



Planning & Development Department

Customer Service and Grievance Redressal Mechanism

The purpose of any organization is growth. One of the vital ingredients of growth, especially in service Organisations like Banks, is its level of Customer Service. Banks continue to provide an increasing number of financial services and products, hence they face the challenge of integrating these disparate systems into a coherent and efficient infrastructure, while delivering the highest level of customer service and convenience without exposing their customers to the Bank's internal / external issues/problems.

With the opening up of the economy, customer satisfaction has acquired new meaning and different dimensions. Moreover, the customer preferences are changing at a rapid pace and their service level expectations are increasing. In order to cater to the changing preferences and to survive in the midst of intense competition, banks are bound to provide suitable level of services as per the customer needs.

Customer complaints are part of the business life of any corporate entity. This is more so in Banks because Banks are service organizations. As a service organization, customer service and customer satisfaction are the prime concern of any Bank.

Our Bank believes that providing prompt and efficient service is essential not only to attract new customers, but also to retain existing ones. This policy document aims at minimizing 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 helps in identifying shortcomings in product features and service delivery, since customer dissatisfaction would spoil Bank's name and image.

The Bank's policy on grievance redressal follows the under noted principles.

- ‡ Customers are to be treated fairly at all times
- ‡ Complaints raised by customers are dealt with courtesy and on time.

- ⌘ Customers are to be fully informed of procedure and process to escalate their complaints/grievances within the organization and their rights to alternate remedy, if they are not fully satisfied with the response of the Bank to their complaints.
- ⌘ Bank will treat all complaints efficiently and fairly as they can damage the Bank's reputation and business, if handled otherwise.
- ⌘ The Bank employees will work in good faith and without prejudice to the interests of the customer.

In order to make Bank's redressal mechanism more meaningful and effective, a structured system needs to be built up towards this end. Such system would ensure that the redressal sought is just and fair and is permissible within the given frame-work of rules and regulation. The policy document would be made available at all branches. All employees will be made aware about the Complaint handling process.

1. The customer complaint arises due to:

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

Customers' needs are basically,

- Speed
- Timeliness
- Accuracy
- Courtesy
- Concern

The customer is having full right to register his complaint, if he is not satisfied with the services provided by the Bank. He can give his complaint in writing, orally or over telephone. If customer's complaint is not resolved within given time or if he is not satisfied with the solution provided by the Bank, he can approach the Banking ombudsman with his complaint or other legal avenues available for grievance redressal.

2. Internal Machinery to handle Customer complaints/ grievances

2.1 Customer Service Committee of the Board

This sub-committee of the Board would be responsible for formulation of a Comprehensive Deposit Policy incorporating the issues such as the treatment of death of a depositor for operations of his account, the product approval process and the annual survey of depositor satisfaction and the triennial audit of such services. The Committee would also examine any other issues having a bearing on the quality of customer service rendered. This Committee would also review the functioning of Standing Committee on Customer Service.

2.2 Standing Committee on Customer Service

The Standing Committee on Customer Service will be chaired by the Managing Director/ Executive Director of the Bank with senior executives of the Bank as members. The committee would also have two to three eminent non-executives drawn from the public as members. The committee would have the following functions.

Evaluate feed-back on quality of customer service received from various quarters. The committee would also review comments/feed-back on customer service and implementation of commitments in the Code of Bank's Commitments to Customers received from BCSBI.

The Committee would be responsible to ensure that all regulatory instructions regarding customer service are being followed by the Bank. Towards this, the committee would obtain necessary feed-back from zonal/regional managers/functional heads.

The committee also would consider unresolved complaints/grievances referred to it by functional heads responsible for redressal and offer their advice.

The committee would submit report on its performance to the customer service committee of the board at quarterly intervals.

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

Bank would appoint a Nodal Officer of the rank of General Manager (or its equivalent), who will be responsible for the implementation of customer service and complaint handling for the entire Bank. The Bank may also appoint *other* designated officers at specified centres. Customer Relation Officer at Regional offices are to handle complaint grievances in respect

of branches following under their control. The name and contact details of nodal officer (s) will be displayed on branch notice boards/website.

Mandatory display requirements

It is mandatory for the Bank to provide:

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

4. Resolution of Grievances

Branch Manager is responsible for the resolution of complaints/grievances in respect of customer's service by the branch. He would be responsible for ensuring closure of all complaints received at the branches. It is his foremost duty to see that the complaint should be resolved fully to the customer's satisfaction and if the customer is not satisfied, then he should be provided with alternate avenues to escalate the issue. If the branch manager feels that it is not possible at his level to solve the problem he has to refer the case to Regional Office for guidance. Similarly, if Regional office finds that they are not able to solve the problem such cases may be referred to the Nodal Officer.

4.1 Time frame

Complaint has to be seen in the right perspective because they indirectly reveal a weak link in the working of the Bank. Complaint received should be analyzed from all possible angles. Specific time schedule has been set up for handling complaints and disposing them at all levels including Branches, Regional and Head office. Branch manager should try to resolve the complaint within specified time frames, decided by the Bank.

