

READING MATERIAL ON OFFICE MANAGEMENT FOR IAS OFFICERS

December, 2018



भारत सरकार

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INSTITUTE OF SECRETARIAT TRAINING & MANAGEMENT
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PREFACE

The Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM), established in 1948, strives to function as a capable capacity building institution to fulfil demand driven human development needs of government and support institutions across the country for improved workflow delivery through sustainable, innovative and contemporary means, with the motto of “Efficiency and the Public Good”.

ISTM implements the Cadre Training Plan of Central Secretariat Service (CSS) and Central Secretariat Stenographers Service (CSSS) and other Organized Services functioning in the Central Secretariat. The Institute is entrusted with the task of providing orientation training to the officers joining the Central Government under the Central Staffing Scheme as Deputy Secretary and Director. The Institute also imparts training to the officers of the Central & State Government, Public Sector Undertakings, Autonomous Bodies, and also the Union Territory Administrations.

ISTM conducts research and undertakes consultancy work for capacity building in the field of governance by collaborating with client institutions in the areas of Training Need Analysis, Design of Training, Cadre Review/Restructuring, Audit of Proactive Disclosure under RTI Act, 2005, etc.

ISTM also conducts Management Development Programmes in the areas of Financial Management, Management Principles, Good Governance, Knowledge Management, Behavioural Techniques, Cabinet Note Preparation, Analytics of Big Data & Gender Sensitisation, in order to orient the officers in Government towards effective service delivery.

ISTM is the nodal institute for capacity building of Government officers for implementation of Right to Information Act, 2005. ISTM is the lead institute in the areas of Training of Trainers courses. ISTM conducts induction training for officers of Indian Cost Accounts Service on regular basis. Besides, probationers of various other organized services like IAS, IFS, IRS, IES, ISS, ITS, ICLS, IDES, IFOS, IIS, etc. attend short duration training programmes on Office Management, Personnel Management and Financial Management as well as Central Secretariat Practices.

This reading material is compiled primarily for the purpose of providing an overview of functioning of Government of India in Central Secretariat. I shall consider its objective fulfilled if the newly recruit officers find it handy and useful.

Dr.(Mrs.) Sunita H. Khurana
Director, ISTM

Chapter 1

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE IN GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

After reading this Chapter, the reader will be able to describe the following:

- a) Transaction of Government Business;*
 - b) Ministry/Department;*
 - c) Functions of various levels of functionaries;*
 - d) Organizations other than Ministries & Departments;*
 - e) Typology of Empowered Organization; and*
 - f) Strength and Weaknesses of Structure of Government of India*
-

1.1 Enactment of Constitution of India

1.1.1 The Constituent Assembly of India was elected by the Provincial Assembly in July, 1946, on the basis recommendation of the Cabinet Mission. Subsequently, it became a sovereign body in accordance with Indian Independence Act, 1947. India became independent. The Constitution of India was enacted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November, 1949. India adopted its Constitution on 26th January, 1950. With this adoption, India became a Republic replacing Government of India Act, 1935. Constitution became India's fundamental Governing document.

1.1.2 Constitution of India deals with three basic pillars of Indian Democracy – Executive, Parliament and Judiciary. Executive Power of the Union is vested in the President and exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him, in

accordance with Article 53 of the Indian Constitution. Article 74 provides that there shall be a Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister to aid and advise the President, who shall act according to such advice. Article 77 provides for the Conduct of Government Business. The first set of Rules, which were promulgated under Article 77 (3) of the Constitution were about allocation and transaction of Government Business.

1.2 Transaction of Government Business¹–

1.2.1 Under Article 77(3) of the Constitution, two set of Rules were made:

- (a) The Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961; and
- (b) The Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961.

1.2.2 The Allocation of Business Rules allocate business of the Government among its Ministries / Departments, which are assigned to the charge of the Ministers by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. In relation to the business allotted to a Minister, these rules also permit the association of another Minister or Deputy Minister to perform such functions as may be specifically assigned to him.

1.2.3 The Transaction of Business Rules seek to define the authority, responsibility and obligations of each department in the matter of disposal of business allotted to it. While providing that the business allotted to a department will be disposed of by, or under the direction of the Minister-in-charge, these rules also specify:

- (a) Cases or classes of cases to be submitted to the President, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet or its committees for prior approval; and

- (b) The circumstances in which the department primarily concerned with the business under disposal will have to consult other departments concerned and secure their concurrence before taking final decisions.

1.3 Ministry / Department²–

- (1) A Department is responsible for formulation of policies of the government in relation to business allocated to it and also for the execution and review of those policies.
- (2) For the efficient disposal of business allotted to it, a Department is divided into wings, divisions, branches and sections.
- (3) A Ministry / Department is normally headed by a Secretary to the Government of India who acts as the administrative head of the Department and principal adviser of the Minister on all matters of policy and administration within the Department.
- (4) The work in a Ministry / Department is normally divided into wings with a Special Secretary/ Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary in charge of each wing. Such a functionary is normally vested with the maximum measure of independent functioning and responsibility in respect of the business falling within his wing subject, to the overall responsibility of the Secretary for the administration of the department as a whole.
- (5) A wing normally comprises a number of divisions each functioning under the charge of an officer of the level of Director/Joint Director /Deputy

Secretary. A division may have several branches each under the charge of an Under Secretary or equivalent officer.

- (6) A section is generally the lowest organizational unit in a Ministry / Department with a well-defined area of work. It normally consists of assistants and clerks supervised by a Section Officer. Initial handling of cases (including noting and drafting) is generally done by secretariat personnel who are also known as the dealing hands.
- (7) Besides, there are variations like the Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence where, the Vice Chiefs of Staff, the Principal Staff Officers of the concerned branches and other appropriate authorities, exercise the powers delegated by the *Raksha Mantri* (Union Defence Minister) through various Branches and the Directorates of the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence.

1.4 **Functions of various levels of functionaries in the Central Secretariat³:**

- (a) **Secretary**—A Secretary to the Government of India is the administrative head of the Ministry or Department. She is the principal adviser of the Minister on all matters of policy and administration within her Ministry/Department, and her responsibility is complete and undivided.
- (b) **Special Secretary /Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary**—When the volume of work in a Ministry exceeds the manageable charge of a Secretary one or more wings may be established with Special Secretary/ Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary, in-charge of each wing. Such a

functionary is entrusted with the maximum measure of independent functioning and responsibility in respect of all business falling within her wing subject, to the general responsibility of the Secretary for the administration of the wing as a whole.

- (c) **Director /Deputy Secretary–** Director /Deputy Secretary is an officer who is in charge of a Secretariat Division and is responsible for disposal of Government business dealt within the Division under her charge. She should, ordinarily be able to dispose of the majority of cases coming up to her on her own. She should use her discretion in taking orders of the Joint Secretary/Secretary on more important cases, either orally or by submission of papers.

- (d) **Under Secretary–** An Under Secretary is in charge of a Branch consisting of two or more Sections and in respect thereto exercises control both in regard to the despatch of business and maintenance of discipline. Work comes to her from the sections under her charge. As Branch Officer she disposes of as many cases as possible at her own level but she takes the orders of Deputy Secretary or higher officers on important cases.

- (e) **Section Officer-** A Section Officer is the leader of a team comprising a Section which is the smallest yet most fundamental block in the structure

of the Central Secretariat. All file work in a Central Secretariat office are normally initiated from a Section.

(f) Assistant Section Officer - She works under the orders and supervision of the Section Officer and is responsible for the work entrusted to her. Where the line of action on a case is clear or the Branch Officer or higher officers have given clear instructions, she should put up a draft without much noting. In other cases, she will put up a note keeping in view the following points: -

- (i) to see whether all facts open to check have been correctly stated;
- (ii) to point out any mistakes or incorrect statement of the facts;
- (iii) to draw attention, where necessary, to precedents or Rules and Regulations on the subject;
- (iv) to put up the Guard file, if necessary, and supply other relevant facts and figures;
- (v) to bring out clearly the question under consideration and suggest a course of action wherever possible.

1.5 Offices – other than Ministries & Departments⁴-

1.5.1 Attached and Subordinate Offices:

- (1) Where the execution of the policies of the government requires decentralization of executive action and/or direction, a department may have under it executive agencies called 'Attached' and 'Subordinate' offices.

- (2) Attached offices are generally responsible for providing executive direction required in the implementation of the policies laid down by the department to which they are attached. They also serve as repository of technical information and advise the department on technical aspects of question dealt with by them.
- (3) Subordinate offices generally function as field establishments or as agencies responsible for the detailed execution of the policies of government. They function under the direction of an attached office, or where the volume of executive direction involved is not considerable, directly under a department. In the latter case, they assist the departments concerned in handling technical matters in their respective fields of specialization.

1.5.2 Constitutional Bodies: Such bodies, as are constituted under the provisions of the Constitution of India. Example: Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

1.5.3 Statutory Bodies: Such bodies as are established under the statute or an Act of Parliament. Example: National Commission for Women (NCW).

1.5.4 Autonomous Bodies: Such bodies as are established by the Government to discharge the activities, which are related to governmental functions. Although such bodies are given autonomy to discharge their functions in accordance with the Memorandum of Associations etc., but the Government's control exists since the

Government of India funds these bodies. Example: All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS).

1.5.5: Public Sector Undertakings are set-up in the form of companies or corporations in which the President of India or his nominees hold the shares and which are managed by Board of Directors, which includes officials and non-officials. Example: Steel Authority of India (SAIL).

1.5.6 Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence comprising Army Headquarters, Naval Headquarters, Air Headquarters and Defence Staff Headquarters are associated in the formulation of policies in relation to matters concerning the Defence of India and the Armed forces of the Union. They are responsible for providing executive direction required in the implementation of policies laid down by the Ministry of Defence. They exercise delegated administrative and financial powers.

1.6 Information and Facilitation Counters (IFCs)⁵

1.6.1 The Information and Facilitation Counter will provide the following services to the clients/customers of the organization:

- (1) Information regarding services provided and programmes, schemes etc. supported by the organization and the relevant rules and procedures, through brochures, folders etc.

- (2) Facilitating the customer/client to obtain the services of the Organization optimally, timely, efficiently and in a transparent manner and providing forms etc. of public usage;
- (3) Information regarding the standards of quality of service, time norms, etc. evolved by the organization with reference to the services/schemes/functioning of the organization;
- (4) Information regarding hierarchical set up of Public Grievance Redress Machinery of the organization; and
- (5) Receiving, acknowledging and forwarding the grievances / application / request / form etc. (related to the services provided by the Organization) to the concerned authority in the organization and providing information on their status/disposal.

1.7 Distribution / Delegation of Work

1.7.1 In this respect one has to remember that in a bureaucratic set-up, lower level functionaries merely carry out higher officers' directives. At the other extreme, one may like to push down decision making to the functionaries who are closest to the action. This is decentralization. In a decentralized organization, action can be taken more quickly to solve the problems, more people provide input into decisions, and employees are less likely to feel alienated from those who make the decisions that affect their work lives. Division in the Government is effectively decentralized when the Divisional Head has an open mind to delegate important decision making to her subordinates.

1.8 Job Standardization

1.8.1 If a job is highly standardized, the job incumbent has a minimum amount of discretion over what is to be done, when and how. Employees are always expected to handle the same input in exactly the same way, resulting in a consistent and uniform output. Thus standardization is very important for purely clerical and repetitive types of jobs within a Section.

1.9 Organization Structure of Central Secretariat

1.9.1 The Central Secretariat is essentially a **Bureaucratic** set-up. Standardization is the key concept that underlies all bureaucracies. The bureaucracy is characterized by highly routine operative tasks achieved through specialization, formalized rules and procedures, tasks that are grouped into functional Departments, Central Authorities, and narrow span of control and decision making that follows the chain of command. Primary advantage of bureaucracy lies in its ability to perform standardized activities in a highly efficient manner. Furthermore, the bureaucracy can get by nicely with less talented – and, hence, less costly functionaries.

1.9.2 The major weakness of a bureaucracy lies in the fact that specialization creates sub-unit conflicts. You may experience uncalled-for occasions when files are objected upon by the internal finance for reasons unknown to you! Another major weakness lies in obsession to follow the rules with a negative mind set. An officer needs to advocate positive interpretation of rules when such scope arises. It is near impossible to standardize such positivity. The bureaucracy is efficient only as long as the employees

confront problems which they have previously encountered and for which rules have already been established.

1.10 Empowered Organization

1.10.1 As a shield against the perils of bureaucratic structure, therefore, one may like to advocate the structure of an Empowered Organization. Modern day management gurus put forward the following typology of empowerment styles:

- i) Information sharing (downward communication)
- ii) Upward problem solving (I am there to protect you)
- iii) Task autonomy (peer pressure becomes prime control mechanism)
- iv) Attitudinal shaping (training, education, confidence building)
- v) Self-management (shift from “THEM” to “ME” model)

1.10.2 In the “THEM” model, the lower level functionaries think that it is “THEM” up there who set the procedures and rules and decide what is to be done and how. The most common thought is *“They want only my hands or back, not my brain. There is not a great deal I can do to change things, so I don’t bother about right or wrong – and I don’t bother working very hard either”*. But the “ME” model is just the opposite. The empowered employee feels at the center of a team that can achieve.

