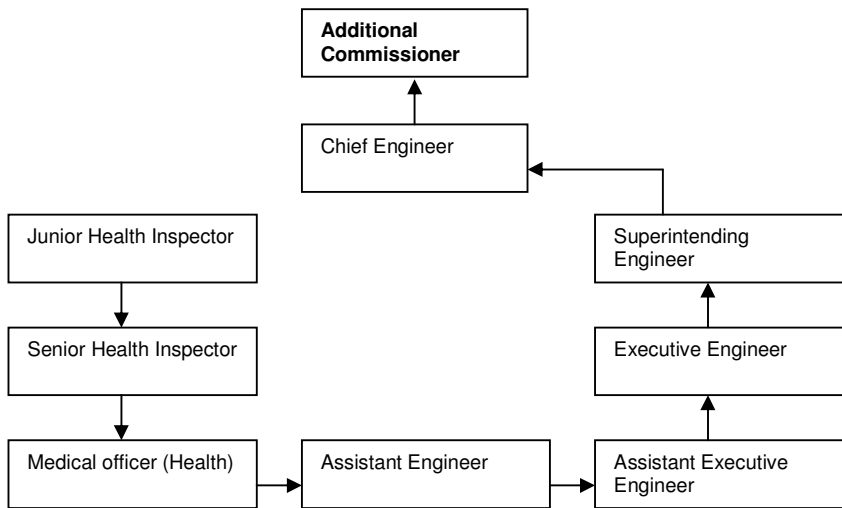


Figure 4.3: Automatic escalation of health related complaints based on hierarchy at BBMP

Source: Based on discussions with BBMP

Those complaints, which require funds and approvals from higher officials, are reflected as pending grievances. Complaints are monitored regularly. Daily and weekly reports are being sent to the respective zones to the zonal commissioner for monitoring purposes.

TERI's observations on CGRS at BBMP

- Apart from the regular channels of grievance redressal, BBMP proactively scans the leading dailies for complaints against BBMP. The control room staff in each zone registers the complaint of a particular zone into the system.
- BBMP officials stated that the most commonly used mode for complaint registration was the voice-based system. The least used is the online system. BBMP officials opined that people prefer direct contact with

the officials and the online registration system does not provide this interface.

- A unique feature of the grievance redressal system in BBMP is the classification of complaint as normal and VIP complaint. The call representatives told the TERI team that normal complaints are the routine complaints lodged by citizens however sometimes the Additional Commissioner or very senior officials forward certain complaints, which are addressed on a priority basis. The colour coding for these complaints is different so they get redressed on a priority basis.
- BBMP is also accepting complaints related to the services provided by BWSSB.
- MoUD service level benchmarks are not followed at present, however officials stated that BBMP is planning to upgrade its CGR system in line with the MoUD service level benchmarks.

Observations of CIVIC on the working of CGRS in BBMP

- BBMP earlier had a manual consumer grievance redressal system, which was initiated along with CIVIC. The emphasis was on organizing weekly gathering where both the public and the officials of BBMP were present. The officials would discuss status of complaints and the action they took to redress. Public gatherings ensured that there was pressure on the employees of BBMP. The Resident Welfare Associations were keenly involved in the grievance redressal process and attended the weekly meetings organized by BBMP.
- CIVIC representatives pointed out that the newly introduced IT enabled system is not effective, as there is no physical interaction with citizens. It reduces pressure on employees. It is observed that staff responsible for redressal call up the call centre and inform that a complaint has been redressed, when it actually has not been. There should be a system of keeping evidence on the redressal (photo, signature of consumer etc.)
- There is not enough staff dedicatedly working on only consumer redressal. Further the existing staff is neither penalized nor incentivised for redressing consumer issues.
- Regular monitoring of the system is required.

- Ward committees should be involved in consumer grievance redressal.
- Despite the IT system, staff at the field level directly receives complaints.
- NGOS involved in the CGR process are not paid well by ULBs.
- Discussion with a few common citizens brought out that not too many people are even aware about the CGR facility.
- It is widely felt that the current grievance registration system is focused on attending complaints and not effectively redressing them.
- Awareness needs to be imparted to the masses so that they can use the complaint management system.

Despite the shortcomings in the grievance redressal system in BBMP, it is felt that the performance of BBMP with respect to addressing the concerns of the public has improved considerably post the implementation of the automated system and 24x7 helpline number. Some of the noteworthy practices followed in BBMP with respect to grievance redressal have been summarized in the box below:

Box 4.1

<u>Best Practices from BBMP</u>	
✓	A robust IT enabled grievance redressal system capturing complaints and general enquiries in detail in-built with powerful complaint analysis and reporting tools.
✓	Voice recording of all the information from complainant. The purpose of voice recording is extremely useful as the same can be immediately forwarded to BBMP officials who would know the exact details of the complaint
✓	Easy access to citizen through a range of touch points - 24x7 helpline, sms, online CGRS, post etc.
✓	Proactive initiative of BBMP of scanning leading dailies for complaints
✓	A structured call center with separate representatives handling inbound and outbound calls, supervised by BBMP officials.