Process flow for customer grievance redressal:

S.NO	Particulars	Contact Person	Time frame for action/address from the date of receipt	
1	First level - complaint received at branch	Branch Head	5 Days	
2	Second Level	Regional Head	Failed at Branch	10 Days
	Directly to RO		15 Days	
3	Third Level	AGM (P&D)GM(P&D)	Failed at RO / Br	25 Days
	Directly to AO		15 Days	
<i>Complaints, not resolved at third level, should be escalated to ED/MD, for redressal</i>				
4	Complaint received on Online	On-line addressing officer to AGM (P&D)/GM (P&D)	P & D to give direction to the concerned department/branch who should follow the same time frame	
5	Complaint lodged with Ombudsman/RBI/Govt. Officials	AGM (P&D)/GM (P&D)	15 days	

(Normally the customers will first approach the branch and then they will take up to higher levels if the grievance is not properly addressed)

5. Interaction with customers

The Bank recognizes that customer's expectation/requirement/grievances can be better appreciated and resolved through personal interaction with customers by Bank's staff. Structured customer service committee meets, once in a month will give a message to the customers that the Bank cares for them and values their feed back/suggestions for improvement in customer service. Many of the complaints arise on account of lack of awareness among customers about Bank's 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 revising the products and services to meet customer requirements.

The following are the tools adopted to achieve customer satisfaction and to avert any complaints/issues with the customers, by the frontline staff/team:

- Attitude
- Politeness
- Listening
- Promptness
- Knowledge
- Communication
- Customer education

6. Sensitizing operating staff on handling complaints

Staff has to be properly trained for handling complaints by the branch heads. The Bank is dealing with people and hence difference of opinion and areas of friction can arise. With an open mind and a smile on the face the Staff should be able to win the customer's confidence. Imparting soft skills required to handle irate, agitated customers - will be an integral part of the role of the staff at counter. It would be the responsibility of the Nodal Officer to ensure that internal machinery for handling complaints/grievances operates smoothly and efficiently at all levels.

The following general guidelines need to be followed, at all levels, for prompt redressal of complaints:

Guidelines at branch level

- ✓ Ensure proper customer service, so that complaints do not arise.
- ✓ Complaints received from customer orally / written should be attended by branch manager, so that the customer may not escalate the matter to higher levels.
- ✓ Complaints at counter should be addressed through personal discussion/email/phone etc. by the fastest mode.
- ✓ Complaints not settled at branch level, should be immediately taken up with next nodal point by the branch itself, keeping the customer informed of the same.
- ✓ Acknowledgement should be given to the complainant within 24 hours.

- ✓ Branch should cooperate at any point of time if RO / AO need information regarding the complaints.
- ✓ Once the complaint is redressed, it should be intimated to the complainant within 24 hours.

Guidelines at Regional level

- ✓ Complaints received by phone / email / writing should be attended immediately by contacting respective branches. The Regional Office should take up their responsibility on war footing to resolve the issue.
- ✓ Acknowledgement to be sent to customers within 24 hours from the receipt of the complaint.
- ✓ RO should forward to AO, if the complaint is not resolved at their levels immediately.
- ✓ Once the complaint is redressed, it should be intimated in writing to the complainant within 24 hours.
- ✓ RO should be in position to answer at any time if AO / Nodal Officer need information regarding the complaints.
- ✓ Every month the Regional office should submit the status of the complaints to P & D Dept. in the prescribed format (will be provided by P & D).

Points to be taken care at AO

- ✓ Complaints received from customer over phone/email/written should be attended immediately.
- ✓ Nodal Officer should send the acknowledgement within 24 hrs from the receipt of the complaint and has to follow up the matter with the concerned branches / RO and ensure that the grievances are settled (within 15 days) as per time frame.
- ✓ Once the complaint is redressed, it should be conveyed to the respective customer, Branches and Regional Office and it should be noted in the complaint register.
- ✓ In case the complaint cannot be redressed within the time frame, the reason should be intimated to the Complainant.
- ✓ The Closure of the complaint should be noted and informed to the persons concerned.

General Guidelines

- ✓ All branches and Regional offices should ensure the entry of receipt of complaint in the system / complaint register and closing it, once resolved. Those who are not

familiar with system up keeping, they should contact Planning & Development Department for guidance.

- ✓ However, register of complaints to be maintained manually, till they shift over to system up keeping. Such entry should be made within 24 hours.
- ✓ Name of the nodal officer at branch / RO / AO should be displayed at a prominent place in branch premises, along with information on Ombudsman.
- ✓ Complaints on share-holders related issues will be forwarded to AO secretarial department.
- ✓ If complaints are received simultaneously at more than one nodal point, the lowest level should initiate the redressal procedure and all the three levels will register the complaints with their system / register.
- ✓ During the customer service committee meeting held every month at the branches, the complaints position should be discussed without fail, to enhance the level of customer service by avoiding the bottlenecks in the system.

7. Right to alter or add Rules:

The Bank reserves the right to alter or add to these rules and such alteration and additions shall be binding on the account holder. Such alteration will be made known to the account holder through website.