1.10.3 One has to also face the following challenges which are quite common in the Central Secretariat work culture when one tries to bring certain changes towards making one's own set up more structurally empowered:

- a) High tolerance level towards slow and centralized decision making;
- b) Short-term focus;
- c) Individual orientation scores over team orientation;
- d) Avoidance of conflict;
- e) Low risk-tolerance;
- f) Focus on results than on process;
- g) Individual accountability;
- h) Little or no horizontal cooperation;
- i) Highly politicized environment;
- j) Resistance to change;
- k) Guarded communication;
- l) Slow communication;
- m) Adoption of indirect communication styles.

1.11 Strength & Weaknesses of Existing Structure

1.11.1 As part of improving governance, the Prime minister of India has said that “...***a positive regulatory framework was being pushed ahead.***” Making a strong case for a policy-driven state, he pointed out that he has often called for ‘***Minimum***

Government and Maximum Governance'. The question is whether with the existing structure of the Government, that is achievable.

1.11.2 The 2nd Administrative Reforms commission (ARC) has commented that the existing structure of the Government of India has evolved over a long period. Hence, it has certain inherent strengths which have helped it stand the test of time. However, there are weaknesses also which render the system slow, cumbersome and unresponsive.

1.11.3 As for strength, the Government of India has evolved an elaborate structure, rules and procedures for carrying out its functions which have contributed to nation building and the creation of an inclusive state. These have ensured stability both during crises as well as normal times. At the same time, where considered essential, innovative structures have been created in form of empowered commissions, statutory boards, autonomous societies and institutions especially in the fields related to research, science and technology.

1.11.4 Moreover, the structure of Government staffed by the permanent civil servants has provided continuity and stability during the transfer of power from one elected government to the other. This has contributed to the maturing of Indian democracy. Besides, the well laid down rules and procedures of government have upheld the neutrality of the civil services and prevented politicization of government

programmes and services. This has helped in the evolution of institutions based on the principles enshrined in the Constitution.

1.11.5 As a matter of strength of the existing structure, the ARC also recognizes the link between policy making and its implementation and the fact that the framework of the Government of India has facilitated a staffing pattern which promotes a link between policy making and implementation. This has also helped the structure of both the Government of India and the States and promoted the concept of cooperative federalism.

1.11.6 The structure also advocates a national outlook amongst the public functionaries: Public servants working in Government of India as well as its attached and subordinate offices have developed a national outlook transcending parochial boundaries. This has contributed to strengthening national integration.

1.11.7 As for the weaknesses the Report of the 2nd ARC clearly points to the undue emphasis on routine functions. The Ministries of Government of India are often unable to focus on their policy analysis and policy making functions because of the large volume of routine work that they are saddled with. This leads to national priorities not receiving due attention. Often, functions which are best carried out by the State or Local Governments - could easily be outsourced. Further, the structure promotes undue proliferation of Ministries/Departments resulting in weak integration and coordination amongst them and creation of a large number of Ministries and Departments sometimes because of the lack of an integrated approach.

1.11.8 Also, adding to the weaknesses is an extended hierarchy with too many levels. Government of India has an extended vertical structure which leads to examination of issues at many levels frequently causing delays in decision making on the one hand and lack of accountability on the other. Another noteworthy feature of the structure is that several levels are redundant as they do not contribute to the decision making process.

Chapter 2

FILE MANAGEMENT

After reading this Chapter, the reader will be able to describe the following:

- (a) What is a File/Case*
 - (b) Four Portions of a File/case*
 - (c) Processing of a Case*
 - (d) Aids to Processing*
 - (e) Submission of a Case*
 - (f) Channel of Submission*
 - (g) Movement of a File/Case*
 - (h) Arrangement of papers in a Case*
 - (i) Part File*
 - (j) Volume of a File*
 - (k) Maintenance of a File*
 - (l) Closing of a File*
 - (m) e- File Management*
-

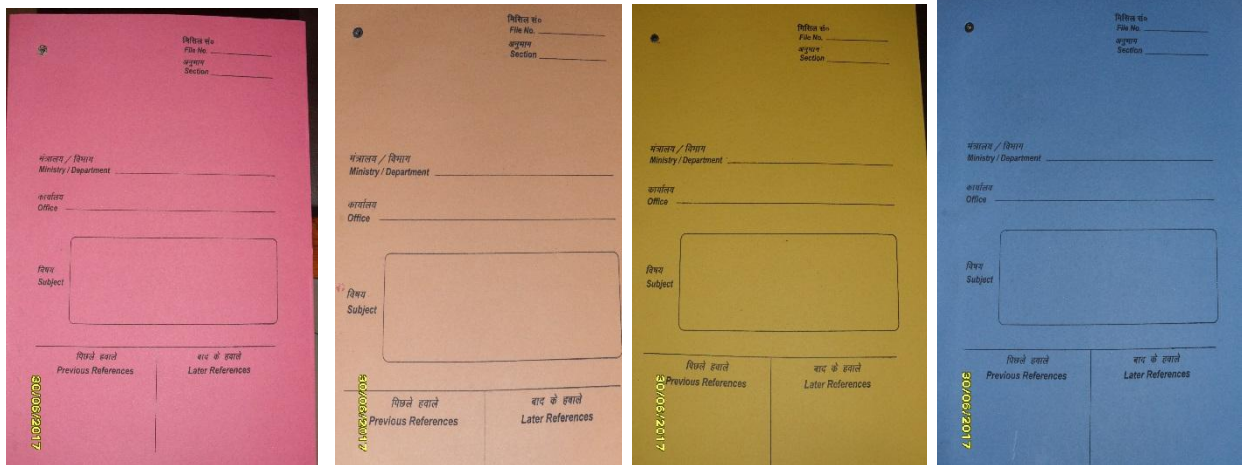
2.1 File / Case

2.1.1 Files are the flesh and blood of the Central Secretariat. This is the much talked about tool of information processing in any Government Office. A normal physical file is a paper folder containing papers arranged chronologically on a particular subject. There are different portion of a file. All portions are required to be page numbered. File are also required to be given specific identity with the help of a unique number and subject mentioned on the top of it. Among other things, the date of opening of a file, category of file its previous and later references and closing date are to be clearly mentioned on a file cover. Sample of a file cover may be seen in Figure 1.

मिसिल सं० File No. <u>A-33076/01/2017-</u> अनुभाग Section <u>DD(MS)</u> ISTM	
<u>ISTM/F00141</u> NCD Prog. 5 May 2017	
मंत्रालय / विभाग Ministry / Department <u>DoPT</u>	
कार्यालय Office <u>ISTM</u>	
विषय Subject <u>One day training on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal Act, 2013- reg. [On 5th May, 2017]</u>	
30/06/2017 पिछले हवाले Previous References	बाद के हवाले Later References

Fig 1: Sample of a File Cover

2.1.2 In any office belonging to Central Secretariat, you will find files of different colours. The most common among them is light brown. Although, the colors are not specifically coded in Government of India, some Ministries and Departments maintain their own color codes. Most common among them are: Light Green/Blue for Files on Lok Sabha Questions; Pink for Rajya Sabha Questions and Bright Yellow for Court Cases. It is a common practice in a Central Secretariat to call a file a “Case”.



(Figure-2: File Covers of Different Colours)

2.2 Four Portions of a File/Case

2.2.1 The four possible portion of a file / case are as follows:

- (i) Note portion – This contains a bunch of greenish yellow, legal sized paper tagged together through single punch holes at the top left corner (Figure – 3);
- (ii) Correspondence portion – This portion comprises of normal white paper or letter headed correspondence made with the office which the file belongs to and other officers / ministries / individuals / agencies etc.;
- (iii) Appendix to note portion – This portion contains a bunch of note sheets which contain auxiliary material - not required to be shown every time with the main portion of the notes; and
- (iv) Appendix to Correspondence - This portion comprises any other related papers of reference value which are not required to be seen or referenced every time the case is put up for consideration.



(Fig 3: Note Portion of a File with tag enclosed)

2.3 Filing of papers-

2.3.1 “Both ‘notes portion’ and ‘correspondence portion’ of a file are placed in a single file cover.

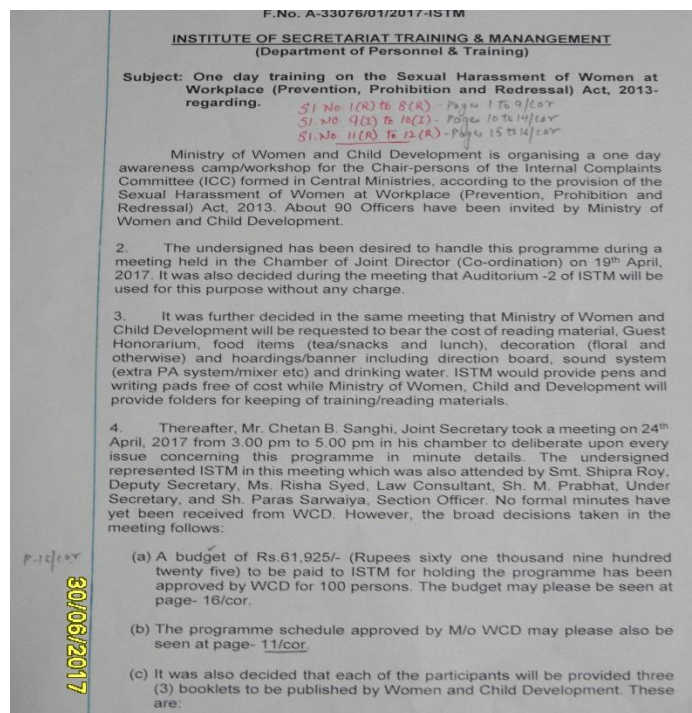
2.3.2 Both ‘right end’ and the ‘left end’ of the tag of the notes portion of the file will be kept free inside the file cover and not tagged to any hole.

2.3.3 In the case of correspondence portion, right side of tag will be tagged onto the right side of the same file cover and left side of the tag will remain untagged.

2.3.4 Every page in each portion of the main file (viz, notes, correspondence, appendix to notes, and appendix to correspondence) will be consecutively numbered in separate

series in pen on the right top corner (page numbering is done in pencil in the 'part files' – explained later in this Chapter). Blank intervening pages, if any, will not be numbered.

2.3.5 Each item of correspondence in a file whether 'receipt' or 'issue' will be assigned a serial number which are displayed prominently in red ink at the top middle of first page of the correspondence. The same serial number (s) are written on note portions also, before recording a note relating to them. Comments (if any) made in writing on the correspondence page by higher officers are also reproduced on the note portion, immediately after the serial number in red. Referencing and flagging are done both in the notes and correspondence portion, wherever required. Writing of Serial Numbers and comments of higher officer on the note portion is called docketing (Figure – 4).

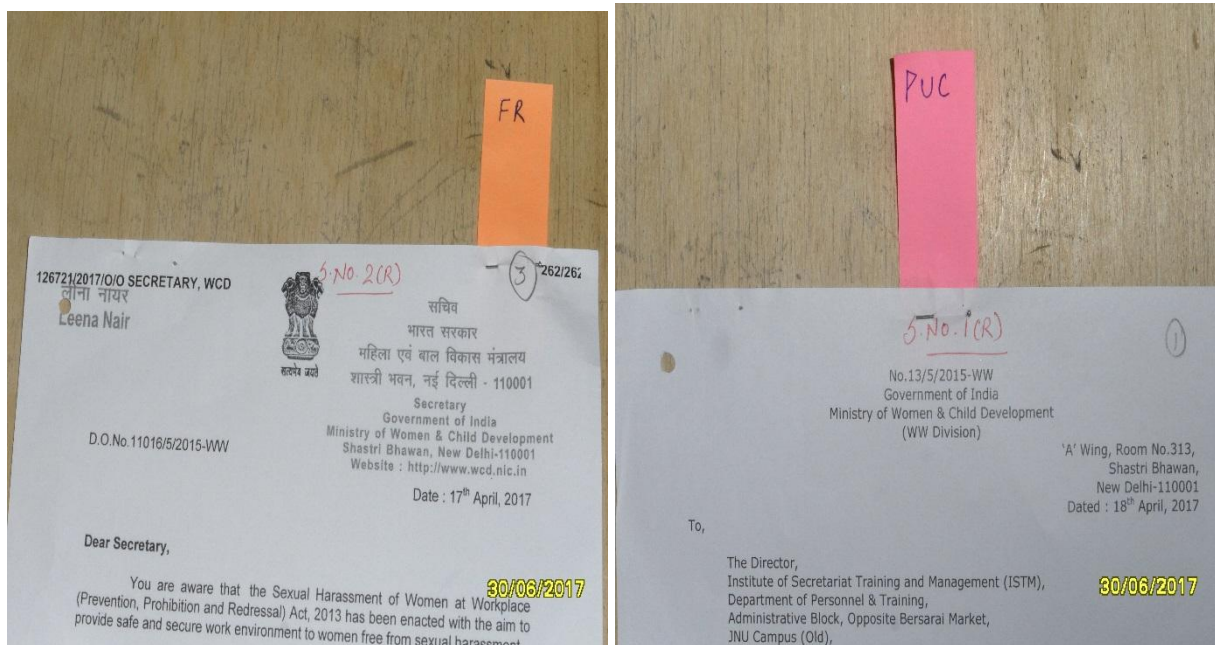


(Fig 4: Docketing on a Note Portion)

2.4 Flagging

2.4.1 In normal secretariat nomenclature, reference slips which facilitate identifying / locating particular pages in a file are referred to as “flags”. The reference slips will be attached neatly on the back of the papers so flagged, preferably with a reusable pin. When a number of papers put up in a case are to be flagged, the slips will be spread over the entire width of the file so that every slip is easily visible. After the action on receipts under examination has been completed, such reference slips, used for flagging, must be removed.