Mysore City Corporation (MCC) provides all the basic services to citizens and caters to a population of around 10 lakhs (approx). Its area of jurisdiction is spread over 129 square kms covering 9 zones and 65 wards. MCC is governed by the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976.

PGR system in Mysore

MCC has adopted the PGR (Public Grievances Redressal) module, which has also been implemented in 56 other cities in Karnataka. The PGR module was introduced in Karnataka in 2005.

Citizens can lodge their complaints using either of these channels:

- Phone –24x7 toll free helpline number
- Internet- MCC online grievance redressal system
- Paper applications – Available at MCC office in local language and English
- SMS

The citizens can get their complaints registered after which they are given a unique tracking number, which enables them to track their complaints at any stage during the redressal.

Complaints are graded into two categories: A and B.

Complaints under category A are considered to be emergency complaints and they have to be redressed within 24 hours.

Complaints under category B are considered to be urgent and they have to be resolved within 7 days. Category A complaints include those of dead stray animals, water leakage, tree falling, road blocks etc. Category B complaints include all other complaints.

The officials of MCC have been deployed in three Rapid Action Forces teams to tackle emergency situations round the clock in three constituencies.

MCC has recently introduced a SMS integrated system. This system has been in operation since August 2008.

Through this system, a citizen can register his grievance by sending a text message to MCC in a prescribed format. The computer accepts the message because it is in the format and generates a docket number. It further forwards it to the concerned official for action.

Three numbers have been provided for SMS based complaint registration. These 3 sims are attached to the computer system through modem to receive the SMS from the public.

As soon as the system accepts the sms, immediately an acknowledgement is sent to the citizen. In those cases, where SMS is not in the format, the same is communicated to the citizen.

After the concerned official attends the complaint, he opens the original message and types S3, which is a reply to original message stating that the complaint has been attended.

The computer automatically closes the complaint and sends the information to the complainant as under

“Your complaint registered on ‘date’ docket number AG1 – 21 -11 – 1001 – 09 is attended and closed, Regards MCC”

If the Citizen is not able to send an SMS he can call the toll free helpline number of MCC and file his complaint.

Auto escalation of complaints

The CGR system in MCC is inbuilt with auto escalation feature. If category A complaints are not attended to within 24 hours, an escalation message will be sent to the immediate officer viz. Assistant Commissioner (AC) to inform him to attend the same in another 24 hours. If the AC does not attend, the complaint will get escalated to the Divisional Officers (DO) allowing another 24 hours. If the Divisional Officer fails to attend the complaint the final escalation message will be forwarded to the Commissioner and IT head.

In case of Category B, the escalation occurs in the same order. However the time limit for each official is 7 days. A progress report is also sent automatically to the Corporators at a fixed point of time.

The SMS integrated CGR system is depicted in the figure 4.4 below:

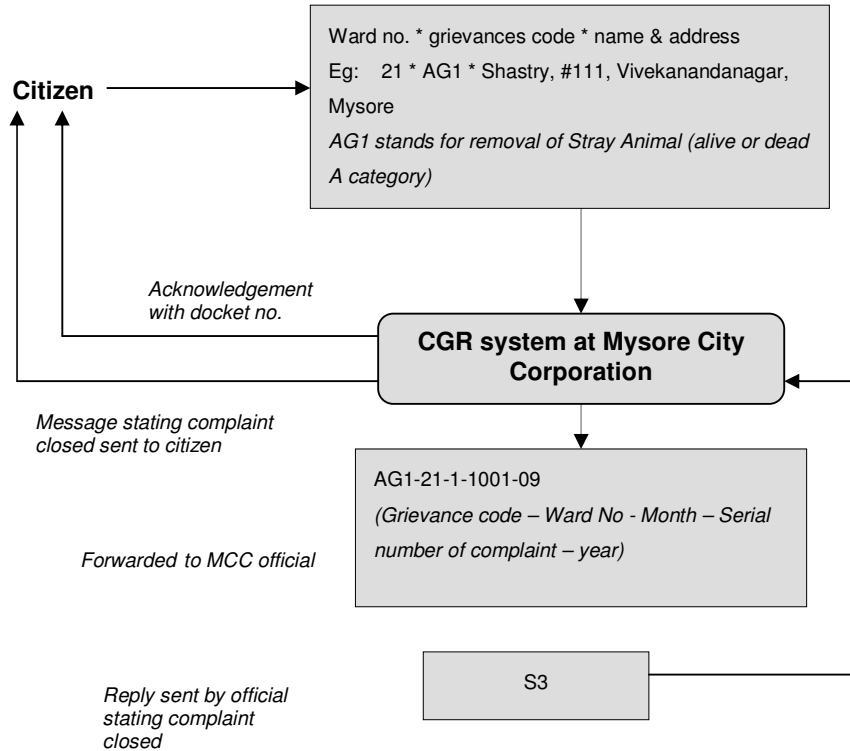


Figure 4.4: SMS integrated CGRS at Mysore City Corporation

Source: Based on information given by Mysore City Corporation

The officials of MCC opined that SMS based complaint registration is time saving and convenient for the citizen. Further the automatic transfer of the grievance message to the executive saves time in communication.

