



**REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED TO
STUDY PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND ISSUES OF
CONCERN IN RESPECT OF PAKISTAN POST
OFFICE DEPARTMENT (PPOD)**

WAFAQI MOHTASIB (OMBUDSMAN)'S SECRETARIAT

REGIONAL OFFICE (Sir Agha Khan Road) LAHORE

**I. COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED BY FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN TO STUDY
ISSUES OF PAKISTAN POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT**

Members of Committee:

- 1. Dr. Kamran Afzal Cheema,
Director General, Wafaqi Mohtasib's Regional Office,
Lahore**
- 2. Mr. Anfas Yunus, Consultant
Wafaqi Mohtasib's Regional Office, Lahore**
- 3. Ms. Mobashshrah Nighat Bajwa Advisor, Wafaqi
Mohtasib's Regional Office, Lahore (was added later to
assist the Committee).**

II. BACKGROUND

In recent months a number of public complaints were received in the Federal Ombudsman Offices, in which shortcomings, inefficiency and mal-practices in delivery of services by Pakistan Post Office Department (PPOD) were alleged.

The main areas of concern identified were:-

- (i) Operation of Savings Bank
- (ii) Disbursement of military pension especially delay in grant of family pensions to widows of deceased pensioners
- (iii) Disbursement under Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)
- (iv) General apathy, lethargy and unprofessional attitude on part of Post Office staff towards public.

To address these concerns the Hon'ble Wafaqi Mohtasib being so empowered under Article 18 of the President's Order No.1 of 1983, constituted a committee to study the issues being faced by the public and identified / highlighted in their complaints and make recommendations for removal of system's weaknesses and improvement in the working of PPOD so that the citizens' complaints against the department were minimized.

Terms of Reference (TORs) of the Committee:

- (a) Identify the kinds of mal-administration in cases related to Military pensions, Savings Banks and Benazir Income Support Programme, etc.**
- (b) Probe into the causes of delay in dealing with the aforementioned cases / areas.**
- (c) Ascertain the overall, deficiencies in the system.**
- (d) To make recommendations and suggest remedial measure so as to bring about improvement in the identified areas of concern.**

III. Methodology

- **In-depth study of recent complaints.**

Special attention was paid to the observations recorded by I.O. during hearings, the nature of complaints and the Agency response. Efforts were made to uncover the underlying shortcoming in the system and/or its implementation that gave rise to the complaints in the first place. The Agency's response to redress the complaint where the citizen had approached the Agency before lodging complaint with Ombudsman's Office and the reasons for its failure to satisfy the complainant were also studied.

- **Visits to Post offices in Gujrat & Gujranwala.**

Dr. Kamran Afzal Cheema, Director General, Wafaqi Mohtasib's Regional Office, Lahore, visited General Post Offices in Gujrat and Gujranwala and met and discussed the issues with the PPOD Officers to ascertain the nature and causes of complaints.

- **Discussions with PPOD's officers in WM Regional Office Lahore.**

The Postmaster General, Central Region, Punjab and the Deputy Postmaster General, Sialkot were separately invited to the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Secretariat, Regional Office, Lahore. Thorough discussions were held by the committee members with both the PPOD Officers. Nature and causes of the citizens' complaints and limitations of PPOD in timely resolution of the issues were examined.

- **Visit to Lahore GPO.**

General Post Office, Lahore, the flagship unit of the PPOD was visited by the Consultant, WM Regional Office Lahore (member Committee). First hand observations of functioning of its various departments and different service counters were made and discussed with the Chief Post Master.

- **Study of recent reports of PPOD.**

Recent reports of the PPOD including its latest Annual Report were obtained and studied to find out nature and scope of its activities, its strengths and weaknesses in delivery of its services and dealing with public complaints.

- **Examination of procedures.**

Prevalent procedures were studied and looked at to develop understanding of the system as well as to identify the need if any, to amend and change those that might be hampering the department's otherwise smooth operation and efficient service delivery. Special attention was paid to the procedures regarding operation of saving bank and disbursement of military pension.

- **Study of PPOD rules.**

PPOD's rules especially the pension rules and procedure to process the pension cases were studied in detail to discover bottlenecks in timely sanction and disbursement of pension to the retiring PPOD employees. Suggestions in improvement in the system for expeditious process of pension cases were also discussed with PPOD management.