2.4.2 The most common flags in a Central Secretariat Office are “PUC” and “FR”. ‘PUC’ stands for ‘Paper Under Consideration’ and ‘FR’ stands for ‘Fresh Receipt’ and convey their usual meanings. When there are more than one fresh receipts in a file, they are referred to as ‘FR-I’, ‘FR-II’ ...etc. However, the PUC is always single (Fig: 5).



(Fig 5: Flagging)

2.5 Processing of a Case

2.5.1 Processing of a Case essentially requires thorough examination of all related information with the help of applicable laws and by-laws and other aids to processing. The outcome of examination of an issue or issues related to a case are recorded on a note sheet by every level of officers who examine them. This will be discussed in detail in the chapter “noting”.

2.6 Aids to processing

2.6.1 Documents in general, which are maintained in Sections to facilitate processing of cases are referred to as aids to processing. Each section is expected to develop and maintain the following records for important subjects dealt with by it:

- (a) Standing guard files;
- (b) Standing notes;
- (c) Precedent book
- (d) Standard process sheets (of repetitive items of work only); and
- (e) Reference folders containing copies of circulars, etc.

2.6.2 Besides above, copies of acts, rules, orders and instructions concerning subjects dealt with by it, each section is expected to maintain, for ready reference, the Constitution of India and certain acts, rules and instructions of a general nature etc. Each Department is expected to procure an adequate number of copies of these acts, rules and instructions and make them available to all concerned. These acts, rules and

instructions may be accessed electronically if available on website of issuing Ministries/Departments. The above records will also be maintained in electronic form in a computerized environment.

2.7 Submission of a Case

2.7.1 A Government functionary who examines all the facts and figures at the initial stage is said to be “dealing” with the case and as per the common nomenclature, refer to as a “dealing hand”. In a Central Secretariat Office, dealing hands are normally Assistant Section Officers or Senior Secretariat Assistants. They are supposed to examine all aspect of an issue record the proposal of action in the form of a “note’ and forward the entire set of papers physically to the higher authority i.e. Section Officer. This is referred to as submission or “putting up off case”.

2.8 Level of disposal and channel of submission-

2.8.1 An officer above the level of Section Officer will take action on a case in accordance with the departmental instructions prescribing the level of final disposal and channel of submission for each category of cases. Departmental instructions will also be maintained in electronic form in a computerized environment.

2.8.2 Each Department will review the instructions on level of disposal and channel of submission every three years keeping the number of levels at which a case is examined to the minimum by delegating powers to lower formations.

2.8.3 As far as possible it will be ensured that a case is examined in detail either by an Under Secretary or a Deputy Secretary/Director instead of both doing it.

2.8.4 A Desk Officer will submit cases direct to a Deputy Secretary or Director who in turn would submit it to the Joint Secretary/Additional Secretary.

2.8.5 A case will pass through only one of the following levels before it is submitted to the Minister;

- Additional Secretary
- Special Secretary
- Secretary

2.8.6 A Joint Secretary can submit cases directly to Secretary/Minister and not necessarily through the Additional Secretary.

2.8.7 Additional Secretaries in large ministries should be allowed to function independently in day-to-day administrative and functional matters. In matters requiring orders of the Minister, other than those relating to policy/important cases, Additional Secretary can submit files directly to the Minister.

2.8.8 In Ministries / Departments with a Special Secretary and Secretary, there should be a clear delegation of authority to the Special Secretary so that in most matters he can function independently.

2.8.9 Wherever level jumping is done in respect of any category of cases, each such case on its return, will pass through all the levels jumped over who in suitable cases could resubmit the cases for reconsideration.

2.8.10 In a computerized environment the system will provide scope for level jumping.

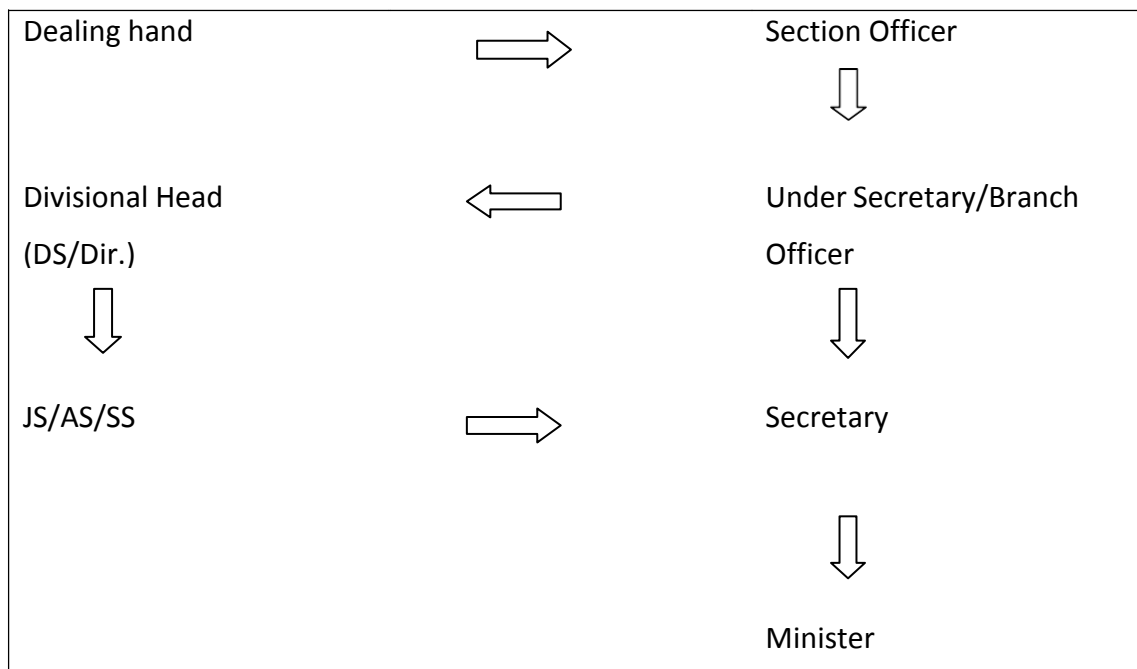
2.9 Direct submission of cases by Senior Assistant Section Officers

2.9.1 An Assistant Section Officers in a conventional section who has more than five

years of service in the grade including at least six months in the concerned section may be required to submit all his cases direct to the branch officer. In appropriate cases, Assistant Section Officers with less than five years of service in the grade may also be permitted to submit cases direct to branch officer.

2.9.2 All the cases directly submitted by an Assistant Section Officer (ASO) to the branch officer will as a rule, go back to the ASO through the Section Officer. The section officer will be free to bring to the notice of the branch officer any omission or flaws in the submission of cases or the decisions taken and thus give an opportunity to the branch officer to reconsider the matter.

2.9.3 The normal path of movement which a file takes when it is submitted may be understood through the following figure:



2.10 Arrangement of papers in a case

2.10.1 The papers in a case will be arranged in the following order from top downwards:

- (1) Reference books;
- (2) Notes portion of the current file ending with the note for consideration;
- (3) Running summary of facts;
- (4) Draft for approval, if any;
- (5) Correspondence portion of the current file ending with the latest receipt or issue, as the case may be;
- (6) Appendix to notes and correspondence;
- (7) Standing guard file, standing note or reference folder, if any;
- (8) Other papers, if any, referred to, e.g., extracts of notes or correspondence from other files, copies of orders, resolutions, gazettes, arranged in chronological order, the latest being placed on the top;
- (9) Recorded files, if any, arranged in chronological order, the latest being placed on the top; and
- (10) Routine notes and papers arranged in chronological order and placed in a separate cover.

2.11 Examination by Higher Officers

2.11.1 A Higher Officer will regularly discuss with his staff to decide the course of action to be taken on various cases. Normally a single note will be put up to the decision making level after the line of action is decided.

2.11.2 For dealing with important problem solving issues, the technique of writing a self-contained note may be used. This involves entrusting an officer or a group of

officers with preparing a comprehensive note which will be put up straight to the decision making level. The note will contain the background to the problem, issues arising out of its precedents, if any, analysis of all relevant facts, and recommendations.

2.12 Deviation From Rules / Procedure

2.12.1 In every case where a major or minor infraction, other than trivial, of the existing procedures or rules, is sought to be made, it shall be the responsibility of the decision making authority to ensure that reasons are recorded in writing, justifying such a deviation from the rules or procedures.

2.13 Oral Discussions

2.13.1 All points emerging from discussions (including telephonic discussions) between two or more officers of the same department or from discussions between officers of different departments, and the conclusions reached will be recorded on the relevant file by the officer authorizing action.

2.13.2 All discussions /instructions /decisions which the officer recording them considers to be important enough for the purpose, should be got confirmed by all those who have participated in or are responsible for them. This is particularly desirable in cases where the policy of the government is not clear or where some important deviation from the prescribed policy is involved or where two or more level differs on significant issues or the decision itself, though agreed up to by all concerned, is an important one.

2.13.3 Oral instructions by higher officers:

(a) Where an officer is giving direction (including telephonic direction) for taking action in any case in respect of matters on which he or his subordinate has powers to decide, he shall ordinarily do so in writing. If, however, the circumstances of the case are such that there is no time for giving the instructions in writing, he should follow it up by a written confirmation at his earliest.

(b) An officer shall act in his best judgment except when he is acting under instructions of an official superior. In the latter case, he shall obtain the directions in writing wherever practicable before carrying out the instructions. If it is not possible to do so, he shall obtain written confirmation of the directions as soon thereafter as possible. If the Officer giving the instructions is not his immediate superior but one higher to the latter in the hierarchy, he shall bring such instructions to the notice of his immediate superior at the earliest.

2.13.4 Oral orders on behalf of or from Minister:

(a) Whenever a member of the personal staff of a Minister communicates to any officer an oral order on behalf of the Minister, it shall be confirmed by him in writing, immediately thereafter.

(b) If any officer receives oral instructions from the Minister or from his personal staff and the orders are in accordance with the norms, rules, regulations or procedures they should be brought to the notice of the Secretary (or the head of the department where the officer concerned is working in or under a non-secretariat organization).

(c) If any Officer receives oral instructions from the Minister or from his personal staff and the orders are not in accordance with the norms, rules, regulations or procedures, he should seek further clear orders from the Secretary (or the head of the Department in case he is working in or under a non-secretariat organization) about the line of action to be taken, stating clearly that the oral instructions are not in accordance with the rules, regulations, norms or procedures.

(d) In rare and urgent cases when the Minister is on tour/ is sick and his approval has to be taken on telephone, the decision of the Minister shall be conveyed by his Private Secretary in writing. In such cases, confirmation will be obtained on file when the Minister returns to Headquarters/rejoins.

2.13.5 Confirmation of oral instructions:

(a) If an officer seeks confirmation of oral instructions given by his senior, the latter should confirm it in writing whenever such confirmation is sought.

(b) Receipt of communications from junior Officers seeking confirmation of oral instructions should be acknowledged by the senior officers or their personal staff, or the personal staff of the Minister, as the case may be.

2.14 Linking of files

2.14.1 If the issues raised in two or more current files are so inter-connected that they must be dealt with together simultaneously, the relevant files will be linked in the manner indicated in (2) below. Such linking may also be resorted to if a paper on one current file is required for reference in dealing with another current file unless a copy of

the paper can be conveniently placed on the first file. Files which are closed and recorded may also be linked with a current file.

2.14.2 When files are to be linked, strings of the file board of the lower file (but not its flaps) will be tied around the upper file and those of the file board or flap of the upper file tied underneath it in a bow out of the way so that each file is intact with all its connected papers properly arranged on its file board or flap.