However, it has also been observed that the present SMS integrated complaint based system is not very effective as it is quite cumbersome to type the complaint in the specific format. The format requires the grievance code to be mentioned, which may not be always known by the citizen. However, MCC officials told TERI team that the grievance codes are widely publicized in newspapers.

Apart from the PGR system the citizens also have the option of approaching the citizen centers for grievances specifically pertaining to water supply. In addition to these avenues, Jan Spandana meetings are held every Saturday, which are attended

by all corporators, mayor and the general public. Citizens can get their grievances redressed in such forums also.

CHAPTER 5 Model Framework for CGRS

Based on the literature review, stakeholder discussions and the review of CGRS in various cities that have been visited by project team, TERI has developed an IT-based model framework of CGRS for municipal services. The model framework has incorporated the lessons drawn from good practices followed by few cities and has also addressed the structural issues in the existing systems.

Consumer grievance redressal system should be structured, responsive, efficient and flexible enough to adapt itself to changes. The following chart describes the main components of the consumer grievance process in detail.

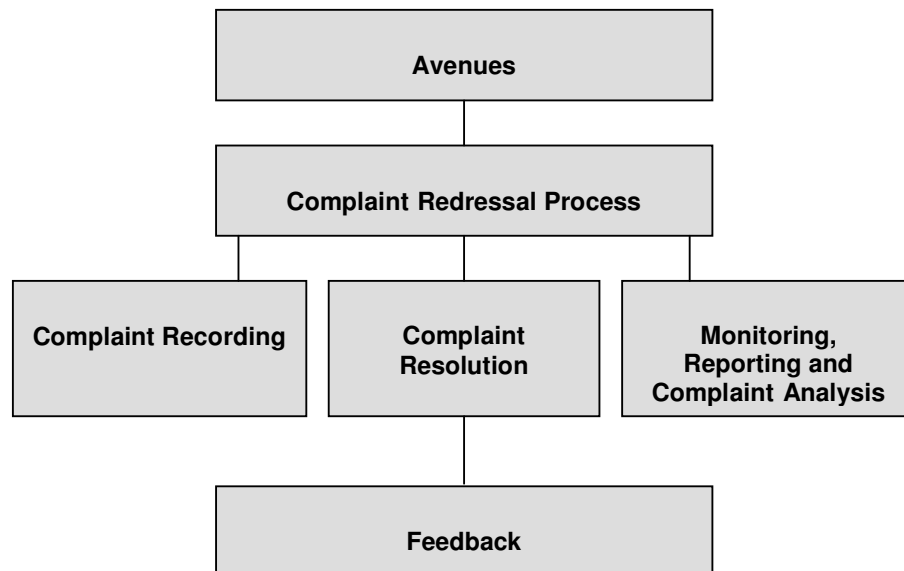


Figure 5.1: Components of Grievance redressal Mechanism

Source : TERI

Avenues

The various channels for grievance registration available to the citizen are:

- Phone
- Walk in
- Online CGRS

The preference for a particular channel depends on its accessibility, effectiveness and trustworthiness. It is therefore important to broaden the access to the consumer. This can be

enhanced by increasing the number of “**touch points**” for the consumer and also by increasing the geographical spread of these touch points.

During stakeholder interactions, the TERI team was informed that phone is the most preferred option for complaint registration, followed by walk in and email/posts. This is primarily attributed to the fact that citizens prefer those options where they are able to directly interact with the municipal authorities. Online CGRS is a relatively new initiative, which has been implemented in number of large cities due to the widespread use of e-governance in public service delivery.

The number of touch points should be decided keeping in view the socio-economic profile of the citizens and their preference for various options. Besides this, it is imperative to consider the costs associated with each of the options before deciding the appropriate channels of grievance redressal.

Key features

- ✓ **Centralized call center:** A centralized call center should be established. The complaints made by citizens’ also act as consumer feedback for the services provided by the municipal corporation. Lodging of complaints should be costless for consumers to encourage them to voice their concerns and provide their feedback. Hence, a toll free number should be given for this call center.
- ✓ **Complaint desk for walk-in complaints:** Each ward office should have a complaint desk/ complaint counter, which should be manned by dedicated municipal staff responsible for recording the details of the complaints in the computer system lodged by the citizens who personally come visit the ward offices for registering their grievances.

Complaint Redressal Process

A. Complaint Recording

Complaint recording should be done in such a manner that it captures all the relevant details of the complaint, which helps not only in the complaint redressal but also facilitates monitoring and periodic complaint analysis.

