



CUSTOMER GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL POLICY



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Bank has a core philosophy of providing prompt, efficient and consistent customer service. In the present scenario of competitive Banking, consistency in customer service is the most important tool for sustained business growth. Bank continues 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, it is essential for 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. In order to cater to the changing preferences and to survive in the midst of intense competition, Banks are bound to provide services as per the customer needs to satisfy them.

Customer complaints are part of the business life of any corporate entity. This is more so in Banks, because banks are service oriented organization. As a service organization, customer service and customer satisfaction are the prime concern of the 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 a proper service delivery channel and review mechanism to ensure a prompt redressal of genuine and legitimate customer complaints and grievances. The review mechanism will help in identifying the shortcomings in product and service delivery. Customer dissatisfaction would tarnish the Bank's name and image.

A complaint may be defined as "An expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its products and services, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected".

2. BACKGROUND OF THE POLICY:

- ❖ The Bank realizes that quick and effective handling of complaints as well as prompt corrective & preventive actions to improve processes are essential to provide excellent customer service to all segments of customers.

- ❖ Through this Policy, the Bank will ensure that a suitable mechanism exists for receiving and addressing complaints from its customers/constituents with specific emphasis on resolving such complaints fairly and expeditiously regardless of sources of the complaints.
- ❖ The Policy will cover resolution of all legitimate complaints raised by customers on account of system intricacies, procedures, gaps in customer service, service charges etc. Redressal machinery is also applicable to complaints raised on account of credit information of customers. The Grievance Redressal mechanism will ensure that the customer issues are resolved expeditiously and effectively.
- ❖ This policy is prepared on the basis of NABARD Circular No. 63/DoS-20/2016 dated 13/07/2016 & Circular No. 203/IDD/14/2016 dated 25/08/2016.

3. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY:

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 fully informed of avenues to escalate their complaints/grievances within the organization 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 Bank's reputation and business, if handled otherwise.
- ❖ The Bank employees must 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. The Grievance Redressal 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. The concerned employees should be made aware about the Complaint handling process.

4. REASON FOR CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS:

- ❖ The attitudinal aspects in dealing with customers.
- ❖ Technological issues relating to failure of transactions.
- ❖ Skimming and phishing of accounts/passwords/emails etc.
- ❖ Inadequacy of the functions/arrangements available to the customers or gaps in the standards of services expected and the actual services rendered.

Customers' Needs are basically

- ✚ **SPEED**
- ✚ **TIMELINESS**
- ✚ **ACCURACY**
- ✚ **COURTESY**
- ✚ **CONCERN**

The customers are having full right to register their complaint, if they are not satisfied with the services provided by the Bank. They can give complaint in writing, through mail or over customer care. If the complaints are not resolved within given time or if they are not satisfied with the solution provided by the Bank, they can approach the other avenues available for grievance redressal.



5. GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM

In order to make Bank's Redressal Mechanism more meaningful and effective, the Bank will have four level of customer redressal machinery.

- A. Branch Level
- B. Customer Grievance Cell at Head Office
- C. Grievance Redressal Committee
- D. Higher Institutions viz., NABARD/RCS/RBI

Acknowledge all formal complaints (including complaints lodged through electronic means) and work to resolve it within a reasonable period, not exceeding 45 days (including the time for escalation and examination of the complaint by the highest ranking internal official responsible for grievance redressal). The 45 days period will be reckoned after all the necessary information sought from the customer is received.

A) Branch Level (Level 1)

As customers normally deal with the branches, it is likely that the complaints are lodged at the branch office. The Branch Manager will thus be responsible for attending to complaints /grievances in respect of customer service at the branch level. He will be responsible for ensuring the satisfactory closure of all complaints received at the branches.

The Branch Head will try to resolve the complaints within specified time frames. As per the Policy, the complaints received at the Branch level should be resolved within 10 days.

Communication of the Bank's stand on any issue to the customer is a vital requirement, as therefore, if complaints received require some time for examination of issues involved this will be conveyed to the customer.



B) Customer Grievance Cell (Level 2)

The Customer Grievance Cell at the Head office will be overseen by the Deputy General Manager (Banking) / Asst. General Manager (Banking), who will act as a Nodal officer. The name, Email ID and contact details of the Nodal Officer will be displayed on Branch Notice Boards.

Customers are advised to approach the Branch Head for any grievances/complaints in writing. If the complaint is not resolved at the branch level, the customer may approach the Customer Grievance Cell at the Head Office of the Bank at No.4, NSC Bose Road, Chennai - 600 001.

Nodal officer will evaluate the feedback/complaint received from the customers and refer the matter to concerned Branch/Section Head for immediate resolution.

The complaints received by the Customer Grievance Cell should be resolved within 15 days.