2.14.3 On receipt back after completion of action, the linked files will be immediately delinked after taking relevant extracts and placing them on the linked files, where necessary.

2.14.4 In a computer environment the file tracking system has the facility for easy linkage of files and its subsequent movement.

2.15 Part File

2.15.1 A part file is opened when the main file is under submission and the issue concerning the main file cannot wait owing to urgency. A part file is also opened when a paper under consideration (PUC) is having more than one disjoint issues to be dealt with simultaneously. Separate parts are made in which “sectional notes” are put up. Sectional notes are notes which talk about a particular section or issue from out of those issues covered in a single “PUC”.

2.15.2 Part files are amalgamated with the main file. Note portions are merged with note portion of the main file and corresponding portion with the main correspondence portion of the file. They are merged maintaining chronological order as far as possible.

2.16 Volume of a File

2.16.1 When the 'notes' plus the 'correspondence' portion of a file becomes bulky (say exceeds 150 pages) it should be marked 'Volume – I'. Further papers on the subject will be added to the new volume of the same file, which will be marked as 'Volume –II' and so on.

2.16.2 In Volume-II and subsequent Volumes of the same file, page numbering in notes and correspondence portion will be made in continuity of the last page number in notes portion / correspondence portion.

2.17 Use of urgency grading

2.17.1 The urgency grading advised are 'Immediate', 'Priority' and 'Top Priority'.

2.17.2 The label 'Immediate' will be used only in cases requiring prompt attention. Amongst the rest, the 'Priority' label will be used for cases which merit disposal in precedence to others of ordinary nature. 'Top Priority' will be applied in extremely urgent cases.

2.17.3 Lok Sabha / Rajya Sabha labels shall be used for appropriate cases which merit disposal in precedence to others of ordinary nature. The file covers of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Questions, Motions etc. are to be in red colour and green colour respectively, in order to facilitate their identification for urgent dealing.

2.18 Time limits

2.18.1 Time Limits will be fixed for disposal of as many types of cases as possible handled in the Department through departmental instructions. As a general rule, no

official shall keep a case pending for more than 7 working days unless higher limits have been prescribed for specific types of cases through departmental instructions. In case of a case remaining with an official for more than the stipulated time limit, an explanation for keeping it pending shall be recorded on the note portion by him. The system of exception reporting will be introduced to monitor the disposal of receipts.

2.18.2 Communications received from Members of Parliament should be attended to promptly.

2.18.3 Each communication received inter-alia from a Member of Parliament, will be acknowledged within 15 days, followed by a reply within the next 15 days of acknowledgement sent.

2.19 Maintenance of a File

2.19.1 Wherever the file board or the file cover of a file gets torn, it should be replaced immediately.

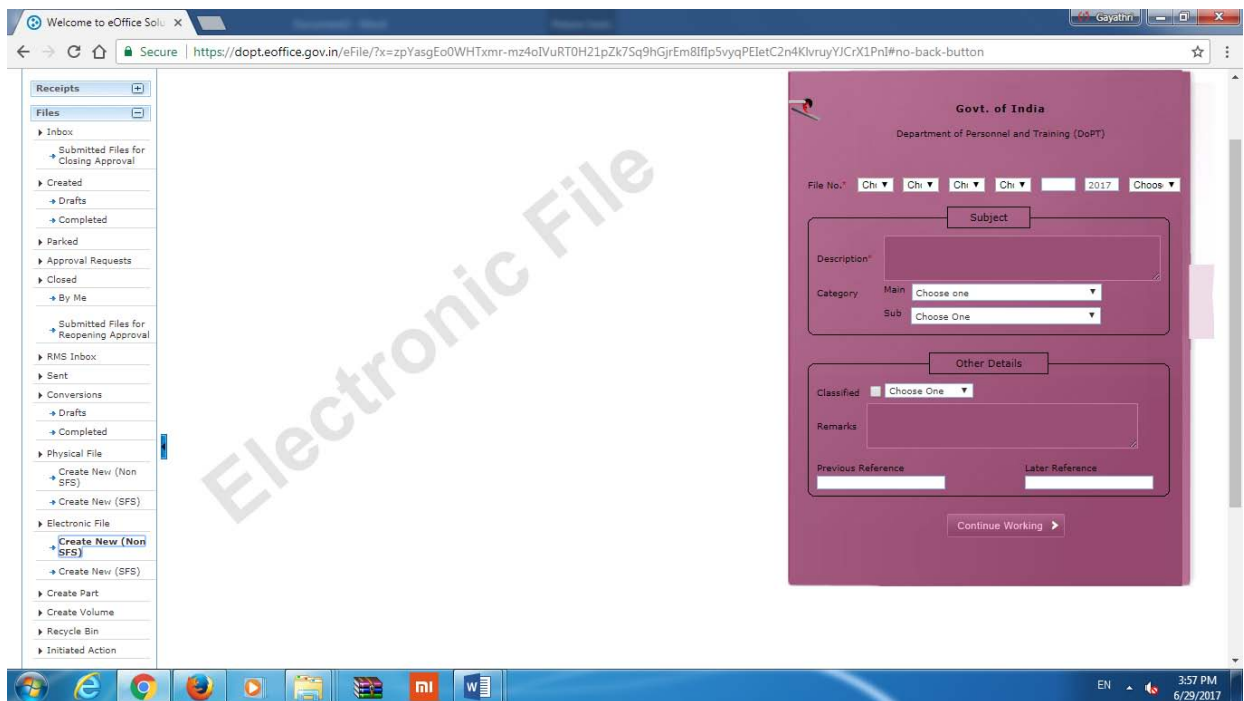
2.19.2 The torn not sheets and correspondence pages of the file should be immediately repaired.

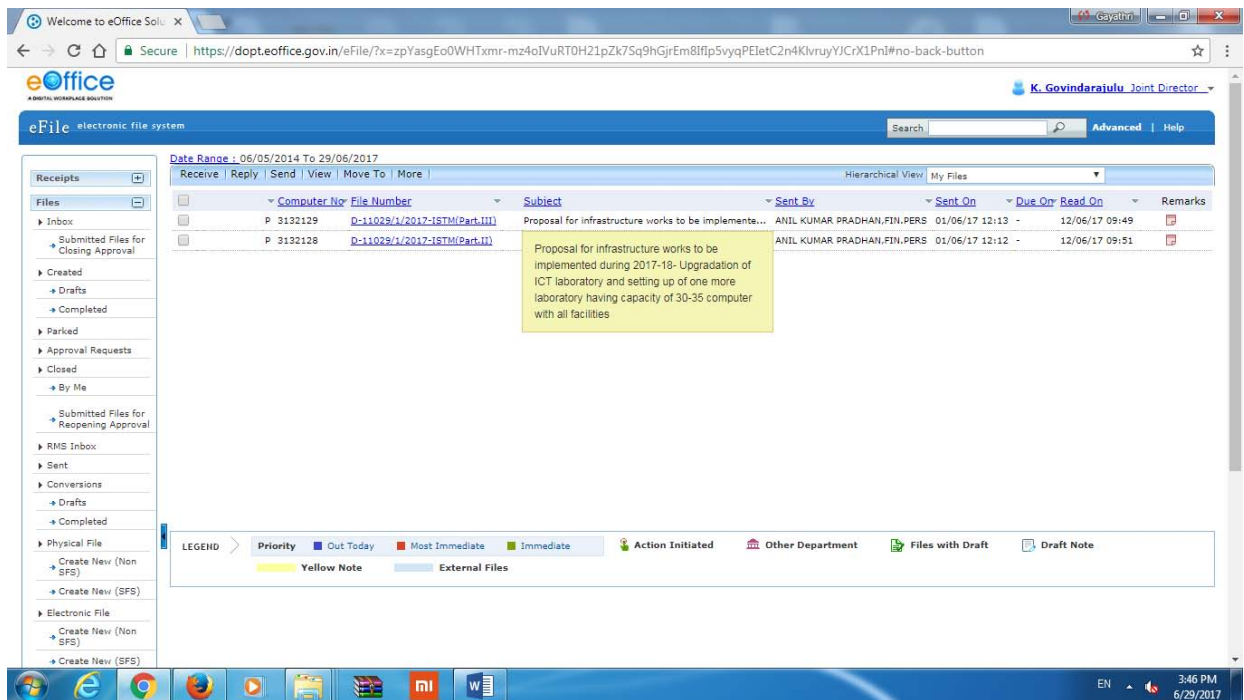
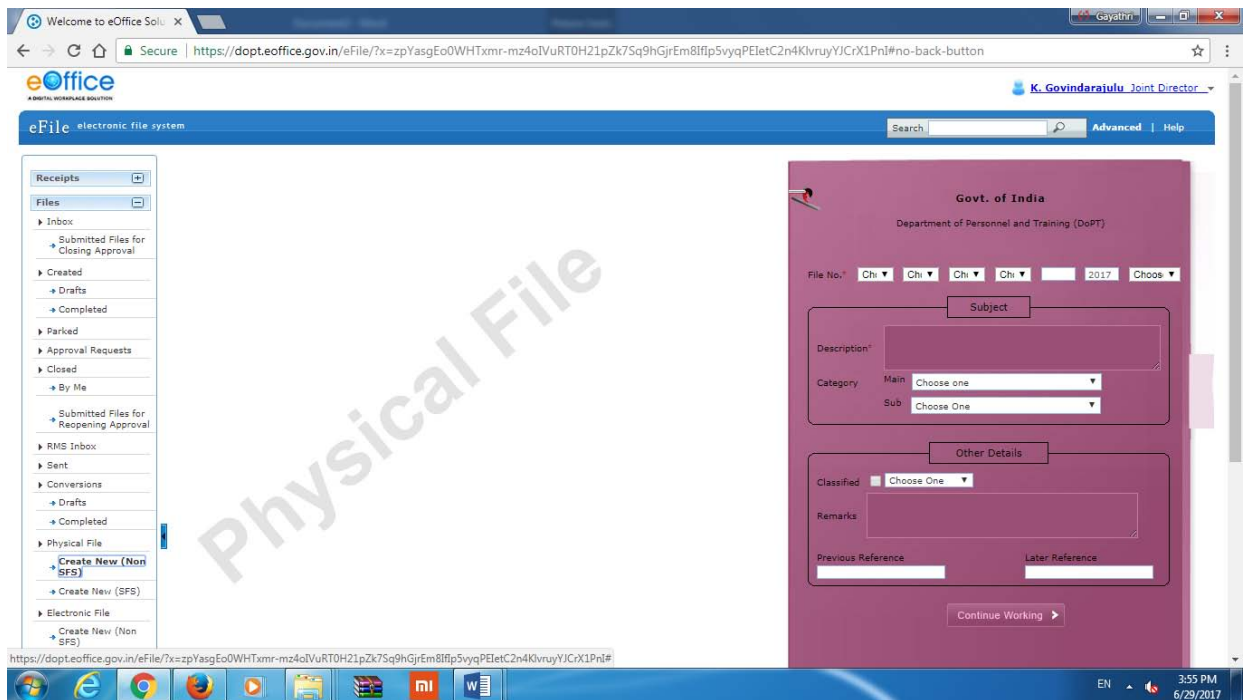
2.19.3 New files should not be opened, when there is already a file existing on the subject. For every year, a miscellaneous file be opened where general papers can be kept.

2.20 e-File Management

2.20.1 National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed e-File Management System where electronic file can be opened and operated upon. Side by side physical files, which are already open, can be electronically tracked and traced through some unique number generated. In the Central Secretariat, these numbers are normally referred to

Computer File No/C.F. No./ Computer Number etc. It is now a common secretariat practice in Central Secretariat to write computer file number in bold ink on every file cover before they are sent to higher officers. Hence, the file management system is more aptly referred to as FTS (File Tracking System). Some of the screen shots are given below depicting sample of electronic file opening, physically file opening, inbox of an officer to see the files received etc.





2.20.2 The e-File & Correspondence Manager: The e-file Manager is one of the most critical modules of e-Office framework. This module will be used by Dealing

Hands/Section Officer and all other higher officers who use e-files for taking all decisions. The module will let the users create e-files, work on e-files, send e-files, review, monitor and track status of e-files and close e-files. The e-file will create transparency in the system along with a better mechanism to track and dispose of e-files. The proposed framework will also help smooth and expeditious disposal of cases. This module will contain all functionalities from the present physical file system which is relevant to e-file manager module. According to the newly described framework, all the e-files in the department will have a unique e-file number. The e-file will contain digital signature of user and once affixed will not allow any changes on the e-file. The system will also have automatic pre-defined reports, alerts at defined frequency to relevant officers to make them aware of the status of e-file and help them take pro-active action in disposal of cases.