Key features

Complaint details: The complaint registration should have the following information to be provided by the complainant:

- Name
 - Landline number/Mobile number
 - Address
 - Pin code → This should automatically generate citizen's ward and zone
-
- Grievance main category and subcategory →
It should be provided with a drop down menu with options of all possible kinds of complaints (See figure below)

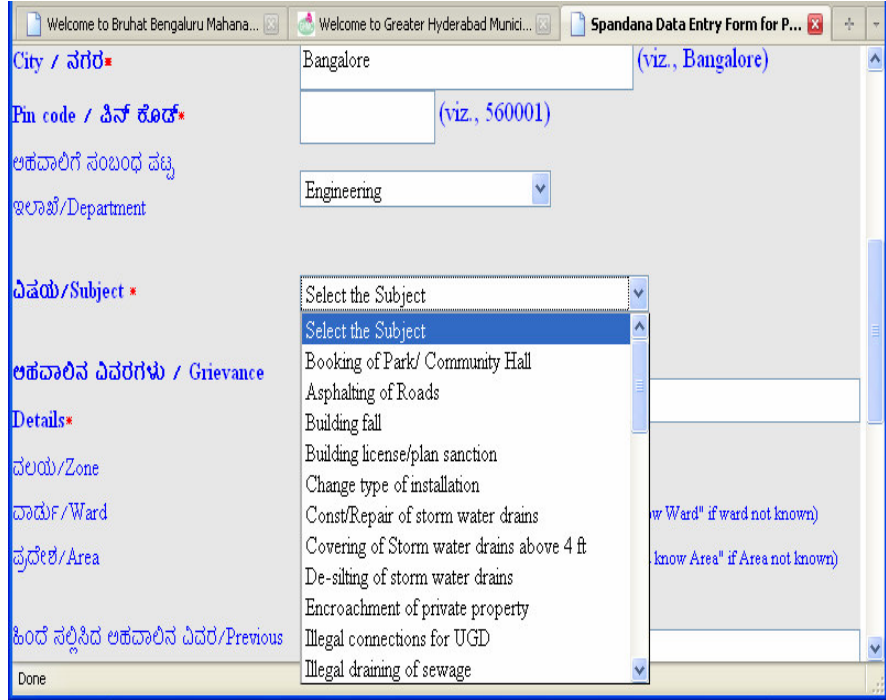


Figure 5.2: Online grievance registration system at BBMP

Source: BBMP

The system should be able to generate the ward and zone number as soon as the pincode is entered. This feature is extremely useful, as many citizens are not aware of their respective zones and wards.

- ✓ **New complaint/Repeat Complaints:** Apart from recording the above set of information, the system should also be able to capture if the consumer is lodging the complaint for the first time or if he has made a complaint before. This would help in analyzing if the same problem has recurred and how frequently a citizen faces problems.

- ✓ **Auto routing of grievance:** Given the grievance subcategory and the citizen's ward and zone, the system should automatically generate the name of the concerned department official who shall be responsible for the resolution. Entire directory of the municipal corporation officials mapped according to department, hierarchy and geographical area should be fed into the system, based on which the system should identify and route a grievance to a specific officer.

- ✓ **Acknowledgement slip:** After complaint is recorded, acknowledgement should be given to the complainant with the following information:
 - Grievance registration number
 - Complaint lodging time and date
 - Stipulated resolution time
 - Name of the concerned officer
 - Toll free centralized call center number

Based on the citizen charter and actual experience/observation, the Municipal Corporation could fix the stipulated resolution time for each complaint category.

The telephone number of grievance redressal officer should not be given as they citizens may directly get in touch with the official to get his complaint redressed. This would render the CGR system inefficient, as the whole process would become unstructured. Further, it may increase corruption/speed money within the organization as officials may charge citizens to resolve problems. To avoid these issues, it would be preferable to give the number of the centralized call center.

TERI proposes the above mechanism of complaint registration for all the avenues viz. centralized call centre, online complaint registration system as well as walk in at the zonal/ward offices. For online complaints, complainants should be given option of taking a print out of the acknowledgement slip. The citizens who get their complaints lodged over the phone should be communicated all the information by the call centre executive and the complainant who physically go and get their complaints lodged should be given the acknowledgement slip by the official handling the complaint desk at the zonal/ward office.

B. Complaint Resolution

Complaint resolution process should be systematic and structured. After the complaint is recorded it should be automatically forwarded to concerned department official

without any time lag to ensure speedy resolution of complaints. An official should be able to see all the complaints that have been allocated to him.

Key features

- ✓ **Complaint details:** The Complaint details should be sent to the concerned official automatically through the intranet system as soon as the complaint is submitted and the official should be able to access all the complaints using his unique login ID and password. The following details should be made available to the official:
 - Grievance registration number
 - Consumer's contact details such as phone number, address, respective zone and ward
 - Complaint lodging date and time
 - Stipulated resolution time
 - **SMS integrated system:** In addition to the above intranet system, SMS should also be sent to his contact number. Most officials are severely tied up due to which they are unable to check their systems on a regular basis, therefore SMS based system would ensure that complaint reaches the official as soon as it gets registered in the system.

- ✓ **Allocation of complaint to field official:** Once the complaint details are available to the concerned official, he/she should select an appropriate field person to resolve the issue at the citizen's premises. Each of such field staff should be provided unique contact number and employee ID which should automatically appear in the system as soon as the official selects the name of the field worker in his system. This should also be automatically updated in the call centre system.