C) Grievance Redressal Committee (Level 3)

Customer, if still unsatisfied with the redressal, can refer the complaint to the Grievance Redressal Committee at Head Office.

Grievance Redressal Committee comprising of the following members.,

Sl.No	Members
1.	Managing Director, Chairman of the Committee
2.	General Manager (Admin)
3.	General Manager (Banking)
4.	Dy. General Manager or Asst. General Manager (Banking) i.e. Nodal Officer
5.	Asst. General Manager (IT)
6.	Chief Manager, HRD
7.	Chief Manager, IT
8.	Chief Managers, Inspection
9.	Chief Manager, P&D

The Committee will be responsible for the implementation of Customer Service and complaint handling for the entire Bank.

As per the Policy, the complaints received by the Grievance Redressal Committee should be resolved within 20 days.

The Committee shall meet every quarter and review the complaints received from the customers. Apart from the pending complaints, the committee also reviews the redressed complaints also. It will be helpful for the Management to find out the deficiencies in the service provided by the Bank. The consolidated Report on customer complaints with remarks shall be placed before the Board of Management for information.

This Committee has the following functions pertaining to Customer Service:

- ❖ Evaluate feed-back on quality of customer service received from various branches. The committee would also review comments/ feed-back on customer service and implementation of commitments as per the customer service policy of the Bank.
- ❖ The committee is responsible for ensuring that all regulatory guidelines regarding customer service are adhered to. To achieve this, the committee will review the feedback of customers expressed in the Branch level customer service committee meetings.
- ❖ The committee will review the initiatives and measures taken by the Bank for improving customer service.
- ❖ The committee will review the complaints received from the customers through RBI/NABARD/RCS and discuss the action initiated on the same.
- ❖ Review long term pending complaints i.e more than 3 months, regularly.
- ❖ The committee would also consider unresolved complaints/grievances referred to it by functional heads responsible for redressal and offer their advice.
- ❖ The minutes of the committee meeting will be placed to the Customer Service Committee of the Board at quarterly intervals.

D) National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) (Level 4)

If the customer is not satisfied with the Bank's grievance redressal offered by the Grievance Redressal committee, he/she may approach the National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development, Regional Office, Chennai.

6. CUSTOMER MEET:

The Bank recognizes that customer's expectation/requirement/grievances can be better appreciated through personal interaction with customers by Bank's staff.

A Customer Service Meet will be convened quarterly at each branch for reviewing the quality of customer service at the branch and examine issues requiring special attention. The Branch level customer meet have been encouraged to include a senior citizen, Woman, HNI (High Net-worth Individual) customer as its member to provide suggestions and voice out their opinions.

Structured customer meets will give message to the customers that the Bank cares for them and values their feed back/suggestions for improvement in customer service. During the customer meets, the Executives will attend and interact with customers to solve the complaint in the origin itself.

Many of the complaints arise on account of lack of awareness among customers about Bank services and such interactions will help the customers appreciate banking services better. As for the Bank, the feedback from customers would be a valuable input for revising its product and services to meet customer requirements.

7. REPORTING TO BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

The Branches shall submit the monthly returns on the customer complaints to the Nodal Officer including NIL report. The Grievance Cell will review the return every month and submit the report to the committee.

A Quarterly report of all complaints / grievances received from customers at the branches is placed before the Grievance Redressal Committee of the Bank for information, consideration and recommendation.

The Report of the Committee is to be place before the Board of Directors on the Board Meeting. The Report should contain the status of the pending complaints, action taken on the complaints, recommendation on the complaints and also submit the policy inputs emanated from such complaints.

8. MANDATORY DISPLAY REQUIREMENTS:

It is mandatory for the Bank to provide:

- ❖ The appropriate arrangement for receiving complaints and suggestions/Complaint register and suggestion box are provided at branches and Bank's email id.
- ❖ The Name, Address, E-mail Id and Contact number of the Officer responsible for redressal of complaints.
- ❖ Contact details of National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development
- ❖ Customer Service Policy

9. COMPLAINT BOOK/REGISTER:

Complaint book with perforated copies in each set shall be introduced, so designed as to instantly provide acknowledgement to the customers and intimation to the Nodal Officer.



Branches of the Bank shall maintain a separate complaints register in the prescribed format given for entering all the complaints/grievance received by them directly or through Head Office. In the register, the status of the complaint whether pending or disposed is to be mention.

These registers shall be maintained irrespective of the fact whether a complaint was received or not in the past.

Further, the separate Register shall be maintained by the Grievance Redressal Cell, Head Office, on the complaints forwarded by Lead Bank/NABARD/Registrar of Cooperative Societies/RBI. The Status of the complaints has to be forwarded in every quarter to the concerned authorities for information.

The Complaint Register maintained by the Branches shall be scrutinized by the concerned Nodal Officer of the Branch during his periodical visit to the Branches and his observations/comments recorded in the relative visit reports.