2.20.3 Records Manager This module will also be used by Dealing Hands/Section Officer and all other higher officers. The module will let the users create e-records after the e-file has been closed, create requisitions for referencing e-records created outside the section, review e-records on timely basis, monitor and track status of review of all e-records due for review, send alerts for timely review, issue of records and create a backup copy in Disaster Recovery Site. The proposed framework will eliminate the need of a physical record room as well as a record officer, as all activities currently being undertaken in a physical record room, such as receiving physical file, allocating location, storage, retrieval of physical file for issue or review and dispatch will be moved to an electronic Digital Record Room. Also all e-records will be reviewed on the e-Office platform making the review process quick and efficient. Records will be

become easy to store, trace, move along with giving added security to the records being maintained.

2.20.4 Knowledge Management This module will be used for maintaining the knowledge repository of any Department.

Chapter 3

DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT– NOTING

After reading this Chapter, the reader will be able to describe the following:

- a) *Definition of Note*
 - b) *Guidelines on Noting*
 - c) *Linking and delinking of files*
-

3.1 Definition of Note

3.1.1 Note are written remarks recorded on a paper under consideration to facilitate its disposal. It should consist of a précis or previous paper, the statement of analysis of the question of questions requiring decision, suggestions regarding the course of action and final orders passed thereon. A note recorded by a Minister, the Prime Minister, the Vice-President or the President should be referred to as a 'Minute'.

3.1.2 Notes and orders will normally be recorded on note sheets in the notes portion of a file and will be serially numbered. All category of officers will use either blue or black ink in signing the note. The name, designation and, where necessary, the telephone number of the officer signing a note should invariable be typed or stamped with a rubber stamp below the signature which should be dated. In recording the date, the month and the year should also be indicated.

3.2 General Guideline on Noting

- (a) All notes should be concise and to the point. Excessive noting should be avoided.

- (b) Notes should not be recorded on the receipt itself except in very routine matters.
- (c) A simple and direct style of writing should always be adopted. Use of complicated and ambiguous language should be avoided.
- (d) Verbatim reproduction of extracts from, or paraphrasing of the P.U.C or of notes of other Ministries recorded on the same file should be avoided.
- (e) Even if apparent errors or misstatements have to be pointed out or an opinion expressed therein has to be criticized, care should be taken to couch observation in courteous and temperate language free from personal remarks.
- (f) A note will be divided into paragraphs of a convenient size. Paragraphs should be serially numbered and may also have brief titles, if necessary.
- (g) The dealing hand will append his or her full signature with date below the note. An officer will append full signature on the right hand side of the note with name, designation and the date.
- (h) When passing orders or making suggestion, an officer should continue the note to the actual points rather than repeating or reiterating the ground

already covered in the previous notes. If the line of action suggested in the preceding note is correct, the officer should merely append signature.

- (i) Modification of notes: - There should be no occasion to record a note in the first instance and then pasting it over. Such pasting is tantamount to mutilation of record. It also gives an inelegant look to the files. Even where a note recorded in the first instance needs any modification on account of additional facts/ errors having come to notice, a subsequent note may be recorded indicating the circumstances leading to recording of the fresh note, keeping the earlier note intact. It is also undesirable for an officer to make his subordinate change his note.

- (j) When a paper under consideration raises several major points which require examination and respective order on each point (or group of related points) it will be noted upon separately in “Sectional” notes. Such sectional notes will each begin with a list of the major points(s) dealt with therein.

- (k) Routine note means a note of a temporary value or ephemeral importance recorded outside the files, e.g, a record of casual discussion or a note on a point of secondary importance intended to facilitate consideration of the case by higher officers.

- (l) Running summary of facts in relation to a case means a summary of the facts of the case updated from time to time to incorporate significant development as and when they take place. It is prepared to avoid repeated re-capitulation of the case through self-contained notes. Wherever a running summary of facts is available on a file, it should be referred to without repeating any part of the facts in the note.

3.3 Types of Cases, Quantum of /noting and Functional Approach

3.3.1 Most of the cases dealt with in Government of India can be divided into the following five categories:

- (i) Ephemeral cases
- (ii) Routine & Repetitive cases
- (iii) Action in Correspondence cases
- (iv) Problem Solving cases
- (v) Planning and Policy cases

3.3.2 The following approach could be adopted for noting on various categories of cases: -

1. Ephemeral Cases-

These cases are also known as “no-Noting” cases. The Section Officer should record the reason, in brief, why no action is necessary and file such cases at the dak stage itself. such cases should be kept in the “O” bundle and destroyed on 31st December of every year. These may also be returned in

original to the sender recording requisite factual information also, in appropriate cases.

2. Routine or Repetitive Cases-

In cases of repetitive nature, 'a **standard process sheet**' which means a standard skeleton note should be developed indicating pre- determined points of check. In respect of other routine cases, a fair should be put up without any noting.

3. Action – in - Correspondence Cases-

These cases also do not require detailed noting. It would be sufficient if a brief note (a paragraph or so) is recorded indicating the issue under consideration and the suggested action.

4. Problem Solving Cases-

In these cases, a detailed note providing maximum information on each aspect will be necessary, even then, the note should be concise and to the point, covering the following aspects: -

- i. What is the problem?
- ii. How has it arisen?
- iii. What is the Rule, 'policy' or 'precedent'?
- iv. What are the possible solution?

- v. Which is the best solution? Why?
- vi. What will be the consequences of the proposed solution?

5. Policy and Planning Cases-

These types of cases would not be large in number in any organization. They would, however, require a thorough examination, particularly because important decisions are to be taken at top management level. A note in such cases should be structured in the following manner: -

- (i) Problem: - State the problem. How it has arisen? What are the critical factors?
- (ii) Additional Information: - Give additional information to size up the problem. The information would be available on the files and other paper in the Section. If sufficient information is not available to enable thorough examination, it should be collected before attempting a note.
- (iii) Rule, policy etc: - The correct and updated law position by quoting them in full perspective should be referred to.
- (iv) Precedents - Precedent cases having a bearing on the issue under consideration should be put up. If there are varying precedents or any

precedent differs in certain respects from the case under examination, the difference should be brought out so as to arrive at a correct decision.

- (v) Critical analysis: - the case should then be examined on merits answering questions like 'what are the possible alternative solutions/ which is the best solution? It should be ensured that views of other Divisions/Ministries etc. have been obtained where necessary. Attention should also be paid to other aspects like the financial and other implications, repercussions, and the modality of implementing the decision and the authority competent to take a decision.

- (vi) Concluding para: - the concluding para should suggest a course of action for consideration. In cases where a decision is to be taken by a higher authority like committee, Board etc. the point or points on which the decision of such higher authority is sought should be specifically mentioned.

3.4 Referencing

3.4.1 Referencing is the process of identifying a document, decision and facts mentioned in a note, draft or office copy of communication issued. It involves a series of activities. These are described in the succeeding paragraphs.

- a) Every page in each part of the file (viz, notes, correspondence, appendix to notes, and appendix to correspondence) will be consecutively numbered in separate series, in pen. Blank intervening pages, if any, will not be numbered.
- b) Each item of correspondence in a file whether receipt or issue, will be assigned a serial number which will be displayed prominently in red ink on the top middle portion of its first page.
- c) In referring to the papers flagged 'PUC' or 'FR' the relevant page numbers will be quoted invariably in the margin. Their page numbers will refer to other papers in a current file.
- d) Recorded files and other papers put up with the current file will be flagged with alphabetical slips for quick identification. Only one alphabetical slip will be attached to a recorded file or compilation. If two or more papers contained in the same file or compilation are to be referred to, they should be identified by the relevant page numbers in addition to the alphabetical slip, e.g. 'A'/23 n., 'A'/17 C and so on.
- e) To facilitate the identification of references to papers contained in other files after the removal of slips, the number of the file referred to will be quoted invariably in the body of the note. The relevant page numbers, together with the alphabetical slip attached thereto, will be indicated in the margin. Similarly, the number and

date of orders, notifications and resolutions, and, in the case of acts, rules and regulations, their brief title together with the number of the relevant section, rule, paragraph or clause, referred to will be quoted in the body of the notes, while the alphabetical slips used, will be indicated in the margin.

- f) Rules or other compilations referred to in a case need not be put up if copies thereof are expected to be available with the officer to whom the case is being submitted. The fact of such compilations not having been put up will be indicated in the margin of the notes in pencil.

- g) The reference slips will be pinned neatly on the inside of the papers to be flagged. When a number of papers put up in a case are to be flagged, the slips will be spread over the entire width of the file so that every slips are easily visible.

Chapter 4

STYLES OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION ISSUED FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT – DRAFTING⁶

After reading this Chapter, the reader will be able to describe the following:

- a) What is a Draft*
 - b) Structures of Written Communication issued for varied purposes*
 - c) Styles of English language used in notes and drafts*
-

4.1 Drafting

4.1.1 Definition of Draft- A draft is a rough sketch of a communication to be issued after approval by the concerned authority and Drafting is the process of preparing this rough sketch.

4.1.2 Instances where Draft is not necessary-

- (i) In simple cases like sending an acknowledgement, etc, a fair communication can be put up for the signature of the officer concerned.

- (ii) In cases of repetitive nature, where standard forms of reply are available.

4.1.3 Drafting- Searching questions-

Before initiating the process, it would, therefore, be useful if the person dealing with a case asks a few searching questions to herself, like as follows:

- a) Is a draft necessary?

- b) Who should be addressed and who will sign?
- c) What is the relationship between the sender and receiver?
- d) Is something to be conveyed or to be called for?
- e) Are all details available?
- f) What is the intention of the decision?
- g) What should be the recipient's response?
- h) Does the language convey what it intends to?
- i) Are the paragraphs logically sequenced?
- j) Does it have proper urgency, security grading?

4.1.4 Contents of a draft-

- a) Identifying the Sender- A draft should clearly indicate the name, designation, telephone number, fax, email address and complete postal address of the organization to which the sender belongs. Apart from these, the file number on which the draft is being put up should also be clearly indicated;

- b) Adopting the right form- Different forms of written communication are used in the office correspondence in the Central secretariat. The use of each form and phraseology adopted in them are given in Annexure. There are eleven (11) forms, out of which only four (4), namely, Letter, Demi Official (D.O.) Letter, Office Memorandum (OM) and Inter Departmental (ID) Note are mostly used for target groups, as indicated below:

Forms of communication	Target Group
✓ Letter	✓ Foreign Governments, State Governments, Statutory Bodies like UPSC, Election Commission etc, Public Enterprises, Attached/Subordinate Offices, Members of public.
✓ Demi-Official Letter	✓ Officers of equivalent level and of one or two levels above the sender. ✓ Non officials.
✓ Office Memorandum	✓ Attached/Subordinate Offices, Other Ministries/Departments, Other Sections/Units within the same Ministries/Departments and Employees.
✓ Inter-Departmental Note	✓ Others Ministries/ Departments

c) Besides, Circular, Advertisement and E-mail are also recognized forms for which no specific formats have been prescribed. Circular and Advertisement can be issued in the formats of letters and office memorandum. In addition, Fax, Speed

Post, and Registered Post/Registered with AD are widely used methods of delivery in important and urgent matters.

4.1.5 Visualizing the Response- While drafting a communication, the intention of the decision to be communicated and what response is anticipated from the receiver, if kept in mind, would help in making the communication effective.

4.1.6 Clarity Consistency and Uniformity- The language used should be simple and clear. The content of communication should be developed in a manner that reflects consistency on a particular issue.

4.1.8 Redundancy, Verbosity, Circumlocution and Repetition- No communication should contain any information that is not relevant. While drafting communication, using simple words helps in easy understanding of the content in addition to adopting a direct style of writing without superfluous expression and repetition of the matter.

4.1.9 Providing a Summary- Where the communication to be sent is long and the subject matter is complex, providing a summary of the content at the end would enable a quick appreciation of the message conveyed and reinforce the action points for the receiver.

4.1.10 General Instruction regarding Drafting-

1. Sufficient space should be left for the margin and between successive lines in the draft for incorporating changes, additions, interpolation of words, etc.

2. Depending on the forms, subject of the communication (including reminders) should be mentioned appropriately.
3. The enclosures, which are to accompany the fair copy, should be indicated at the bottom left of the page. A short oblique line in the margin will indicate that enclosures are to be sent along with the fair copy.
4. Urgency grading will be indicated on the top right corner, if required.
5. Where the communication to be sent is of an important or immediate nature, the mode of transmission e.g. by registered post or by speed post or by special messenger etc, will be indicated at the top right corner.
6. Where copies of the communication are to be endorsed to other authorities for information or for further action, proper endorsements will be indicated at the bottom left of the draft.
7. A slip bearing "DFA" which stands for "Draft for approval" should be attached to the left hand corner of the draft. If two or more drafts are put up on a file, the draft as well as the DFA. slips numbered as "DFA-I", "DFA-II", "DFA-III" and so on will be attached.