- ✓ **Complaint status:** At any point of time after a complaint is registered (online/walk-in/phone), its status (i.e stage of the redressal process) can be any one of the three options, namely, (1) Pending (2) closed and (3) in process
 - **Pending complaints:** In case a complaint requires much longer time to resolve or there are some approvals required from higher authorities such as additional funds, new construction etc., then the official himself can update its status as pending in his system. There should also be an option of writing remarks if the complaint is pending. The

details of such complaints with the remarks made by the concerned official will be automatically forwarded to all the senior officials in the department so that senior officials can easily understand the reasons for complaint being not taken up and what interventions are required to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the consumer. For such complaints, the concerned official should directly inform the consumer about the issue before the stipulated time provided to the citizen during the registration process.

- **Closed complaints:** The concerned official should not have option to close the complaint by himself to avoid any misreporting of information for his benefit in terms of either lesser complaints to handle or a better performance appraisal. As soon as the complaint is resolved by the field personnel, he should inform the call centre executives about the status of complaint. These field officers are allocated a unique phone number so that whenever a call is received from such numbers, the call should be automatically transferred to the dedicated executives who are responsible for updating the status of complaints in the system (as explained later in the section). They can also send a SMS to the call centre to update the status once the complaint is rectified.
- **'In process' complaints:** If the complaint is not closed by field personnel as explained above, the system itself will show its status as 'in process' in the call centre system as well as in the concerned official's system.
- ✓ **Status updation by call center executive:** The executives dedicated for status updation should have a system where against each of the complaint (identified by the grievance registration number), he/she can update its status as closed and the system should automatically generate the date and time at which it is closed. As soon as the executive receives call/SMS from field officer informing that the complaint has been resolved, the executive makes a call to the complainant to seek the feedback. As long as the feedback is not updated in the system, the complaint is not closed. Once the status is updated as closed by the call centre

executive, the status is automatically updated in the concerned official's system as well.

In case of a poor feedback, the status of the complaint should remain as 'in process'. The feedback mechanism has been elaborated in the subsequent section.

C. Monitoring, Reporting and Complaint Analysis

Monitoring complaints at all stages of grievance redressal is essential to bring in accountability into the CGRS. It also helps in measuring the performance of employees with respect to complaint redressal and linking it to the performance appraisal. Monitoring should be done at various levels within the Municipal Corporation.

Analysis of complaints on the basis of system generated MIS reports is absolutely vital as it serves as an important reviewing tool to know the efficacy of the system.

- ✓ **Monitoring 'in process' complaints:** As already mentioned, if the status is not closed at the call centre, then it should automatically show it as 'in process' and the similar status should be updated in the official's system as well. The concerned official can provide his/her comments/remarks and the stage of the resolution in his system for all the complaints that are not closed and still under process. These comments/remarks are made with the help of periodic follow-ups with the concerned field worker. Once the official uploads any such comment, it gets updated at the call centre system. This would facilitate the executives to update the complainants if he/she calls up at the call centre to know the status of his/her complaint before the stipulated time provided for resolution.
- ✓ **Auto escalation:** If a complaint stretches beyond the stipulated time limit, it should immediately get escalated to the next higher level official. The municipal authority should decide the number of intermediaries to be involved and the respective time allocated for each level.
 - As soon as stipulated time is over for a 'in process complaint', the dedicated call centre executive calls the complainant and inform him/her about the status and can also tell him about the stage of resolution (which has been

updated by the concerned official). If in case the official has not given any remarks and the complaint is not closed even after stipulated time, then the executive should call up the concerned official and request him to update the information so that the same can be communicated to the citizen to avoid any consumer's dissatisfaction

- ✓ **Reporting:** System should be have inbuilt MIS reporting, such that various reports presented in tabular and pie charts formats can be generated for complaint analysis. It should be able to generate reports on number of complaints registered in a particular time period, department wise complaints, zone/ward wise complaints, complaints allocated to various officials, complaints resolved in stipulated time period, unresolved and pending complaints so on and so fort.
- ✓ **Complaint Analysis:** Based on the system-generated reports, regular complaint analysis should be undertaken to identify trends in complaints based on various parameters. Separate staff must be employed for periodic complaint analysis. A comprehensive complaint analysis in a municipal corporation can help to identify various aspects such as:
 - Recurring complaint in a particular zone/ward
 - Any significant shift in the number and category of complaints in a particular zone/ward
 - Any specific department that received maximum complaints in a given period of time
 - Particular officials who are continuously not able to provide timely resolution to complaints that have been allocated to them (*This can be useful to link the official's performance with their annual appraisal which helps to build more accountability amongst the employees*)
 - Any issue that has led to human injuries and frequency of such complaints

Feedback

Feedback from citizens is essential to know if the system is performing efficiently and is able to deliver the desired outcomes. Feedback is also important to improvise the system with respect to changing needs and expectations of the citizens in order to provide them quality service.

- ✓ **Citizen satisfaction:** After the complaint is closed, the executives should call the complainants and ask for their feedback, in case the complainant is willing to give the same. The feedback should have the following:
 - Overall satisfaction (whether satisfied/somewhat satisfied/unsatisfied)
 - Do you think the behaviour of the field worker needs improvement?
 - Any suggestions for improvement?