10. CENTRALISED SYSTEM OF RECEIVING COMPLAINTS:

The Bank has to enable dedicated telephone line for receiving customer complaints and create awareness among the customers about the system. Further, the Bank will create a system for receiving complaints through our Web Site which will be helpful for the young customers to lodge their complaint on digital mode.

The Complaints received from the customer is to be categorised like., Technology Related, Service Related, Charges Related, General Banking Related, Staff Attitude Related etc., for find the reason for complaint and take necessary steps to reduce the same in near future. The categorisation should be communicated to Branches and monthly return should submit on the basis of the category. Further, the complaint register should have a column indicate the category of complaint.

11. ESCALATION/RESOLUTION:

Ordinarily, the Branch Manager is responsible for the resolution of complaints/grievances in respect of customer's service by the Branch. He/She would be responsible for ensuring closure of all complaints received at the Branches. It is his/her foremost duty to see that the complaint should be resolved fully to the customer's satisfaction and if the customer is not satisfied, then the customer should be provided with alternate avenues to escalate the issue.

If the Branch Managers feels that it is not possible at his/her level to solve the problem, he/she has to refer the case to Customer Grievance Cell at Head Office for guidance. Similarly, if Customer Grievance Cell finds that they are not able to solve the problem such cases may be referred to the Grievance Redressal Committee.

12. 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 will be analyzed from all possible angles. Specific time schedule has been set up for handling complaints and disposing them at all levels including Branch and Head office. Branch Manager should try to resolve the complaint within specified time frames decided by the Bank.

However escalation matrix for redressal of each complaint is prescribed at different levels in the organization. The Matrix prescribes the time period for unsolved complaints/grievances not redressed to customer satisfaction to be escalated by customers to higher authorities. The escalation matrix for customer complaints is given below.

Escalation Levels	Authority receiving the complaints	Time Limit to resolve	Further Escalation
1 st	Branch Manager	10 days	If the customer is not satisfied with the response provided by the Branch Manager, he has the options to escalate his complaint to the Nodal officer.
2 nd	Customer Grievance Cell	15 days	Nodal officer review the complaint/feedback and refer the same to Branch/Section for speedy resolution.
3 rd	Grievance Redressal Committee	20 days	Nodal officer/Concerned section Head will present the case to committee for policy making decisions or final resolution/ decision of bank.

The complaint lodged by the customer, if not received by the branch directly, is first assigned to the Branch for redressal. The customer may, if the complaint is not redressed within 10 days or not happy with the redressal by the branch may escalate the complaint to Head Office of the Bank after 10 days of the first lodging of the complaint.

If the complaint is not redressed with the next 15 days (after 25th day from first day) by the Customer Grievance Cell, the customer may escalate the complaint for redressal to the Grievance Redressal Committee.

The complaint will invariably be redressed with in a maximum period of 45 days.

If the complaint is not redressed within 45days of the time limit, the Nodal Officer is responsible to communicate the interim reply regarding the process on the complaint lodged by the customer.

13. GUIDELINES AT BRANCH LEVEL:

- ❖ Ensure proper customer service, so that complaints do not arise.
- ❖ Complaints received from customer orally/written/e-mail should be attended by Branch Manager and it should be recorded in the complaint register.
- ❖ 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 Customer Grievance Cell/Grievance Redressal Committee needs information regarding the complaints.
- ❖ Once the complaint is redressed, it should be intimated to the complainant at the earliest.

14. SENSITIZING OPERATING STAFF ON HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Staffs are properly trained for handling complaints and to win customer confidence. Imparting soft skills required for handling irate customers is made an integral part of the training programs. It is the responsibility of the Grievance Redressal committee to ensure that internal machinery for handling complaints/grievances operates smoothly and efficiently at all levels.

In regular interval, the Grievance Redressal Officer shall conduct session for staff members to impart knowledge about the policy and services provided by the Bank.

15. MECHANISM OF REVIEW OF GREIVANCE REDRESSAL POLICY:

As per the existing guidelines, Bank shall critically examine on an on-going basis as to how Grievance Redressal Machinery is working and whether the same has been found to be effective in achieving improvement in customer service in different areas.

Bank shall identify areas in which the number of complaints is large or on the increase and consider constituting special Executive Committee to look into complaints on the spot in Branches against which there are frequent complaints.

The Board may review the policy at least once in 3 years. In case of any amendment(s), clarification(s), circular(s), etc., issued by competent authorities of the Bank on the basis of any amendment to the Laws and Rules of the Land, not being consistent with the provisions laid down in this policy, then such amendment(s), clarification(s), circular(s), etc. shall prevail over the provisions of this policy and this policy shall stand amended accordingly.



Bank shall make all its efforts to review this policy from time to time with an intension to provide better grievance redressal mechanism to its customer in coming periods.