4.2 Style of English used in Central Secretariat

4.2.1 Official communications emanating from a Department and purporting to convey the views or orders of the Government of India must specifically be expressed to have been written under the directions of Government. This requirement does not, however, imply that each communication should start with the phrase 'I am directed to say' or 'The undersigned is directed to convey', which has the effect of distancing the communicator from the reader at the very outset. A more direct and to-the-point format is to be preferred if some degree of rapport is to be established with the receiver of the communication. The obligatory requirement can be met in a variety of imaginative ways. For instance, variations of the phrase can be added to the operative part of the letter towards the end as under:

.....I have the pleasure to inform you that the government, on reconsideration of the matter, has decided to sanction an additional grant of:

Or

.....In the circumstances, it is regretted that it has not been found possible to accede to your request.

Or

.....We do, therefore, regret that we have not found it possible to accede to your request.

4.2.2 The most common mistakes found in Secretariat English necessitate reiteration on following points: "Information" is singular. If information is called for on many points, it does not become "Informations." The words "Proximo", "Idem" and "Ultimo" are avoidable. They are not necessarily even abbreviations and they possess no

recommendations. On the contrary, they lead to confusion. “The same” must not be used instead of “it” or some other simple word. Such needlessly formal words as “therein” and “thereon” should not be used instead of “in it” or “on it”. The preference for passive verbs over active verbs generally make the style vague and clumsy, as “It is understood” for “I do not understand” or “The date of issue of the order should be reported by him” for “he should report when he issues the order”. A simple or short word is to be preferred in place of a long phrase. Examples of needless verbosity are preference of “make the assessment” to “assess”, “purchase”, to “buy”, “commence” to “begin” and “omitted to” or “failed to” to the simple “did not” (the two latter ones are very common); “make enquires” for “enquire”; “building purposes” for “buildings” Where “omit” by itself is proper and sufficient. Another widespread error is the use of “for being” instead of “to be” and “for doing” instead of “to do” and “returned for being stamped” instead of “to be stamped”. If the Secretary orders that a senior secretariat assistant should be punished “for being corrupt” he does not mean “in order to make him corrupt”. Foreign or classical words and expressions should be avoided as far as possible; vernacular words should only be used when their meaning cannot be expressed equally well in English.

1. Short sentences should be preferred to long ones “Secretary’s attention is invited to O.M.
2.He is requested” is better than “The Secretary’s attention is invited to O.M and he is requested”. “In case in which” is a clumsy phrase for which “when”, “where” or “if ” can usually be substituted.

The word “necessary” is usually superfluous in such phrases as “the necessary entries”, “the necessary corrections”, “the necessary instructions”, etc.

3. The phrase “do the needful” should never be used. Either state definitely what is to be done or say “do what is necessary”. The word “avail” is very awkward one, as it is reflexive and also takes “of ” after it. It is better avoided. Moreover, if you do use it, you must not say “the leave was availed of ” or “I availed of the leave”, still less “he is permitted to avail the holidays”. You must say “I availed myself of the leave” and so on. But why not simply say “took the leave”? “Available” also is a bad word. A register “not readily available” may mean anything, for example, that it was needed for reference by one of the members, or had been sent somewhere out of the office, or was locked up and the key was elsewhere. It is very annoying to have one’s work increased by having to send a note back to ask what it means.

- 4 Split infinitives should be avoided. Write “Kindly to state” and not “to kindly state”. A very common and equally objectionable feature of official communications is a similar splitting of other verbal phrases. For instance, “The Deputy Commissioner will, in the circumstances now stated, be requested” is not good English. It is quite as easy to say “In the circumstances now stated, the Deputy Commissioner will be requested to

5. Do not write “marginally noted” which could only mean “having marginal notes”. Write “noted on margin”. Similarly, “Plan marked” could only mean “marked with plans” (Compare “pock- marked”), and “plaint mentioned” neither does nor possibly could mean anything.

6. Instead of such a phrase as “the figures for 1949, 1950 and 1951 were 256, 257 and 348 respectively” which is confusing, write “the figure for 1949 was 256, that for 1950 was 257 and that for 1951 was 348”. This is a little, if at all, longer and is perfectly clear. “Former” and “latter” should also be avoided as they are constant sources of confusion.

7. Do not ride any phrase to death. Some persons begin every letter with the phrase “with reference to”, It is better to vary the phrase so as to make it definite. Say “In reply to”, “As directed in” and so on; or begin in narrative form “In their order Government directed “. Avoid the phrase “with advertence to”.

8. In ordinary English “in case” does not mean the same as “if ” “I shall take my umbrella in case it rains” means “so as to be prepared for rain”. Nor does “as well as” mean the same as “and”. It is much more emphatic. It would be absurd to say “a man was 5 feet 8 inches high as well as 21 years of age”, But you might well say that “he was a good painter as well as a remarkable

musician". The fondness for writing "as well as" for "and" and "in case" for "if " presumably arises from the fondness of the users for a longer expression. "In case "if " is a stage further on the downward path. "I am unable to" for "I cannot" and "hand over" for "give" are other common examples of the preference for the longer phrase. "By the time" is sometimes wrongly used for "then". "By that time" is sometimes wrongly used for "then". "By that *time*" means "then". "By the time that" means "when". Always be as definite as possible.

9. "As such" is often misused. It is correct to say "Mr. A was then the Superintendent and as such was bound to report-"but "Mr. A was not then the Superintendent and as such he is not to be blamed" is meaningless. "While such being the case" is a familiar embellishment of criminal complaints, etc. "While" is here redundant.

10. Tenses and moods are misused in almost every note or draft. The misuse of "had" is one of the commonest errors. The pluperfect "had" is rightly used to emphasize the priority of one event in the past to another. It is correct to say "I had gone to bed when the house caught fire" but senseless to say "I had gone to bed at 10 O'clock last night" ("I went" is correct)- unless the meaning is that you had gone to bed before 10 O'clock. The present tense is wrongly used for the incomplete perfect, as in "I am record-keeper from 1906. "I have been record-keeper since 1906" is correct. "Government press for a reply" should be

“Government are pressing for a reply”. “The following men now act” is wrong. It should be “are now acting”. “Act” means “usually act” or, habitually act”,” are acting” emphasizes the fact that they are doing so now.

11. “Must have” is sometimes misused for “should have” or “ought to have”. “Must have done it” means that he certainly has done it. It is not to be used to mean that he has not done it but should have. “Till” is commonly misused in a way that it is positively misleading. “No reply was received till January last” implies that a reply was received on January 1st but it is erroneously used to mean that even on January 1st no reply had been received. To convey this latter meaning “up to” with the pluperfect is the correct English-”Up to January 1st, I had received no reply”.

12. Distinguish “all the stamps have not been punched” which is ambiguous from “Not all the stamps have been punched” or “the stamps have not all been punched”, which mean that some have been punched and some not. These phrases are commonly confused. “He has yet to collect Rs.1 ,000”, is not ordinarily modern English. “Still has” is correct. “Yet” may be used with a negative, e.g., “has not yet applied” and is only used with a positive a verb in special phrases such as “I have yet to learn”.

13. “So” is not equivalent to “very”. It is sometimes written “the peon is so impertinent” “I warned him so many times” meaning “very impertinent”, “very

often". "Not so bad" means "rather goods", but this is a colloquial phrase. Similarly, "too" has generally a relative sense, that is, it implies exacts relatively to a certain standard or object not absolute intensity so to speak (except in a few colloquial phrases such as "it is too bad"); but it is commonly written "it is too hot" meaning "it is very hot".

14. The verb "to hope" implies pleasurable anticipation. It is used sometimes instead of a natural word such as "think", and thereby producing comically inappropriate phrases such as "I hope your honour is ill". Omission of articles (a, an, the) is a common fault. It is permissible in a telegram for reasons of economy-not elsewhere. But articles must be used correctly. The statement "appellant is the inhabitant of Jaipur," implies that there is only one inhabitant. "An inhabitant of Jaipur" is correct "This is serious omission" should be "This is a serious omission".

15. "As to" is common redundant form e.g. "The Deputy Commissioner is directed to report as to whether", "whether" alone is sufficient. So also "as against "or" as compared with" are commonly used in comparing figures, where "against" or "compared with" are sufficient and correct. It is correct to say "as compared with last harvest, the yield was poor", but not the "yield was 4 rupees as compared with 8 rupees last year". "As" mean, nothing in the latter phrase.

16. Pseudo-accuracy account for much unnecessary verbiage. “If any” is a common example of this fault. It is quite unnecessary to say “The Deputy Commissioner is requested to report the number of cases if any”. If there are none, the Deputy Commissioner will say so. In the same way it is unnecessary to say “The Deputy Commissioner is requested to report whether it is advisable or not to”.... The use of the word “ask” instead of “order” or “direct” produces a curiously important effect when a lower subordinate is referred to. “The S.D.O. may be asked to report” sounds silly.

17. On the other hand, the use of such phrases as “at all”, “in spite of ” sometime sounds needlessly discourteous as well as unidiomatic. “In spite of three reminders the Deputy Commissioner has not at all cared to reply” is rude as well as un-English “It” will be enough if the Deputy Commissioner is not English. The more appropriate phrase is “the Deputy Commissioner need only”. Avoid pretentious words such as “penultimate”. “Last but one” is quite good enough.

18. “I am directed to request that you will be so good as to furnish me with information as to whether” is the sort of stuff that we come across frequently. “I am directed to enquire whether” means exactly the same and is not unduly curt. Never use several words where one will do. Do not write “make an application” but “apply” or “a liable of the value of fifty paise only” instead of “a

fifty paise stamp”. Addition of the word “only” after any sum of money is in place in a bill or cheque not elsewhere.

19. “In this connection” at the beginning of a sentence is a favorite bit of hackneyed padding. It means nothing at all. “In returning herewith” a favourite but inappropriate type of opening phrase. It is often aggravated by making the subject of the main sentence different from the implied subject of “returning” or by changing to the passive construction. You can say “In returning..I am directed to point out”. You must not say “In returning herewith the statement received with his letter.... the Deputy Commissioner is informed”. But this is quite common. On the other hand, such phrases as “Turning to paragraph.... it may be observed” and so on (“Regarding”, “Concerning”, “Considering”, etc.), are unobjectionable though “Turning to paragraph 1” is no doubt more strictly correct.

20. A needless anxiety to avoid repetition gives rise to various faults. Sometimes, instead of repeating a man’s name, an assistant will say “the individual” which is not good English. The use of “former and latter”, “respectively” and “the same” have been mentioned already and also come under this head.

21. The words “Comprise”, “compose” and “consists” are confused with each other. It is written “the land comprises of 3 plots” or “is comprised of ”. The

correct forms are “the land comprises/ consists/ is composed of three plots”. It is also written “the old building was substituted by a new one”. You can say “a new building was substituted for the old one” “or” “the old building was replaced by a new one”. “Dispose it off ” is a common error for “dispose of it”, also “tear off” for “tear up” and “stick up” for “stick in” (You can stick a thing “up” on a wall of course but not “up” in a book). “Stick up too” is used for “Stick to” itself a slang phrase. “He stuck up to the agreement” is wrong. It is also written “slips have been pasted” and the “papers have been stitched” whereas “pasted in” and “stitched (or preferable ‘Sewn’) together” are correct.

22. “Agree” and “tally” cannot be used actively. Figures may agree or tally. You cannot “agree” figures or “tally” them. Generally use unpretentious words rather than pompous ones. “I went to camp” not “I proceeded”, “live” or “dwell”, not “reside”. “Instead of ” is much more usual in ordinary English than “in lieu of ”, which is a phrase used mainly in legal documents. “Stamp” is the ordinary English not “label”; and “Envelope” or “letter” not “cover”.

23. You cannot say “He told/expressed that he was unwilling”. It must be “he told me that he was unwilling”, “he expressed his unwillingness”, “he expressed himself strongly”. “Enough of money” is not good English. Say “enough money”; “of follows”, “enough” when for any reason it is necessary to use “enough” as a substantive, e.g. “I have had enough of this” “I don’t know enough of the language, to “but I know enough English to”.... “None” for “no

one” is obsolete or poetical. Do not write “None made any offer” but “no one made any offer”. Do not say “it is not used by any” but “but it is not used by anyone”. Do not say “this is known to all” but “everyone knows this”. “There is no use of sending” is wrong. It should be “it is no use sending”, “it is no use to send” or “there is no use in sending”.

24. Do not qualify expressions, needlessly. To do so produces flabby style. Words like “it seems” and “it appears” are used when there is really no doubt. “He was absent in his house” meaning that he was elsewhere than in his house, is a contradiction in terms. “Absent from” is correct, but the ordinary English would be “he was not at home”, or simply “he was away” or “was out”. “Also” is misused with negatives. “He did not address the letter and did not also stamp it” should be “nor did he stamp it”.

25. “He puts himself up at...” or “he is put up at”, are wrong. The correct English (and it is colloquial) is “He is putting up at”, “Wooden piece” for “piece of wood” is a common error.