Feedback received on closed complaints should get reflected in the department official's system. This would make the CGRS a robust system and further strengthen the monitoring process. It would also be useful for the official to demand an explanation from the field staff in case of poor feedback.

In case the complainant has not provided his/her contact details during complaint registration, feedback form should be sent to him by post.

Feedback form should also be available online in the online complaint tracking system. In this case, consumer can check the online status of his complaint (using the unique complaint registration number). If the complaint status is closed, a feedback form is made available to complainant.

However, in case the complaint is closed and the call centre executive has already called up the complainant and his feedback has already been uploaded in the system, then this customer will no longer be given option of providing feedback in the online complaint tracking system. Thus, feedback can be received online as well as by making call to the citizen, but once received from any of the two; the other option shall not be made available to the complainant to avoid inconsistencies in the feedback received from a complainant.

- ✓ **Third party customer satisfaction surveys:** Independent third party surveys would also provide an unbiased and fair assessment of the efficacy of the CGRS. This review should be both quantitative and qualitative and could be conducted on an annual basis. For instance, citizen report cards have been successfully implemented in Bangalore, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad

in obtaining consumer feedback on various aspects of the services. In these reports, consumer voices are recorded through participatory methodologies consisting of focus group discussions and sample households survey with different population groups.

The model framework illustrated above shall function effectively only if the pre-requisites are implemented:

- **Training and skill enhancement of functionaries:** A model CGR system would not yield maximum benefits, if the officials in the urban local bodies do not know possess the skills to use it optimally. The functionaries of the municipal corporations should be imparted training for operating the CGR system. Skill enhancement workshops should also be organized for effective complaint handling, educating them about the benefits of complaint handling.
- **Robust backend processes:** A good grievance redressal system requires a good data management system with robust backend processes. The CGR system must be backed by appropriate technologies to support service requirements such as 24-hour access etc. The call centres should be deployed with alternative connectivity and power supply solutions. The IT architecture should also offer a high level of security and privacy.
- **Awareness:** Awareness creation is extremely vital to ensure that citizens use the model CGR system. Targeted efforts must be made to create awareness among the masses about the CGR system.
- **Public disclosure:** The data/information on consumer complaints received by the municipal corporation in year should be available for public scrutiny. The information should primarily include the number of complaints for different categories of municipal services received during the year, percentage of complaints that have been resolved and that have been pending, key reasons for unresolved complaints, a trend analysis over the years indicating the performance of the municipal corporation in terms of its efficacy of complaint handling mechanism etc. This information can be included in the annual report

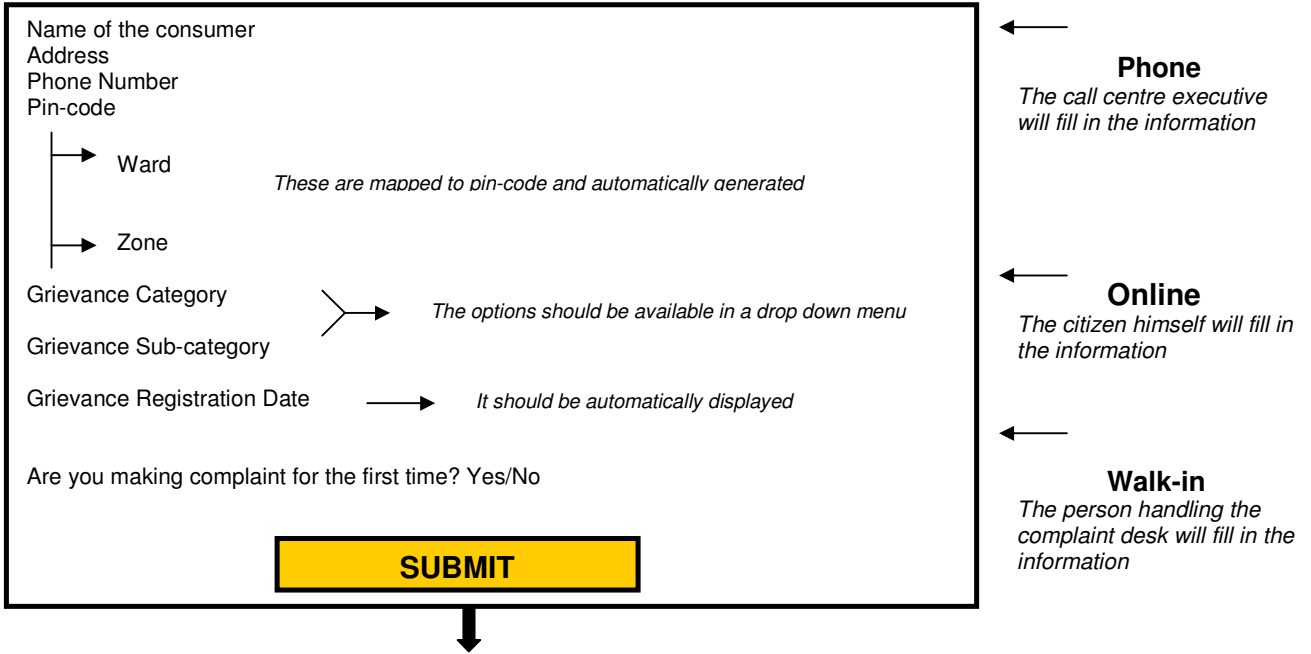
of the corporations and should be available in the public domain in the form of published annual reports and monthly report on corporation' website.