IV. OVERVIEW OF PAKISTAN POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT (PPOD)

- **Functions & Services**

PPOD provides the following services to the public:

- (a) Traditional Post Services (delivery of letters, etc.)
- (b) Express Mail Services
- (c) Money Transfer Services (remittances of money through the postal order, postal draft and money order services including Fax Money Order Service.
- (d) Dissemination of knowledge and culture through definitive and commemorative Postage stamps.
- (e) The following Agency Services are also offered by Pakistan Post: -

Post: -

- Savings Bank
- Disbursement of Funds under BISP (now withdrawn)
- Postal Life Insurance
- Utility Bills Collection
- Collection of Provincial Taxes
- Collection of Federal Taxes
- Disbursement of pension to retired non-commissioned ranks of Armed Forces, retired employees from Pakistan Post, Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited and Capital Development Authority.
- Disbursement of pension to retired employees of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited and Capital Development Authority.
- Sanction and disbursement of pension to retired department's employees.

- **Structure of PPOD**

Pakistan Post Office is one of the oldest Federal Government departments. Since 2008, it is working under the administrative control of Ministry of Postal Service. The policy planning is vested in a high powered Management Board headed by a Chairman who is also the Director General of the department and exercises all the operational powers.

Executive management of postal and allied services below the Directorate General is done at three levels – the Circle, the Regional and Divisional levels. A Postmaster General heads each Circle. There are 10 Circles with specific jurisdictions.

The Post Office maintains over 3000 Post Offices and supervises about 9000 Extra Departmental Post Offices (Franchises). It directly employs about 50000 workers. In addition, about 16000 staff positions are available in the Extra Departmental Post Offices.

- **Performance (volume of work)**

About 400 million letters, parcels and other postal items are handled by the PPOD, annually.

The Savings Bank maintains over three million different accounts including pension accounts.

Postal Service Insurance has about 4000 active policies including Group Insurance (in force).

Over 20 million drivers and arms licenses are renewed during a year. Over 46 million utilities bills are yearly collected by post offices in the Country.

V. PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Areas of Concern

In the recent months about 200 complaints from citizens were received in the Ombudsman Office against the PPOD. Major areas of concern in these complaints were related to:

- a) Savings Bank 37%
- b) Military pension 31%,
- c) Postal Service 13%
- d) Attitude / Misbehaviour of staff 8%
- e) BISP 8%
- f) Other matters 2%
- g) 1% cases related to staff and service matters which were beyond the jurisdiction of Ombudsman.

In addition to the complaints lodged with the Ombudsman a higher number of complaints specially regarding inefficiency of postal service (delivery of mail, parcels and money orders etc.) and misbehavior of staff are lodged by the citizens with the Post Office. For example over 300 complaints are pending regarding post offices in Lahore alone for over three months.

Nature & Causes of Complaints

Saving Bank:-

- Delay in settlement of claims in case of fraud/embezzlement. For example Rs 82 million were embezzled from saving accounts of citizens in the Post Office Bhurch Basooha (district Gujrat) in 2011. PPOD took more than 3 years to decide (accept or reject) the bulk of the ensuing claims, whereas decisions on some claims are still pending.

- Delay in preparing / finalizing deceased claim cases of the saving accounts / certificates

- Non-posting of profits since 2008. The Directorate of Accounts Pakistan Post Office Lahore (DAPPO) had not credited profit on saving accounts for the last 06 years.

Military Pension: -

- Omission of names of persons from fresh increased list
- Delay/difficulty faced by widows regarding family pension.
- Cases relating to difference in increase of pension

BISP: -

- Delay in resolution of claims of short or non-disbursement. Some cases are still pending with PPOD regarding disbursements made during 2009 to 2011.

Mail Services: -

- Short delivery of parcels
- Non receipt of payment against VPPs (Value Payable Parcels)

General Complaints: -

- Lethargy or non-availability of counter staff
- Misbehaviour of staff. This problem is endemic especially in small town post offices, but also not uncommon in cities even in Head/ General Post offices.