26. “Inquired/enquired into the witness” is another frequent mistake. You “examine” a witness and “enquire into” a case. But one does not “investigate into a case”, one “investigates it”. ‘Male member’ should not be used to mean “male” or “man”. You can say “the male members of my family”. Do not

say “my family members” but “members of my family”. “Through” meaning “past” and “cross” meaning “went past” are frequently used e.g., “I went through the temple”, or “I crossed the temple”. You “cross” a river or a road when you go from one side of it to the other.

27. Do not use such phrases as “has breathed his last”, or “is no more”, for “is dead”. “It is high time to do so and so” is an idiomatic English phrase. “As it was high time, the Court adjourned the case till next day” is not English.

28. “In view to do” “so and so” is wrong. You can say “with a view to reducing” meaning “in order to reduce”, and you can also say “in view of these circumstances” meaning “having regard to them”. “In view to” is impossible.

29. “You should insist on the Under Secretary to reply” is wrong. It should be “should insist on his replying”. “Address” is used sometimes as though it meant “ask”. “Government will be addressed to reconsider their order” is, strictly speaking, meaningless.

30. “Government sanctioned a peon to the Deputy Secretary” should be “for the Deputy Secretary”. “Petitioner wants that the land should be transferred” is wrong. It should be “wants the land transferred/to be transferred.”

4.2.3 The drafts of letters issued having crucial policy, financial and vigilance implications, where the drafts have been changed by Senior Officers in the process of movement of files upwards, barring grammatical corrections, should also form a part of the correspondence portion, which could be numbered in seriatim. If there is no change in the draft letter, it can be shredded.

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

The specimens of different forms of communication generally used by various functionaries of the Government of India are available at Appendix 9 of the Manual of Office Procedure (March 1987 edition). A particular form of communication is adopted for a specific purpose with a specific target group to be addressed. Accordingly, therefore, each should have some distinctive features, is only obvious.

1. LETTER

This form is used for corresponding with foreign Governments, State Governments, the UPSC, and heads of attached and subordinate offices, public enterprises, statutory authorities, public bodies and members of public generally. It must commence with 'Sir(s)', 'Dear Sir(s)' and end with 'Yours faithfully'. The name, designation and telephone number of the signatory must be mentioned below the signature. Written in first person, it carries more of formality than any personal touch. It is used for collecting/eliciting information as well as for conveying views, decisions etc.

2. DEMI-OFFICIAL LETTER

It is used in correspondence between Government Officers (of the same rank of the Addressee being not more than one or two levels above the officer who is writing) or while writing to a non-official for an inter-change of communication of information or opinion without the formality of prescribed procedure. It is written in the first person and in a personal and friendly tone. With name, designation and telephone number on the top of the letter head, it begins with the salutation 'My Dear' or 'Dear Shri' or even 'Dear Sir/Madam' as may be suitable and ends with an expression of regards and the subscription 'Yours sincerely'.

3. OFFICE MEMORANDUM

The target group to be addressed comprises other departments (but not UPSC), Attached & Sub-ordinate Offices, and the Employees. It is written in third person and bears no salutation or subscription except the name, designation & telephone number of the signatory. It is used in calling for or conveying information but not for conveying any order of the Government.

4. INTER-DEPARTMENTAL NOTE

To obtain the advice, views, concurrence or comments on a proposal or to seek clarification of rules, instructions etc. this form of communication is addressed to other Departments. It is also used for consultation by a Department with its Attached and Sub-ordinate Offices or vice-versa. It may be recorded on a file or even may be on independent self-contained note. No salutation, no subscription are necessary.

5. *OFFICE ORDER*

It is used for communicating internal decision of day-to-day administration e.g. grant of regular leave, distribution of work etc.

6. *ORDER*

It is used for communicating financial sanctions and orders in disciplinary cases.

7. *NOTIFICATION*

It is used for notifying the promulgation of statutory rules and orders, appointments and promotions of Gazetted Officers etc. in the Gazette of India and is addressed to the Manager of the Government of India Press concerned. The details about different parts and sanctions of the Gazette reserved for different types of notification are available in Appendix 11 of the Manual.

8. *RESOLUTION*

It is used for making public announcement of decisions of Government important matters of policy and is published in the Gazette of India. The publication and its communication to be specified parties are authorised by means of an order below the resolution.

10 *PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ/NOTE*

These are used with a view to giving wide publicity to a Government decision. Press Communiqué is more formal and has to be reproduced verbatim by the media whereas the press note is in the nature of a hand-out which can be edited, compressed or enlarged by the media.

11 *ENDORSEMENT*

It is used for returning or passing on the original letter alongwith reply/ remarks. It is also used for supplying to copies to parties other than the addressee. However, this will not be used for sending copies to State Governments. The appropriate form in that case would be "letter".

12 *CIRCULAR*

This form is used when important and urgent external communications received or important and urgent decisions taken internally have to be circulated within a Department for information and compliance by large number of employees.

(Forms without any format)

13 *ADVERTISEMENT*

This form is used for communication with the general public to create awareness and may take the form of audio visual or written communication.

14 *E-MAIL*

This is a paper-less form of communication to be used by the Department having computer facilities supported by internet or intranet connectivity and can be widely used for subjects where legal or financial implications are not involved.

Specimen Forms of Communications

LETTER (With endorsement)

No.....

Government of India
(Bharat Sarkar)

Department of
(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, dated the

To

The Director General,
Central PWD,
NirmanBahvan,
New Delhi

Subject : _____

Sir,

With reference to your letter No Dated..... On the subject
cited above , I am to inform you that

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-

(A.B.C.)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tele No

No.....

Copy forwarded for information / action to :

(1)

(2)

(A.B.C.)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tele. No.-----

DEMI-OFFICIAL LETTER

XYZ
Deputy Secretary
Tele.No.

Government of India
(Bharat Sarkar)
Department of
(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

D.O. No : _____

My dear / Dear Shri

We propose to draw up a model scheme for A copy of the outline prepared in this connection is enclosed.

I should be grateful if you would let me have your comments as soon as possible. I may add that we intend circulating the draft scheme formally to all departments in due course for their comments.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(X,Y,Z)

Shri A.B.C.
Deputy Secretary
Department of
(..... Vibhag)
KrishiBhavan
New Delhi – 110001

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

NO.....
Government of India
(Bharat Sarkar)
Department of
(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject : _____

The undersigned is directed to refer to the Ministry of Agriculture's Office Memorandum No _____ dated _____ on the subject mentioned above and to send the requisite information as in the enclosures.

2. Information regarding _____
will be sent on receipt from the field offices.

Enc.: 3 statements

(A.B.C.)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India
Tele. No

To
The Department of
(..... Vibhag)
(Shri/Smt)
YojanaBhavan,
Parliament Street,
New Delhi

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL NOTE

Government of India
Bharat Sarkar)
Department of
(..... Vibhag)

Subject : _____

The present rules regulating the issue of identity cards provide *inter alia* that
.....

2. A question has now arisen whether
- 3.
- 4.
5. This department will be grateful for the advice of the Department of Legal Affairs on the issue raised in para 4 above.

(X.Y.Z.)
Deputy Secretary
Tele. No.

Department of Legal Affairs (VidhiKaryaVibhag) (Shri)
ShastriBhavan, New Delhi

Department of (VidhiKaryaVibhag) I.D. NoDated

OFFICE ORDER

No.....
Government of India
(Bharat Sarkar)
Department of

(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

OFFICE ORDER

Shri XYZ, a permanent Lower Division Clerk in this Department is granted earned leave for Days from To with permission to prefix a public holiday, to the leave.

It is certified that but for his proceeding on leave, Shri XYZ would have continued in the same post.

(A.B.C.)

Under Secretary to the Government of India

Copy to :

1. Office Order File
2. Cashier
3. Section concerned
4. Shri X,YZ, LDC

ORDER

No.....
Government of India
(Bharat Sarkar)
Department of

(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

ORDER

Sanction of the President is accorded under rule 10 of the Delegation of Financial Powers Rules, to the write off irrecoverable loss of Rs. 5000 /- (Rupees Five Thousands only) being the value of the following articles belonging to this department.

- 1) X XXX
- 2) X XXX

(A.B.C.)
Under Secretary to the Government of India
Tele. No.

Copy forwarded to :

1. The A.G.C., New Delhi
2. Internal Finance Section
3. Cash Section

NOTIFICATION

[to be published in the Gazettee of India, Part I, Section 2]

Government of India
(Bharat Sarkar)
Department of

(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

NOTIFICATION

No..... Shri X,Y,Z, Under Secretary in the Department of is appointed to officiate as Deputy Secretary in that Department vice Shri..... transferred to the Department of

(A.B.C.)
Under Secretary to the Government of India

To
The Manager
Government of India Press
(Bharat Sarkar press)
Faribabad

No..... New Delhi, the

Copy forwarded for information to :

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

(D.E.F.)
Under Secretary to the Government of India

Endorsement should be typed on all copies except one intended for the Press.

RESOLUTION

[to be published in the Gazettee of India, Part I, Section I]

Government of India

No.....

(Bharat Sarkar)

Department of-----

..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

RESOLUTION

The Government of India have had under consideration the question of further improving efficiency of the departments and services concerned with the collection of revenue. As a first step in that direction the President has been pleased, under the powers vested in him by provision to Article 309 of the Constitution of India, to decide that a Class I Central service to be known as 'India Revenue Service' should be constituted with effect from

(A.B.C.)

Secretary to the Government of India

ORDER

ORDERED that a copy of the resolution be communicated to

ORDERED also that the resolution be published I the Gazette of India for general information.

(A.B.C.)

Secretary to the Government of India

To
The Manager,
Government of India Press,
(Bharat Sarkar)
Faribabad

PRESS COMMUNIQUE / NOTE

Not to be published or broadcast beforea.m. / p.m. on day.
The 2002.

PRESS COMMUNIQUE / NOTE

In response to public demand, the Government of India have appointed a Commission to go into the problem of And make suitable recommendations to the Government.

2. The Commission will consist of Shri as Chairman and the following as members :

1.

2.

3.

3. In making its recommendations, the Commission is expected to give consideration to the following matters :

a)

b)

c)

4. The Commission is expected to submit its report to the Government by

Department of

(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

No.....

Forwarded to the Principal Information Officer, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, New Delhi for issuing the communiqué and giving it wide publicity.

(ABC)

Joint Secretary to the Government of India

ENDORSEMENT

No.....
Government of India
(Bharat Sarkar)
Department of
(..... Vibhag)

New Delhi, the

A copy each of the undermentioned papers is forwarded to For information and necessary action.

(ABC)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India
Tele No

List of papers forwarded

- (1)
- (2)
- (3)

Chapter 5

NOTE FOR THE CABINET/COMMITTEE OF SECRETARIES⁷

After reading this Chapter, the reader will be able to describe the following:

- a) How Cabinet Notes are instruments of Policy making*
 - b) Disposal of the business of the Government of India*
 - c) Format and Presentation of the Note*
 - d) Contents*
 - e) Inter-Ministerial Consultations*
 - f) Timelines for Inter-Ministerial Consultations*
 - g) Forwarding of Notes to Cabinet Secretariat*
-

5.1 Cabinet Notes as instruments of policy making

5.1.1 The decisions taken by the Cabinet and Committees of the Cabinet are fundamental to the governance of the country. Various matters of national and international importance impacting different facets of governance get flagged and placed before the Cabinet and Committees of the Cabinet. The notes for their consideration are, therefore, central to policy making and to successful execution of different programmes. These notes, should therefore, have the highest degree of clarity with all pertinent details having been brought out in the right perspective.

5.1.2 Some of the illustrative cases required to be placed before the Cabinet are:

- (i) Cases involving legislation including the issue of Ordinances.
- (ii) Cases involving negotiations with foreign and Commonwealth countries on treaties, agreements and other important matters

- (iii) Proposals to appoint public commissions or committees of inquiry and consideration of the reports of such commissions or committees.
- (iv) Proposals relating to creation of posts of the level of Joint Secretary to the Government of India or higher.
- (v) Cases in which a difference of opinion arises between two or more Ministers and a Cabinet decision is desired.
- (vi) Proposals to vary or reverse a decision previously taken by the Cabinet.

5.1.3 The proposals that are placed before the Cabinet and Committees of the Cabinet are often the culmination of a series of steps. These include consultations with the stakeholders within the Central Government and outside, consultations with the State Governments, inter-ministerial consultations and in many cases, appraisal by designated bodies or financial institutions. The final document and the proposals contained in such notes should therefore be of very high quality.

5.2 Disposal of the business of the Government of India

5.2.1 The business of the Government of India is disposed of at various levels within the Ministries/Departments in terms of the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 by, or under the general or special directions of the Minister-in-charge. However, the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961, stipulate that such disposal of business is subject to the provisions relating to consultation with other Ministries/Departments, approval of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and its Committees and the President. Accordingly, while a significant portion of the Government business

gets disposed of at the departmental level, certain cases, or class of cases that are important from the national perspective, require approval of the Cabinet or one of the Committees of the Cabinet.