The detailed flow chart for the model CGRS is presented below:

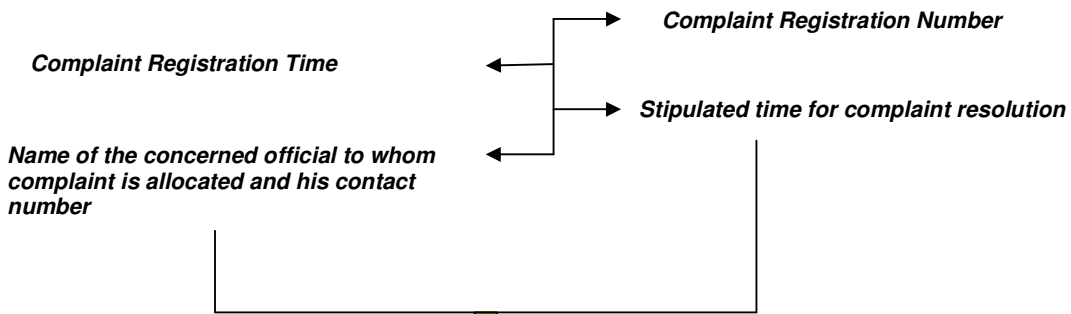
First interface between citizen and the municipal corporation

1

Complaint Registration Form (Online/Walk-in/Phone)

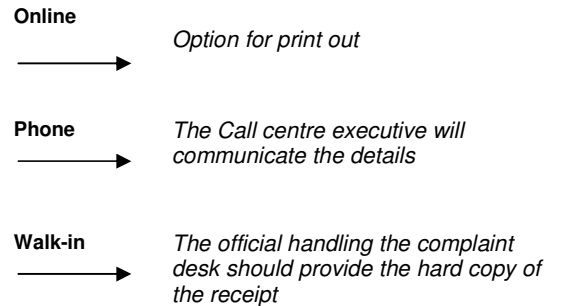
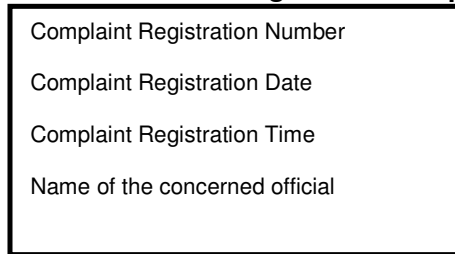


The system should generate



2

Acknowledgement Receipt



Redressal process: Flow of information within Municipal Corporation

1

Complaint Registration Form (Online/Walk-in/Phone)

Name of the consumer
Address
Phone Number
Pin-code

Ward
Zone
These are mapped to pin-code and automatically generated

Grievance Category
Grievance Sub-category
The options should be available in a drop down menu