Causes of complaints

Saving Bank:-

- Inefficient staff and lack of professional knowledge
- Deceased claim cases are processed in Head Office instead of the concerned unit (Post Office).
- Non-posting of profits since 2008 by DAPPO Lahore. The procedure itself is outdated and cumbersome.
- Non-supply of blank certificates by CDNS Karachi.
- Non-preservation of purchase application of certificates by the issuing P.O.
- Lack of full computerization

Military Pension: -

- Most of the issues fall within the authority of Controller of Military Accounts (Pension)[CMA(P)]. In some cases lack of coordination between CMA(P) & PPOD was also observed.

BISP: -

-BISP disbursements had been withdrawn from Post Office. Some residual complaints (mostly of fraud) lying with the Pakistan Post. Most of the enquiries in cases referred to WM's Lahore office had since been completed and cases settled.

Cross checking and verification of claimants' authenticity was an overriding concern in most of the areas of PPOD functioning (especially Saving Bank, Pensions and BISP disbursements).

Mail Services: -

- Inefficiency and / or corruption of staff
- Attitude / Lethargy of staff
- Lack of vigilance on part of supervisors
- Lack of vigilance on part of senior officers

General Complaints: -

- Shortage of trained staff.
- Lack of efficient supervision system.
- Inordinate delay in resolution of complaints
- Indifference/ apathy towards citizen's requirements

Misbehaviour of staff

- Shortage of trained staff
- Weak supervision.
- Lack of disciplinary action against delinquent staff

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Post Office Savings Bank

1. Complete computerization of the savings bank to be done on top priority basis

2. Training of all staff of savings bank on professional lines to make them completely aware of all the relevant rules and regulations of the savings bank. Training may be arranged through the banking Council or similar professional organizations /institutions.
3. Delegation of authority to unit offices instead of GPOs for expeditious process of deceased claim cases
4. Director of Accounts must post the profit of SB accounts immediately as the profit was not updated after 2008.
5. Posting / training of accounts officers in GPOs and Head Post offices. And delegation of reconciliation of accounts and posting of profits to GPOs/HPOs instead of referring all accounts from all over to DAPPO in Lahore.
6. Better coordination with the Central Directorate of National Savings Karachi
7. Ensuring security and safety of purchase application of savings certificates
8. Timely and periodic inspection of the SB branches by the unit officers
9. Filling of the vacancies immediately
10. Linkage with NADRA for NIC / thumb impression verifications. Software and equipment should be made available at least at all GPOs and HPOs

Pakistan Military Pension Payment

1. Taking Controller Military Accounts (Pensions) on board for overcoming delays and problems

2. Proper training of staff for dealing with old pensioners in a professional and courteous manner
3. Ensuring proper seating and other arrangements for old pensioners
4. Filling the vacancies immediately to overcome shortage of staff
5. Complete computerization of the pensions to be done on top priority basis
6. Getting the authority from CMA for calculating pension increase

Attitude/ Behaviour of Staff & General Problems

1. Postal Training Centers and Postal Staff College must hold courses for postal employees in areas like customer care, enterprise management, stress management, time management, team building, business leadership, project management, etc.
2. Vacancies in all areas must be filled on priority basis
3. Automation / Modernization of services. Efforts should be made for complete computerization of saving bank and pension accounts. Some services have been outsourced by PPOD, but there is a strong need for setting up of a professionally trained / efficient I.T. section for back end support within the department.
4. Cost-benefit study for introducing ATMs. A pilot project for some selected GPOs may be initiated for saving bank and pension disbursement.
5. Image building. The Post Office has lost its glory. One reason being that it had failed to keep pace with the developments in the relevant technology. It is important that PPOD should adopt measures to improve its public image. This can only be done by efficient service delivery through modernization and innovations. Above all the counter and supervisory staff must show due respect

and courtesy to the citizens realizing that they in fact are its revenue generating customers.

Acknowledgement

Co-operation, help and contribution of the following PPOD officers in carrying out this study is acknowledged:

1. Mr. Nasir Hassan, Post Master General, Central Region, Punjab
2. Mr. Athar Mansoor, Assistant Post Master General, Sialkot Region and
3. Ms. Fauzia Salman, Chief Post Master, GPO Lahore