

Policy on Customers Grievance Redressal

1. Introduction

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

2. Principles

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

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

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

2.3 The customer complaint arises due to:

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

2.4 The customer is having the full right to register his complaint if he/she is not satisfied with the services provided by the bank. He /She could lodge his/her complaint orally, in writing, through web portal, over telephone etc.

2.5 If a customer's complaint is not resolved within a period of one month or if he/she is not satisfied with the solution provided by the bank, he/she can approach the Banking Ombudsman with his/her complaint or seek other legal avenues available for grievance redressal.

3. Internal Machinery to handle Customer complaints/ grievances

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

3.1 Customer Service Committee of the Board:

3.1.1 This sub-committee of the Board would take steps to strengthen the corporate governance of the Bank, with regard to customer service. The Committee would review the functioning of the Standing Committee on Customer Service and ensure compliance of the recommendations made by it. This committee would also review the ongoing improvements in the quality of customer service provided at all levels and take innovative and corrective measures, if needed, for enhancing the level of customer satisfaction for all categories of clientele at all times.

3.1.2 The Customer Service Committee of the Board would also periodically review the existing customer grievance redressal mechanism, the efficacy of the grievance redressal, steps taken by the Bank to preclude possibilities of receiving complaints in certain specific areas of functioning such as sanction and disbursement of loans and educational loans in particular, services rendered to senior citizens/pensioners etc.

3.1.3 The committee would periodically review the compliance of the Bank's Code of Commitment to Customers.

3.1.4 The committee would also review the overall status relating to the customer complaints to Banking Ombudsman / Consumer Forum.

3.2 Standing Committee on Customer Service:

3.2.1 The Standing Committee on Customer Service, consisting of Chairman, General Manager, Chief Manager besides eminent personalities drawn from public, would meet once in a quarter to review the following areas:

- Quality of customer service rendered and feedback received from various quarters.
- Position of unresolved complaints/ grievances.

3.2.2 A report on the performance of the Standing Committee on Customer Service is being submitted to the Customer Service Committee of the Board at quarterly intervals.

3.3 Nodal Officer and other designated officials to handle complaints and grievances

3.3.1 General Manager in-charge of Customer Service would be the Nodal Officer responsible for implementation of Customer Service and complaint handling mechanism of the entire Bank. All the Regional Managers would be Customer Relation Officers for their respective Regional Offices to handle complaint grievances in respect of branches in their Regions.

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

4. Mandatory display requirements

4.1 Bank would mandatorily provide the following minimum requirements as a notice to the customers in the Banking Hall at all the branches, in order to help them register their grievances:

- Appropriate arrangement for receiving complaints and suggestions.
- The name, address and contact number of Nodal Officer(s), in case they are not satisfied with the response at branch level.
- Contact details of Banking Ombudsman of the area.
- Code of Bank's Commitment to Customers / Fair Practice Code would be made available on demand by the customers at the branches.

5. Resolution of Grievances

5.1 The entire Bank's grievances redressal machinery is committed to resolve the complaints received against the Branches or any other organ of the Bank. Branch Manager would be responsible to resolve and ensure closure of all complaints received at the branches. Branch Manager's foremost duty would be to see that the complaint is resolved to the customer's satisfaction.

5.2 If the Branch is unable to resolve the problem he/she can refer the case to Regional Office for guidance. Similarly, if Regional Offices find that they are not able to solve the problems, such cases may be referred to the Customer Service Cell at Head Office.

5.3 Standardised Public Grievance Redressal System – (SPGRS)

5.3.1 Bank has introduced online complaint management system, viz., Standardised Public Grievance Redressal System (SPGRS) to integrate complaints received through various modes like telephonic complaints, e-mail, letters, Online grievance redress site of Banking Ombudsman, Govt. of India (CPGRAMS) etc.

5.3.2 All complaints received through all modes' would be entered online in SPGRS for data management and speedy disposal of complaints. These complaints would be attended / resolved by the respective Branches / Regions / Head Office within the given time frame viz. 21 days.

5.3.3 SPGRS is enabled in such a way that branches can only reply to the complaints but could not close. It would be closed only by Regional Office or HO Customer Service Cell.

5.4 Time frame for Complaint/Grievance Redress Mechanism

5.4.1 Any Complaint would be seen in the right perspective because they indirectly reveal a weak spot in the working of the Bank. Complaint received would be analyzed from all possible angles.

5.4.2 Communication of bank's stand on any issue to the customer is a vital requirement. Complaints received which would require some time for examination of issues involved should invariably be acknowledged promptly.

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

i) Customer has to lodge his/her complaint to the Branch Manager / Regional Office / Head Office / Internet Portal of the Bank etc.

ii) Bank would initiate steps for resolving and replying to the customer to his satisfaction on his/her complaint within a maximum period of 21 days (Branch would resolve within 5 days from the date of receipt of the complaint, if not by Regional Office within 10 days from the date of receipt of the complaint and Head Office totally within 21 days from the date of receipt of the complaint).

iii) If the customer is not satisfied with the reply given by the Branch, the complainant may take up with Head Office / HO: Customer Service Cell.

5.4.4 If the complaint is not redressed by the Bank to the complainant's satisfaction within a period, as mentioned above, he/she could approach the Office of Banking Ombudsman of the jurisdiction at the address displayed in the Branch for redressal.

5.5 As a measure towards complaint free service, Regional Offices / Branches would not include such complaints/grievances which are redressed within the next working day in their statement of complaints.

6. Interaction with customers

6.1 The bank recognizes that customers' expectation / requirement / grievances could be better appreciated through personal interaction with customers by banks staff.

6.2 To achieve this, customers can meet the Branch Manager at 3.00 pm on 15th of every month or on the next working day, if it falls on Saturday or on a holiday, to resolve their grievances. In addition, Monthly Joint Customer Service meet would also be conducted at the branches. This would pass a message to the customers that the bank always cares for them and value their feedback / suggestions for improvement in customer service. Many of the complaints arise on account of lack of awareness among customers about banking services and such interactions will help the customers appreciate banking services better. As for the bank, the feedback from customers would be valuable input for revisiting the product, strategies and services to meet customer requirements.

7. Sensitising operating staff on handling complaints

7.1 Staff would be properly trained for handling complaints. Bank is dealing with people and hence differences of opinion and areas of friction could arise. With an open mind and a smile on the face operating staff should be able to win the customer's confidence and ensure zero free complaints. Nodal Officer would ensure that internal machinery for handling complaints / grievances operates smoothly and efficiently at all levels. Nodal Officer would give feedback on training needs of staff at various levels to the HR department.

8. Anonymous and Pseudonymous complaints

8.1 In view of the fact that complainants who desire to protect their identity now have the protection of the Public Interest Disclosure & Protection of Informers Resolution – 2004 (PIDPI), the following procedure has been laid down for handling such anonymous and pseudonymous complaints:

8.1.1 No action is required to be taken on anonymous complaints, irrespective of the nature of allegations and such complaints need to be simply filed.

8.1.2 Complaints containing vague allegations could also be filed without verification of identity of the complainant.

8.1.3 If a complaint contains verifiable allegations, Bank may take cognizance of such complaint - In such cases, the complaint will be first sent to the complainant for owning/disowning, as the case may be. If no response is received from the complainant within 15 days of sending the complaint, a reminder will be sent. After waiting for 15 days after sending the reminder, if still nothing is heard, the said complaint may be filed as pseudonymous by Bank/Branch.

Review of the Policy

Guidelines received from the Government, RBI and other regulators from time to time shall automatically form part of the policy.

This policy will be in force till such a time the policy is reviewed or modified by the Board.