Grievance Registration Date
It should be automatically displayed

Are you making complaint for the first time? Yes/No

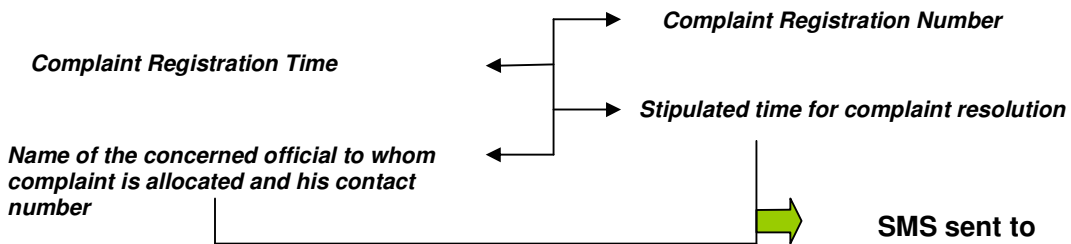
SUBMIT

Phone
The call centre executive will fill in the information

Online
The citizen himself will fill in the information

Walk-in
The person handling the complaint desk will fill in the information

The system should generate

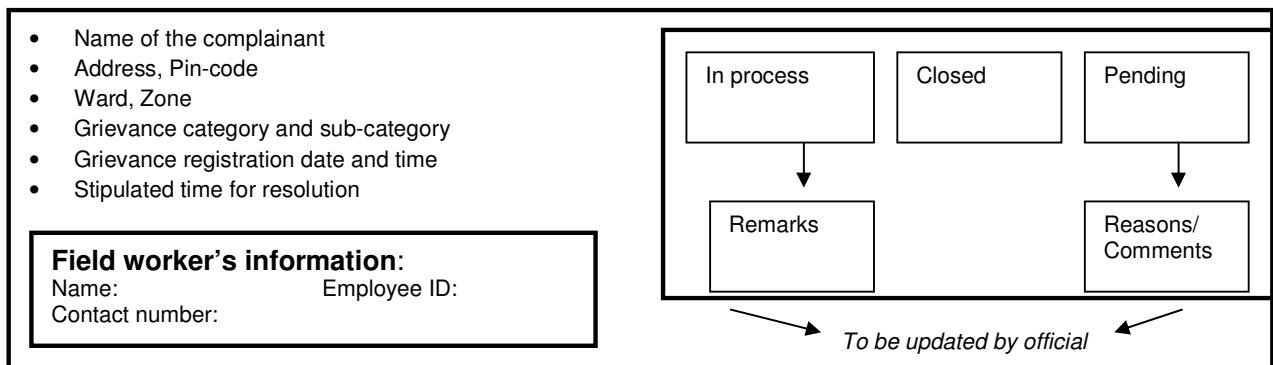


SMS sent to official

- Complaint Registration No.
- Complainant's Name, Address and contact details
- Stipulated resolution time
- Grievance category

3

Information available through Intranet to concerned official

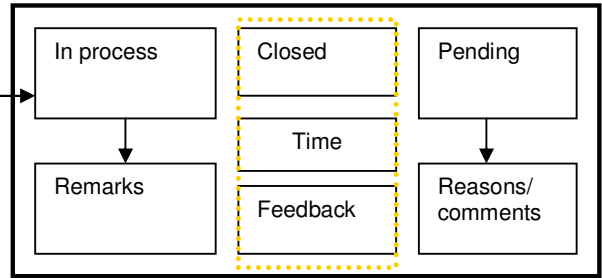


3

Information available through Intranet to concerned official

- Name of the complainant
- Address, Pin-code
- Ward, Zone
- Grievance category and sub-category
- Grievance registration date and time
- Stipulated time for resolution

Field worker's information:
 Name: _____ Employee ID: _____
 Contact number: _____



Complaint not closed at the call centre will be updated as 'in process' in the official's system

The official allocates a complaint to a particular field worker

The status is automatically updated as closed in the official's system with feedback and time

4

Field Worker

If the problem is rectified (Yes/No)

No

Yes

Status as 'in process' in the call centre database with remarks by official

Field worker calls up/SMS at the call centre to update the status

5

Centralized Call Centre

The executive should call the complainant to seek his feedback

Call centre executive updates the status as 'closed'

*System generates **time and date** when complaint is closed*

Is the stipulated time over? (Yes/ No)

No

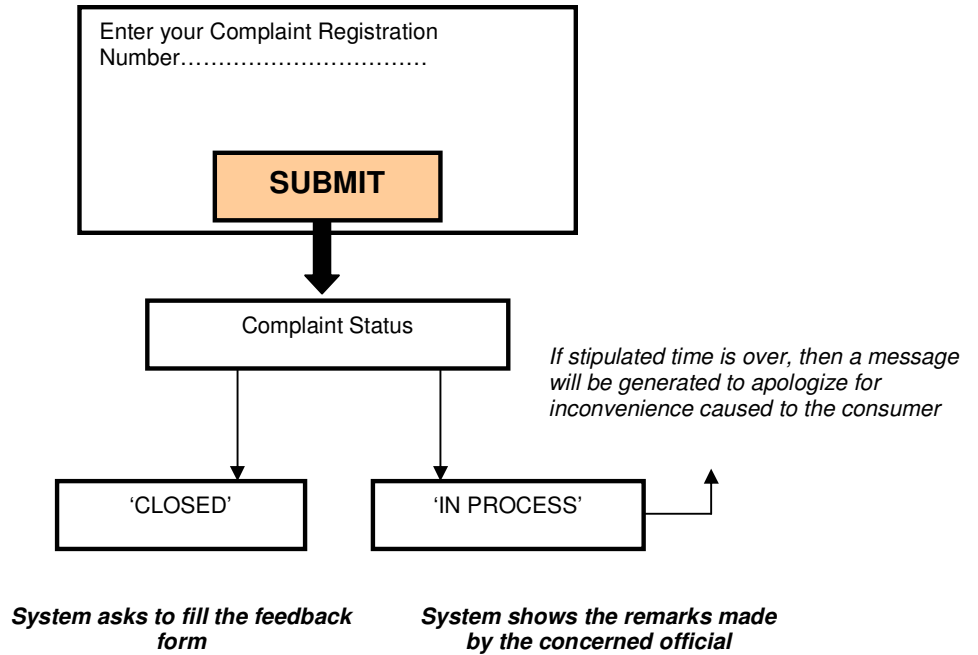
Yes

The executive can update the complainant about resolution stage (remarks by official) in case he calls up

Automatic escalation to higher authority as soon as stipulated time is over

The executive should call the complainant to apologize for the inconvenience and update him about the status (remarks by official)

Once the system records the status of the complaint as defined in the above framework, it is automatically updated in the online complaint tracking system as well, to facilitate the citizens to check the online status of their complaints using the unique complaint registration number (see figure below).



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