5.2.2 The proposal(s) sought to be placed before the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet, should either be the concern exclusively of the sponsoring Department, or it should primarily concern the Department in terms of the AoB Rules. In cases, where it does not exclusively concern the sponsoring Department, the concurrence of Departments whose business is impacted, must be obtained. In the event of such concurrence not being possible, the views of the differing Departments are to be appropriately included in the note seeking approval of the Cabinet or the Committee of the Cabinet. In the latter case, where there is difference of opinion between the sponsoring and the consulted departments, the views of the consulted departments need to be reflected honestly in the note.

5.2.3 Detailed guidelines/instructions regarding preparing notes for the Cabinet and Committees of the Cabinet including the process to be followed for inter-ministerial consultation have been issued by the Cabinet Secretariat. These are available on the website of the Cabinet Secretariat, viz., <http://cabsec.nic.in>. Some of the important aspects of format and inter-ministerial consultation process are given in the foregoing paragraphs.

5.3 Format and Presentation of a Cabinet Note

5.3.1 The notes for the Cabinet or the Cabinet Committees should be prepared as per the following format and presentation requirements:

- (i) The notes are to be prepared in the prescribed format and copies of the Notes made on A-4 size paper.
- (ii) The copies of the Note are to be made both in English, and Hindi. Both versions are to be sent to the Cabinet Secretariat together.
- (iii) The notes are to be typed in double space (in Arial font, size 12-14) and both sides of the paper are to be used.
- (iv) The typing impression should be legible and clear in all pages.
- (v) In the documents annexed, marginal notings if any, must be removed. In case, such documents have a poor impression, these must be retyped.
- (vi) The main note should, preferably, not exceed 7-8 pages in double space. Other details, especially tables, charts, diagrams, maps etc. which should, as far as possible be brief, can be relegated to annexes.
- (vii) A wide margin (not less than 1.5 inch) should be left towards that edge of the paper which is put in the pads for the meetings i.e. the left edge on the obverse and the right edge on the reverse of the page.
- (viii) All paragraphs and sub-paragraphs of the Notes are to be appropriately numbered. Bullets, arrows and other similar markings are not to be used as a replacement for paragraphs or sub-paragraphs.
- (ix) The Notes are to be security graded "Secret" or "Top Secret". While assigning the security grading, the proposed classification should be properly evaluated with reference to the contents of the Note. However, all proposals to be brought before the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet are to be classified at least as "Secret". Depending on the content, the

sponsoring Ministry/Department would examine whether the note should continue to be classified “Secret” or “Top Secret” after its consideration by the Cabinet, or after action on it is complete or over.

- (x) Copy number is to be indicated on the top right side on the first page of the note. Below that, in the centre, the file number and the name of the sponsoring Ministry and Department are to be indicated. Copy number is not required to be indicated on pages other than the first page of the main note.
- (xi) The file number and the name of the Ministry/Department is to be indicated on each page of the note on the top including appendices and annexures.
- (xii) The words “Note for the Cabinet” or “Note for the Cabinet Committee on _____”, , as the case may be, are to be indicated below the name of the Ministry/Department on the first page.
- (xiii) Below the caption “Note for the Cabinet/Committee of the Cabinet”, a brief subject heading is to be given. While being brief, the heading should be fully indicative of the proposals contained in the Note.
- (xiv) Every note should, as far as possible, be so structured as to include paragraphs on introduction, background, proposal, justification, details of inter-ministerial consultations, financial implications, approval required and a paragraph stating that the note has been approved by the Minister-in-charge.
- (xv) **Appendix I** : “Statement of Implementation Schedule;

Appendix II :“Statement on Equity, Innovation and Public Accountability”;
and

Appendix III : “Statement on Major Milestones and Corresponding Target Dates” (for infrastructure project related proposals only) should also be added and a reference made to that effect in the body of the note.

- (xvi) On the top right hand corner of the first page, the date of the note is to be indicated clearly. It has to be the date on which the note is signed and its copies sent to the Cabinet Secretariat. In those cases, where the Note is required to be rectified/revised and resubmitted, it should be given a fresh date. The date on the front page and all other pages that are signed by the competent officer should be the same, both in English, and Hindi versions.
- (xvii) All pages in the Note, including the annexes, appendices etc. are to carry continuous page numbers on the bottom extreme right hand corner, simultaneously indicating total number of pages, in the manner “page x of y” where “x” is the running serial number of the page, and “y” is the total number of pages in the note including Appendices/ Annexures.
- (xviii) The fact that Appendices/Annexes/Annexures are attached with the note should be indicated in the main note and also duly referenced with page numbers wherever these are referred to for the first time. On each Appendix/Annex/Annexure, the relevant paragraph and page number of the main note, where these have been referred to, should be indicated, for easy reference.

- (xix) Only relevant papers are to be annexed with the Note. Unrelated papers/annexures are not to be attached. Copies of old notes considered by Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet are not to be attached. In cases, where the issue had previously been considered by the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet, only the relevant extracts from such notes and the decision(s) previously taken by the Cabinet/ Committees of the Cabinet are to be annexed or appropriately reproduced in the body of the note.
- (xx) It should be indicated in the final paragraph of the Note that the proposals made therein have the approval of the Minister-in-charge of the sponsoring Ministry.
- (xxi) The Note should be properly tagged or stapled. No other form of binding is advised. There should be no spiral/hard binding of the note(s).
- (xxii) The Note as well as the Appendices, should be signed by a Joint Secretary or higher officer in the main Ministry/Department sponsoring the note. Joint Secretary equivalent officers even if working in the main Ministry/Department are not authorized to sign the notes for Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet.
- (xxiii) No note for the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet etc. should be signed by any officer in the Attached/ Subordinate Office.
- (xxiv) The telephone number of the officer signing the note should necessarily be indicated in the note as well as Appendices.

- (xxv) Signed softcopy of the cabinet note should also be sent to the Cabinet Secretariat along with prescribed number of copies of the note in English and Hindi.

5.4 Contents

5.4.1 Special attention needs to be paid to the quality of drafting. The note while being brief should bring out all relevant details and no material fact should remain unstated. The main note should be self-contained, lucid, straight forward and contain only the relevant details.

5.4.2 All acronyms/abbreviations used in the text of a note are to be expanded when the term is first used in the note. Its full form, with the acronym/abbreviation given in brackets should be given. Acronyms that are not commonly used are to be avoided.

5.4.3 The Note should have a brief introduction that succinctly brings out the essence of the proposal in three-four sentences, followed by a brief background, the details of the proposal, its financial implications, details of appraisal, if any carried out by the financial institutions or prescribed appraisal body/forum, inter-ministerial consultations, consultations with State Government, if relevant, recommendations of any expert bodies etc., details about Appendices/Annexures attached and approval required etc.

5.4.4 The approval paragraph should be self-contained and it should indicate the specific point or points on which approval/decision is sought. Reference to proposals in earlier paragraphs should be avoided while formulating the approval paragraph. The paragraph should have absolute clarity and it should leave no scope for any differing

interpretations. This paragraph should also not contain any content for which approval of the Cabinet/Committee of the Cabinet is not required.

5.5 Inter-Ministerial Consultations

5.5.1 The sponsoring Ministry/Department should consult all Ministries/ Departments which may be concerned with the subject matter. The draft note(s) should be sent to all the Ministries/Departments concerned, whose business is likely to be impacted by the proposal.

5.5.2 The views of the consulted Ministries/Departments should have the approval of the Minister-in-charge of consulted Ministries/Departments. While conveying the views on proposals contained in the draft notes for the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet to the sponsoring Ministry/Department, the consulted Ministries/Departments should categorically state that the same have the approval/concurrence of their Minister-in-charge. In cases, where approval at the level of the Minister-in charge in the consulted Ministries is not indicated by them, it will be presumed that the comments had been approved at the level of the Minister-in-charge.

5.5.3 When the differing Ministry/Department's remarks are reproduced in the final Note, no second reference to the differing Ministries/Departments concerned is necessary. However, if any addition is made to the Note by the sponsoring Ministry to rebut the arguments advanced against its proposal, it should be shown to the differing Ministries/Departments. The obligation would, however, be limited to sending a copy of the note to such Ministry/Department and not to securing their consent to the views expressed by the sponsoring Ministry/Department in rebuttal. In such cases, the fact

that the note, in its final form, has been shown to the differing Ministry/Department should be clearly reflected in the Note.

5.5.4 The details of inter-ministerial consultations i.e. the comments of consulted Ministries are required to be incorporated in the main note. The views of the consulted Ministry/Departments need to be faithfully reflected in the main note to ensure that the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet could peruse them before arriving at a decision. The comments of the consulted Ministry should not be edited or para-phrased in a manner as to alter their connotation and all the comments/conditionalities should be incorporated in the note/ annexures.

5.5.5 Only in cases where the comments of the consulted Ministries/Departments are very lengthy and it may not be possible to incorporate them in the main note, may these be reproduced in the Annexure without being para-phrased or edited along with the comments of the sponsoring Ministry in a tabular format. However, the gist of such comments shall necessarily be incorporated in the main body of the note even in such cases.

5.5.6 All notes for the Cabinet/Committee of the Cabinet etc. must specifically mention the dates on which comments of the consulted Ministries/Departments were sought and received by the administrative Ministry/Department.

5.6 Timelines for Inter-Ministerial Consultations

5.6.1. Commencing from the date, the draft note is received by the Ministry/ Department being consulted, the comments of consulted Ministries/Departments shall, in all cases, where there are no financial implications, be finalized and communicated to

the sponsoring Ministry/Department in 15 days, and in cases, where there are financial implications, the time limit for finalization and forwarding comments shall be four weeks.

5.6.2 In all cases where the notes for the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet are required to be circulated for inter-ministerial consultations, the entire process of consultations will be completed in two weeks' time. In cases where the consulted Ministries/Departments fail to forward their comments to the sponsoring Departments within two weeks, the sponsoring Departments will clearly indicate in the body of the note the date on which comments were sought from the Ministry/Department concerned, and the fact that the comments of the Ministries/Departments consulted have not been received till finalization of the note for the Cabinet/Committee of the Cabinet. It will be the responsibility of the Ministry/Department sponsoring the proposals to ensure that the draft note for the Cabinet/Committee of the Cabinet is delivered to all Ministries/Departments required to be consulted and the Prime Minister's Office quickly and the period of two weeks will reckon from the date, copies of such draft notes have been delivered to all Ministries/Departments concerned.

5.6.3 A copy of the draft note should necessarily be forwarded to the Prime Minister's Office at the time when notes are sent for inter-ministerial consultations and their comments awaited for 15 days. In cases, where the proposal needs to be cleared/appraised by bodies such as EFC/PIB etc., a copy of the EFC/PIB Memo etc. should also be forwarded to PMO. Comments, if any, received from PMO should be duly taken into account while finalizing the note. It is, however, clarified that the consideration of the proposal by the appraisal bodies should not be delayed for reasons

of non-receipt of comments from PMO. The Handbook on Writing Cabinet Notes also elaborates as to how the comments, if any, received from the PMO are to be dealt with.

5.6.4 A copy of the draft note should also be forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat at the time of inter-ministerial consultations, as per recent instructions on the subject.

5.6.5 After completion of inter-ministerial consultation an unnumbered single copy of the finalized note shall be submitted to the Prime Minister's Office. Simultaneously, 5 copies of the note are to be submitted to the Cabinet Secretariat. The sponsoring Ministry/Department will wait for 3 working days for any direction and, thereafter, if any comments have been received, make necessary changes and submit the requisite number of final note to the Cabinet Secretariat.

5.7 Forwarding of Cabinet Notes to Cabinet Secretariat

5.7.1 After the Minister-in-charge of a Department/Ministry has approved a note for submission to the Cabinet or any Committee of the Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, a copy of the note should be forwarded to the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister immediately and thereafter, comments/advice of the PMO be awaited for three working days. Simultaneously, five copies of the final note will also be forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat. Accordingly, only after expiry of three working days, the requisite number of copies of the final note should be sent to the Cabinet Secretariat for placing it before the Cabinet/Committees of the Cabinet. The note should bear the date on which it is sent to the Cabinet Secretariat. The fact of compliance with the aforesaid instructions will be clearly stated in the forwarding memo *vide* which the notes are sent to the Cabinet Secretariat.

5.7.2 The forwarding memo should be addressed to and all copies of notes sent to Director (Cabinet), Cabinet Secretariat, Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi- 110004 and not to any other senior officer in the Cabinet Secretariat. Where it is considered expedient or necessary to draw the attention of senior officers in the Cabinet Secretariat, an additional copy of the note may be forwarded to them directly.

7: Based on Handbook on Cabinet Note Published by Cabinet Secretariat

भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



सचिवालय प्रशिक्षण तथा प्रबन्ध संस्थान
कार्मिक और प्रशिक्षण विभाग

(आईएसओ 9001:2015 संस्था)

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